



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

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1958

Editor: R.J. Scarlett, Canterbury Museum Rolleston
Avenue, Christchurch 1.

Dear Fellow-Members,

As usual, this is being produced in the midst of other work. I've often said that if I could find the person who invented work I'd make him (or her) do some of it. Don't forget the Annual Conference at Wanganui in May, of which you have already had particulars. Apologies to Frank Davis for omitting him from the list of Council members, in the last issue.

The Editor.

Members of the Association, and others, were busy in December and January. "Golson's Gang" (officially the Auckland University's Archaeological Society) were again at their Coromandel site for 24 glorious days, this time finding an intriguing system of drains and pits. Your editor was one of them. Susan Davis and Bruce Palmer were busy in the Wellington district. Les Lockerbie and Ernie Munro dug at Pounawea and Papatowai. Dr Roger Duff, Frank Davis and Wal. Ambrose recorded rock-drawings from a site threatened by the building of a dam for a power station. Then many of us converged on Moa Bone Point Cave At Redcliffs, near Christchurch. This cave has been well-known since Julius von Haast put two men to work digging there for seven weeks in 1872. I cannot list everyone who took part in the latest dig there. In all, 18 members came from Auckland, Wellington, Marlborough, Otago and locally - but mention must be made of the Junior Archaeological Club, organised by Selwyn Hovell, who took a major part in the removal of spoil by wheelbarrows, as well as doing much other useful work. Prior to the official dig, which began on 20th January, Dr Roger Duff and a team of local volunteers had removed a large amount of spoil, mainly that worked over by Selwyn Hovell and his associates early last year, to the footpath outside the cave, whence it was removed

by the City Council, a procedure repeated several times as our team deposited more spoil there. The dig, officially sponsored by the Canterbury Museum, was directed by Dr Duff, with Jack Golson in charge of the interpretation of stratification, and so on. Unfortunately, in the part of the cave which we excavated, by the usual system of squares, with later removal of baulks, down to the clean marine sand, a good deal of unrecorded digging had taken place in past years, so that only one thin layer of apparently undisturbed material was found. However, under Jack's clear exposition, even this disturbance was put to good use, as we followed the sequence in which earlier trenches and holes had been dug.

Roughly half the cave awaits excavation next year, when we do hope to get into undisturbed material. Over 200 artefacts, mainly Polynesian, and including the head of a "god-stick", of presumed Moa-hunter age, but also including European coins and clay pipes, were found, which had been missed by earlier diggers, as well as dog and bird bones. We also found the post-holes and a post recorded by von Haast. Von Haast regarded these as evidence of a whare, but Dr Duff, from their position, makes the more reasonable suggestion that they were from a shelter for a large canoe. A C₁₄ analysis of one of these post butts will test the supposition that the structure was erected before the midden layers commenced being deposited.

This first official project of the Association could not have occurred in happier or more convenient circumstances, as local hospitality removed the need to camp out, and reduced living costs to a minimum. The effective public relations of the Canterbury Museum extended to electric lighting installed by the Municipal Electricity Department, and the welcome presence of Frank Chilton who shot off many hundred feet of black and white for a National Film Unit short for commercial distribution.

Photographs of the Junior Archaeological Club at work in the cave appeared in the March, 1958 issue of Junior Digest.

Your editor and some friends spent a weekend in preliminary investigation of a Ngati-mamoe pa site in March.

REVIEWS:New Zealand - Recent Archaeological Research.

Robert E. Bell.

This excellent summary by Dr Bell, whom many members met when he was in New Zealand in 1955-56, appeared in Asian Perspective, Vol. 1, 1957. Asian Perspective is the Bulletin of the Far Eastern Prehistory Association, American Branch. Dr Bell has missed very little that has taken place in New Zealand archaeology up to the time he wrote his report, and his paper is well worth reading in conjunction with Jack Golson's New Zealand Archaeology 1957 which has been circulated to members.

One mis-spelling in Dr Bell's paper, which occurs several times, should be corrected. "Parawhakatau" should read "Pariwhakatau".

Several good books on overseas Archaeology have appeared lately, Among those noted by your editor are Digging up Jericho by Kathleen Kenyon, Ernest Benn Ltd, 1957. Here the text is good, and Miss Kenyon really does give a fine picture of what is so far known about the history of Jericho, and in particular corrects Garstang's erroneous dates, but, as I have noted in other of Kathleen Kenyon's books, the standard of photography - or of reproduction - is poor, and many of the photographic illustrations are muddy and poor in definition.

In contrast, the photography in The Testimony of the Spade, by Geoffrey Bibby, Collins, 1957, is mostly superb, and the text is one of the best summaries I have yet read, covering the period from about 15,000 B.C. to the time of the Vikings, for Northern Europe. Bibby works in a Danish Museum, and gives more space to the important Scandinavian work than is usually found in such summaries; he is well worth reading for that alone.

The 2nd volume of the Nature and Art series, published by Phoenix House, is Old Stone Age, with photography by Stevan Célébonovic, and text by Geoffrey Grigson. This is a really remarkable assemblage of photographs, both for the selection of subjects and the standard of photography and reproduction. Anyone whose archaeological interest extends beyond New Zealand should, if possible, get a copy.

Another volume of superb photography and fine text is Egypt Architecture - Sculpture - Painting in Three Thousand Years, by K. Lange and M. Hirmer, published by Phaidon Press in 1956.

Finally, for this issue, I mention Primitive Art, by E.O. Christensen, Thames and Hudson, London, and Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, a magnificent volume covering most of the world, with coloured plates as well as very many monochrome plates.

May I urge those members of our association who have not already done so to join the Polynesian Society, or at least to become familiar with its Journal, where much of importance to New Zealand archaeology appears.

Also, the Illustrated London News in most issues has well illustrated up-to-date reports on overseas digs.