



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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The work at Poukawa has been extensive; this has been possible by the assistance given by Mr. K. Ramsay, Mr. F. Tegg and Mr. K. Pedler and I am sincerely grateful to them for their careful and methodical help over a very considerable period of time.

Reference:

Price, T.R. 1963 - N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 4.

NOTE ON ASH BEDS AT POUKAWA, HAWKES BAY

W.A. Fullar

Ash beds at Lake Poukawa (Price, 1963) were briefly examined on 30th December, 1964, in the company of Mr. P.J. Grant, Havelock North. At the diggings, probings in peat revealed two ash beds near the surface and this arrangement was confirmed along the side of a drainage canal $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west where the following profile was obtained;

- 9 in. dark brown peat
- 1 in. pale yellowish white coarse ash and lapilli (up to $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, jagged, and highly vesicular)
- 15 in. dark brown peat
- 2 in. white fine ash (upper lin. very fine and lower inch fine);firm.
On peat

I consider the upper ash layer to be airfall Taupo Pumice (erupted 1819 plus 17 years before 1950) and the lower, airfall Waimihia Lapilli (erupted 3270 plus 200 years before 1950). An account of the chronology of these ashes is given in Healy, Vucetich and Fullar (1964: pp.33 and 42).

If the lower layer is indeed Waimihia Lapilli then the discovery by Price (p.171) of "items related to man found below the pumice band....." raises implications almost too daring to be true. At Orongo Bay, Gisborne, Green and Fullar (1960) could find no evidence of occupation below the Taupo Pumice and suggested first occupation of the site between AD 500 - 1200, and Wellman (1962: fig. 22. p.88) finds no sign of human occupation in his stratigraphic division No. 5 between AD (?) 500 and AD 150 (Taupo Pumice eruptions). Indeed, in the Bay of Plenty it has become exceedingly difficult to prove occupation below the Kaharoa Ash (erupted 950 plus 70 years before 1950).

It is of first importance to establish the validity of airfall Waimihia Lapilli and this may be accomplished by further mapping around Poukawa and through Heretaunga Plains to the uplands at Patoka, Te Pohue, and Raupunga where the bed has been definitely identified. But this may be impracticable as I am not resident on the spot, and to be effective, this kind of work requires much searching. Another method is to determine the radiometric age of the bed by sampling the peat immediately above and below and so bracketing the deposit as it were. Dating in this manner proved fruitful at Lake Repongaere, Gisborne, where Taupo Pumice and Waimihia Lapilli in subfossil peat were confirmed after hand over hand mapping along a line of 100 miles (Pullar, 1964).

A few field characters associated with Waimihia Lapilli may not go amiss:

- (1) in peat, alluvium, and collovium the bed is always white and fairly compacted.
- (2) it has organisation cursorily in a fine top and a coarser base with a sharp contact as in the profile above
- (3) on floodplains and fans, waterborne ash is associated with the airfall deposit giving the impression of extraordinary thickness, and for a while in the Gisborne district gave much trouble in plotting isopachs until the two depositional forms were separated. The close association of waterborne/airfall deposits is now discovered to be common in the Bay of Plenty and Gisborne districts and from variable thicknesses quoted by Price, (as much as 10 in.), it would appear that the same character is to be noted in Hawkes Bay. Indeed, in the landforms mentioned I would now regard this association as a diagnostic criteria for Waimihia Lapilli, just in the same way as the highly vesicular lapilli typify Taupo Pumice in the Gisborne district (Green and Pullar, 1960; p.349). An example of waterborne/airfall association is given by Pullar (1963); figure);
- (4) Waimihia Lapilli is widespread having been noted in eastern Bay of Plenty, Gisborne district and northern Hawkes Bay.

The lower ash layer is unlikely to be Taupo Pumice as the members were all erupted close in time (Healy, 1964; p.29) and at Poukawa, the layers are separated by 15 in. of peat; nor are the Taupo sub-group members 9 to 13 (erupted 2,500 to 2,800 years before 1950) a likely source as on the Taupo-Napier Road about 5 miles east of Rangitaiki, the collective deposit is only a few inches thick (Healy, 1964; fig. 9, (p.25) and at Gisborne is 1 in. and at Tiniroto $\frac{1}{2}$ in. As a first shot, and on stratigraphic grounds, I plump for Waimihia Lapilli.

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Quaternary Volcanic Ash in Taupo, Rotorua,
and Gisborne Districts.
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- Price, T.R. 1963: Moa Remains at Poukawa, Hawkes Bay. N.Z. Arch. Ass. Newsletter. Vol. 6, No.4; pp 169 - 74.
- Pullar, W.A., 1963 Sea Level Changes in the Holocene (Letter to the Editor). N.Z. Science Review. Vol. 21, No. 2; pp. 37 - 38 (Figure).
- Pullar, W.A. 1964 Radiometric Ages of Taupo Pumice and Waimihia Lapilli at Gisborne. Newsletter, Geological Society of N.Z. No. 15, pp. 16 - 17.
- Wellman, H.W. 1962 Holocene of the North Island of New Zealand; a Coastal Reconnaissance. Trans. N.Z. Roy. Soc. Vol. 1, No. 5; pp. 29 - 99.

REVIEWS

PRACTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY - AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD-WORK AND EXCAVATION:

Graham Webster, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1963. 11 photographs, 20 line illustrations, 176 pp., index, 21 s (England).

This book is described as the "Companion volume to Approach to Archaeology by Stuart Figgott" in which the author "attempts to set out for serious amateur and young professional archaeologists the back-ground for practical fieldwork and excavation in Britain." Written by an archaeologist "who has spent most of his working life on the problem of the Roman occupation of Britain" it draws more attention to the problems of structures and stratigraphy than to other features found in quite different types of archaeological sites. Within the limitations that it is written for the British amateur, draws on British excavations and stresses structural fieldwork and excavation, certain aspects of the book still lead me to commend it to the New Zealand archaeologist.

The chapter on archaeological organizations and publications in Britain, is, for one not familiar at first hand with the situation, useful in understanding the roots of our own organization and the many parallels shared with Britain. Differences suggest fruitful lines, not yet developed here which we could well pursue.

The chapter on investigation by field-work offers little for the New Zealand archaeologist, except to remind us that in the field of geophysical prospecting we can hardly be said to have begun to exploit the possibilities.