



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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NOTES AND NEWS

New Members

The NZAA welcomes these new members to the Association and wishes them well in their future archaeological endeavours:

Murray Cox and Duncan Ives

NZAA Web Address

There is a change to the web address which is advertised on the inside cover of *Archaeology in New Zealand*. You can still access NZAA's web page via the old address but it is a long circuitous route. The new address is:

<http://c14.sci.waikato.ac.nz/nzaa>

Call for Papers

I am very light on papers for the next issue of *Archaeology in New Zealand*. I would appreciate any papers you have in the pipeline, book reviews, suggestions for books for review, letters to the editor, and any other relevant contributions. I also welcome papers from students. (See in this issue 'The geoarchaeological context of two iron age sites in northeast Thailand' by Jeremy Habberfield-Short, a PhD student at Otago University).

NZAA President moves to Wellington

Rick McGovern-Wilson is leaving the Department of Conservation in Rotorua to take up a new position as Senior Archaeologist and Head of the Archaeology Unit at the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. He sees it as an interesting and challenging future with the proposed changes to the RMA Amendment Bill and the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. Congratulations Rick. We wish you well in your new position.

NZAA Site Recording Scheme Upgrade Project

The NZAA Site Recording Scheme Upgrade Project is a national initiative that Council has taken to upgrade the information contained on the 53,000 recorded archaeological sites. The Site Recording Scheme was established in 1958 to encourage the recording of information about archaeological sites and these records have been contributed by many different individuals and agencies over many years and so vary in quality and in the level of detail offered. With the advent of the RMA 91 and the revised HPA 93, there is now a greater use of the Scheme in planning and legal issues for site identification, protection and management. Territorial Local Authorities are becoming the principle end-users of the Scheme in their ongoing heritage management and protection mechanisms. It is essential, if we are to ensure the long-term survival of our cultural heritage, that the information available is accurate and up to date. NZAA Council recognised that there were inaccuracies in the Scheme, and the Upgrade Project is aimed at correcting the inaccuracies and bringing the information of all records up to date.

In mid 1998 NZAA was awarded approximately \$60,000 by Lottery Environment and Heritage to enable the Project to get started. This included funding for a Project Manager for a year, computer and GPS equipment and money towards the employment of field crews who would be undertaking the checking of sites. A selection panel, consisting of Rick McGovern-Wilson, Kath Prickett and Ian Lawlor, held interviews in early April for a Project Manager and as a result of those interviews Lynda Bowers was appointed to the position and started work on the Project on 1 May.

The Project has begun work in Gisborne District because this Council had earlier funded a pilot study and had funds available to complete the work in their District. In addition to providing direct capital to the project, GDC contacted all landowners who had recorded sites on their properties and provided 1:10,000 maps with topographic features, cadastral land boundaries and archaeological sites marked. A number of NZAA members have already been involved with field checking of sites, in conjunction with hapu/iwi representatives and although it can be a slow process it has been very rewarding. With over 2000 records in the GDC area it will take most of the remainder of this year to complete the District but we are on track. Opotiki and Wairoa District Councils have been contacted so that the Project can move west and south respectively as the GDC material is completed.

Discussions have also been initiated with other councils and iwi around the country as word starts to spread about the Project. Chris Jacomb has been involved in talks with Ngai Tahu and local councils in Canterbury, and we are hoping to start work down there before the end of the year. One important task is to link in with the Ngai Tahu Rock Art Project which will save us having to revisit several hundred sites in Canterbury and North Otago. Discussions have also begun with BoP Regional Council, Wanganui DC, Auckland CC, and iwi in the Marlborough Sounds and Southern Wairarapa.

The Project is now underway and it is now more important than ever that members get into the regular habit of filing site upgrades as they visit previously recorded sites. The more sites that are checked before the Project moves into a district, means that fewer will need to be revisited and so costs will decrease accordingly. **Remember** – this is a long-term project (5-6 years or more) which requires a huge financial input (probably around \$1.25 million in total) so if savings can be made at any point by people voluntarily completing update forms, then please help. The most important details that must be checked, and corrected if need be, are: the grid reference, aids to relocation, current status and condition of the site. Filekeepers will receive copies of the upgrade forms that we have designed for the Project – you can use those, or just use a standard site record form and note on it that it is an upgrade.

Additionally, if members are employed on projects working for or with district councils, please contact Lynda Bowers (free phone 0508 ARCHAEOLOGY = 0508 272 423), so that we may either make arrangements with those Councils to tie our projects together, or at least be able keep our record of district council activities up to date.

Rick McGovern-Wilson
Project Co-ordinator

Wetland Archaeological Site Management Project

The Science and Research Division of the Department of Conservation is undertaking a project on the conservation and management of wet archaeological sites over two years. This project recognises the special value of wet archaeological sites, their vulnerability and the particular pressures they are under. It is intended to carry out the project in stages:

1. A critical review of international literature on the subject;
2. Assessment of the scale and nature of the problem in New Zealand including carrying out focused case studies focusing 2 or 3 specific sites;
3. Production of a report making recommendations relevant to advocacy for resource management and to assist development of site conservation/management projects.

The project is to be carried out by Warren Gumbley and Dilys Johns under contract to the Department of Conservation.

A wetland archaeological site may be defined as any place where survival of archaeological material depends on it being maintained in wet anaerobic conditions. Wet archaeological sites are set apart from other types of archaeological site by the range of organic materials that may be preserved in them.

In this sense a wet archaeological site is as much a product of, and so defined by its environment as its archaeological content. Sites may be platforms and palisades in swamps (swamp pa), caches of artefacts in swamps or estuaries (e.g. waka and carvings), even deposits under buildings. Sites in wetlands form a significant part of New Zealand's archaeological resource and contain important and often unique cultural and environmental information.

The development of an inventory of wet sites is fundamental to achieving stage 2 and this is where we need some help from members of the New Zealand Archaeological Association and others. What we need is information about specific sites that meet the definition for wet archaeological sites described above. The information we are looking for is as follows:

- A site record form or failing that a description of the site in reasonable detail (you'll have to use your judgement here) including what the site is and what has been found there (include any references known);
- The location of the site (including a grid reference if possible)

We would not only like to know of sites which are now wet but also of other sites which were wet but are now dry in order to get some measure of the diminishment of the resource. Similarly we would like to know the causes of the "drying" of sites.

As well as obvious sites such as swamp pa, sites where organic artefacts are known, such as waka, tools or carvings are also being considered during the project. Some of these sites may border or be associated with "dry" sites like the Kauri Point swamp site where a collection of wooden artefacts (including combs) were found adjacent to the pa.

Please send information to either Warren Gumbley (42 Oaklea Lane, RD 3, Hamilton) or Dilys Johns (Anthropology Department, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland).

NZAA Council Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Council of the New Zealand Archaeological Association was held on the 26th of June, 1999.

Issues discussed included:

1. Handbook update

On track for an Oct/Nov publication date.

2. SRS Upgrade Scheme progress report

Lynda Bowers was appointed as Project Manager and started work in the Gisborne District in May. She has established a toll-free number: 0508 ARCHAEOLOGY (ie., 0508 272 423) which is on the business card. She provides monthly reports to Rick McGovern-Wilson who forwards them to Lotteries. She will also provide Joan Lawrence with quarterly reports for AINZ. Fieldwork started on 21/6 and archaeologists are lined up for the next 8 weeks. They will use field forms to record data that can be put onto a computer database later. Photographs will be taken of as many sites as possible. A further report on the Project is included here separately.

3. 2000 Conference

Now looking at a long weekend conference in Wellington – further details will be posted in the next Newsletter.

4. NZAA web site

Our html has changed since Waikato has a new web server. Council felt that it was time to analyse what we want to do with the site, to what other sites do we want links, and what is appropriate to have on it. How much raw data do we want there and do we wish to pursue the suggestion of a grey literature

bibliography in this context? There is a suggestion that we add an electronic membership application form.

5. Release of key CINZAS data on DoC web site

There is a need to decide if we are charging in any way for the information. If so, the N.Z.A.A. web page might be a better site. Council gave Tony Walton approval to proceed with a project of putting minimum data required for access to the system, with an explanatory note and appropriate disclaimers, and with the proviso that the charging issue needs to be resolved first.

6. Best Practice Guidelines

The Best Practice Guidelines sub-committee has been updated so it now consists of Rick McGovern-Wilson, Lynda Bowers and Ian Barber. Their first job is looking at Kevin Jones' proposed Forestry Best Practice Guidelines document.

7. Editorships

The editors of both N.Z.J.A. (Janet Davidson) and the Monograph series (Nigel Prickett) have advised us that they wish to resign from these roles. An advertisement was placed in the PIN for indications of interest in taking on this work. These are important positions within the Association and Council urgently need to hear from anyone who may be interested in either of them.

8. Code of Ethics feedback

The Council discussed appropriate response to the comments published in AINZ. It was suggested that we open a PIN discussion of the points raised and publish a reply in AINZ based on a consensus form that forum. Need to note that we were trying to address these matters as generic issues.

9. NZHPT Future Search Conference

Rick McGovern-Wilson reported that he had, as N.Z.A.A. President, received an invitation from Elizabeth Kerr to participate in the conference with the aim of examining future directions for the Historic Places Trust.

10. Awards

It was decided to make two presentations of the Public Archaeology Award for contributions to archaeological site protection: one to the Gisborne

District Council (for their support of the SRS Upgrade project) and the other to Manukau City Council (for their purchase of the Otutataua stonefields).

RMA Amendment Bill

On 13 July Simon Upton, the Minister for the Environment, brought the Resource Management Amendment Bill into Parliament. After two readings it was passed to the Transport and Environment Select Committee for public submission. The most major implication this bill has for the Association, and cultural and Maori agencies as a whole, is the transfer of responsibility for archaeological site protection from the Historic Places Trust to regional and district councils, particularly the latter. The whole of Part I of the Historic Places Act 1993 will be repealed, thereby scrapping the current authority processes, and archaeological site destruction will be treated as another form of land use within s9 of the RMA. The blanket protection for archaeological sites disappears, as does the 1900 cut-off date. There does not appear to be any control of scientific investigations and no provision made for offences in unlawfully disturbing archaeological deposits. Probably the only really positive result is that recognition and protection of historic heritage shifts from s7(e) to a new s6(f), i.e. it becomes a matter of national importance.

Submissions to the Bill close with the Select Committee on 1 October, and the Association fully intends making both a written and verbal submission. Members are asked to make their own submissions about the Bill but if you have any ideas you may wish Council to consider, or you require some advice or guidance about how to make a submission, please contact Moira White (NZAA Secretary) as soon as possible. Her address is P O Box 6337, Dunedin North.

Obituary

ALASTAIR BUIST – 1920-1999

Alastair Gordon Buist was born in Hawera a year after his father took up general practice in the town in 1919. William Buist came to New Zealand from Scotland in 1913 and practised in Eltham and Kaponga, before setting up in Hawera where he was in general practice until 1951. In his turn, Alastair served Hawera and south Taranaki as GP from 1946 to 1983. In Taranaki, but not among his archaeological friends, he was always 'Snow' Buist.

Alastair was educated at the Otago Medical School in the years 1939-1943, after which there was a year at the Wellington Clinical School. He was then a house surgeon at New Plymouth before returning to Hawera in 1946 to join his father in the Collins Street practice. For many years the practice was shared with husband and wife Bob Armstrong and Phil Stockdill.

Hawera Hospital first employed Alastair in January 1944 when he stood in for medical officers who were away on leave. Later he was to have a long association with the hospital, from part-time anaesthetist in the early 1950s, to Medical Superintendent at the end of his career before retirement in November 1985.

In 1948 Alastair married Dinah Allen of a New Plymouth medical family. Their three girls appear in many of Alastair's early Taranaki field photographs, and the whole family went to Western Samoa when he undertook a field survey there. When he retired from medicine in 1985, Alastair and Dinah went to live on a farm property previously purchased at Tate Road, Waitara. A sharemilker ran the dairy herd, while Alastair grew musk melons for the Japanese market, and a lovely garden was developed – mostly by Dinah, I think. Dinah died in 1994.

It is not known how Alastair became interested in archaeology. His daughter Miranda Cullen says there was a childhood interest. Certainly, he got to know the south Taranaki countryside when accompanying his father on calls, and as a child he holidayed at Ohawe Beach where he was to dig an important early site. He may also have become familiar with South Island archaeology and the collections of the Otago Museum in his years as a medical student in Dunedin. Back in Hawera, Alastair got to know historian John Houston, who contributed to the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* and wrote a book about Taranaki Maori. A Hawera informant describes Alastair as inheriting the mantle of local authority on historical matters after Houston's death in 1962.

It seems that the first fieldwork undertaken by Alastair was concerned with recording and mapping pa and redoubts in South Taranaki. When he went to the 1959 N.Z.A.A. conference he already had a strong interest in these sites. Ken Gorbey suggests that it was military redoubts that first attracted his attention, and that this interest developed to embrace pa when he discovered the older sites underneath, or occupying prominent sites nearby. Some of his early aerial photography of south Taranaki sites was concerned largely with

redoubts, and he spoke to me of the archaeology of General Cameron's 1865 campaign, in particular, as unfinished business. One of the last days I enjoyed in the field with Alastair in 1994 was spent looking at redoubts and gun-fighter pa south of Hawera.

Alastair's first published fieldwork was the January 1960 dig at Ohawe Beach, a few miles from Hawera at the Waingongoro River mouth. The site was noted as early as 1843 by the Rev. Richard Taylor, and in 1847 Walter Mantell obtained a major collection of moa bones there. The 1960 work turned up an oven containing the articulated leg of a moa, which was published in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, and for many years has been on display in the Taranaki Museum.

A second moa-hunter site at Ohawe was investigated later in the same year at Alastair's behest by Tess Canavan (and published by her in the *Newsletter*). The site was named after nearby Te Rangatapu pa, which occupied an isolated hill-top above the river mouth. Tess Canavan states that after the hill was sold to the Wallaces' quarry operation someone brought artefacts into Hawera from the quarry site. She worked there on her own, but after a bank gave way on top of her took her material into the Taranaki Museum and "went off to look at ruins in Greece".

Another area of operations in the early 1960s was Kaupokonui, eight miles west of Ohawe. According to Tess Canavan it was Manaia G.P. Dr Kenneth Fox who drew Alastair's attention to sand erosion at Kaupokonui which was revealing the moa-hunter site there. Two parts of the site were investigated: the moa-hunter midden and the so-called 'village' site on the terrace above. In a 1963 report Alastair wrote up the excavations, while the artefact finds were described by David Robinson. From the evidence at Kaupokonui and Waingongoro Alastair was able to bring to the attention of the wider New Zealand archaeological community the importance of these sites as representing the first human settlement of the district.

In 1964 Alastair's "Archaeology in North Taranaki, New Zealand" was published as Monograph 3 of the Association. After 35 years it remains a rare resource in its description of a New Zealand archaeological landscape. It also affirms Alastair's interest in systematic recording and classification, which was an important part of his approach to archaeology. But his major objective in pa mapping was aimed at an account of sites in the Hawera and Patea counties - his own home territory, which he began before and



Ohawe: Tess Canavan and Alastair Buist, with Brian Harding in the excavation.



Ohawe: Dave Robinson and Dinah Buist excavating as Alastair takes a photograph and Tess Canavan looks on.

continued after the north Taranaki project. He once told me that the 1964 publication was a trial run for his major work. Sadly that other publication was not forthcoming, although I believe the drawings and notes are still among his papers.

During this active early period Alastair gathered around him a core of enthusiasts from Hawera. Sisters-in-law Melva and Ngaire Riley and their families dug at Waingongoro in January 1960 during the families' summer holiday at Ohawe Beach. Also there was Hawera chemist Leslie ('Bunt') Thomas, who is said to have made the all-important moa oven find in someone else's area over a tea break. Melva later mapped pa with Alastair and was responsible for inking in the final drawings. Architects Brian Harding and David Robinson worked on the north Taranaki pa project and at Kaupokonui. And, of course, there was Tess Canavan at Te Rangatapu.

Alastair first attended an Archaeological Association conference at Rotorua in 1959. This wider contact with New Zealand archaeology led to his appointment as editor of the N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, which he took up in 1962. Alastair went on to produce more than 60 Newsletter issues, with the important help of his family who did much of the work collating each issue, and his sister Margaret Buist who typed-up the final copy and liaised with the Wellington printers. Alastair also served for almost 30 years as the Taranaki region site record file-keeper, only giving up when he moved to Waitara in 1985.

Among others Alastair met at the 1959 conference was Roger Green, who was then a Fulbright student based in Auckland. It was through Roger that Alastair carried out most of the fieldwork he was to undertake outside Taranaki. In 1964 Alastair and Dinah joined him in salvage excavations at Tairua, where Dinah found the famous pearlshell lure. Later that year Alastair spent two weeks surveying at Kuaotunu on the east coast of Coromandel Peninsula. The 1965-66 field season saw Alastair undertake a survey on Savai'i for the University of Auckland's major Samoa programme, later published by the Auckland Institute and Museum.

A significant contribution was made by Alastair in his early aerial photography of sites, mostly in South Taranaki. Typically, he became very involved in photography, developing and printing in his own darkroom in the Collins Street house. Some outstanding images have been published in a 1976 contribution to a history of Patea County, and more recently in Kevin Jones'

book on the aerial photography of New Zealand archaeology. A month before he died Alastair put the negatives into the Taranaki Museum. The record is increasingly valuable as sites are lost or damaged. Garry Law recalls a television item showing Alastair engaged in the work, in the skies over South Taranaki.

Alastair always had a strong interest in art. His daughter Miranda, looking through early diaries after his death, was struck by an early passion for music, poetry and literature. In Hawera he was heavily involved in the Arts Council, and in the Film Society which he founded and which met in the old Collins Street house. Some of his archaeological group also were involved in these other activities. He took up crafts with enthusiasm - in the 1950s it was enamelling, and in the sixties, weaving. Friends describe him taking these up, mastering them, and then moving on. Ken Gorbey, who was in Taranaki in the late sixties, remembers a man of incredibly wide interests. At that time Alastair was in his weaving phase. Ken also recalls a great record collection dominated by old 78s, and a collection of Japanese prints.

After their marriage in 1948, Alastair and Dinah had a new house designed by Austrian refugee Ernst Plishke, then living in Wellington. An important figure in New Zealand and European architecture, Plishke returned in the sixties to resume his career in Vienna. The new house was built off High Street, at one corner of the large garden behind the Collins Street villa, which was the old family home and surgery.

Friends in the art world were by no means confined to Hawera. Two portraits of Alastair painted by Leo Bensemann were a familiar sight in his homes in Hawera and Waitara. Doris Lusk, whose mother for a time occupied the flat in the old house over the lawn at Hawera, was also a friend whose work was represented in the Buist homes.

Alastair first joined the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 1958, and from 1959 served for long periods on the Taranaki Regional Committee. He chaired the committee from 1986 until last year. His wide interests in Taranaki history were shown by work put into marking heritage sites such as Chew Chong's factory and the Koru monastery.

It is said that Alastair did not suffer fools gladly; and there are some who found him gruff. But behind this was a wonderfully laid-back style and a dry sense of humour. He was quick to see the ridiculous in anything. I well

remember a battle he had with a new-fangled tomato sauce sachet in a Patea tearoom. The sachet won and Alastair's old clothes looked even older by the end of it. I think he enjoyed not knowing any better afterwards how was supposed to get into it.

He was also enormously generous of his time and knowledge. His wide interests, and a deep knowledge of the Taranaki historical landscape built up over many years, made him a fascinating companion on any excursion. He had his own style in fieldwork, and Aileen Fox, among others, was astonished when he drove his Mark II Jaguar over the paddocks to pa sites, rather than approach on foot as she would have preferred. In later years he went out with Hip Fenton of Waitara, visiting known sites and recording new ones especially in the Waitara district.

Alastair Buist was an outstanding regional archaeologist with a profound knowledge of his local patch. His contribution depends not just on his own published work, but on all those records and files, and the work of others for whom he was free with information and help. His old friend Tom Ngatai acknowledged his contribution at the funeral in New Plymouth, when he said that if Alastair had not recorded the sites, knowledge of them would have been lost. But his work in Samoa, on the Coromandel, and as Newsletter editor made him more than just a regional archaeologist, and a university education and wide contacts enabled him to make sense of his local knowledge. He died on 15 July 1999.

Nigel Prickett