



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NOTES AND NEWS

In response to requests from Universities, and with the permission of the Editor and the Authors, we start this volume of the NEWSLETTER with a reprint of the classic paper "The Last Decade in New Zealand Archaeology" from Vol. 36 of "Antiquity". Some consideration was given by the authors to the possibility of bringing the original paper up to date, but it was finally decided that it should stand as a statement on archaeology in New Zealand at the time it was written. It is hoped that both student and dilettante will find the reprinting of interest and value and that the subsequent progress in theory published in 1963 ("A Review of the Prehistoric Sequence of the Auckland Province") together with later comments on this work will provide a comprehensive statement on current New Zealand Archaeology.

The editor has just returned from a field recording season in Western Samoa where the Auckland University is conducting a survey under a N.S.F. grant from the Bishop Museum, Hawai'i. Because of his absence (and the poor mail service in Samoa) the summer activities of New Zealand archaeologists are not completely known. Auckland University has been active throughout the year. A beach midden on an off-shore island was completely excavated. At the end of the year a large area on Mount Wellington was excavated. Occupation sites south of Auckland are being investigated and excavated under the direction of Dr R. C. Green. W. Shawcross and C. Peters of the Anthropology Department are conducting the first excavation of a beach midden in North Auckland. Site recording is being carried out in the Coromandel Peninsula, and it is possible that the Otago University party under Les Groube is once again excavating in the North Auckland area.

Excavation of a Moa-Hunter site at Foxton, which was the subject of a paper at the 1965 Science Congress, was continued in summer 1964-65. During last year a group of pits at Porirua was excavated, and the results will be published as part of a larger study of the archaeology of the area. Besides the completion of the site survey, future work will be directed at more intensive investigation of sites to determine the pre-European occupation sequence in the area more exactly than is known at present.

In Western Samoa, John Terrell completed the excavation of part of a further earth mound at Vailele before he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to complete his post-graduate studies. Further pottery fragments were found in the lowest level, and a sequence of carbon samples from the earliest to the latest periods of occupation of the mound were collected. Janet Davidson is continuing her work on early settlement patterns in Opolu, and intends extending her detailed study to all parts of the island. A. G. Buist continued the work initiated by Stuart Scott on the island of Savai'i. Preliminary results suggest that whilst the earliest settlement in Western Samoa may have been on the coast, later settlement shifted inland up the volcanic slopes, and only within historic times

shifted again to the present coastal area. This pattern is present both on Opulu and Savai'i, but there are indications that Savai'i has unique field monuments.

Bruce Palmer of the Fiji Museum, Suva, is also working with a N.S.F. grant. Under his direction Laurie Birks and his wife excavated a large midden sequence in the Sigatoka coastal dunes, whilst Bruce Palmer is doing extensive fieldwork up the Sigatoka River to the mountains. Large amounts of pottery sherds have been recovered and the typology of field monuments caused some alarm to a N.Z. field-worker. Mr Palmer's work will cause a major reassessment of South Pacific prehistory. Colin Smart, A.N.U., is accompanying a large amount of equipment to do a year's field-work in New Caledonia.

Fieldwork in Canterbury and North Otago : For the past eight years it has been the policy of the North Otago Scientific and Historical Society to undertake excavation only of sites either threatened by destruction, or which have revealed data relevant to the investigation of Murihiku pre-history. This has resulted in somewhat intermittent but valuable work being done. During 1965 the excavation of portion of an Intermediate Age site at Shag Point (Mata Kaea) was completed, and the midden and artifact data supported previous findings.

At Hampton Beach the destruction of portion of a large Moa-hunter camp site for the provision of public amenities made it desirable to make a trial excavation in the remaining undisturbed ground. This was a typical Moa-hunter cooking area with large quantities of Euryapteryx gravis bones, numerous flakes, and very little else either artifactual or faunal. With the creation of a hydro lake at Aviemore in the Waitaki Valley imminent, a site survey of the 5000 odd acres to be inundated was organized. Three sites were recorded in the bed of the proposed lake, two of which were already largely destroyed. The third site was on a river flat. Lying on the surface were many broken burnt stones, plus a few flakes, moa bone and shell fragments left after flood and wind erosion of the top soil. In one corner of the flat the occupational deposit was undisturbed and several days were spent in excavating. Bones of three species of moa, dog, and small bird were obtained, as well as numerous flakes, a broken grindstone and a hammer. Assistance in excavating this site, which confirmed earlier reports of the scale in inland moa-hunting in the Waitaki Valley, was given by L.Groube and L.Whelan of the Otago Anthropological Society.

In Canterbury, members of the Museum Archaeological Society have continued excavations every second Saturday at a site at Bromley and latterly at Moa-bone Point Cave. The first of these appears to be a small late Moa-hunter or Intermediate camp site, which is situated amongst sand dunes just above high water level. It is one of several sites in the Christchurch city area, and this one is overlain by layers of sand and European occupational material. At the Cave, important artifacts are still being obtained from the completely disturbed midden, but the destruction of what was once an important site is very frustrating. At the contact horizon there are occasionally small pockets of undisturbed material, and a number of moa bones have been found embedded in the top of the sand. Site surveying is continuing in both Otago and Canterbury, 25 and 28 sites having been recorded in the last six months.

M.M.Trotter.