



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

Notes and News

New Members

Ellen Cameron, Bruce Comfort, Simon Hall, Greg Hil, Bruce McNeill, Aramanu Ropiha, Phil Ross, Brian Ruawai, Owen Springford.

Recent Reports & Publications Indexes

AINZ no longer carries a list of recent consultancy reports, but Heritage New Zealand maintains the Digital Library of consultancy reports, copies of which can be emailed on request. More information can be found at: <http://www.heritage.org.nz/protecting-heritage/archaeology/digital-library>

The New Zealand Archaeological Association also maintains an archaeological report library. Scans of this collection have been included in the HNZ Digital Library, but any other enquiries can be directed to Nicola Molloy (nmolloy@doc.govt.nz).

Back issues of *AINZ* and the *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* can be downloaded (with a three year moving firewall) at the NZAA website: www.nzarchaeology.org

NZAA Archaeology eNews

The eNews is an emailed newsletter of links to items of archaeological and heritage interest. It appears weekly and is open to anyone to subscribe. Content includes jobs ads, links to other heritage news site updates and to archaeological news stories from New Zealand, Australia, Oceania and worldwide. A typical issue can be seen here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7sskfr2>

The list is hosted by Mail Chimp and does not generate Spam. You can unsubscribe at any time using a link in each emailed eNews. You can subscribe at: <https://tinyurl.com/yah76t3n>

2018 Archaeology Week

After the success of the first Archaeology Week earlier this year planning is underway for the 2018 event. The December issue of *AINZ* will have more details, and in the meantime keep an eye on the NZAA website: <https://nzarchaeology.org>

Obituary

Don Millar (1931 to 2017)

Donald George Larnach Millar was born in Christchurch, 2 September 1931, to George and Margaret (nee Larnach). His father was in the First World War, including Gallipoli; on his mother's side was the builder and owner of Dunedin's Larnach Castle. Don was always proud of his Scottish heritage. When he was three years old, the family moved to Timaru, where he went to Waimataitai Primary School and Timaru Boy's High.



Don Millar and Kath Prickett and an eroding site, at Loisel's Beach (Waihou Bay), north of Gisborne, 1971 (Nigel Prickett).

Still at school he attended a scout camp at Raincliff, near Pleasant Point, where he met up with Theo Schoon, who was based at the camp while recording Maori rock drawings for the Internal Affairs Department. Schoon asked if anyone was interested in helping. Don and one other boy volunteered, and stayed on for two days of field work, Don maintaining an interest in rock art ever since. He went on to Dunedin Teachers College, where he took a university paper in anthropology taught by H.D. Skinner. His first

archaeological site experience was at Murdering Beach with Skinner in 1950. In December 1951 and January 1952, he excavated at Wairau Bar with Jim Eyles, where he also made and used a Maori stone-pointed drill. Eyles' (2007: 134) autobiography has pictures of Don at the time, excavating and using his drill.

Don's teaching career took him to Tahunanui School, Nelson, and then Motupipi in Golden Bay. In 1957 he married Nelsonian Joy Ballard. Don was active in a group of archaeologists based at Nelson Museum, including Jim Eyles from January 1965 when he became museum director, and Kathy Walls and Michael Hurst, both still at school (see Eyles 2007: 175). Also active in the Nelson district at the time, were Owen Wilkes and Ron Scarlett, who Don dug with at Anapai in the Abel Tasman National Park (Wilkes et al. 1963; Millar 1967). Wilkes and Scarlett then excavated at Heaphy River Mouth in May and July 1962 and May and August 1963 (Wilkes and Scarlett 1967), joined by Don who would walk in by the Heaphy Track from Golden Bay, to meet up with the others who came in from Karamea.

In January 1964, he was at Wairau Bar, with a Canterbury Museum Archaeological Society group led by Wilkes, who was now Canterbury Museum archaeologist. Joy recalls Don being the discoverer of a cache of five adzes, which are illustrated in Brooks et al. (2011: 41) with photographs and two pencil drawing views by Don of the cache as found.

It was after Wairau Bar, on his way home to Motupipi that Don found the Tahunanui site in his in-laws' house section. 'Argillite flakes were observable in the vegetable garden and so early in 1964 a trial excavation of a five foot square was made—in the centre of the back lawn' (Millar 1967). Don tells the story of Tahunanui, and more besides, in his contribution to the NZAA 50th anniversary volume (2004). Results of the Tahunanui work are published in the NZAA Newsletter (Millar 1964, 1971).

In 1966 Don excavated at Rotokura (Cable Bay) near Nelson (Millar 1967; Butts 1978) with members of the Nelson archaeological group. Another excavation was on Haulashore Island at the south end of the Boulder Bank. In Golden Bay, Joy remembers him carrying out small investigations near Takaka and Collingwood, and rescuing human bones washed out from the back of beaches, to be reburied above high tide under the direction of a local kaumatua.

In 1969, he took up a position at Patutahi, Poverty Bay, where the family lived for eight years. Here he was appointed NZAA site record file-keeper

and made the first major contribution to site records in the region. In the early 1970s, Don took Kath and myself to Loisels Beach (Waihau Bay) north of Gisborne, where there was a site eroding from sand dunes including a group of one-piece shell fishhooks. I remember his meticulous removal of overburden to expose the hooks in plan and equally meticulous notebook record. The hooks are now in the Tairāwhiti Museum.

Don and Joy and daughters Chrissy and Sandy's last move was to Napier in 1976, where he taught first at Maraenui, with mostly Maori pupils, and where he arranged for the school hall to be changed to a marae. Then he was at Nelson Park School in the middle of town. After 40 years teaching, Don was appointed Honorary Curator of Archaeology at the Hawke's Bay Museum, where, among other work in Hawke's Bay archaeology, he produced three reports on artefact collections in the museum. These were of a collection put together by Andy Pattison, a fisherman and agar-picker on the southern Hawke's Bay and north Wairarapa coast, the Field Collection from Waikawa (Portland Island), and Lowe Collection, mostly from Ocean Beach.

At the Archaeological Association's Havelock North conference in 2011, Don received the Association's 'Public Archaeology Award'. His last excavation was with Elizabeth Pishief on an early cottage site in the Napier Botanical Gardens. Also in his Napier years, he worked on replicating the poll spirals characteristic of Hawke's Bay greywacke adzes. His collecting interest is shown by the book co-authored with Des Harris, *Napier's Medicine Makers*, based on his typically thorough and cared for collection of pharmaceutical bottles, which I remember seeing in his Taradale home. While Don was an amateur archaeologist, his site work and recording, and collection responsibilities, were carried out to the highest professional standard. He was always interesting and interested. It was a pleasure to have known him. Don died in Napier, 30 May 2017.

Kath would add that as a schoolgirl she worked with Don at Anapai, Haulashore Island, Tahuanui and Rotokura, and sorting artefacts at his Motupipi home, and that he was an important mentor for her and others who worked with him. Again, he was that rare amateur who was very aware of the best and new ways of doing archaeology.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank especially Joy Millar, Chrissy Richards and Sandy Millar for help with this obituary. Thanks also to Cathy Barr, Roger Fyfe, Garry Law and, also especially, Kath Prickett.

Nigel Prickett

Don Millar Publications

- 1964 Preliminary report on an Archaic site at Tahunanui – Nelson. *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter* 7(3): 120-123.
- 1967 Recent archaeological excavations in the northern part of the South Island. *Journal of the Nelson Historical Society* 11(2): 5-12.
- 1971 Excavation of an Archaic site at Tahunanui, S20/2, Nelson. *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter* 14(4): 161-172.
- 1992a Two trolling lure shanks from the East Coast. *Archaeology in New Zealand* 35(2): 121-125.
- 1992b Maori artefacts from Waikawa (Portland Island), Hawke's Bay. Privately published, 36 pages.
- 2002 Nga taonga Maori: North Island east coast, collected by Mr A. Pattison. Privately published, 23 pages.
- 2004 Being in the right place at the right time. 'Digging into History; 50 years of the New Zealand Archaeological Association'. *Archaeology in New Zealand* 47(4): 176-179.
- 2005 Taonga Waipuka: a collection of artefacts mainly from Ocean Beach, Hawke's Bay. Privately published, 17 pages.
- 2007 Des Harris and Don Millar. *Napier's Medicine Makers - a brief history of chemists & druggists who served the town from 1860 to the 1950's*. Ahuriri Publishing, 241 pages.

Other References

- Barr, C. (2011) Nomination for Public Archaeology Award; NZAA conference Havelock North 2011: Mr Don Millar. Unpublished, 2 pages.
- Brooks, E., Walter, R., Jacomb, C. (2011) History of excavations at Wairau Bar. *Records of the Canterbury Museum* 25: 13-58.
- Butts, D. (1978) Rotokura: an archaeological site in Tasman Bay. *Journal of the Nelson Historical Society* 3 (4): 4-17.
- Eyles, J. (2007) *Wairau Bar Moa Hunter; the Jim Eyles story*. River Press, Dunedin.
- Scarlett, R. (1982) Archaeology on a shoe-string: excavations at Heaphy River mouth 1961-1963. *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter* 25(3): 180-182.
- Wilkes, O., Scarlett, R. (1967) Excavation of a moa-hunter site at the mouth of the Heaphy River. *Records of the Canterbury Museum* 8(3): 181-212.
- Wilkes, O., Scarlett, R., Boraman, G. (1963) Two moa-hunter sites in north-west Nelson. *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter* 6(2): 88-93.

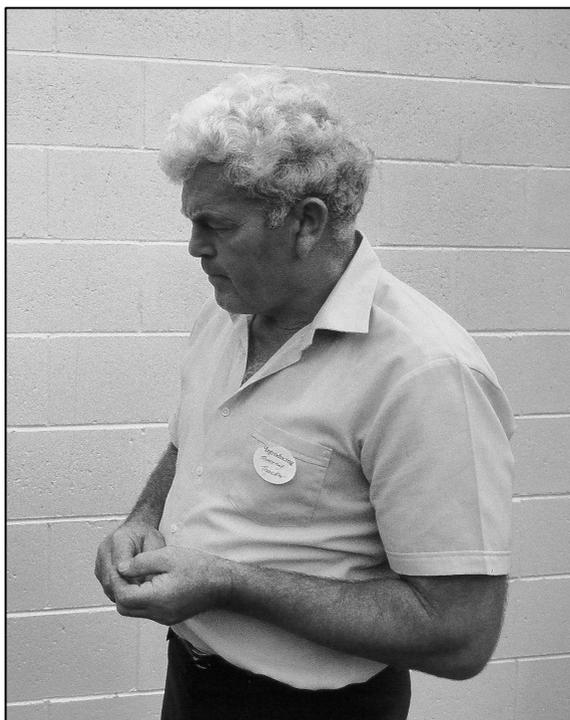
Obituary

Murray Thacker QSM (1933 to 2017)

Murray was a young fossicker in isolated Okains Bay before learning that there was a scientific way of excavating. In his first publication in our newsletter (Thacker 1960 'Excavations at Pa Bay, Banks Peninsula' *NZAA Newsletter* 4(1): 8-12) he began with the following words: 'Firstly, I would like to make known my desire to someday form a Public Museum here at Okains Bay: and excavations at Pa Bay are carried on with this in mind.' He wrote that along with members of his family and others he had been digging at the village site at Pa Bay for the last five years. He followed through and gifted his museum and collections to the Nation. For this he was awarded a Queens Service Medal in the New Year's honours list for 1977.

*Murray Thacker
(Michael Trotter).*

Murray Thacker is Okains Bay. All eight great-grandparents had been early settlers in the Bay. He grew up there and attended



the local school. As he himself said, WW2 was a great time to live in the Bay. All the young men were away and their tasks taken by older men who did things the old way. It was from such people that young Murray learned his pioneering skills. After his formal education finished, as a boarder at Christchurch Boys High School, he trained as a blacksmith, soon returning to Okains to manage his own farm and develop a very successful Hereford stud.

An old man in nearby Stoney Bay had a fascinating collection of Maori artefacts, and Murray visited him to see and learn about the artefacts. When the old man decided it was time to dispose of his collection he offered them to Murray for £30. Murray tried to give him more but the man refused. The Museum began as his private collection in an old cook-house on his farm, but the collection soon outgrew its premises as Murray fossicked and purchased interesting pieces. In 1968 the old Okains Bay Cheese Factory closed, so Murray purchased that and spent the next 9 years setting up the Museum there. This included the relocation and restoration of many Colonial historic buildings, forging links with Maori crafts people and commissioning the construction of the Whakaata and Pataka and the erection of the Whare Taonga.

Murray is extremely well known and respected in New Zealand for his wealth of knowledge on Maori taonga. He expanded the museum collections through purchases world-wide and his museum will be his testimony. During an expedition on the Whanganui River, he was given the name 'Te Tuhi,' meaning 'The Writer,' and learned to speak Te Reo fluently. He has served on the Board and as the President (1986) of the Christchurch Agriculture and Pastoral Show, on the Board of the New Zealand Antique Arms association, the Canterbury Pilgrims Association and the Board of Trustees of the Canterbury Museum. In 1962 and 1987, on the 100th and the 125th anniversary of the show, he drove a bullock-pulled dray from Okains Bay to the showgrounds.

In 2009 he was honoured by the Canterbury History Foundation with the award of A.C. Rhodes History Medal, which celebrates the work of non-academic historians. Murray has also been a very strong supporter of the local community of Okains Bay. He purchased several properties in the Bay and rented them to suitable families with school age children, thus ensuring the school was viable. He purchased the Bay's general store to ensure it and the postal service was retained.

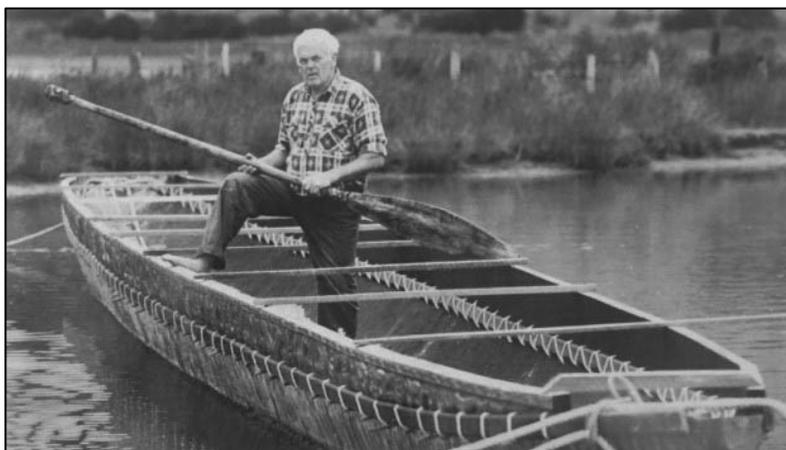
Murray remained a member of NZAA until his death.

John Campbell recalls Murray.

I knew Murray through the NZ Archaeological Association (which I joined in 1971 or 2) and was on the Okains Bay Maori and Colonial Museum Board for some years. In those days it was the venue for the official South Island Waitangi Day celebrations.

Murray was unique. His can-do attitude was emphasised to me one year when I was at Okains Bay helping prepare for Waitangi Day. Murray wanted to build a few more shelves for the museum. So he, I, Landrover, and trailer headed up the hills where he had harvested a large macrocarpa tree. As a mere mortal, I looked at the log and immediately thought, 'There's no way we are going to get that on the trailer. Murray's can-do attitude was 'We'll just pop this on the trailer.' And we did.

One Waitangi Day he solved the problem of cheapskates sneaking down the west side of the museum to avoid paying. Murray still had the bullock team that, as President of the Canterbury A & P Show, he had used to pull a wagon from Okains Bay to Christchurch. Two of these fearsome-looking, horned-beasts, fenced into the west entrance, deterred all freeloaders. Little did they know these beasts were docile pussies, Murray's pets. The celebrations were the main fundraiser for the museum. Along the west side were colonial settler's buildings that Murray had retrieved from the surrounding hills before they fell down. These included a brick bread oven, and slices of bread sold like hot cakes, even after demand outgrew supply whereupon some came from precooked loaves from bay kitchen ovens. The celebrations included paddling a large waka up the creek at high tide, and feeding the masses via a midday Ngai Tahu hangi. The meat for this had all fallen off the back of Murray's truck. One time I helped prepare the hangi. Trays of the fattiest mutton chops dripping in grease served as the crew's pre-dawn breakfast before preparation began.



Murray Thacker standing in a waka (supplied by John Campbell).

Being on the Museum Board wasn't a white-collar job. I was one of Murray's assistants during his display of blacksmithing and wheelwrighting. Colonial activities included using hand-flails to thresh cocksfoot sheaves. In woollen trousers tied with bowwangs, I demonstrated this millennia-old skill using my experience that went as far back as about 5 minutes previously. The guests and audience were an eclectic slice of humanity. One of my favourite remembrances was the ludicrousness of the official government rep, the commander of the Canterbury RNZNVR, having morning tea and a chat with the well-turned out, red-tunic clad, commander, of Alf's Imperial Army. Many a defence of Queen and Country was fought at Okains Bay on Waitangi Day, off course stopping for tea.

Murray's achievements, which included speaking Maori fluently and embracing both cultures, will see his Mana grow as time passes.

Helen Leach recalls Murray.

Back in 1977 I put together the nomination for a NZ decoration for Murray, after he gave the museum and collections to the nation. Later we saw each other when the fate of the Williams' cottage in Robinsons Bay was under discussion in the 1990s. Murray sold it to my late relative John Fernyhough who funded its restoration. It is now known as the Pavitt Cottage and is run by a family trust. The 2001 Annual Conference of NZAA was held at Akaroa, with a field trip to Okains Bay. Murray had the blacksmith's shop up and running and demonstrated his skills at the forge. He encouraged some of the conference visitors to have a go. That was typical of Murray who believed that learning was enhanced by practical experience. Murray was a unique person, and it was a pleasure to know him.

John Campbell