



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Following the Annual General Meeting of the N.Z.A.A. the following officers were elected for the ensuing year.

President: Dr. G. Blake-Palmer, Wellington.
 Immediate Past President: Dr. Roger Green, Auckland University.
 Secretary: Mr. Michael Hitchings, Alexander Turnbull Library.
 Treasurer: Mr. D.W. Robinson, P.O. Box 154, Hawera.
 Vice-Presidents: Mr. R.A.L. Batley, Taihape.
 Mr. F.W. Shawcross, Auckland University.
 Council: Mr. R.R. Cater, Wellington.
 Miss. J. Davidson, Auckland.
 Dr. R.S. Duff, Canterbury Museum.
 Mr. L.M. Groube, Otago University.
 Mr. R.J. Scarlett, Canterbury Museum.
 Mr. D. Simmons, Otago Museum.

The Council of the N.Z.A.A. re-appointed Dr. A.G. Buist as Editor of the Newsletter and Mr. John Daniels (Wellington) as central file keeper for the Association's site records scheme. Mr. Daniels reported that in the past year the number of recorded sites has risen from 928 to 1623.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE N.Z. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
DR. G. BLAKE-PALMER.

During the past year Council has been very much concerned with the increasing urgency of problems relating to archaeological sites, some of very great importance, in the cultural heritage of the country, threatened by a variety of causes. Among more pressing occasions for concern are the rapid spread of urbanisation, particularly in the Tamaki isthmus, the requirements of municipal water supply undertakings and new roading and airfield projects; concern also arises from consequential effects of hydro-electric development schemes and current practices in farming operations, particularly as these may involve the levelling of important earthworks without any opportunity of prior investigation of the site in question.

The present pattern of development in so many diverse fields has brought about a situation in which it is, at present, beyond the capacity of the few professionally qualified archaeologists and amateurs with sufficient experience to direct salvage operations in New Zealand, to cover any but the most urgent of the many threatened sites. To meet the immediate priorities the N.Z.A.A. Council has encouraged all archaeological societies affiliated with the Association to concentrate their site recording programme in areas where there are the greatest immediate threats. During this year there have also been consultations with the National Historic Places Trust to whom the N.Z.A.A. Council acts in an advisory capacity in regard to any question of archaeological concern. The National Historic Places Trust has itself directly assisted in "salvage" excavations as in the case of Paremata by way of grant in aid without which the work could not have been undertaken within the time limits imposed by the impending destruction. Similar assistance has been given in the Auckland area by the Mt. Roskill Borough Council and Mt. Wellington Domain Board. These examples are, unfortunately, the exceptions. Yet in the Auckland area alone archaeological work undertaken by the Archaeological Society have involved that group in a direct expenditure of some £1,500 which, if labour given by members were costed, would have in all amounted to an equivalent of £11,150.

In New Zealand the time has already arrived and indeed in some cases is overdue for arousing greater awareness of responsibility towards archaeological sites of importance particularly those which are facing imminent destruction in the course of developmental work.

During his recent visit to New Zealand Professor Grahame Clark, Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge discussed this problem with several members of N.Z.A.A. Council. Professor Clark pointed out that in England, the United States and many European, Asian and African countries, on both sides of the so-called Iron Curtain, there is already established a principle whereby the actual agencies of destruction of archaeological sites have a responsibility to ensure that there is at least adequate recording and where practicable salvage excavation work undertaken before the site in question is destroyed. These obligations applied initially only to the more important archaeological sites. However, so rapid has been the spread of enlightenment in recent years that it is becoming not uncommon for an archaeological assessment to be made of any areas threatened by major engineering, re-afforestation, or other development works prior to the actual commencement of works operations. This allows sufficient time for assessment and decision as to what further work, if any, should be undertaken apart from recording. One simple way in which the "agents of destruction" can effectively assist is in the provision of labour to enable a qualified archaeologist to carry out salvage or more extensive excavation in the threatened area. A further step would be the appointment of Archaeologists to the staff of Ministry of Works as in U.K.

In recent years there has been a welcome and much greater awareness of the urgency of this problem within Government Departments such as Works, Lands and Survey, and also on the part of some local authorities and the time would seem opportune for a more formal approach to the examination of the more immediate threats to New Zealand's cultural heritage.

The N.Z.A.A. publishes a regular quarterly newsletter devoted to the publication of current work in New Zealand related to archaeology. This newsletter has a fairly substantial circulation to overseas libraries. So great has been the demand for complete issues that some of the earlier numbers have recently been reprinted to satisfy this. In maintaining the standard of this quarterly newsletter a considerable strain has been placed on the financial resources of the Association. Apart from past assistance with the printing of a few numbers, the full cost of production has to be met by the Association, which may well have to seek some assistance if the present standard of publication is to be maintained.

It could well be said that similar considerations apply to the site recording scheme which is entirely financed by the Association and supported by the voluntary work of members. In relation to the size of the membership, work undertaken by the Association bears most favourable comparison with that of many of the older established archaeological societies overseas.

The recording and publication of much of the work now being done requires greater financial resources than those at present at the Association's command. The Council's immediate intention is to seek modest additional revenue to cover this publication account.

NOTES

A Visitor:

Professor Grahame Clark, as noted by our President, was here as a visiting

professor at the University of Otago during the first term of this academic year. We congratulate Mr. Peter Gathercole, the Head of the Anthropology Department, for arranging this and also the University of Otago and its benefactors who make such visits possible. Professor Clark was able to come to Auckland, before he returned to Britain, and gave us a lecture on "The Earliest Farmers in Europe", a subject to which his own excavations at Nea Nikomedeia in Macedonia are currently adding fresh evidence. In the theme of this lecture lies the basis of European Civilisation, but there were technical aspects of the lecture which had bearings upon our own Archaeology. Professor Clark described the considerable successes achieved where Archaeologists have worked together with specialists in the various Natural Sciences and though this, perhaps, reflects an ideal and far from common state of affairs, even in Europe, it indicates clearly where the future of Archaeology lies. Jack Golson made a significant step towards this when he organized the contributions of New Zealand Natural Scientists, published as the Proceedings of the New Zealand Archaeological Society in Volume 15 of the New Zealand Science Review. Another interesting point which Professor Clark raised in his lecture was the emphasis of recent European Archaeology upon the excavation of sufficiently large areas of Prehistoric sites to provide valid evidence for the form of the settlements.

Conservation:

During the past years interest has developed in various aspects of this many sided subject. On the one hand a great deal of valuable energy is going into attempts to solve the problem of the conservation of our field monuments and on the other hand we are also beginning to be aware of the need for an improvement in the conservation of portable artefacts. For instance, Mr. Bruce Palmer, after attending a course on Conservation at the International Centre for the study of the Preservation and Protection of Cultural Property at Rome, made recommendations to the Art Galleries and Museums Association for a National Conservation Studio. While we, at Auckland, have been attempting to tackle some of the practical problems of conservation in connection with the waterlogged woodwork found in the swamp at Kauri Point. The available literature in the English language on this aspect of conservation had so far not provided a good solution, which was frustrating in view of the known activity and successes of the Scandinavians, as witnessed by the preservation of a complete wooden battleship, the Vasa. However, after some initial tests with a variety of methods, which were met with mixed success, we were able to send off a small sample of woodwork to our former colleague Mr. W. Ambrose, who has been working at the London Institute of Archaeology. Then came the arrival, it now seems providential, of a Danish Archaeologist, Mr. Jan Hjørnø, who took over the Kauri Point material without hesitation and saved for us all that could be saved of this remarkable assemblage. Mr. Hjørnø did this work in his own time while supporting himself for four months in various labouring and factory jobs. But we are pleased to be able to conclude this with the news that his own skill and techniques are now being employed to their best advantage in the Otago Museum.

Publications:

This year we are beginning to see the fruits of a number of years of Archaeological research in the form of publications. Dr. Green's "A Review of the Prehistoric Sequence of the Auckland Province" appeared early in the year and is available to members of the Association at a reduced rate from Mr. John Daniels, P.O. Box 3382, Wellington.

A second publication which will shortly be available is Dr. A.G. Buist's "Archaeology of North Taranaki". This too will be available to members at a reduced

rate, but for a limited time only, and will be available from our Treasurer, Mr. D.W. Robinson.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN WESTERN SAMOA

R.C. Green

Introduction

As their part in a three year programme of research in Polynesian prehistory outlined by archaeologists at the Tenth Pacific Science Congress (Green 1961), New Zealand based participants agreed to carry out investigations in Pitcairn and the Chatham, Cook and Samoan Island groups. That New Zealand archaeologists are fulfilling these tasks is indicated by the University of Otago expedition to Pitcairn led by Mr. P.W. Gathercole, the Otago Museum expedition to the Chatham Islands led by Mr. D.R. Simmons, the Canterbury Museum expeditions to the Cook Islands led by Dr. Roger Duff, and the University of Auckland expedition to Western Samoa led by the author. All have occurred within the 1962-64 period; the funds and equipment for the research being derived in part from local New Zealand sources through the two Departments of Anthropology, the Canterbury and Otago Museums and the National Historic Places Trust, and in part from a major grant by the National Science Foundation of the United States to the Bernice P. Bishop Museum for work in Pitcairn, the Cooks, Samoa and the Society Islands (Emory 1962).

The investigations in Western Samoa covered a period of seven months from December 1963 through June of 1964. Operations over the entire period were directed by six people, each for different shorter but overlapping periods, so that overall continuity of the programme was maintained. The expedition daily employed between six and more than thirty Samoan labourers in one or more crews at various times and places. While in Samoa we enjoyed the co-operation and assistance of both the Western Samoan Government and its departments and the direct assistance of the Western Samoan Trust Estates Corporation. To them, and in particular to their representatives, Mr. E. Stehlin and Mr. P.W.H. Kelly, we owe a special vote of thanks. For their goodwill toward our endeavours we owe a debt of gratitude to many of the people of Samoa.

Investigations

The focus of the investigations were the mounds at Vailele, some three miles along the coast east of Apia. Originally cut into by bulldozers, they were investigated and reported on by Mr. J. Golson in 1957 and inspected by the author in 1960. The recent excavations at Vailele continued throughout a six month period and included a site survey of all mounds in the area. This was designed to relate the mounds being excavated to others in the locality recorded by Thomson (1927), Freeman (1944) and Golson (1957). All other projects were carried out concurrently with the Vailele project for shorter periods of time as personnel and circumstances permitted.

In 1957 Golson undertook a brief test excavation covering 120 square feet in the interior of a large earthen mound at Vailele of rounded rectangular form, about six feet in depth and 120 by 170 feet in size. The mound had already been cut into by a bulldozer for fill needed in a nearby stockyard, and this had exposed a set of neatly stratified occupation layers. In the lowest habitation layer Golson encountered the first pottery to be reported from Samoa. Three charcoal samples from this layer were later radiocarbon dated to the 1st century A.D. (Golson 1962:175). The nature of the