



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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/>.

This has resulted in large flakes of the soft friable limestone being broken off as the plaster was removed, completely destroying some of the spirals and damaging others to the extent that the lines can only just be traced (photographs of the design before and after damage are held at the Canterbury Museum). Quite apart from this not being a suitable way to make a cast (it is not possible to get an accurate positive from it), the rough handling is deplorable, and clearly demonstrates the necessity of preventing untrained personnel attempting to investigate pre-historic sites without supervision.

Several square yards of ground adjacent to the rock face have been dug, thus also destroying any underground archaeological evidence relating to the carving, and a few artifacts (haematite and flakes) were left lying in the diggers spoil.

In the illustration herewith (based on a recent Canterbury Museum photograph and an earlier charcoal sketch by the writer) the dashes indicate parts of the carving destroyed while the stippling shows how it now appears.

PRACTICAL USES OF DITCH-AND-BANK FENCES IN THE
AUCKLAND DISTRICT

J.T. Diamond

While working on farms at Pukekawa near Tuakau, Henderson Valley near Auckland and Awhitu on the southern side of the Manukau Harbour, I saw ditch and ditches and bank in association with hedges and post and rail fences. (Smart 1966:19) Curiosity prompted me to discuss with the farmers its relative merits and these notes summarise the information obtained.

I found that the ditch-and-bank could be used in the following ways:-

1. With gorse hedges for subdivision. Pukekawa and Henderson.
2. With post and rail fences. Awhitu and Henderson districts.
3. With a boxthorn hedge for subdivision. Awhitu.

The advantages of the ditch or ditches and bank in category 1. are as follows:-

A. To provide an effective fence on its own, the gorse must grow right down to ground level. In seeking shelter from the elements, animals will push up hard against the base of the bushes and so tend to damage the lower branches, thus leaving openings in the hedge through which lambs, pigs, sheep and calves can escape especially when being rounded up. The bank helped to preclude the possibility of damage, and any openings in the hedge above the bank were harder to see and reach by the smaller animals. Also the bank presented a solid face and while I have seen lambs and pigs crash through a wire fence - not mesh - I have not seen them successfully escape through a fence consisting of a ditch-and-bank surmounted by a properly maintained gorse hedge.

B. The ditch or ditches acted as a drain for surface water as well as supplying earth for the bank and in places where hedges were being established across grass paddocks, the grass sods were used to turf the sides of the banks otherwise grass was grown on the banks to hold them together. I saw deep ditches on only two farms. These had reached a depth of nearly two feet but were caused by surface water gouging out the ditch. In one ditch stones were used to reduce the speed of the flow and in the other fascines consisting of bundles of teatree had been laid along the bottom to protect it from scouring. In no instance were the ditches meant to act as drains to carry off water from springs etc.

In category 2, a ditch-and-bank was used in conjunction with a post and rail fence in order to prevent small animals from escaping. In holding paddocks for sheep and pigs a bank would be built up and the post and rail fence erected above it. The reasons given in 1.A also apply in this instance. It was difficult as well as expensive to fit rails close enough together so that lambs and piglets could not escape between them, so in the larger paddocks the bank was used to eliminate low level gaps.

Category 3 refers to a boxthorn shelter belt that I saw at Awhitu. This had been grown on a bank with a ditch on either side. The boxthorn had spread to a width of over 20 feet and definite evidence of the ditches and bank could be seen up the centre line of the hedge.

To date I have not seen or been told of ditch-and-bank of the type under discussion being used in conjunction with Maori occupation. Enquiries established that the ditch or ditches and bank in conjunction with a hedge or post and rail fence was introduced by the first European settlers for boundary and subdivision fences as well as for fences enclosing holding paddocks, orchards, gardens, and homesteads.