



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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PRELIMINARY REPORT AND CARBON 14 DATINGS ON SITE N44/69,  
HOT WATER BEACH, COROMANDEL

Anne Leahy

Early in 1969 Mrs McCartney of Hamilton drew the attention of the Auckland Museum to a site at Hot Water Beach. She had found artifactual material protruding from the dunes near the beach access road. She investigated the area and established that the material was coming from a black greasy charcoal layer and below that a yellow sand layer. Amongst the material recovered was a bone reel and a side-hafted adze.

In July 1969 Janet Davidson, Mrs McCartney and I spent a day at the site and put down a trial excavation. Five layers were established:

1. Recent blown sand and soil.
2. A two-inch firm black charcoal layer.
3. A thick layer of yellow-grey sand containing a few shells.
4. A two to six-inch layer of black greasy charcoal sand containing artifacts, bone and shell.
5. A layer of loose clean sand containing artifacts and midden material.

In August 1969, a group, under the auspices of the Auckland Museum, spent a week there. Five three-metre squares were completely or partially excavated.

All material was sieved through a 1/3rd-inch sieve and the contents bagged for analysis. Layers 4 and 5 were the main artifactual layers and all the material seemed to be Archaic in type. Of particular interest was a large stone 'reel' found in Layer 5 together with a long flat piece of stone which appeared to have been used as a file. Extinct fauna was represented by industrial moa bone, including Dinornis and Euryaptery species and bones of an extinct coot.

Charcoal from a haangi in Square M 11, Layer 4, was forwarded to the Institute of Nuclear Sciences for dating, together with a sample of the black greasy layer in which the haangi was situated. The laboratory separated the charcoal from the grease in the latter sample and tested the two substances separately.

1. Haangi Square M 11, Layer 4  
R2678/6  
421 ± 40 B.P. = 1529 A.D. ± 40 N.Z. 1169
  
- 2a. Soil containing charcoal Square M 11, Layer 4  
R2678/7(A)  
484 ± 79 B.P. = 1446 A.D. ± 79 N.Z. 1170
  
- 2b. Grease Square M 11, Layer 4  
R2678/7(B)  
177 ± 77 B.P. = 1773 A.D. ± 77 N.Z. 1171

For the charcoal samples an approximate age of about 1500 A.D. would seem reasonable. The 1773 date is more puzzling considering that the greasy substance appeared to be part of the same layer as the charcoal flecked soil.

Layer 5 would have been deposited at a date earlier than 1500 A.D. and as it appeared to be associated with grey black pumice, possibly Loiselles pumice, it would seem to have been built up between 1300 and 1500 A.D., giving a median date of 1400 A.D.

The site appears to belong to a late stage of the Archaic phase, New Zealand Eastern Polynesian culture, on the Coromandel Peninsula.