



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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by burning. We found ample evidence in support of this. Tradition says the Ngati Mamoe came from the East Coast of the North Island. We found they possessed a typical North Island material culture, and were still making a typical East Coast fish-hook. The traditional date for the destruction of Pari Whakatau is C.1650 A.D. The C.14 date is 1636 + 60 A.D.

New Zealand archaeology cannot confirm names of people, but it can confirm the events in which tradition says they were involved.

On the Monday of Labour weekend we paid a visit to a farm at Goose Bay, where a midden discovered during gardening is yielding interesting material, adzes, fish-hooks, moa bone, including a large worked tab (apparently derived from a sub-fossil source), quartzite knives, sinkers, etc. I hope, later, to make a full report on this material.

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QUARTZITE

by Rhys E. Griffiths

In "NEWSLETTER" of the N.Z. Archaeological Association, Vol. 3, No. 1, December 1959, under the title of "Some Random Thoughts", I referred to the discovery in the Oxford district, near Christchurch, of outcrops of quartzite. It was also pointed out that, previously, the generally held belief as to the origin of this material as a stone of economic worth to the Maori had been the McKenzie Country.

Opportunity came in August of this year (1960) to examine in some detail the Oxford outcrops. At that time, I was in charge of some two dozen Stage II Geography students doing field work in the area. They were asked to note outcrops found, and to bring samples back to camp, together with a grid reference which would pinpoint the locality. On the basis of my previous discovery of the year before, it was possible to suggest where outcrops could occur. Specimens of quartzite were shown to the group, and its characteristics pointed out.

Each evening, samples collected during the day were handed in, and it soon became possible to plot the distribution and to see where the outcrops occurred. At this stage, I inspected the localities and collected a range of hand specimens over the full length of the outcrops, a distance of one and a half miles approximately. Grid references for the two extremities of the line of outcrops from Sheet S75 of the New Zealand Provisional One Mile Series are 498878 and 486863.

The area in which they occur is one of low rounded hills, previously bush covered, but now mainly under grass, tussock and small remnants of bush, mainly in gully heads. It lies between the inner edge of the Canterbury Plains and the slopes of Mount Oxford. In places on the summits are bare outcrops of basalt. In other places, but also on the summit flat blocks of basalt varying in thickness from an inch upwards are scattered about on the surface. This stone is very fine-grained, tough, and distinctively blue on fresh surfaces. I would regard it as a high-quality stone.

The quartzite is found on the tops of these hills, in association with the basalt, in a discontinuous line from north-east to south-west. I traversed the line from one end to the other and found that the quality of the stone fell off quite rapidly from the south-western end. The range of samples collected shows this deterioration in quality rather well. At the south-western end, the quartzite is a rough, resistant stone, with the typically conchoidal fracture and breaking to produce a razor-like edge. The stone is free of flaws, of even texture and unaffected to any visible degree by weathering on exposed surfaces. At the north-eastern end the sample was poorly fused and individual tiny quartz grains, some almost of pebble size were visible in the specimen. The edge was prone to crumble under moderate pressure, and the outcrops themselves were considerably weathered.

It is obvious that this locality is capable of supplying quartzite flakes of very high quality. But, the question still remains unanswered, as to whether it did or not. This needs further examination. In one place, I discovered a small pile of conchoidal flakes, plainly taken from a larger block. These could hardly have occurred naturally, but whether they were produced by the Maori could not be shown. And there, I thought, is where the matter ends.

But one student reported finding an adze-shaped piece of basalt, and by good fortune had brought it in. It had been picked up close to an outcrop of quartzite. In my opinion, this is an adze in the process of being made. Traces of polishing are clearly discernible, and the characteristic sub-parallel scratches associated with rough initial polishing are quite unmistakable. Along the edges are the scars made by flaking, and along the cutting edge, the basalt has been partly ground. Admittedly, it is not a complete adze but I would submit that it is evidence of Maori work. In this one locality, then, are two kinds of stone important to the Maori. It seems to me that finds like these are every bit as important as finding the finished product produced from these raw materials in some other place where occupation can be shown to have occurred.

Out of these finds then arose the question as to whether quartzite flakes could be accurately associated with outcrops in different parts of the country. This is certainly rather more difficult. But an examination of flakes collected by von Haast from a site at the Rakaia River mouth in 1870 shows that this should be possible. The quartzite in these flakes seems different in colour and texture from the Oxford quartzite, and suggests a different source. It remains now to find flakes that closely resemble, or better still, exactly resemble the original Oxford stone in an occupied site to allow a reasonably safe assumption that this area has indeed been a source area for quartzite.

EXCAVATIONS at PA BAY, BANKS PENINSULA

By M. Thacker

Firstly, I would like to make known my desire to some day form a Public Museum here at Okain's Bay: and excavations at Pa Bay are carried on with this in mind.