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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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RADIOCARBON DATE FOR NIUE ISLAND

Lawrence and Helen Birks

The following radiocarbon date has been received from the Nuclear Research Institute, Wellington, through Professor J. Golson, Australian National University. Though the sample providing the date was collected in June 1959 and submitted for analysis shortly thereafter, various adverse circumstances have combined to prevent earlier publication.

<u>CODE NO.</u>	<u>SAMPLE</u>	<u>AGE B.P.</u> (Years before 1950)
N.Z. 729	Shell from 12-24 ins. from surface of mound	1830 ± 40

The sample was obtained during the brief stay in port of a ship visiting Niue Island. Through the kindness of a local resident with whom prior arrangements had been made, an inspection was carried out at the site of a mound in the grounds of Matalave School, Tuapa village, about 7 miles from the port of Alofi. The mound had been largely levelled during the previous year in the course of developing the school grounds, so that its original height and area could not be established. However, the fact that it contained material such as coral rock fragments, shell, charcoal and ash, suggested that it was at least partly artificial and composed largely of habitation refuse. No information was available regarding its origin, though our informant stated that other mounds on Niue Island were the site of "pagan festivals" in pre-European times.

The sample was recovered from an undisturbed area near what had apparently been the western extremity of the mound. Information regarding artifactual material noted when the mound was levelled referred to several small stone adzes and to coconut-graters of shell, one of which was presented to the writers at the time of their visit. No potsherds were recovered.

As far as the writers are aware, this is the first radiocarbon date from Niue Island.