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RADIOCARBON DATES FROM HAMLINS HILL (N42/137)

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Since 1969 there have been a number of excavations on the lower knoll at Hamlins Hill (Davidson, 1970; Irwin, 1975; Pearce, 1975, 1977; Walton, 1979; Nichol, 1980). Dwellings, storage pits, and cooking and dumping areas have been uncovered. The relative spatial arrangement of the various types of features changed through time but the site was probably occupied, either continuously or with only short breaks, over a limited time period (Pearce, 1977:93). Comparison with sites of known age suggested an antiquity of anywhere between 1500-1800 A.D. was possible.

Two radiocarbon dates have recently been processed by the Institute of Nuclear Sciences, D.S.I.R., and provide a somewhat better age estimate for occupation of the site. The results are:

NZ5962	charcoal	A 415±75	(Old T $\frac{1}{2}$ )
		B 427±77	(New T $\frac{1}{2}$ )
NZ6156	shell	A 330±42	(Old T $\frac{1}{2}$ )
		B 340±45	(New T $\frac{1}{2}$ )

NZ5962 is on charcoal from a charcoal-rich layer just above the floor in the fill of Pit K (Pit J in Nichol, 1980). The date is thus for an event that postdates, but is probably close in time to, the use of the pit. The charcoal has been identified as belonging mostly to a Coprosma species but with a Metrosideros species and a Podocarpus species also present in small amounts. The inbuilt age is negligible with Coprosma species as they have relatively short life spans. The charcoal was identified by B. Molloy, Botany Division, D.S.I.R.

NZ6156 is on Paphies australe from the midden in the south-west quadrant of Square 4 (Davidson, 1970). The deposition of this midden is stratigraphically a late event in the occupation of the lower knoll.

The two dates can be related stratigraphically because of the presence of a stockade or fence that extends some distance across the site. The postholes of the fence have been identified in the top of the fill of Pit K and also underlying the midden. NZ5962 is, therefore, stratigraphically earlier than NZ6156. Known and probable relationships between the various features are shown in Figure 1. The most favoured interpretation of the results is that most of the occupation dates to somewhere between 1400-1700 A.D. (Fig. 2).

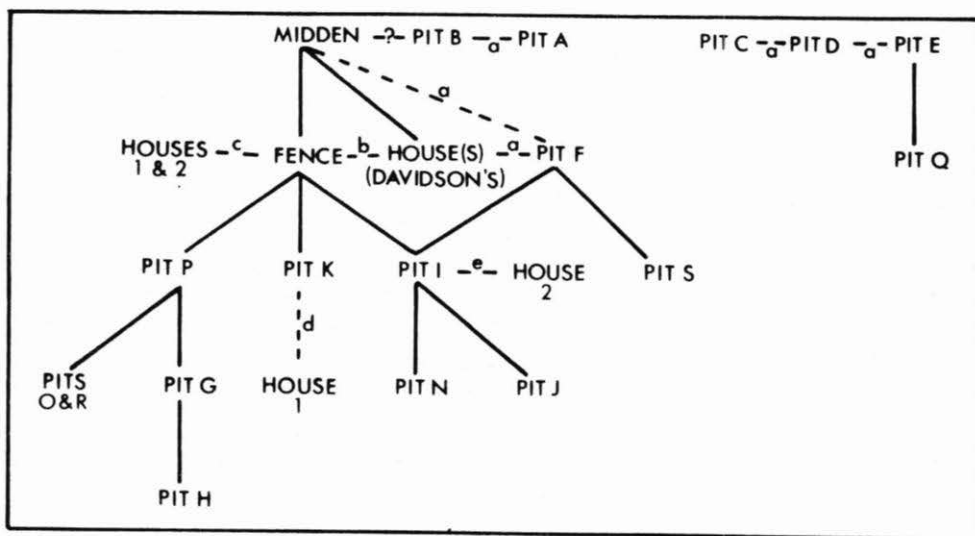


FIGURE 1. Diagram showing relationships between various excavated features. Horizontal lines linking features show contemporaneity; vertical or diagonal lines indicate that the lower feature of the two is the older. No lines indicate that no relationship has been established. Stratigraphic relationship is indicated by a solid line; inferred relationship by a dashed line, with a - Davidson, 1970:120; b - Irwin, 1975:54; c - Pearce, 1977: 80-81; d - Nichol, 1980:221; e - Nichol, 1980:223. Stone-covered drains are contemporary with pits E, P and Q.

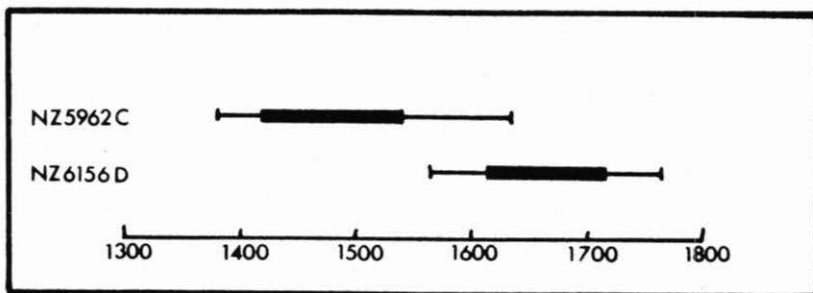


FIGURE 2. Age estimates of radiocarbon dates from Hamlins Hill. Two standard deviations (95% confidence level); corrections and calibrations after McFadgen (1982).

Acknowledgements

The Paphies australe shells were from a midden sample (AR 2745) collected by Janet Davidson and held by Auckland Museum.

References

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