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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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RADIOCARBON DATES FROM OKAU EXCAVATION - WAIRARAPA

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Radiocarbon dates have been received from the Institute of Nuclear Sciences, D.S.I.R., Lower Hutt, for samples collected from the Okau excavation site, N159/18. The site is a coastal terrace occupation site 9km north of Castlepoint.

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Dating material</u>	<u>Age Old T$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	<u>Age New T$\frac{1}{2}$</u>
NZ4720	<u>Melagraphia lugubris</u>	295 \pm 34	304 \pm 35
NZ4721	<u>Turbo smaragdus</u>	265 \pm 34	273 \pm 35
NZ4722	Charcoal, twigs, bark	224 \pm 56	230 \pm 58

The new half life corrected for secular effect age for NZ4722 is 304 \pm 68. The three samples submitted for dating were collected as part of an excavation study. A full excavation report was supplied to Historic Places Trust as required by Historic Places Trust excavation permit number 1976/11.

The samples were associated with one period of occupation of a terrace site from remains of a cooking fire and cooking activity. Two different species were selected from the same layer. Separate samples of mainly whole Melagraphia lugubris and Turbo smaragdus shells were collected. Samples collected were lying on top of burned stones of an open cooking fire, Layer 2a, excavation square J3a.

The charcoal sample consisted of small pieces of charcoal from twigs, branchlets, bark and small pieces of charcoal collected from immediately below the burned stone layer. Sample dates last use of this cooking fire.