



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

REVIEWS

Kevin L. Jones, 2007. *The Penguin Field Guide to New Zealand Archaeology*. Penguin Books, Auckland. 262 pp., figs, bib. Paper. \$39.95.

Nigel Prickett

Kevin Jones and Penguin Books are to be congratulated on the production of our first wide-ranging field guide to New Zealand archaeology. This is a book that spreads the word that our history is written in the landscape and that New Zealand, so often described as a ‘young country’, has a rich archaeological heritage. It does so by introducing more than 100 sites, how to find them, what to see there and the stories they tell.

The first of two main parts of the book begins with a (very) brief outline on the subject matter of New Zealand archaeology. It goes on to look at the kinds of sites or archaeological features covered, under Pre-European Maori sites, Maori and European historic period sites and industrial archaeology. Maori pa, pits, gardens, house floors, terraces, drains, ovens, middens, stone quarries, rock art and wetland sites are discussed. Among historic period sites the emphasis is on 19th century military works, with only a brief mention of other sites which tell the stories of economic, social and technological change in the past 200 years. It is not easy fitting in all that might be said on the many subjects of New Zealand archaeology.

The second, main, part introduces particular sites or localities to visit in seven North Island and four South Island regions. Nearly half the sites are pa, which is probably only fair given their visibility and often significant stories. Localities or topics where several sites are covered include Rangihoua (Bay of Islands), Motukorea (Brown’s Island), Motutapu Island, Papamoa near Tauranga, Pukerangiora in Taranaki, the Makotukutuku valley (Palliser Bay), Kaikoura Peninsula, West Coast coal mining sites, South Canterbury rock art and the Central Otago gold mining landscape.

A strength of the book is the many colour photos taken by the author. Most are aerial views which besides so often being the best way of showing sites and their settings also provide a benchmark for the landscape change currently impacting on so much of our archaeology. But is it necessary to label nearly every picture ‘oblique aerial photograph’? Surely, where a view’s direction is given (from the west etc.) it must be oblique.

I know from my 'Landscapes of Conflict' that it is hard to cover such a range of material without sometimes getting it wrong. In the present book, the 'Auckland Institute and Museum' has not existed since 1997 (p. 11). The so-called 'New Zealand redoubt' did not have bastion defences only at two opposite corners but specifically at all four corners each covering one side (p. 56). The 1846 war in Wellington did not extend to the Wairarapa (p. 54). Woodall's Redoubt near Wanganui was a British Army work not colonial (p. 55). Janet Leatherby is a New Zealander, not English (p. 84), and with Englishman Peter Morgan did some of our best archaeological mapping, much of it regrettably unpublished. The manaia in Maori carving is one side of a human face, not a 'bird-like monster' (p. 137).

There is no historical evidence that a trench cutting through pa defences at Pukerangiora was dug by British forces, and really no occasion when this might have happened (p. 164). Alternative suggestions for the interpretation of post-holes at Rakaia River mouth are just that (p. 225). While radiocarbon dates for the Moikau house are arguable (p. 31), this must be on grounds other than any in-built age of wood samples. They were twigs.

There are other things that might simply be done differently. The photograph said to show a 'bulb of percussion' (p. 42) will not show much to the general reader. A drawing would be better. Words such as quincunx (p. 110), igneous (p. 141), assemblages (p. 172), etc. can say more than most readers will know or a dictionary will tell. At the very least a definition is required. An index would be useful.

These are minor points in an outstanding production. There are lots of photographs and line drawings, introductions to many wonderful sites and landscapes, and a national coverage. It is the only such work available. There is, of course, room for more. The many field guides to New Zealand natural history now available show how knowledge and interest grow. More books on our archaeology will create a demand for yet more. Meanwhile, everyone who gets this journal will have friends whose interest might be encouraged if this was in their Christmas stocking.