



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

**Middleton, Angela. 2008. *Te Puna – A New Zealand Mission Station*. Springer, New York. ISBN 978-0-387-77620-0. 276 pp, 38 figs., appendix, glossary, references, index. Hard cover. €79.95.**

*Nigel Prickett*

Angela Middleton must be congratulated for having surely broken all records for speed of publication of a Ph.D. thesis in New Zealand archaeology. *Te Puna – A New Zealand Mission Station* reports a thesis submitted to the University of Auckland in 2005. Against such a performance I refuse to say how long it has taken me to publish my thesis from 24 years earlier.

Like all good historical archaeology *Te Puna* balances library and field research. Chapter 1 sets out the context of worldwide evangelical and earlier Christian missions, identified as ‘institutional’ or ‘domestic’ in style and scale. Our missions fall within the latter, from which the author develops a major theme of their presentation of the virtues of hard work, self-sufficiency, cleanliness and monogamous family life to the heathen. The author is especially interested in the role of women in this. It is easy to see how the arrival of such English virtues along with evangelical religion might be an advance guard for more than just Christianity.

Chapter 2 deals with mission history in the Bay of Islands region, and Chapter 3 the particular story of Te Puna. The early years were dominated by Samuel Marsden, not least in condemning the first arrivals in 1814 to the restricted site of Oihi, in the shadow of Rangihoua pa, where there was not enough land and they depended for food on Maori neighbours. This arose from Marsden’s relationships with the chiefs Te Pahi and Ruatara and the importance of Rangihoua Bay to early European shipping. Anxiety from the 1809 sacking of the ‘Boyd’ and killing of its crew had not gone away. The protection of powerful neighbours might be needed.

In 1832 John and Hannah King moved to Te Puna on the other side of Rangihoua where there was a more open site with land for stock and cultivation. The rest of the book is focused on this family, from which a wider story is told. In 1832 there were also missions at Paihia, Kerikeri and Waimate; shipping in the Bay of Islands now by-passed Rangihoua for Kororareka. The King family was at Te Puna until 1874 when the land was sold. In view of criticism of missionaries buying large areas of land before 1840 it would be interesting to learn just how the family obtained the 20,000 acres awarded by the Old Land Claims

Commissioner (p. 108). Doubtless they were helped by the Church Missionary Society's provision of £50 to buy land for the support of each missionary child, the Kings having nine alive in 1840.

The Chapters 4 and 5 report of 2002 excavations at Te Puna begins with a description of the wider Maori and European landscape of Rangihoua Bay. This is excellent, and tells a long history of the place, where archaeology comes into its own. At the mission station, only one building of several shown in historical pictures was located. This is in contrast to Waimate where we have Bambridge's detailed 1843 map (published in Challis 1993:20), and the outstanding 1980s archaeological map of Janet Leatherby and Peter Morgan, which remains unpublished through no fault of their own.

I would have liked more of the Te Puna finds illustrated. They may be shown elsewhere but this is the major report that people will turn to. The interesting point is made (p. 220) that no find actually identifies a mission, nor is there any indication of children although five King children were ten years or under during the Te Puna years (p. 70). Also in this section: a 'pipe' is not of tube form (p. 213) but is a measure of capacity, referring to a cask usually of 105 imperial gallons and equal to four barrels, two hogsheads, or half a tun. An 1897 source gives 57 imperial gallons of port to the hogshead but only 54 of sherry and 46 of claret and Madeira. The missionary order was for a half pipe of port. Failing that, a pipe would do.

Early in the book a point is made that, '...domesticity was central to the evangelizing mission, and to British imperialism' (p. 7). This is followed by a quote identifying 'white men' as the baddies. Thus it was in some trepidation that I reached the discussion and conclusions where this might be expanded upon. Instead, I found a chapter full of interesting conclusions and starting points. From Dietler is borrowed the productive idea of 'cultural entanglements', with expected and unexpected outcomes for both sides in the native/newcomer relationship (p. 224, 226). The Kings arrived in 1814 to bring the gospel to Maori but came to feel at home in Rangihoua Bay. Two children buried at Oihi reinforced a sense of belonging. It is easy now to see missions as an advance guard for white settlement. At the time, the shape of the new New Zealand was hard to predict. Many missionaries wished for British protection or annexation, and at the same time were opposed to an influx of white settlers.

The series 'Contributions to Global Historical Archaeology' suggests *Te Puna* is aimed at an international audience. This can only be good for our historical archaeology, although the price of *ca* NZ\$185 at the time of writing will limit readership in New Zealand, which is a pity. In places I felt that non-New Zealanders needed more help. Maps might locate Hokianga, Puriri, Te Kohanga, Okuratope, etc. Other references too might not mean much to inter-

national readers. American spelling (skepticism, gray, archeology) is used in the text, but ‘archaeology’ is on the cover and in the title. Production standards are generally high, but there are some odd typographical glitches. The pictures are murky, in some cases preventing confirmation of matters referred to in the text. A variety of date formats reflects general indecision among archaeologists. With long experience, historians use day/month/year – e.g. 18 January 1984 – or day/month or month/year as required. This is simple, logical, and looks better without all those numbers falling together (as in January 18 1984). Also, Tasman did not name ‘New Zealand’ (p. 39).

A well developed mission archaeology has arrived suddenly in New Zealand. At the same time the domestic sphere comes into focus in historical archaeology, from what was treated – or rather, not treated – as if an unproblematic and inconsequential background to the important stuff (p. 218). This was anticipated in the 1999 site recording handbook (Walton ed. 1999:77): ‘In the 19th century, women’s work and social roles were in large part confined to the house. Study of the domestic world is therefore central to a balanced account of gender contributions to social and economic life.’ *Te Puna* enlarges the study of New Zealand archaeology. Anyone interested in archaeology of the historic period should read this book.

## References

- Challis, Aidan. 1983. Bedggood buildings, Te Waimate, Bay of Islands: excavations on the site of the blacksmith’s shop, 1986. *NZ Journal of Archaeology* 15: 17-37.
- Walton, Tony (ed.). 1999 Archaeological Site Recording in New Zealand. *New Zealand Archaeological Association Monograph* 23.

**Shiner, Justin. 2008. *Place as Occupational Histories: An investigation of the deflated surface archaeological record of Pine Point and Langwell Stations, Western New South Wales, Australia*. British Archaeological Reports International Series 1763. ISBN 978-1-4073-0252-2. 140 pp. Paperback. £31.**

*Matthew Douglass*

The surface archaeological record is gaining a place of growing prominence in archaeological research the world over. The sheer abundance of surface remains and the spatial extent of their distribution affords easy access to the material residues of past behavioural systems at a scale unavailable to research proceeding through excavation alone. Surface deposits do, however, present a number of contextual challenges that complicate behavioural interpretation. Because of their variable geomorphological histories, surface exposures of

archaeological material positioned across the landscape do not reflect a uniform history, but instead present a patchwork of archaeological accumulations of different age and temporal grain. While researchers studying buried deposits must deal with the same formational complexities, the scale at which surface studies proceed makes the need for chronological control all the more apparent. This book addresses these challenges through a study of surface scatters of flaked stone and associated heat retainer hearths in far western New South Wales, Australia.

Shiner's book is an updated presentation of his 2004 doctoral thesis and represents the latest book length instalment to a growing body of research completed by the Western New South Wales Archaeological Programme (WNSWAP) directed by Simon Holdaway at the University of Auckland. As such the book's objectives are threefold: to present an overview of the formational and chronological complexity of the surface record; to demonstrate the difficulties this poses to analytical approaches aimed at reconstructing quasi contemporaneous settlement/subsistence patterns; and to demonstrate an alternative approach to contextualising and interpreting the surface record through a case study in western New South Wales, Australia.

After an introductory overview of the themes of the book in Chapter One, Chapters Two through Four serve to introduce the reader to the incongruities between the formation of the surface record and the interpretive perspectives commonly used to describe it.

Chapter Two reviews the accumulative process by which the archaeological record is formed and the implications this has for archaeological approaches to the study of past human behaviour. Topics covered include Australian approaches to surface assemblage chronology; archaeological perceptions of time; and the variable structure of the archaeological record, particularly as it relates to temporal resolution and the investigation of behavioural change. Shiner argues that because of its accumulative nature, patterning in the surface archaeological record rarely, if ever, represents the ethnographic time frames featured in many interpretations. He instead contends that their palimpsest nature is most amenable to investigations focused on understanding long term patterning.

Chapter Three presents an overview of Australian approaches to the study of stone tools and assemblage composition. Themes covered in the chapter range from historic trends in artefact typologies and past attempts at the development of chronological sequences to discussions of the emphasis placed on artefact function and stone raw material procurement. Following this overview, Shiner outlines an approach more suited for investigating the long term patterns registered in surface deposits. He advocates an economic

perspective where variation in assemblage composition reflects the interplay between the availability of raw material, artefact discard and occupation intensity and duration. From this perspective assemblage variability is investigated in order to make inferences about the long term place use histories represented at different locations distributed across the landscape.

Chapter Four provides a detailed overview of the landforms and land systems, geomorphological history and contemporary rainfall trends of the case study area and a more generalised overview of the ecology and geology of western New South Wales. Shiner emphasises variation both in terms of environmental/ecological relationships and landscape history in order to highlight the lack of contemporaneity between surface deposits found in different geomorphological contexts and to further argue against the use of current environmental conditions as a direct analogue for the past.

The remaining five chapters of the book serve to outline the operation of the alternative approach to the surface archaeological record that Shiner advocates. In outlining this approach, Shiner includes descriptions of the methodologies and techniques as they are applied within the case study as well as a discussion of results and their implications for understanding the nature of human adaptations within the arid zone.

Chapter Five presents a general overview of the survey and recording methodologies utilized in the study. Topics covered include the selection of the study area, overviews of the individual sampling locations and descriptions of the field methodologies for artefact and micro-geomorphic data recording and hearth excavation.

Chapter Six describes the establishment of occupational chronologies for the study assemblages through an investigation of deflated pit hearth features. Sections include a brief overview of the criteria for hearth selection and excavation followed by individual descriptions for hearths that yielded charcoal in quantities sufficient to obtain age determinations. The resulting hearth chronologies indicate multiple phases of hearth construction over the past two thousand years, punctuated by gaps where hearth construction ceased. These gaps are interpreted as periods of decreased human presence and are offered as a further indication of the dynamic nature of the Aboriginal use of the arid zone. Comparisons are then made with hearth chronologies from a previous WNSWAP study at the Fowlers Gap Arid Zone Research Station. This further serves to highlight gaps in occupation histories and provides a useful overview of the temporal variability in surface age found within the region.

Chapter Seven presents an overview of the stone raw material composition of the study assemblages. The different raw material types, their character-

istics and the location of potential sources are described and the relative proportions of each raw material within the study assemblages are discussed.

Chapters Eight and Nine outline the compositional variability of the Pine Point-Langwell lithic assemblages and draw further comparisons between them and other assemblages previously measured by WNSWAP. Discussion centres on a variety of analytical techniques used to investigate trends in core reduction, flake production and the intensity of secondary edge modification recorded on retouched tools. Comparisons are drawn both between the different assemblages and more generally between differences in the use of the various raw material types (quartz and silcrete) available within the study areas. In general, it was found that higher quality silcrete was used more intensively but that the more abundant quartz dominated assemblages numerically, particularly as distance from sources of silcrete increased.

Shiner further reflects on the meaning of long term patterning in assemblage variability particularly with reference to landscape context. He notes that differences in the availability of water and other resources served to limit the length of occupation in upland contexts, thus diminishing the range of behaviours performed. Creek valley assemblages, on the other hand, had the potential for more sustained occupations and thus afforded the development of a broader range of occupational variability. These generalised observations were not, however, used to argue for consistency in the use of these different portions of the landscape through time. Considerable variation and inconsistency is found in the different measures of reduction presented both within and between assemblages. Shiner argues that this is a reflection of long term variation in the intensity, frequency and duration of the individual occupation episodes that comprise the occupation histories of each study assemblage. That variation persists, particularly in the valley assemblages, indicates that within the majority of assemblages a long term behavioural “uniformity” did not emerge. This is presented as a further indication of discontinuity in the use of place over time.

Chapter Ten concludes the study with a summary of the book’s central themes, an overview of the results of the case study and an extended discussion of the interpretive potential of the long term patterning observed in surface deposits.

*Place as Occupational Histories* provides an outstanding synthesis of the contextual factors affecting the structure of the record and the methodologies developed by the Western New South Wales Archaeological Programme to overcome them. Within the short span of 140 pages Shiner manages to succeed in his goals of addressing problems in the interpretation of surface deposits and offering a serviceable solution by which these problems can be resolved.

His thorough presentation of the accumulative nature of surface deposits and the dynamic conditions of the Australian environment unequivocally lays bare the assumptions underlying settlement pattern approaches as they are applied to Australian surface assemblages. The clear and concise presentation of the alternative approach provides both a thorough justification of the theoretical principles upon which it is founded and an accessible reference to the methodologies and analytical techniques by which it is applied. The organisation of the book is straightforward and a wealth of data relevant to outlining the approach and its interpretive potential are provided in a variety of tables, graphs and maps.

The one criticism I do have of the book is that the target audience is too narrowly focused on Australian archaeologists. While the subject is indeed an Australian case study, the poorly contextualised nature of surface assemblages is not a problem that is unique to Australia, but is instead the norm wherever surface archaeology is practiced. It is therefore unfortunate that Shiner's presentation was not more clearly directed towards a global audience as it provides an easily accessible introduction to a set of principles about which all archaeologists should be made aware.

That being said, the book is well written and certainly presents a handy outline of an approach that can be easily applied in areas outside of Australia. For this reason Shiner's work represents an important reference within the growing body of literature on the surface archaeological record and would be a welcome addition to the libraries of both academic and cultural heritage management archaeologists alike – regardless of their geographic specialisation.