



NEW ZEALAND
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ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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RON'S BABY NOW 40

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It was in March 1957, well before I had set foot in New Zealand, that Ron Scarlett, signing himself as editor, launched the *New Zealand Archaeological Association Newsletter*. The first issue outlined the forthcoming Association conference, its programme and speakers, and carried items about members' doings (including a reference to those of the Auckland University Archaeology Society as "Golson's Gang" -a description that did not rest well with Jack). It ended with a book review by the editor, and in total consisted of four quarto-sized cyclostyled pages. The second issue of six pages, late in 1957, contained summary details of the conference proceedings. All text for that year, and the next, when two more issues of Volume 1 were forthcoming, were in Ron's vintage verbiage. Later, the four issues were reprinted in the folded foolscap size that has characterised production since.

Volume 2 began with the December 1958 issue by Ron, and records my arrival in New Zealand, and announces the inception of a project on obsidian sourcing and dating, a topic which interestingly continues to be a focus of recent research and reportage by the next generation of investigators (Volumes 37, 38, and 39 for 1994-1996).

In March 1959, Ron was promoted to "Editor-in-Chief" and a practice of editors for each issue, drawn from the four main regional centres with supportive university or museum institutional infrastructure (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin) was implemented. This resulted in a certain amount of rivalry over the next several years as to who could produce a more innovative "up-market" issue, beginning with Susan Hirsh [Bulmer]'s 33 page Auckland effort for March 1959, and Terry Barrow's 30 page edited Wellington effort complete with multilith picture plates. His words at the time proved prophetic: "I hope the experiment might foretell the



Ron Scarlett (right) with Jack Golson, Christmas 1957, Sarah's Gully.

day when our "Newsletter", which has become rather more than its name implies, will blossom into an archaeological journal with appropriate format".

Colin Smart, editing issue 4 of Volume 3 (1960) employed the then new technology of offset printing to produce a more readable quality of text and format. Ron's brief "swan-song" as issue editor (and Editor-in-Chief) appeared in the June 1961 issue (Volume 4, No.3). Ron's baby had now become a healthy young child ready for further developments in the world of publication.

Additional reorganisation of the *Newsletter* began in 1962 (Volume 5) with the appointment of Alistair Buist as its overall editor; but with the practice of an occasional issue by a regional editor continuing to Volume 7 (1964). Pages for the Volume were now numbered consecutively, rather than beginning over with each issue. It was in this period that 107 and 80 page Auckland issues appeared. Note that in the last three years Volumes 37 to 39

reached an average of 300 pages, suggesting that 100 page issues are again not too far away, and that what were then seen as "bumper" issues are close to becoming the norm.

In 1965 (Volume 8, No.2) a special issue of "Archaeology in the South Pacific", featuring work in the islands by New Zealand archaeologists was produced, and the "four centres" focus to issues for each Volume finally dropped. The 1966 (Volume 9, No.3) special issue was on "Salvage archaeology and site protection in New Zealand". A first index to items appearing in Volumes 1 to 9 of the *Newsletter* is found in Volume 10(2), 1967. Under Buist's guidance, in a short six years, the healthy child had grown into an exceptionally robust youngster and a main source for archaeological work being done in Aotearoa, and to some extent the South Pacific, by New Zealand based archaeologists.

Alistair Buist's steady hand in editing, production, distribution, and building-up of institutional subscriptions extended to 17 years and some 68 issues and are described more fully by the NZAA secretary (1978) and by Prickett (1988: 3-4). His sterling efforts were marked in 1973 by an Honorary Membership in the NZAA and in 1978 by general acclaim. When Alistair ceased as editor, Ron's baby was a young adult of 21, and at that point spawned its prophesied professional publication in the form of the *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology*.

Nigel Prickett took over the editorship of the *Newsletter* in 1978, and proceeded to further develop its format and content, advances which included a new type of cover with a continual series of pertinent archaeological pictures on each issue. His reign as editor lasted for 36 issues. Again his was a hands-on sterling performance, that extended to far more than editing, and was only possible with support from the Auckland Institute and Museum.

In March 1988, with Volume 31, No.1, the *Newsletter* finally became *Archaeology in New Zealand*, a transformation of name which Nigel describes in full (Prickett 1988: 6-8), but summarises neatly as "a protracted affair". In fact there was initially little change in context, but as he said, the name now "more truly reflects the style of the Association's quarterly magazine". Developments in content since have come to fully reflect that situation, with a set of regularly appearing information sections, plus short articles and reviews. Editors after the name change have been Tony Walton, Sarah Macready, and currently Joan Lawrence. Nigel ended his editorship

with an index for 30 Volumes by Louise Furey and himself (NZAA Monograph 16, 1988), replacing an earlier index by Dorothy Brown, issued separately as *NZAA Newsletter Index 1957-1974*. One cover in colour has also now appeared (Volume 36, No.3) and new technology should in due course allow more such colour reproduction.

At 40, the Association now supports a very enjoyable, informative, necessary (and professionally produced) quarterly "house magazine", plus a fully professional annual journal. Ron's baby has indeed evolved into mature adulthood, as has the Association whose commitment throughout has been vital to the process.

My own pleasure has been in being one of the regular contributors over some 39 years. That commitment too is vital. We all owe our several editors over the years large debts of gratitude - they are best reciprocated, I find, by helping to keep up the supply of contributions plus kind words for their behind the scenes endeavours. Ron's baby has a long way to go yet. It will, with our help.

Note: Sources for the above are my own collection of *Newsletter's* beginning with the originals of Volume 1, the NZAA secretary's report as a supplement to Volume 21, no.4, December 1978, and Nigel Prickett's "The *Newsletter*: A brief history" which appears in the front of NZAA Monograph 16, the 30 volume index for the years 1957-1987 by Louise Furey and Nigel Prickett.