



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Thanks are due to Lands and Survey on whose land the site lies, and to the Army authorities against whose military establishment it abuts for permission to carry out excavations: and in particular to Mr Bedford, Lands and Survey Manager of Motutapu, who has made transport available for carriage of gear and personnel at some inconvenience to himself and his staff. Mr and Mrs Peter Sibley, of the Animal Quarantine Station, have shown much appreciated hospitality to members of the Society. Mr R.C. Green, of Harvard University, has supervised the mapping of the site.

Reference

Fergusson, G.J. and Rafter, T.A., 1959 "New Zealand ¹⁴C Age Measurements - 4" N.Z. Journal of Geology and Geophysics, 2 no.1: 208-241.

SITE SURVEY OF SOUTH KAIPARA HEAD: PRELIMINARY RESULTS by L.M.Groube and R. Green.

Introduction

Most association members are probably already aware that the handbook on site recording resulted from the experience and knowledge gained from making this survey of the South Kaipara Head. They may be tempted to ask, however, what were the actual results. The first and perhaps most typical result, is that the society has decided to go back and finish the work. The job was bigger than expected and takes time. None-the-less, 20 people in five parties managed to record in detail 24 sites of various kinds, including the internal features of some quite complex pa. The whole group felt that the successful outcome of the trip was largely due to the training and preparations made before taking to the field. They recommend such projects to other local groups as a pleasant and productive club activity.

The University Archaeological Society is well pleased with these, the results of one day's field trip. The club had been interested for some time in South Kaipara as a region for intensive field study. Its comparative nearness, its geographical compactness and the possibility of testing the N.Z. Archaeological Association Record forms initiated the field trip. A preliminary party went out to look over the area, assess the possibilities of a full-scale field trip, and to make contacts with the local farmers.

The society would like to record gratefully the co-operation and hospitality offered to us by Mrs E.D.B. Sheffield of Kaipara South Head, who is vitally interested in the Maori history of her district. From her many of the Maori names for pa sites were obtained. She also contacted and gained the permission from surrounding farmers over whose

land we had to trek.

A series of aerial photographs, compass use, and filling in the site record forms, conducted in the main by Mr R. Green, led to a very smoothly running field expedition, when on the actual day the five parties were dropped off at various points along the road on the northern end of the South Kaipara Head. The results were mainly, if not wholly, due to the enthusiasm and hard work of those members of the society who took part in the trip.

Before taking to the field again it was necessary that the present information be properly organized, processed and evaluated, so that the survey could be brought to proper conclusion. This was undertaken by one of the society's members, Mr L.M. Groube. From it we have put together this preliminary report.

Results

1. Pa sites: The major portion of each group's time was spent in the recording and description of pa sites. As each was already provided with scale maps of the major visible features of the site, they could be used for reference in filling in the further details observed on the ground with a reasonable degree of accuracy. While we had indicated some of the nearby natural features, i.e. banks, ridgetops, streams, experience showed us that more of these should have been drawn, and the area included much larger. Frequently the site extended far beyond the area of features visible on the ground, and these natural features on a plan would have been of considerable value in locating artificial features which came to light. Also from the examination of the plans, it was obvious that cross-sections, even if only estimates, were needed, for where done they were a valuable aid to interpretation. The terminology and classification of pa and their features adopted here is that of Golson (1957).

The fourteen pa sites recorded and surveyed ran almost the full gamut of types. Included were headland, ridge, ridge peak, hill, low hill/flatland, and swamp pa. In a surprisingly large number of cases, 7 out of 14, the Maori name was obtained.

In all but two instances the pa were initially located on the aerial photographs. This emphasises not only the thoroughness of the method, but suggests for those members of the association studying pa sites that close study of the aerial coverage is a most efficient system. As was expected, considerable variation in the detail of defenses, external and internal, in the number, size and distribution of pits, and in the patterns of habitation areas upon pa sites was noted. At the present state of our analysis, the internal consis-

tency of the South Kaipara pa sites is a striking feature, with the use of ditch and bank and the secondary use of well planned terracing being characteristic. The consistent medium size range of the pa, and their relationship to the ecology of the area may also prove to be definitive characteristics.

Ecologically a broad division can be made between the inland and the coastal sites. As at no part of the South Head can one get more than three miles from the sea the boundary between these categories has rather arbitrarily been selected at a half mile from the coast. Significantly, of the inland pa, all but one are situated adjacent to, or within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of inland swamps or lakes. Many coastal sites are located on swamps too. The exceptional pa is only $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away from a large swamp, and recent change in the ecological scene as to the extent of this swamp may explain the anomaly. This fact, combined with evidence of shellfish in middens on inland pas, suggests that extensive use was made of water-courses for food and/or transport.

As yet very little information has been gleaned from evidences of habitation; the pits, middens, and extensive flat areas, within and without the pa. With more sites, and closer analysis of the information, especially in relation to the distribution of pits inside and outside terraces and platforms we can expect some interesting results.

Upland Pa: The great majority of the sites located are up-land pa, the most common variety being ridge pa. The sites show a gradation from simple to complex: for instance N 33/3 is a simple headland pa with one transverse ditch cutting off the headland and one longitudinal terrace on the lesser of the natural slopes forming the other three sides. On the other hand, N 37.2, sprawling for nearly half a mile along a flat-topped ridge, is a complex ridge pa. Seven transverse ditches, 3 of these with internal banks, the pa divided into 3 major platforms and 3 minor platforms on ridges running off the central ridge, a terraced peak, or tihi, the scarps of which are surmounted with banks part way round and two internal pit complexes of 20 and 12 rectangular, semi-subterranean pits plus others unevenly distributed on terraces and platforms is typical of the complexity of features which have been recorded on the larger sites.

All of the upland pa, except one which was extensively destroyed showed use of the transverse ditch, whereas terracing although very common varied considerably in extent of use, from complex, continuous terracing and scarping surrounding the site, to smaller selective terracing around the tihi, to in 2 cases no form of terracing at all.

Generally terracing as a form of external defence was uncommon, surpassing in importance the transverse ditch on only two sites. It was most common as a form of internal defence surrounding the tihi, and a small discontinuous supplements to slopes. The occurrence of the tihi is significant, on 11 out of 14 of the pa. Of the 3 without tihi, 1 is the simple headland type mentioned above, 2 are ^{atypical} described in Flat-land Pa section below. The selection of an area for a pa to be built on seems to have been governed by a suitable contouring of the hill to enable internal defensive systems. Normally the internal defensive system was transverse ditches and terracing, but in one instance (N 37/3) a longitudinal ditch, with internal scarp surmounted by a bank is a striking exception. This site has one suspected external terrace, and is illustrated in the map following this article. The absence of terracing is typical of the South Kaipara pattern and not anomalous, for it seems clear from the available material that terracing was a supplementary defensive form, used only when the topography of the hill made a ditch and bank system impossible. There could be one exception to this generalization, N 33/13, a double-peak ridge pa, with an external bank running round the base of only one of the complexly terraced peaks. Little distinct information is available on the distribution of pits on these sites, mainly because they are the first features to disappear.

The return field trip we plan may supplement or modify our conclusions about the South Kaipara upland pa of the Ridge, Ridge-Peak and Headland variety, but what appears plain at the moment is that the features they display, although individually of varying combinations and characteristics, suggest a strong internal consistency.

Flat-land Pa: Several sites investigated were not of the upland variety. Three of these N 33/1, N 33/2 and N 33/9 we have called flat-land to low hill pa, because although situated around the steep bluffs surrounding Kaipara Harbour and entrance, they make use of some natural rise at the bluff's edge. This selection, which in the first two cases produces an internal tihi, is a feature we recognize from the upland variety. These two, half a mile apart, show similar features, defended on the 3 landward sides by ditch and outer bank, and divided internally by ditches and scarps into 3 platforms. N/33/9, an exception to the general pattern, is defended externally by a low scarp forming a single rectangular platform with no internal features. No explanation for this exception, except destruction of other more typical features can be offered. Another flatland pa, formed by a low bank and/or ditch into a featureless, round-cornered rectangular enclosure 160'x 80' and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away from two other sites of archaeological interest is also an anomalous sites in the South Kaipara complex.

One particularly interesting swamp pa (lowland variety) was very briefly visited at the end of the day, and will be the first surveyed when we repeat the field trip. It was divided into two platforms by a narrow, transversely ditched neck of land, with one platform fortified by ditch and internal scarp and bank, and the other platform flat and unfeatured. The latter is presumably a habitation platform, but the group intends to investigate this site in more detail.

2. Pits:

Apart from pits which are an integral part of pa, a number of isolated pits or pit complexes came to light. As might be expected, these were originally discovered on the aerial photos only in two of the six cases; also, as might be expected, no Maori names were obtained for any of them.

In one case N 33/11, there were six pits associated with a single low scarp on a ridge. It may be all that is left of a ridge pa. Site N 33/4 is a similar case where six rectangular and one circular pit are associated with a low scarp joining the rectangular group to the circular pit. In the other few cases associated archaeological features are some distance away.

The majority of pits, whether on pa or isolated, were rectangular and rimless. Exceptions were two circular pits, one on pa N 33/1, the other on N 33/4 discussed above. The former of these was rimmed. The only other indication of rimming, partial and faint, was on a single isolated pit.

Of the four instances of isolated pits or pit complexes, one is of particular interest. This is site N 33/7, composed of a rather irregular strip of forty-one pits on the northern and sunny side of the slope.

3. Middens:

Aerial photographic identification of middens proved to be practically impossible. So small and formless do most middens appear from the air that the chances of positive identification are remote. Middens unassociated with other archaeological features are hard to find even on the ground and only a few were recorded. One of these on the shifting sand dune belt was probably a pa site, although unrecognizable today. That pa were built on these areas of unstable dune sand is proved by site N 37/5, a ridge pa, in the dunes overlooking one of the inland lakes.

The midden composition was generally shell, principally pipi, although one beach midden below the flatland pa on the bluff

yielded a quantity of obsidian and an adze. The depth of the deposits was shallow, seldom more than eighteen inches deep.

The internal consistency of the pa in this area is the most striking result. Eventually it may be possible to define these as a type distinguishable from those elsewhere, but it will require at least more extensive study.

The amount of time needed for covering a small area is very deceptive; an area like Kaipara may take many days of recording before it is finished. We covered on the day no more than twelve square miles, the five parties surveying a little more than two square miles each. From this small area, twenty-four sites were recorded, fourteen of them pa sites. This high concentration of sites in South Kaipara is surprising - but on close field investigation, many other areas will probably yield greater concentrations. We hope the results of our activity will lead to other such expeditions, for, as we all know, sites are rapidly disappearing all over the country.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE COROMANDEL PENINSULA by J. Golson

If you look at the distribution in the North Island of the distinctive types of adze, ornament and fishing gear which South Island archaeologists have been able to show as characteristic of the culture of New Zealand's earliest inhabitants, the Moa-hunters, there are some areas where their occurrence is more frequent than others. One of these is the Coromandel peninsula, particularly the east coast from Cape Colville to Waihi Beach. It was on this general area that field exploration was concentrated when the Auckland Society set itself the task of discovering and excavating a North Island Moa-hunter site with the aims of :-

- (a) comparing Moa-hunter culture in its North Island form with the form well-described for the South Island, and
- (b) testing the generally accepted hypothesis that in the North Island with its fewer moas, man was the contemporary merely of a remnant moa population consisting of two species at most waning through the operation of environmental and/or genetic changes.

Sarah's Gully:

The area finally selected for excavation was the small beach at Sarah's Gully, just north of Mercury Bay. Sarah's Gully did not