



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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A large portion of the Inland Patea lies within the area covered by the volcanic ash showers of the central North Island. While there is no evidence as yet of human occupation beneath these showers they provide a valuable horizon for dating purposes and their effect on vegetation and moa populations has to be taken into consideration in the reconstruction of the prehistoric environment. Float pumice carried by a prehistoric flood in the Rangitikei River has been found in a silt layer on the floor of a habitation site at Tarare. Located at a higher level than the recorded historic flood of 1897, this float pumice is valuable evidence of prehistoric flooding.

To date there has been no official site recording carried out in the area although private records covering fieldwork over a number of years are in existence. Steps are being taken regarding the formation of a local field group to carry out field recording and environmental studies. A series of historic gunfighter's pa, at altitudes in excess of 3000ft. above seal level, are probably the most interesting field monuments in the region, as well as the highest defensive earthworks in New Zealand.

The most important feature of archaeological work during the present season has been the discovery of a fragment of moa bone in a human occupation level on a river terrace beside the Rangitikei River. A preliminary investigation has revealed a considerable amount of obsidian, as well as the first occurrence of flake artefacts of flint on an Inland Patea site. Flint does not normally occur within the region, except as a pebbly conglomerate in the Waitotaran limestone which abuts against the Ruahine Range. As this is probably the first inland North Island site to produce moa material from an occupation level, it is hoped that future excavations will provide further evidence of moa hunting in the region. (Author's note: At this stage it would be unwise to speculate on the age of the moa remains or the cultural phase associated with them. It is of interest to recall that Mr.G.L.Adkin discovered an imported flint knife with a group of moa gizzard-stones at an altitude of 2680ft. above sea level on the Tararua foothills. See Horowhenua, 1948, pp.80-83).

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#### TAUPO - by T.Hosking, Taupo

The Taupo region is particularly rich in archaeological sites. Here, as in the Inland Patea region, the Maori population has not moved away to any great extent. Many owners have moved only to the surrounding areas and in some cases still employ sites as tribal burial grounds. It is possible, by gaining the goodwill of the Maoris concerned, to carry out field investigation of many sites but excavation is, of course, precluded. The preservation of most sites is good but the opening of new farming areas has effected a certain number.

(Pressure of work has prevented Mr.Hosking from compiling a fuller account of this interesting region in time for this issue of the Newsletter - Ed.)

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