



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE FIELDTRIP

Helen Leach  
Department of Anthropology, University of Otago

Why do New Zealand archaeologists regard fieldtrips as an integral part of their conferences? There can be no question that they do, for of the 48 conferences (or extended Annual General Meetings) held from 1956 to 2003, at least 39 featured one or more fieldtrips, and since 1981 fieldtrips have been held every year. In choosing to document the facts of those fieldtrips, presented in Table 1, I became interested, as archaeologists do, in the origins and meanings of this curious archaeological activity which is neither field-survey nor excavation, and which can hardly be considered field work other than vicariously.

On a personal level I could identify several reasons why I look forward to conference fieldtrips. Within the confines of a moving bus they capture a group of fellow archaeologists from other parts of New Zealand with whom I normally interact only by letter, telephone or email. For several hours we catch up with news about archaeology (and gossip about archaeologists). In the middle of the outing there is a picnic lunch that somebody else has prepared. There is the anticipation, invariably fulfilled, that we will see sights and sites on private land that as individuals we might otherwise not visit. Of course, such personal benefits, even if shared by all the others present, are not the rationale of the institution we call the conference fieldtrip, merely a satisfying and stimulating outcome.

Pinning down the origins of the institution is more difficult. Is it simply a form of tourism? Just as literary tourism exists, for example to the home of the Brontë's, archaeological tourism flourishes, as on eastern Mediterranean cruise liners. Is the conference fieldtrip a more modest version of a Swan's Hellenic Cruise?

Delving into the history of travel and tourism I found that in medieval times, pilgrimages were made to see holy relics such as the preserved body parts of saints. Though ostensibly for spiritual improvement, such visits created a commercial infrastructure that enriched the abbeys that held the relics (Turner



*Figure 52. To see is to learn... conference field trip to Banks Peninsula, 1973. Photo Helen Leach.*

1993: 16). This has been described as an early form of religious tourism, with antiquarian elements. Although the report of the 1974 NZAA conference fieldtrip to Wairau Bar referred to it as a “pilgrimage” (*NZAA Newsletter* 17(3): 150), the sites visited on most fieldtrips do not normally inspire such reverence.

Does the Grand Tour of the Renaissance provide a better prototype? Under the guise of educational enhancement wealthy European travellers sought out the glories of ancient Rome, Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. Their writings depict a desire to see both the natural and cultural wonders of the world. Where these were combined in one location, as at Pompeii and Herculaneum at the foot of Vesuvius, the sight/site was doubly attractive. Souvenir collecting became a significant element of this tourist experience and remains so today. The Grand Tour, and the more modest Home Tour of the British Isles, established a pattern of mainstream tourism that was duplicated in 19th or 20th century New Zealand. The awe-inspiring equivalents of Vesuvius and Pompeii were the Pink and White Terraces prior to the eruption of Tarawera in 1886, and the Buried Village after it. Milford Sound and the Southern Alps evoked awe in the 20th century, while New Zealand lakes were the picturesque equivalent of the much-visited English Lakes District. Jet boat rides and bungy jumping are now

pre-requisites for the ‘awe-some’ tourist experience. But ‘aweful’ is not an apt description for archaeologists’ reactions to sites seen on fieldtrips.

A particular branch of British tourism that emerged in the 18th century focused on megaliths such as Stonehenge, stone circles, and barrows. Though antiquarians attempted to measure and describe and eventually excavate these sites, tourists were rather more stimulated by the fantastic speculation that surrounded their obscure origins. With the rise in public taste for Gothic ruins as theories of the picturesque took hold at the end of the 18th century, such archaeological sites were appreciated not just for their mysterious past but as part of an ideal landscape (Ousby 2002), to the point where mock Gothic ruins were constructed in English landscape gardens. New Zealand archaeologists have not subscribed to the claims of ancient Chinese barracks, Celtic ruins or Egyptian petroglyphs periodically aired in the media, so we can dismiss the conference fieldtrip as the local equivalent to immersion in Druid or New Age hysteria.

Should we trace the origins of the institution to the profusion of learned societies that existed in Britain just prior to the colonisation of New Zealand? Implicitly modelled on the Royal Society, gentlemen’s societies and literary and philosophical societies were a common feature of 18th century provincial England (Allen 1994: 142). In turn these inspired the natural history societies of the early 19th century that maintained libraries and cabinets of curiosities, published transactions and provided a forum for gentlemen scholars. The philosophical societies and institutes that were incorporated within the New Zealand Institute from 1868 (subsequently reconstituted as the Royal Society of New Zealand) are the direct descendants of this movement. However the field observations that generated the institutes’ museum collections were usually undertaken by members acting as individuals.

In contrast, the early Victorian field clubs made the fieldtrip the core activity. Their nomadic programme involved gatherings at inns, with sorties out in groups according to their special interests, whether in fossils, ferns, or butterflies, followed by a convivial show and tell at the end of the day, invariably accompanied by a meal and drinks. Archaeological and antiquarian interests were frequently represented in the field clubs, but though the desire to collect was influential in the choice of the destination, accounts of their outings show that it was camaraderie that lay behind their long-lasting success.

As in Britain, the format adopted by the philosophical societies of Victorian-era New Zealand was evening meetings in which papers were delivered; no fieldtrips are mentioned in their proceedings. However in Canterbury and Otago the branches of the New Zealand Institute played an important role in fostering field clubs. Peter Thomson, Vice-President of the Otago Institute,

proposed the formation of a field naturalists' group in 1871, to study the geology, flora and fauna of the district and to collect specimens for the museum and for private collections (Griffiths 1998: 511). The Dunedin Naturalists' Field Club was formally constituted in 1872, and remains active 132 years later. In 1890 the President of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury advocated a similar group "as an aid to the Institute" (Meeson 1891: 625).

New Zealand field clubs were rather more serious than their English forerunners, producing scholarly publications and formulating systematic collecting plans. But fieldtrips remained their core activity. In all but one respect they provide a model for our conference fieldtrips. The difference lies in our respective attitudes to collecting. Initially the difference was not marked, as when the first NZAA conference fieldtrip of 1958 included a visit to a private museum at Aramoho (*NZAA Newsletter* 1(4): 4). At the 1966 Annual General Meeting the NZAA adopted a set of principles for membership that emphasized excavation by approved organisations led by properly trained archaeologists and the deposition of archaeological material and records with a local public institution. Members were prohibited from trading artefacts "for personal or monetary gain" (*NZAA Newsletter* 9(3): 139). Behind these principles was an implicit rejection of private collecting. Any fossicking for souvenirs on conference fieldtrips was unacceptable, to the extent that the discovery of an artefact eroded from a road or river section was almost an embarrassment.

Only one partial lapse was reported in the *Newsletter*: on the 1984 conference fieldtrip from Oamaru, the bus stopped at the site of a recent discovery of moa bones in a swamp. Encouraged by the report that the local museum had taken away a large quantity, as had "busloads of school children", some of the fieldtrip participants followed their example. The incident was reported thus: "Nor was New Zealand's archaeological élite slow when it came to their turn! Which goes to show what frustrated fossickers we are" (*NZAA Newsletter* 27(2): 73). Of course natural moa bones are not artefacts, but even in 1984 the value of controlled excavation of natural deposits was being pointed out by palaeontologists.

Inevitably codes of conduct change, and will continue to do so. In the last decade Maori speaking on behalf of the tangata whenua have joined fieldtrips at particular sites and provided a commentary alongside those of the archaeologist leading the group. NZAA members are more sensitive to the multiple readings of the New Zealand landscape, and more conscious of protocol. Though we have a dash of field club conviviality and love of the outdoors in our history, our conference fieldtrips now have a different agenda.

Though it relates to heritage, it should not be confused with heritage tourism, as I learned from Priscilla Boniface and Peter Fowler's (1993) book

*Heritage and Tourism in 'The Global Village.'* In this work they describe the “*aloha* experience” encountered at a global heritage tourism congress in Hawaii. Because Fowler is an English archaeologist with a particular interest in field systems he travelled separately to see three field systems in Kaua‘i and Hawai‘i after the congress. In comparison with what he termed the “constructed authenticity” amounting to a “heritage conspiracy” presented to the congress members, the relict landscape of rectilinear fields overlooking Kealakekua Bay struck him as “authentic Hawaiian heritage.” He found these field systems to be undervalued (except locally) and inadequately protected from tourist-driven developments such as hotels and golf courses. Although non-indigenous, he felt a sense of ownership: “as a student of early agriculture and historic landscapes worldwide, I was surrounded by the raw material of my trade and, therefore, by what in a sense was my heritage too” (Boniface and Fowler 1993: 55, 58).

To my mind, Peter Fowler’s words capture the rationale of the conference fieldtrip. We construct our itineraries to see the raw materials of our trade (archaeological sites) in their widest possible context. We brave horizontal rain and bitter winds to experience their setting in the landscape. We gather round to hear their excavators describe the history of the fieldwork. In short, fieldtrips breathe life into excavation reports and encourage us to celebrate our archaeological heritage.

### **Acknowledgements**

The data incorporated in Table 1 were drawn from every volume of the *NZAA Newsletter* (and its successor *Archaeology in New Zealand*) and from two issues of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (65(1): 77–81, 86; 66(3): 271–290). I am grateful to Nigel Prickett for directing me to the Index of the *Newsletter* with its full list of conference references. Like all good archaeological deposits, the *Newsletter* does not preserve all the necessary information; so I tapped the memories of other senior members of the NZAA: Janet Davidson, Sue Bulmer, Ian Smith, Roger Green and Gary Law. I am most grateful for their help. I regard Table 1 as a work in progress and will be grateful to receive amendments and additions.

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Table 1. NZAA conference field trips since 1956.

Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
1956	May 14–16	Auckland	Auckland University	no	
1957	May 21–24	Dunedin	Otago Museum	visit to Otago Museum	
1958	May 21–23	Wanganui	Whanganui Museum	1 full day	Kemp's Pole, Tuhuaere Pa, A.C. Robertson's museum at Aramoho, Nga Potiki a Rehua Pa, Ihupuku, Waverley rock-shelter
1959	May 19–21	Rotorua	St John's Hall	2 day excavation	Pakotore
1960	May 12–17	Wellington	Victoria University (NZ Science Congress)	1	Saturday 14–Sunday 15, on east Wairapa coast visiting pa, 'kumara plots' and middens, overnight stay in E. Cameron's shearers' quarters
1961	June 3–5	Wellington	Dominion Museum	no	
1962	August	Christchurch	NZ Science Congress	1	South Canterbury rock art
1963	June 1–3	Wellington	Dominion Museum	no	
1964	June 26	Wellington		AGM only	
1965	February 11–17	Auckland	University (11th NZ Science Congress)	2	Saturday 13, all day trip to Motitapu; Sunday 14, half day excursion to sites in Auckland
1966	June 4–6	Wellington	Dominion Museum	no	
1967	May 10–14	New Plymouth	Taranaki Museum	1 half day + 1 other?	Saturday 13, pm, led by Dr Buist, to North Taranaki pa
1968	June 1–3	Wanganui	Whanganui Museum	1	Westmere and Okahu, led by Max Smart
1969	May 17–23	Dunedin	Otago Museum	1 full day	South Otago sites, led by Les Lockerbie



Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
1970	May 30–June 1	Turangi		1	To salvaged sites in Tongariro Power Scheme area, and Te Porere
1971	May 13–18	Auckland	Auckland University and Museum	2	1, to city volcanic cone pa; 2, to South Kaipara, including Otakanimi and Waioneke
1972	June 3–5	Wellington	Victoria University?	no	
1973	May 14–18	Christchurch	University of Canterbury	1 + 1 post-conference?	1, Banks Peninsula
1974	June 1–3	Blenheim	Boathouse Theatre	1	To Wairau Bar (led by Jim Eyles, organised by Neville Matthews)
1975	May 13–17	Wellington	National Museum	1	To Palliser Bay sites (B.F. Leach and H.M. Leach)
1976	June 5–7	Whakatane		1	To some pa between Whakatane and Ohope
1977	May 17–22	Dunedin	Otago Museum	1	Full day to Otago Peninsula sites, including Little Papanui?
1978	June 3–5	Nelson	Nelson College and Nelson Museum	1	Full day to Tahunanui, Maitai, Rushpool adze quarry
1979	May 7–13	Auckland	Human Sciences Bldg, Auckland University	1	Mt Wellington, Wiri, Pawhetau Pa near Clevedon, and Howick Stockade
1980	May 31–June 2	Palmerston North	Manawatu Art Gallery	no	
1981	May 18–22	Christchurch	Canterbury Museum	pre-conference? + 1	1, Plans to visit sites at Blenheim, Clarence, Kaikoura, Claverley and Hurunui; 2, Akaroa Harbour, Onawe, Okains Bay Museum

Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
1982	June 5-7	New Plymouth	Govett-Brewster Art Gallery	pre-conference field school June 2-4	Mataitawa Redoubt, Pukerangiora, Te Arei Redoubt, Puketapu, Pukemiro, Kumara-Karaimo, Okoki, Wai-iti Redoubt, Pukearuhe; Omata Stockade, Waireka Redoubt, Koru Pa, Manawapo, Pouteau, St George's Redoubt, Tataraimaka, Ngaweka Pa, Pungarehu petroglyph, Kaupokonui, Ohawe Pa, Te Rangatapu
1983	May 12-16	Napier	Hawke's Bay Art Gallery & Museum	1	Friday 13, Ohiti Redoubt, Waitio, Bridge Pa, Raukawa Rd Pa, Poukawa, Waikoukou, Tiromoana
1984	June 2-4	Oamaru	North Otago Museum	1	Sunday 3, Takiroa rockshelter, Earthquakes, Five Forks moa swamp, limestone quarry, south Oamaru
1985	May 20-25	Tauranga	Bay of Plenty Community College	2 planned	Wednesday 22, day long trip cancelled through rain, pm, visit to Tauranga Historic Village Museum; half day trip Friday 24, to Papamoa hills pa
1986	May 12-16	Cromwell	Cromwell College	2	Tuesday 13, Chinatown (Cromwell), Northburn tailings, Bendigo; Thursday 15, Bannockburn, Kawarau Gorge, Arrowtown
1987	May 30-June 1	Wanganui	Wanganui Regional Museum	1 pre-conference + 1 half day	Friday 29, Waitotara Valley including Te Oie [=Tarata Pa]; Sunday 31, am, Whangaeu Valley, Marangai Blockhouse

Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
1988	May 9-14	Auckland	Auckland University	1 full day + 1 half day	Wednesday 11, 1, Motukorea (Brown's Is.); or 2, Huia, Waitakere Ranges kauri timber sites; Saturday 14, am, Pollen Brickworks, Avondale
1989	May 8-12	Hokitika	Hokitika Multicultural Centre	2	Tuesday 9, Punakaiki, Barrytown, Fox River; Thursday 11, L & M dredge, Woodstock sluicings, Lake Kanieri, Arapura R., Styx R.
1990	June 2-4	Wellington	RSNZ Science Centre	1	Sunday 3, pm, Pauatahanui Inlet (Rangihaeata's Pa, Paremata site), Porirua Museum
1991	May 6-10	Invercargill	Southland Museum & Art Gallery	1 full day + 1 half day	Tuesday 7, W. Southland (Templeton's flaxmill, Round Hill workings/Canton, Cosy Nook, Orepuki Beach, Clifden); Thursday 9, am, Colyer's Island
1992	May 16-18	Whitianga	Whitianga Area School	2 pre-conference + 1 half day	Thursday 14, Great Mercury Is.; Friday 15, Kuaotunu Peninsula (Otama, Sarah's Gully, Cross Creek, Tahanga, Opito Pt); Sunday 17, am, Hahei (Te Pare Pa), Hot Water Beach, Whitianga Rock Pa
1993	May 24-28	Kaikoura	Community Centre	1 pre-conference + 1 full + 1 half day	Sunday 23, Picton to Kaikoura (Ward lime kilns, Clarence sites, Rakautara rockshelters); Tuesday 25, Kaikoura Peninsula sites, Peketa; Thursday 27, pm, Fyffe House
1994	May 9-13	Whangarei	Forum North	1 half day + 1 full day	Monday 9, pm, Whangarei Heads (pa, flaking floor, midden); Wednesday 11, Hikurangi, Ruapekapeka Pa, Te Waimate Mission, Okuratope Pa, Haratua's Pa

Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
1995	June 3–5	Dunedin	Moot Court, Hocken Bldg, Otago Univ.	1 pre-conference + 1 half day	Friday 2, Central Otago; Sunday 4, pm, Macraes Gold Mine and Historic Reserve
1996	April 9–14	Whakatane	Whakatane Memorial Hall	1 full day	Thursday 11, E. Bay of Plenty (Tauwhare Pa, Tokitoki site, Waimana Gorge, Kawerau, Kohika)
1997	April 1–6	Gisborne	Te Poho-o-Rawiri Marae	1 full day	Thursday 3, Tiritangi Pa, Cook Landing site, Waipaoa Valley (Pukepoto Pa, Rongopai Marae, Popoia Pa, Korowhiorau Pa, Waerenga-a-Hika)
1998	April 15–17	Picton	Ancient Mariner Motor Inn	1 pre-conference + 1 half day	Tuesday 14, boat trip QCS/Tory Channel; Golden Point mine, Blumine Is., Wharehunga, Te Awaiti, Perano Whaling Stn, Tripi Bay Whaling Stn, Moioio Is., Kaihinu Pt; Thursday 16, pm, Tuamarina memorial, Marshlands flaxmill, Whites Bay, Robin Hood Bay, Port Underwood (Kakapo Bay), Karaka Point Pa
1999	Mar. 29–1 Apr.	Auckland	Auckland University	1 full day	Wednesday 31, Kaukapakapa River, Helensville and S. Kaipara
2000	May 5–8	Wellington	Functions Centre, Victoria University	1 pre-conference full day + 1 full day	Friday 5, Matiu (Somes Is.); Monday 8, Palliser Bay sites (Raho Ruru Pa, Moikau Valley, Whatarangi, Te Humenga, Washpool, Pararaki, Kawakawa, Waiwhero, Black Rocks)
2001	May 30–3 June	Akaroa	Akaroa Boating Club	1 half day + 1 full day + 1 post-conference	Friday 1, pm, Onawe Pa; Sunday 3, Panau, Okains Bay Museum, Pavitt's mill; Monday 4, Whakamoia, Ikoraki, Oashore

Year	Dates	Place	Venue	Fieldtrip	Places Visited
2002	April 24-29	Russell	Russell Town Hall	1 pre-conference + 1 half day + 1 full day	Wednesday 24, Ruapekapeka; Friday 26, pm, historic sites in Russell; Sunday 28, Cape Brett
2003	April 23-27	Alexandra	War Memorial Hall	1 pre-conference + 1 half day	Wednesday 23, Alexandra, Clutha Valley, Queenstown, Arrowtown Chinese Village, Roaring Meg powerstation, Bendigo; Friday 25, am, Mitchell's Cottage, Conroy's Gully, Bannockburn