



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Kenneth Gorbey

In the past year the activities of the University of Auckland Archaeological Society, now a group with a membership of something like one hundred and eighty, have been many and varied. A most interesting year of lectures and discussion began early in 1965 when Auckland was host to the Eleventh New Zealand Science Congress. The week of papers, discussion, films, and trips was a stimulating experience to all who attended. Over the following months meetings continued with the same high standard. Mr J. Terrell, the visiting Fulbright Scholar, spoke on the French Upper Palaeolithic rock shelter of Abri Pataud after which in succeeding months reports were given on the Ruarangi, Moturua, and Ponui excavations. Mr H. Parker and Miss J. Davidson spoke of their respective contributions to Pacific archaeology in the Cook Islands and Nuku Oro. One of the most successful meetings of the year was with the new director of the Auckland Institute and Museum, Mr E. G. Turbott, who discussed the effects of Polynesian man on the birds of New Zealand.

Along with these meetings were held a series of seminars. The first three of these were for new members while the last four were more advanced studies in Settlement Patterns. In 1966, as in 1965, meetings began early. This year advantage was taken of the arrival in New Zealand of Dr Thor Heyerdahl. His talk attracted over two hundred people, a figure that was equalled in the following month when Dr Davis Lewis (of Polynesian navigation fame) spoke.

Site recording trips were not as frequent as in previous years. In fact only one was organised, to Te Oue Pa, Clevedon. A development in 1965 was the splitting of the Auckland recording district in two. Mr S. Bartlett of Whangarei is now in charge of the Far North.

The summer excavation 1964-65 was once again at Ongari Point, Kati Kati. It proved most rewarding, as in the one occupation uncovered interesting concentrations of pits and postholes were found. The following Easter a training excavation was held at Ponui Island in the Hauraki Gulf. Here Mr J. Terrell and Mr W. Shawcross conducted a most careful investigation of a small midden-cooking area, the results of which are proving most important. These are to be published shortly. After the 1965 University Examinations a group of students retired to Mt. Wellington to excavate an area later to be destroyed by the construction of a tea kiosk and car park.

There were two excavations in the summer of 1965-66. The first, conducted by a joint University of Auckland and Auckland Institute and Museum party, was at Mt Camel, north of Kaitaia. Here was an extensive Moa-hunter site, artefactually rich, with huge hangi, and extensive working floor areas. The patterns of postholes could also prove interesting. The second was the excavation at Maioro, North Waikato Heads, where Dr R. C. Green continued his New Zealand work on pit complexes. In spite of trying weather, an extensive area was uncovered and two occupations revealed.

Pacific research by Auckland members has continued with Dr Green, Miss J. Davidson, Miss E. Shaw, and Mr and Mrs L. Birks excavating in Samoa, Tonga Nuku Oro, and Fiji. While this work was being conducted, Mr Shawcross and Mr Terrell were engaged in less idyllic surroundings - the swamp pa of the Hauraki Plains.

In closing the Auckland group would like to thank Miss M. Nicholls and Mr L. Groube who in the 1964-65 season invited members to their excavations at Ruarangi and Moturua.

A NOTE ON THE HOUHORA EXCAVATIONS

Wilfred Shawcross and Noel Roe

The following is a brief note on the excavations, carried out during the 1965/66 season, of an important, early, coastal camp site, located at the foot of Mount Camel, in the district of Houhora, Northland. (National Site recording scheme number N6/4).

The site is located on a terrace formed of gravel and in part former sand dune, whose surface is several metres above the present sea level, and it was while the gravel was being dug for road metal that its archaeological character was discovered.

Mr Harold Blucher, a keen local amateur archaeologist identified the prehistoric nature and age of the site, which was then inspected by members of the Mangonui Archaeological Society, including Messrs D. Vincent and W. Mabbitt, and it was Mr Mabbitt who informed the Department of Anthropology at Auckland about the urgent need for a rescue excavation, before the gravel-digging might entirely destroy the site.

Messrs John Terrell and Karel Peters of the Anthropology Department carried out a reconnaissance and test excavation in August 1965, during which they made a plane table survey and excavated two squares, obtaining evidence for some depth (by New Zealand standards) of cultural deposits and excavating sample collections of faunal material, including Moa, dolphins, seal and fish and artefacts including adzes, flakes and drills and evidence for the manufacturing on the spot of large numbers of one-piece fish hooks, made from moa bone. As a result of their report on this investigation it was decided to carry out a full-scale excavation, to be directed by the authors of this note.

The main period of excavation ran between November 28, 1965 and January 15, 1966, during which the numbers of workers ranged between about five and fifteen at any one time. During this same period some thirty 3 metre squares were excavated, a number being taken down to a depth of 1.25 metres.