



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



This document is made available by The New Zealand Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

in the interpretation of New Zealand prehistory - warrant consideration as sites of NATIONAL HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE. for the most part these sites should have been little disturbed by European settlement so that possible excavations in them may be expected to throw additional light on existing problems and still yield materials for new interpretations in the future.

We are seeking a list of sites which hold the key to understanding the pre-historic sequence in New Zealand and which are also protected to some extent by existing legislation, private owners, or public sentiment, and which reasonable people would concede should be protected. Thus, the number of sites in this category in each region should be small and the reasons for their preservation fairly obvious.

#### Legislative Recommendations.

The members of the Association have already acted on the first two recommendations of the Sub-committee by adopting the above classification and forwarding it to the National Historic Places Trust as the basis for seeking further legislative protection for archaeological sites in New Zealand. They have also agreed to apply to Council whenever they wish to conduct excavations on sites scheduled for permanent preservation, and to abide by a general regulation that may be specified for modifying sites placed in the Interim protection category.

Our next moves now will be to try and obtain amendments to existing legislation in conjunction with National Historic Places Trust for sites placed in Categories I and II. The final proposals remain to be worked out fully, although the committee suggested some desirable changes which are now being examined. One of our members is exploring the possibility of more extensive use of Private Historic Reserves, as another means of gaining protection for these sites.

#### Information.

Your committee notes that its task is impossible unless the members of the Association are willing to furnish it with the requisite information. We ask, therefore, that not only all regional filekeepers but also all members through the filekeepers provide us with lists and brief descriptions of sites for scheduling. It will not be through the work of a small committee that a portion of New Zealand's archaeological heritage is preserved for the future, but only through the efforts of every member in our Association.

—oo060C000—

## TWO MOA-HUNTER SITES IN NORTH-WEST NELSON

Owen Wilkes, Ron Scarlett and George Boraman

INTRODUCTION:

A casual examination of the artifact collections shows the Nelson province to be quite rich in tanged adzes. They have been found on the West Coast at Karamea, the Kohaihai, the Heaphy and in the West Wanganui Inlet. They are common on Farewell Spit, scattered along the shores of Golden Bay and present in almost every bay of the Abel Tasman National Park coast. The east coast of Tasman Bay is a significant area because of its proximity to the ultramafic belt of serpentines etc., which contain the baked argillites used in adze manufacture. Wellman (1962) has described a pattern of intensive Moa-hunter Settlement for D'Urville Island, featuring large quantities of waste argillite from adze manufacture - one site in Greville Harbour, is calculated to have sixty tons of argillite. This pattern of settlement is continued down the East Tasman Bay coast. Croixelles and the Waimea Mouth both have large quantities of waste argillite and serrate edge flake cutting tools associated with moa bone and tanged adzes.

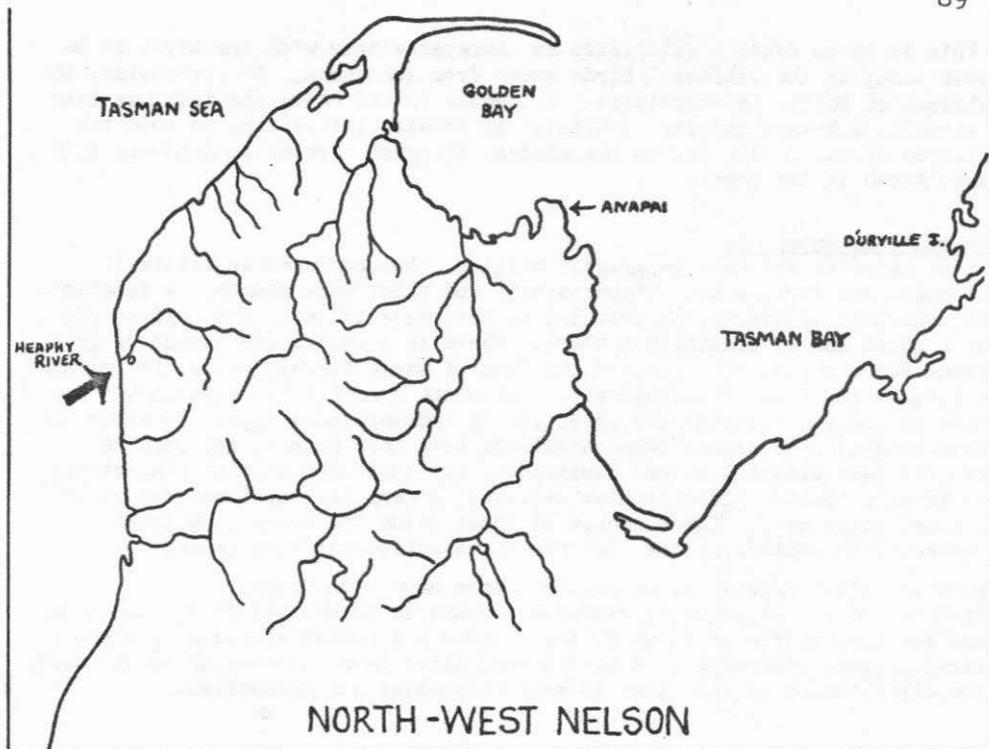
Excavations at Anapai:

On the west coast of the Tasman Bay is the Anapai site. This is a small midden fronting onto the beach and at present being cut away by the sea. Large quantities of argillite flakes indicate adze manufacture, and chips from completed adzes are common. Midden material is predominantly seal with bones of the small bush moa, *Anomalopteryx didiformis*, concentrated towards the bottom of the four foot thick occupation layer. There is also rocky shore shellfish and bird bone, including an undescribed new kaka which Ron Scarlett has also identified in other sites. Two or three human finger bones were found in a layer of seal bone.

Excavations at Heaphy River:

A series of excavations in November, 1961, May and July 1962 and May 1963, has now reached the stage where a report is justified. The most recent digging party was partly composed of members of the Canterbury Museum Archaeological Society, while previous parties were privately organized, and the support of amateurs from Christchurch, Karamea and Takaka is gratefully acknowledged. The dig has been a difficult one to organize, in that the site is in a high rainfall area, and is 12 miles from the nearest road, with a tidal river mouth and easily flooded creeks to be forded. On our slender resources the project would have been impossible without the generous assistance of Karamea residents in such matters as accommodation for transients, car transport and packhorses.

The Heaphy River enters the sea by way of a tidal estuary. The coast on either side is rugged, with steep sand, or boulder beaches, and rocky headlands and cliffs. The coast offers little opportunity for Maori settlement, there being only small flats formed by talus from the slopes above, and floodplains of creeks. The Heaphy Mouth constitutes the only substantial acreage of flat land for at least 12 miles either way. The excavated site is situated here, on a low-angle stream fan formed by a small



tributary about a quarter of a mile back from the seabeach. At present lateral erosion by the Heaphy River is removing this fan quite rapidly - seven acres have disappeared in the last 30 years, and judging by the large numbers of artifacts which have been picked up by sporadic visitors in the past, the site covered much of this seven acres. To date 52 six-foot squares have been excavated.

#### Midden Material:

Midden contents are dominated by seal bone and shellfish (mainly mussel), but the moa *Anomalopteryx didiformis* is common and one piece of *Emeus crassus* has been found. Dog is fairly common. Amongst the bird bone (which forms a very minor midden constituent) is what appears to be the petrel *Puffinus assimilis elegans*, now found only on the Chathams. We have subfossil collections of this from caves at the Heaphy and in Golden Bay. It was apparently once abundant in the area. Other birds identified are:-

<i>Eudyptula n. minor</i>	-	little blue penguin
<i>Eudyptes p. pachyrhynchus</i>	-	crested penguin
<i>Nestor meridionalis</i>	-	kaka
<i>Apteryx</i>	-	kiwi, species unknown
<i>Hemiphaga n. novaseelandiae</i>	-	pigeon
<i>Prothemodera n. novaseelandiae</i>	-	tui
<i>Thalassache canta subsp</i>	-	mollymawk
<i>Phalacrocorax v. varius</i>	-	pied shag
<i>Phalacrocorax sp.</i>	-	shag

This is by no means a full range as compared either with the birds to be seen today or the subfossil birds known from the caves. In particular, the absence of kakapo is surprising - it occurs in the caves and this was traditionally a kakapo hunting district. It is also interesting to note the absence of the native rat in the midden, although several individuals have been found in the caves.

#### Artifactual Material:

Stone material had wide geographic origins. Nelson baked argillite is abundant and local siltite ("quartzite") and flint were common. A substantial quantity of quartz, is puzzling as this material will not hold an edge or a point and is seemingly useless. There is a remarkable amount of greenstone for a moa-hunter site, in the form of waste flakes, chips off polished artifacts and 5 adzes and chisels. The stone used and the workmanship are both of inferior quality and adzes are of indeterminate type. 36 adzes and adze roughouts of Nelson baked argillite have been found, with Type 2A (Duff's 1956 Classification) dominating, but including all the characteristic Archaic traits - quadrangular sections, triangular sections, laterally reduced polls etc. Three caches of adzes below the occupation level respectively containing one, two and three adzes each were found.

Five typically Archaic stone minnow shanks have been found.

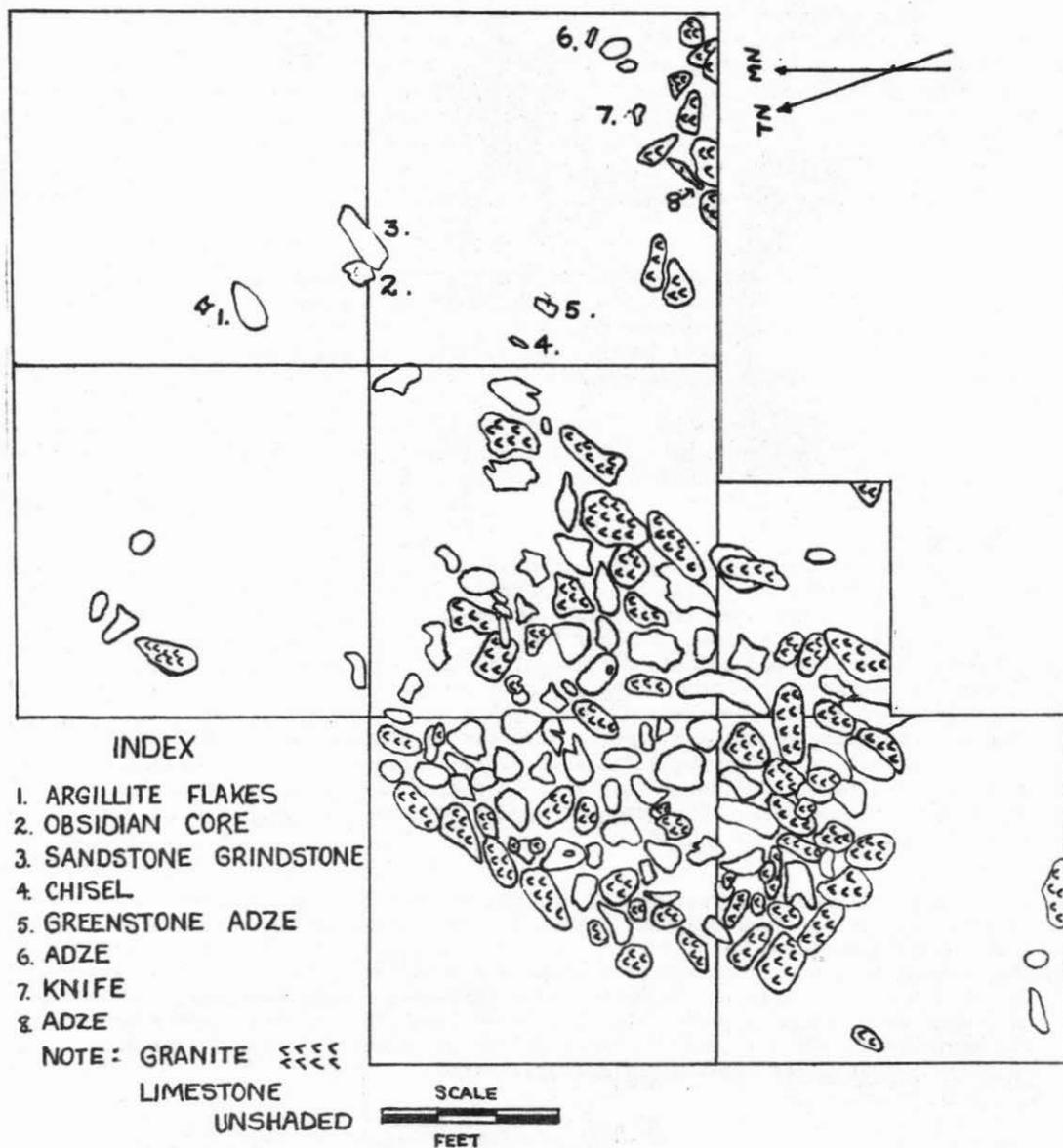
The head of a teka or dart, rendered in bone is an unusual find. One other New Zealand example is known to the Authors - a wooden specimen of unknown stratigraphic context recovered from Redcliffs Cave. According to Dr. Duff, the distribution of this item is West Polynesian and Melanesian.

#### Stratigraphy:

A typical section shows the occupation layer resting on clean yellow fine gravel and coarse sand with occasionally a "fossil" soil developed in the topmost 3 ins. of the gravel/sand material, but more generally the occupation layer rests on an unweathered surface. From sedimentary structures, e.g. current bedding in the underlying natural and from general topography the gravel/sand substrate is interpreted as fan deposits of the nearby creek. The occupation layer is 10 - 24 inches thick with oven stones sparse to abundant - sometimes forming up to a third of the bulk of the occupation layer. Lenses of crushed shell are 2 - 6 ins thick. In places, the occupation layer is overlain by a layer of grey unconsolidated sand. A grain size analysis was carried out on a sample from this layer and the grain size cumulative curve was compared with those for similar looking samples from modern beach, sandhill, estuary and river sands. A sample from the lee slope of a sandhill was found to have an identical curve to the site sample. Overlying the grey sand where present and otherwise resting on the occupation layer are 6 - 30 ins. of fine gravel, coarse sand and silty sand. The upper surface of the occupation layer in places is very flat and sharply defined and has apparently been planed off by stream action. The overburden, similar to the substrate, is interpreted as further fan deposits of the creek. Grain size increases and coefficient of sorting decreases, from the natural immediately beneath the occupation to that immediately above the occupation, and thence grain size decreases to the present surface. This textural gradation would be expected if the overburden was the result of one short depositional

# HEAPHY RIVER EXCAVATIONS - 1963

## STONE PAVEMENT



episode, or it may be indicative of acceleration of erosion during occupation due to destruction of plant cover or earthquake slipping, and, after occupation ceased, a slow change to non-depositional conditions.

Followed Northwards for a short distance the occupation layer dips abruptly so that the lower surface is about 6 ft. below ground level, and rests on what appears to be estuarine sands. Apparently the site "overflowed" beyond the edges of the stream fan down onto what was then an estuary beach. The occupation layer, in a stratigraphically confused section, splits into two members separated by 6 - 8 ins. of yellow sand - another stream deposit.

These stratigraphic observations may be interpreted in terms of site history as follows:-

- (a) Occupation was initiated on the fan of an active stream, on a surface covered with meandering stream channels and patchy vegetation. Occupation was continuous down a sloping bank onto the estuary beach. Part of this lower-lying section was inundated by the creek but occupancy was resumed.
- (b) Occupancy terminated over most of the site and windblown sand, possibly from denuded sandhills invaded the area. Subsequently stream channels meandered over the site.

#### Structures:

There are two distinct types of oven present. Most common was the usual shallow dish shape, 18 - 42 inches in diameter and generally less than 9 inches deep. One oven was in the shape of an inverted cone with a slightly overhanging lip on one side. Another form of pit of which two examples were found was flat bottomed but had distinctly vertical or overhanging sides. It was not necessarily a form of hangi as no orange colouring due to burning could be found in the sand around the pit, and the fill is less charcoally than the overlying occupation layer. This may be compared with R.H.Parker's (1960) observation at Skipper's Ridge of "Three curious circular 'pot-holes' with well cut vertical sides. They were approximately 18 inches in diameter and 9 to 10 inches deep. They did not appear to have been hangi and no guess at their function can be made."

One of the most exciting features of the dig is what can only be described as a stone pavement (see diagram). This is constructed of flat slabs of granite and limestone, with more cylindrical boulders laterally placed to form a sort of raised kerb and more spherical boulders along the south-west end. To the north east the pavement fades into oven stones and intensely melanised sand. The pavement appears to have formerly extended further to the north east. The majority of the boulders are unburnt. Comparisons with Pacific Islands marae immediately spring to mind.

The only other structure of any interest was a cache - like intrusion of granite boulders, burnt and unburnt, into the substrate. These boulders

were set in contact, with long axes vertical. Occasional postholes occur, but appear to form no significant pattern.

As excavation proceeded it was very noticeable that the site was strongly differentiated areally. Most of the ovens occur within a few squares - some squares had 5 oven hollows, oven stones had accumulated in other areas, the shell and bone midden was very restricted and stone flakes tended to be concentrated in definite areas, notably around and on the pavement.

Reference:

- |              |      |  |
|--------------|------|--|
| R.H. Parker  | 1960 | Reconnaissance at Skippers Ridge<br>N.Z.A.A. Newsletter 3 No. 2 p. 39. |
| Wellman H.W. | 1962 | NZ Journ.Geology and Geophysics Vol 5 : 55-75                          |

---

PRELIMINARY NOTE ON TWO WAITAKI RIVER SITES - MacKENZIE COUNTRY

---

G.M. Mason

INTRODUCTION:

On the left bank of the Waitaki River at the southern end of the MacKenzie Country and at the top end of the Waitaki "Gorge" two camp sites have recently been discovered. The northern-most ("Waitaki I") is about half a mile west of the old Black Forest Station homestead and on a tussock, matagouri and briar covered terrace remnant which is bounded to the west by a stream flowing in the bed of the Waitaki 25 ft. below. The eastern boundary is a gravel terrace rising 20 ft. at a 30° angle. The site is exposed to the south and west.

The southern site ("Waitaki II") is approximately one mile north of "the Gooseneck" and is at the foot of a greywacke face 15 ft. high and running roughly NE - SW for about 2 chains and is about 1 chain back from a long and very deep back water which runs into the main river. On the completion of the Benmore Dam these sites will be drowned by about 50 and 100 ft. of water respectively, thus there is some urgency about getting them excavated and for a general reconnaissance to locate other sites which will be drowned. Lack of time and transport will prevent the Author from doing all this work. It is apposite to mention here the good work done by Ambrose and Davis (1955, 1959, 1960) who recorded rock shelter art from this area.

Waitaki I Excavations:

At the Waitaki I site about 20 square yards have been excavated, not leaving bank to a depth of 6 ins. Two hangi were found, one exposed in the terrace edge and the other some 2 ft. away. The portion left in the terrace edge was 41 ins. in diameter and 27 ins. deep with steep sides rounding to a flat bottom. The other was 51 ins. diameter and 19 ins. deep with an overhanging