



NEW ZEALAND  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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WAIKATO GROUP REPORT

by C.G. Hunt

As reported in the last Auckland edition of the Newsletter the newly formed Waikato Group had a most successful initial dig at Te Rapa pa in Hamilton. At the time we had been warned that the contractors would soon be moving their bulldozers into the area to prepare the approaches for the new traffic bridge. This has since eventuated and we have not had, and now will not have, an opportunity of completing our investigations. However, the contractor concerned has been most co-operative and has kept us informed when anything of interest has been unearthed by his workmen. Already he has handed over to us three stone adzes and a stone pounder. Recently he reported that a large collection of bones had been uncovered, and, though on investigation these proved to be recent horse and cattle remains, the contractor's willingness to help is evident.

During last winter the local group fell rather into the doldrums due to a variety of reasons. First our Recorder met with a serious road accident which put him out of commission for two months. Then our Maori interpreter, who worked in the Maori Affairs Department, was transferred on promotion to the Cook Islands. With no Recorder to give new members the promised instruction in map reading and site recording our membership remained static until recently.

Realising that Field Days are the life-blood of the group, some of the older members made reconnaissance surveys of several possible sites during the spring and we have had three splendid Field Days which have put new life into the Group.

The first was at Tamahere about seven miles from Hamilton in the locality where Wiremu Tamehana signed the peace with General Carey in 1865. Evidence of defence works is scattered over a wide area, but, in our unsuccessful search for the memorial, we quite by chance came across the central redoubt well hidden under a grove of acacias and thick blackberry. This became the target for a week-end's rewarding dig, reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

Following the success of the Tamahere dig we decided to investigate a cave shelter near the Aotea Harbour which the local farmer had long ago asked us to undertake. He was of the opinion that it had been used by the Maori for many generations as a camp site when they came up the harbour to collect raupo from a neighbouring swamp, for as a lad, he remembers them coming to the area for just that purpose. The cave, as he described it, turned out to be a tunnel in limestone rock with an opening at each end. From the initials and dates carved on the walls it has obviously been used up to the present time by flounder fishermen who frequent that shallow harbour.

Unfortunately, though there were three feet of loose debris on the floor of the tunnel, only the top two inches showed any evidence of human occupation. We pointed out the lack of evidence of long usage to our farmer friend and he accepted our findings, particularly when we pointed out that there were undoubted remains of a Maori village in the scrub on the hill fifty feet higher up. Though he was disappointed he appreciated our point that the Maori of old were not likely to use a draughty and fairly damp rock shelter when there was a comfortable village close at hand.

These two digs brought home to us our lack of numbers so we decided to stage a Field Day with the object of attracting new members. We decided to make the Tamahere Pa the central feature of our Field Day because of its unique character and, as a contrast, we then proposed to take the party to the Narrows Pa which is of the headland type. The latter two have not as yet been excavated by us though they are included in our future plans. Specially invited to attend the Field Day were the members of the Waikato Historical Society and the members of our own parent body the Waikato Branch of the Royal Society of N.Z. (formerly the Waikato Scientific Assn.). The support accorded this venture exceeded our wildest dreams because on March 12th we found ourselves leading a convoy of 38 cars and trucks crammed with 150 adults and children.

We are considerably elated by the many congratulatory remarks about the Field Day which were showered upon us, and the numerous enquiries from prospective members augers well for the future.

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#### TAMAHERE PA

by C.G. Hunt

Tamahere Pa is situated about seven miles from Hamilton just off the main highway to Cambridge, though it is separated from the road by a deep gully which entails a detour along the Matangi road.

It was here that Wirimu Tamehana signed the peace with General Carey in May 1865. The exact spot where the treaty was signed on a piece of notepaper, is stated to be marked with a cairn and it was while searching for this monument that we located the central citadel of the pa. The pa belonged to a hapu of the Ngati-Haua and the local chief was Te Keihi who was a kinsman of Tamehana.

The locality is a flat plain laid down by the Waikato River in the geological past but the pumicious alluvium has now been deeply scored