



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/>.

WAIRARAPA - by K.Cairns, Masterton

(An article dealing with this region appeared in the last Wellington issue, Vol.2, no.4. Mr. Cairns reports that the field inspection of sites has continued in all parts of the Wairarapa. The nature and original find-spot of artefacts occupies much of the time spent on research as does the gathering of traditional information - Ed.)

- - ---ooOoo--- - -

WELLINGTON - by J.R.S.Daniels, Wellington.

Descriptions of Wellington sites have been published since the eighteenth-seventies, notably by Elsdon Best, and recently this work has been collated and revised by G.L.Adkin in the "Great Harbour of Tara". Thus there are ample references to consult before recording in the field. Unfortunately such publication means that the important sites have been well known for many years and have suffered fossicking and haphazard excavation as a result.

The WELLINGTON REGION: The area covered by the Wellington group extends north along the west coast to the Otaki River, a good boundary since the country beyond is dealt with in G.L.Adkin's "Horowhenua". Trips have also been made to the south Wairarapa and to Kapiti Island, the latter rich in the remains of Maori and European settlement, particularly of the whaling period. The Wellington district proper contains two distinct areas from the archaeological point of view; the land around the Wellington and Porirua Harbours to Fokereua Bay in the north and the distinctly different southern portion of the Horowhenua dune belt. There are differences, of course, in the type of work to be done in these two areas. Around Wellington, for example, traces of pa and villages survive whereas middens have been scattered or built over or have been buried by shingle slides. In the case of the sandhill country erosion has destroyed many important settlement sites but is continually exposing middens and other material.

PA SITES: There were many fortified pa in the Wellington area but, with the exception of those built by the early Ngai-Tara people, earthworks appear to have been kept to a minimum, possibly because of the difficulty of digging into the hard Wellington subsoil. There are, however, some good earthworks and terracing on these older sites. Perhaps the best of these is the Makara pa described by Susan Davis in last year's Wellington Newsletter (Vol.2, no.4). This well preserved headland pa has a sizeable terraced occupation area defended by a ditch and scarp 7-10 feet high and 150 feet in length.

One of the best preserved pa in Wellington itself, the Rangitatau pa at Seatoun, is perhaps the oldest. Reputed to built by Ngai-Tara some 700 years ago, it consists of a terraced citadel area on a small headland some 200ft. above the beach and an associated village area, terraced and probably lightly defended, on more gently sloping ground some 300 feet inland. On the headland itself there are about fourteen terraces, some straight but most semi-circular in plan, encircling the round summit. These, together with the now shallow fosse in the ridge behind, are well preserved despite the action of Cook Strait winds and rain.