



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/>.

WAIRAU BARBy Owen Wilkes

In May 1959, 22 members of the Canterbury Museum Archaeological Club, under the leadership of Dr. Duff, spent a fortnight extending excavations at the moa-hunter site on Wairau Bar, Marlborough. Digging was carried out in two areas:- (a) East of Point 13 (see plan, p.26, Duff: "The Moa-hunter Period of Maori Culture") in what is regarded as a habitation area, and (b) five or six chains South East of this, in an area which has yielded several burials in the past.

The habitation area, which has been ploughed, showed a fairly constant profile of 6 inches of humus stained soil and 2" of lighter soil underlain by fine, well-sorted gravel. Artifacts and oven materials were confined to the top 8 inches. Notable was the discovery by Annette Jones of a cache of 13 adzes, in all stages of completion, in a hollow dug into the gravel layer. A trussed burial also turned up unexpectedly. No artifacts were associated with it. Three burials were located in the second area, two of which were fully exposed and recorded. The first was a burial in the standard moa-hunter style, prone, cranium lying on the right side, the right hand clutching an adze beneath the pelvis. In close association was a cache of 3 medium size adzes, there being no other grave goods. The normal profile here consisted of 10 inches of ploughed soil resting on varying grades of beach deposited gravel. The burial was about 18 inches deep in a soil filled hollow in the gravel. Adjacent to this burial, indeed almost superimposed on it, the skeleton of an elderly female was found in an unnaturally contorted attitude, the body apparently having been unceremoniously bundled into a shallow pit dug in ignorance of the close proximity of the deeper burial.

A visit from Dr. H.W. Wellman was responsible for the digging of two trenches inland from, and perpendicular to, the lagoon edge, in an attempt to elucidate the stratigraphy, and detect the presence, if any, of more than one occupation layer. A representative profile consisted of, from the bottom upwards, well sorted, probably beach deposited, fine gravels, 18 inches of midden (charcoal and shell), 6 inches of silt, 3" of charcoal, 6 inches of comminuted shell (Chione), 8 inches of flood deposited soil. As the silt lensed out away from the lagoon and is probably a flood deposit, there is no justification for recognising two occupation layers separated by any length of time.

During the excavations we had several visits from members of the Rangitane tribe, who took a keen interest in the progress of the dig and who expressed approval of the way we went about exposing, recording, and re-interring the burials without the bones being disturbed. Marlborough Historical Society members also spent a day inspecting the excavations.

SITE SURVEY OF THE KAIKOURA PENINSULA

By Tony Fomison

Introduction:

The value of South Island archaeology in isolating the Moa Hunter period of Maori Culture is widely recognised, yet it is only recently turning its attention to the subsequent developments of Maori culture, and it is in the hope of increasing this interest that I present the following account.

From the abundance of natural food on the Kaikoura Coast to-day, and the known suitability of its climate and geography to kumara growth, it is to be acknowledged as a region of major importance in