



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Jill Hamel

Citation for Roger Green Lifetime Achievement Award
2017 NZAA Conference, Thames

Jill Hamel has been a leading light in archaeological practice in Otago and Southland for over 40 years. She has combined the often very different worlds of academic study, consultancy and public advocacy in a way few others have done.

Jill was brought up on a mixed dairy and sheep farm in the Hawkes Bay, which undoubtedly influenced her later interest in the history and archaeology of early farmsteads. Jill started her university life as a botanist, and was for a time employed as a technician in the Botany Department at Otago University. However, she decided to step sideways slightly, and began her studies in archaeology in 1966 and completed her PhD in 1977, applying ecological approaches to the study of archaeological evidence in the Catlins, South Otago.

Since then Jill has been prominent in both archaeology and wider conservation and heritage advocacy in Otago and Southland. She was active in conservation circles in Otago in the 1970s, was appointed to the Otago Conservation Board in 1993, and has also been a member of the Scientific Advisory Group that provides the board with specialist information and recommendations. Jill was Chair of the Historic Places Trust Otago Branch Committee from 1981 to 1984, where she provided archaeological expertise. She has been the NZAA Regional Filekeeper for many years. She has also always had a strong interest in ornithology, and was most recently instrumental in setting up small bird sanctuary islands at Anderson's Bay.

Jill's archaeological interests span both prehistoric and historic archaeology, and she was an early practitioner of the latter in the Otago region. Many years prior to the advent of what is now termed 'buildings archaeology,' Jill along with others such as Nigel Prickett and Neville Ritchie were recording old buildings during their site surveys. Jill's work during the 1980s on early agricultural pastoral and mining sites laid the groundwork for the discipline in the region, and complemented Neville Ritchie's contemporary work on Central Otago goldmining during the CVD project. Jill conducted numerous surveys for the old New Zealand Forest Service during the 1980s, and many of these are still used as standard references for the archaeological management of the relevant forest blocks (most of which are now in private ownership). Her levels of research and scholarship in many of these reports are particularly impressive when one remembers that they were produced years before online resources such as Paperspast and the use of GPS surveying were even thought of. With the advent of the Department of Conservation in 1987 Jill continued her role as a contract archaeologist and historian, and in particular she has had a long-standing

interest in the history and archaeology of Otago goldfields and high-country pastoral leases in the Protected Natural Areas and Pastoral Tenure Programmes respectively in Central Otago.

Alongside her work for the NZFS and DOC, Jill was one of the first of the independent contract archaeologists, and conducted surveys and excavations on a wide range of sites across Otago and Southland for numerous organisations, big and small. These included the Waitaki Valley Survey for a proposed hydro-power scheme, surveys and excavations at Macraes Gold Mine, and the excavation of the old town site at Nokomai in Southland. The product of this activity is a body of over 150 published and unpublished reports and papers. In 2002 Jill synthesised all of the work done to that date in the Otago region, and the resulting publication *'The Archaeology of Otago'* is now a standard text for local archaeology. During these years of archaeological work Jill provided a generation of Otago archaeology students with their formative fieldwork opportunities, including Peter Bristow, Warren Gumbley, Mat Campbell and Rick McGovern-Wilson, and she continues to mentor younger members of the profession, who still seek her advice for both her wide experience and easily approachable manner.

One of Jill's achievements that many people see and appreciate, but few realise who was responsible, is the continuing restoration and rebuilding of the historic Otago Harbour walls using original hand-stacked stonework: the Dunedin City Council would have preferred to use much (much) cheaper machine-placed rubble, but Jill's advocacy won the day. She pioneered, with the co-operation of the DCC, the construction design technique now used for all seawall repair and restoration. Jill has not only advocated for public money to be used for heritage projects, but has very much led the way with her own work: she has employed stonemasons to repair and stabilise ruins on her own properties for no other reason than it was the appropriate thing to do. Her McKessar farm ruin at Mopanui has been extensively rebuilt, and she has also made it available for archaeology students to practise their mapping and recording skills. Despite declining agility, Jill continues to take an active role in archaeological management, and is presently heavily involved with the Hereweka Harbour Cone Trust in Dunedin, which is managing the many historic farmstead ruins and drystone walls on this Council-owned property on the Otago Peninsula.

Jill's conservation and heritage work has been recognised numerous times over the years. In 2013 Jill was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in recognition of her contribution to New Zealand archaeology and historic heritage and her long standing association with the NZHPT as a member since 1976, and in the same year she was awarded the 2013 Dunedin Heritage Festival Bluestone Award for her outstanding contribution to the promotion and protection of Dunedin's heritage. Most significantly, she was awarded the Queens Service Order for public service in the 2000 New Years Honours List.

Jill's high standards, leadership, passion for the archaeology and history of Southern New Zealand, and decades of hard work, make her a worthy recipient of this Lifetime Achievement Award.