



Heritage

Quarterly working together for our shared heritage

Summer | 2011

Our collective heritage

The main picture here of cobblestone paving, discovered by consultant archaeologist Ivan Bruce and possibly dating to New Plymouth's early settlers, was discovered during restoration work at the White Hart Hotel and is a great reminder that New Zealand's history is more than what we can see around us. Over the years, layers of history created from the days when Maori first landed through to today's multi-cultural society have been built on to the point where much of it rests beneath where we stand.

Often these archaeological remains are unearthed during redevelopment or farming activities and they can add valuable information to our history. Explained more on page two, archaeological artefacts can range from items of jewellery, clothing and household objects to shellfish found in Maori middens (rubbish dumps). Increasingly koiwi tangata (human remains of early Maori) are being unearthed, primarily due to coastal erosion and also through other earthworks.

The great news is that these cobblestones will be covered in glass

so future generations can view a part of that city's early history. NZHPT Central Region Heritage Advisor (Architecture) Alison Dangerfield has been working with the owners Harvey Dunlop and Jeremy Thomson on the conservation and re-development of the hotel.

Our history and collective heritage belong to us all. As we head into the summer holiday period, it is timely to remind people that historic artefacts and archaeological sites are legally protected by the *Historic Places Act* (1993) and *Protected Objects Act* (1975), with more information on these laws inside this issue.

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Strength in partnership

A four-way partnership to ensure koiwi tangata (human remains) are treated appropriately when unearthed is proving a success.

The NZHPT works closely with tangata whenua, police and local authorities when koiwi tangata are unearthed through natural erosion, earthworks or, unfortunately, fossicking.

Last year a volume in the archaeological guidelines series on how to deal with koiwi tangata was released by the NZHPT following extensive consultation. It is available to view at www.historic.org.nz (search the site using 'archaeological guidelines').

NZHPT Central Region Archaeologist Kathryn Hurren says the partnership ensures appropriate cultural sensitivities are observed while legal requirements are carried out.

"Earlier this year beach walkers noticed koiwi at a Cape Palliser shoreline site



Field work just north of Castlepoint – part of a New Zealand Archaeological Association site upgrade.

following significant erosion. It was really pleasing that the public left the remains where they were, contacted Masterton police who then notified the NZHPT and, in this case, Ngati Hinewaka to assess the site.

"Once the police determined the site was not a crime scene the koiwi were removed with iwi approval and reinterred at another nearby location."

Kathryn says it is important that when the public find koiwi tangata they

leave them for professionals to assess.

"If you can, cover the koiwi and then contact the police. It really is about showing respect and doing the right thing."

As part of the work for the koiwi guidelines, the NZHPT set up a process where each of the three police communications units (Northern, Central and Southern) have contact details for a designated NZHPT archaeologist to contact when koiwi tangata is found.

Simple message from NZHPT

There will be times when archaeological artefacts are unearthed either through natural changes such as erosion or people being inquisitive. It is important that artefacts are left where found and covered up, if possible, before contacting the police who will then alert the NZHPT.

Not only is it illegal to remove artefacts from the place where they are found, it seriously undermines the significance and understanding of the artefact and has the potential to lead to further site damage. The artefact's surroundings can tell an archaeologist so much that contributes to building a wider picture of how the object came to be there, how old it is and how people lived in that time.

There are also cultural sensitivities to be aware of. That interesting piece of

bone you come across could be human; needing to be treated with respect and removed appropriately.

Under the *Historic Places Act* (HPA) 1993 any work that will affect an archaeological site must be authorised by the NZHPT before it takes place. The HPA defines an archaeological site as any place in New Zealand that was associated with human activity that occurred before 1900 and that can be investigated with archaeological techniques.



Iwi representative Chris Hemi, left, and Central Region Archaeologist Kathryn Hurren during field work.

The HPA makes it unlawful for any person to destroy, damage or modify the whole or any part of an archaeological site without prior NZHPT authority. Evidence of archaeological sites may include burnt and fire-cracked stones, charcoal, rubbish heaps including shell, bone and/or glass and crockery, ditches, banks, pits, old building foundations, artefacts of Maori, Moriori and European origin or human burials.



David Rudd at Robin Hood Bay.

Robin Hood Bay Cottage conservation underway

NZHPT staff have begun a multi-stage process of conservation work on the Robin Hood Bay cob cottage in the Marlborough Sounds.

Built as a whaler's cottage in the early 1840s and possibly lived in by John O'Brien and his wife Metapera Kawhe (of Ngati Toa and Maniapoto descent) it became the home of Captain George Covell Jackson and his wife Clara James, who settled in the bay in 1848. The land was sold in 1885 to Henry Stace, who farmed the land, and ran a boarding school, using the cottage as part of the school facilities. In more recent times it has been used as a bach and as a farm shed.

The first stage of conservation work has involved the safe removal of two large macrocarpa stumps next to the cottage. The roots of the macrocarpas run underneath the cottage, and have lifted the floorboards in the bedroom.

Central Region Archaeologist, David Rudd, with the assistance of Victoria University post-graduate student Phillipa Hamilton, supervised the safe removal of the stumps and recording of artefacts

and archaeological features. David says the cob cottage is a rare example of an early settler's cottage, and an even rarer example of cob (also known as wattle and daub) construction in New Zealand.

"The NZHPT is working to keep this piece of New Zealand's history intact for future generations. Bus tours and school parties make trips to Robin Hood Bay to take in the history of the cob cottage. Our goal is to work with local building professionals and contractors to deliver a high standard of conservation so that the cottage can be good for at least another 100 years."

Many of the earliest cob cottages in Marlborough were severely damaged or destroyed by a 7.5 magnitude earthquake in 1848 centred in the Awatere Valley. This was the first large earthquake recorded following European arrival and caused major damage in Wellington.

The Protected Objects Act

The Protected Objects Act 1975 (POA) makes sure any newly-found Maori objects (taonga tuturu) are returned to iwi ownership or held in local museums.

The Ministry for Culture and Heritage administers the POA. When a find is made, and until ownership is determined, the Ministry is responsible for the recording and custody of the taonga and for any conservation treatment required.

Tangata whenua and other interested parties are advised about the find and how to claim ownership or custody. Once claims have been received and assessed, the Ministry seeks an order from the Maori Land Court to determine ownership.

Earthquakes and insurance on our minds

The impacts of the earthquakes in Canterbury and difficulties in insuring property are reaching across New Zealand. NZHPT Central Region area coordinator David Watt says the regional office in Wellington has been getting several calls a week asking for advice, particularly on renewal insurance.

“Insurers now require owners of pre-1935 buildings in particular to show that their risks have been minimised - and this is not just confined to heritage buildings. It applies to all buildings. For example, electrical rewiring to current standards reduces the risk of fire, whereas pre-1935 wiring presents an electrical hazard.

“We advise owners to contact an insurance broker. There are a number of insurance broker companies in New Zealand who can go through a checklist of key items that impact on a property getting insurance cover – structural integrity, the nature of the ground the building is located upon, electrical work and fire protection. Through our work we have built an understanding around insurance for heritage buildings and can provide guidance to owners of heritage buildings.”

A set of guidelines on the sustainable management of historic heritage can be found on the NZHPT’s website www.historic.org.nz. The guidelines provide a number of principles for insurance and heritage properties.

“These principles go beyond ‘insurance’ issues to promote a wide risk-management approach to caring for a heritage place. The principles are – carrying out regular maintenance and repair; promoting fire safety measures; avoiding vandalism and theft; maintaining adequate documentation; obtaining valuations; maintaining adequate insurance cover and promoting full information disclosure.”

NZHPT staff can help property owners and prospective buyers work through these challenges.

Miramar Peninsula protection welcomed

The NZHPT has welcomed the Crown’s decision to designate 76 hectares of land on Te Motu Kairangi/Miramar Peninsula in Wellington as a reserve.

The northern end of the peninsula is a very special cultural landscape that has sites of significance to iwi as well as military sites that date from the Russian Scare in the 1880s through to World War I and World War II.

“The layers of history that are represented throughout this landscape, the density of archaeological and historic sites, and their proximity to the capital make it a unique place that has significance to all New Zealanders,” says Central Region General Manager, Ann Neill.



“We are pleased that the land will remain in public ownership as a means of ensuring the protection and conservation of these historic sites for the public to be able to visit and enjoy.”

Following a comprehensive heritage assessment by Heritage Adviser Natasha

Naus, the NZHPT gave advice to the NZ Defence Force on the heritage significance of the land through the Crown Land Disposal process. The NZHPT is now involved in a working group of key stakeholders established to develop ideas and options for a future reserve.