

N Z H P T

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE SURVEYS

SITE RECORDING IN THE TE ARAI POINT TO POUTAWA STREAM

SAND DUNES, NORTH AUCKLAND

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ABSTRACT

An Historic Places Trust survey was conducted in an area between Te Arai Point and Poutawa Stream, North Auckland, in November 1974. It was carried out because the area is threatened by new forest plantings and also because the beach area may soon be made more accessible to the public. A small number of sites were found among the sand dunes surveyed and these are mainly middens. Other sites discovered include one pa, one hearth area, and a stone working area. The report is designed to explain what was found in the area as well as to give some archaeological interpretations of the finds.

INTRODUCTION

The Te Arai Point-Poutawa Stream Archaeological Survey was carried out under the auspices of the Historic Places Trust in November 1974. The sites discovered are marked on the accompanying map (Fig.1) and their descriptions, as recorded in the New Zealand Archaeological Association's site record files, are listed (Table 2). The report deals with the survey method applied, definitions of site types found, and a discussion of the nature of the evidence found. Possible cultural interpretations and problems for future archaeological work in the area are also raised.

The survey was undertaken for two very important reasons. Firstly, sites in this area are in the process of being slowly obliterated owing to the planting of a pine forest intended to stabilise dune movement. The second factor is that the Auckland Regional Authority (A.R.A.), has recently provided an interim report describing a coastal resource area which includes the survey area (A.R.A. Interim Report, 1974). The two provided the impetus to apply for funds from the Historic Places Trust to conduct the survey described in this report.

METHOD OF SURVEY

During November of 1974 two one-week periods of investigation were devoted to the area bounded by Te Arai Point in the north, Poutawa Stream in the south and by Lakes Slipper, Spectacle and Tomarata in the west. During these two weeks sites were recorded in the following order; firstly along the beach front, secondly northwards from the southern forest blocks and

finally out of the forestry area to surrounding farms and some beach dunes north of the Te Arai Point-Eyres Point area. All of the survey was carried out individually by the author.

It was originally intended to cover the area in a prescribed pattern. Upon arriving in the area, however, it was found that conditions would not allow this. The majority of land had been planted in pinus radiata in 1972-73, and what was not forested was under lupins, tussock and marram grass. These conditions generally were not conducive to the discovery of sites. Accordingly site recording was normally restricted to localities with limited vegetation. These areas normally consisted of clay or sand pans of low fertility or of sand affected by the presence of salt water (Fig.10.)

All sites (including dubious cases) observed on the clay pans were initially recorded on both a forestry map and on the NZMS 1 sheet N29. The locations of these sites have since been recorded on Forest Service aerial photographs (negatives available at the N.Z. Forest Service, Auckland), and on the map included here (Fig.1). There could be some errors in the exact positioning of sites on both the aerial photographs and the map, given the technique of recording used in the field, but it is considered that these are minimal. The method of survey employed, that of a single person investigating an area and recording its sites, could also be questioned, but it is felt that the method was in this instance generally satisfactory. Of course, a second opinion in the field would, on most occasions, have been beneficial and helped to ensure full coverage - a possibility which could well be considered in the planning of future survey projects. Sites were recorded as found in searching those areas

where vegetation permitted access and allowed their discovery

DEFINITION OF SITE TYPES

Rather than set out separate definitions I have used those established by Davidson's Te Paki Archaeological Survey (1971; 4-5) and added others not included there. This ensures that data from the two areas are comparable.

Pa - sites which show visible evidence of fortification in the form of earthworks, particularly ditches and banks, but also certain kinds of terraces with steep scarps.

Terraces - artificially levelled areas where a flat surface has been obtained by cutting back into the hillside and using the spoil for building up the area in the front.

Midden - a general term for deposits of cultural debris, particularly but not necessarily in the form of shells, often associated with other evidence of occupation. On inland sites midden is visible only where disturbed by stock, rabbits, fence posts etc, or by erosion. 'In sand dunes midden are the main kind of archaeological evidence' (Davidson 1971;4-5).

Hearth - (a category included here to cover site N29/36, an area where there is visible evidence, in the form of scoops with charcoal or stone alignments, to show where hearths have been laid or cut into the surface.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND DISTRIBUTION

The predominant type of site found in the sand dunes were middens. The remainder comprised a pa N29/32, an area of hearths from a possible prehistoric cooking place N29/36, a site consisting of rocks including many obsidian flakes

N29/33c and a possible storage pit recorded as site 17 in the field survey, but not filed as a site.

The midden sites themselves can be divided into three categories: (a) foredune middens, deflated and/or blown out, (b) midden lenses, (c) backdune middens, deflated and/or blown out.

These distinctions have been made for the sake of locality and to show where middens have remained intact.

(a) Foredune middens are represented by only one example, site N29/37, a large windblown foredune midden similar to many others in the area between Pakiri and Mangawhai Heads. The main species of shell represented here was tuatua (Amphidesma subtriangulatum).

(b) Midden lens sites were found in five places, sites N29/31, 34a, 34c, 35b and 30. Except for site N29/30 these are predominantly of tuatua; site N29/30 had a large proportion of cockle (Chione stutchburyi). The main component of these lenses is shellfish but they also include some charcoal and rock.

The lens sites are all found just above a dark peaty layer in the soil, except for N29/30, and this I took to be indicative of circumstances in the prehistoric past, i.e., possible evidence of former swampy conditions.

(c) Backdune deflated sites are perhaps the most difficult sites to attribute as being sites in a proper sense. Some of them may have been turned over many times during the movement of sand-dunes whereas others are likely to be just recent exposures, still intact, uncovered by the wind. It is because of this that I divided such middens into two categories:

(1) those that can be positively identified as remains of prehistoric middens, N29/33a, 33b, 34b, 34d and 35a.

(2) those which may reveal the possible existence of prehistoric activities but do not qualify as certain sites because they are represented by shells alone.

To call this second category of sites middens may be too presumptive so their existence only has been noted in the field notes (sites 3, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21.) It should be said here, however, that the evidence may be an indication of the former presence of sites in the near vicinity.

Middens, although predominating, did not constitute the most important site discoveries. The pa, N29/32, and the hearth area, N29/36, were more significant; in the former because of its size and visibly stratified occupation levels and in the latter because it indicated the diversity of sites which were once available in the area.

The pa is situated on a hummock covered in native bush in the east corner of block 31 of the forestry. It is conspicuous from a long distance and since it is so well defended naturally by local topography it may have been used as a pa. This is not certain, however, as it has no structural features on its surface indicating that it had once been occupied. They may exist but are not visible because of heavy undergrowth and humus. On the southeast face eroding down the hill one can find several different midden lenses. These indicate its use for habitation on more than one occasion although not necessarily for any long period of time. This and its location, seemed sufficient to consider it as possibly being a pa. It is the only conspicuous site in the area and is also called a pa by

the present population. The midden lenses in evidence are composed of varying material, some being predominantly cockle (C. stutchburyi), some predominantly catseye (Lunella smaragda); the main midden itself has predominantly tuatua (A. subtriangulatum).

The hearth area, with possible associated postholes, is located in the southernmost block of the forestry on top of a dark grey clay pan, which in turn is on top of a lighter yellowish clay pan. This site has three positive firescoops, two with charcoal in them and one with shells. The postholes are not entirely certain and, moreover, their positioning represents no particular pattern. However, the site may well have been a cooking area in the past and therefore is important to our knowledge of prehistoric activity in the area.

DISCUSSION

Archaeological Material

Interpretation of some of the interesting features is attempted here as a means of understanding the prehistoric situation.

The area's interesting features include:

- (1) a peaty-type layer beneath the midden lenses, possibly indicating the existence of a former swamp.
- (2) the different shellfish represented on sites, which throw light on prehistoric exploitation patterns. The shellfish in the middens are predominantly tuatua (A. subtriangulatum) with a few toheroa (Amphidesma ventricosum) in site N29/32. At other sites we find scallop (Pecten novaezelandiae), ostrich foot (Struthiolaria populosa), cockle (C. stutchburyi) and

catseye (L. smaragda). The cockle most likely came from the Mangawhai Harbour to the north, unless a former lagoon or estuary exists behind the sand dunes south of Te Arai Point.

In an attempt to substantiate the fact that these shells are available in this area I collected from the beach a small shell sample which included the following shell species: Amphidema subtriangulatum, Pecten novaezelandiae, Chione stutchburyi, Struthiolaria populosa, Tawera spissa (morning star shell), Zethalia zealandica (wheel shell) and from the inland lake some Hyridella (freshwater mussel) was collected. Possibly Hyridella menziesi (or H.m. depauperatus).

(3) evidence that it has been used for short occupation.

This most likely would be on a seasonal or sporadic basis only, as the middens are small. The presence of certain characteristics in 12 cockle investigated in section corroborates this. The cockles, taken from N29/32, the small pa site, indicate the presence of a dark bank or winter occupation (Swadling 1972;66). Admittedly, this was only a very small sample from a single exposed section, but it does indicate that some of the cockles in this lens were collected at this season. It is not possible to know whether it is more widely representative.

Problems for further work

It would appear impractical to conduct additional investigations in this area apart from those on the sites which have midden lenses intact. All of the other sites are too windblown to think that closer examination would prove worthwhile unless new methods of tackling deflated surfaces are devised. Even then, some of these sites will prove worthless on account of modern man's disturbance.

Forestry machines and workers have been in the area for over ten years and therefore anything on the surface has had a chance of being removed. This could be a reason why no artifacts except obsidian and chert flakes were found. The obsidian was collected from a stone industry site N29/33c along with all the associated rock material. It is hoped in the future to have the obsidian sourced, but little else at present can be examined because of the heavily eroded surfaces on all of the material. These plus other obsidian flakes from site N29/32 and chert flakes from site N29/33b may indicate prehistoric rock movement patterns and will be kept in the Anthropology Dept., University of Auckland in the meantime. As far as the middens are concerned, however, again only those intact would be worth investigating because the rest have to my knowledge had a mechanical tree planter run through them. Finally, if any work were to be done it would have to be within the next few years before either the now small trees grow too large or before the Forest Service find methods to plant trees successfully in the clay pan areas.

SUMMARY

In concluding I would like to point out certain aspects of this survey which show firstly how important it is that such a scheme be reinstated every year and secondly how important an adjunct this survey is to planning bodies, such as the A.R.A. Essentially it gives them an overall view of the archaeological remains in an area.

The area surveyed is currently threatened by the growth of young pine trees. Only those sites not amongst the planted

pine trees - sites N29/32, N29/37, N29/30 and N29/27 and 28 are safe from being covered over by new forest. These sites however, as explained above, are all heavily eroded and only the midden lens sites and a hearth area could warrant further investigation in the light of present techniques. It is fortunate then that some information has been collected from this area before it is obliterated. In all probability the sites recorded are representative of the type of sites to be expected in the dunes in this area, and contrast with adjacent areas and other site types. Therefore surveys such as these are vitally important so as to sample all areas in collecting information on New Zealand's past.

Archaeological surveys, as in this instance, can also play a part in helping local body planning. The A.R.A. has presented an interim report on the Cape Rodney to Mangawhai Heads coastal resource area which pointed out the lack of archaeological material known from this particular location. They intend to open up the beach and rocky shore areas of the coastline to allow greater public recreational use of the area. This report covers only a small portion of the area considered by the A.R.A., however, it is felt here that some comment could be made as to the feasibility of their scheme.

Should they intend to open up the foreshore of Pakiri Beach between Te Arai Point and Poutawa Stream only one large foredune midden is endangered. However, north of Eyres Point (and Te Arai Point) to Mangawhai Heads in an area not yet intensively surveyed, there are many more foredune middens (N29/27). In

fact a mile expanse of foredune contains over sixteen large windblown and eroding middens. An area such as this should have public access limited pending more thorough investigation. It is important then that site surveys be continued by planning bodies themselves, especially as these bodies are required to include archaeology in their consideration but seldom possess the required information which would allow proper assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Area - Cape Rodney to Mangawhai Heads.

TABLE 1 - Site types

Site Type	Number
<u>Pa</u>	1
Hearth	1
Storage pit (?)	1
Stone working area	1
Middens -	
a) Foredune deflated	1
b) Midden lenses	5
c) Backdune deflated	
i) positive sites	5
ii) possible indicators of sites	10

N.B. These are discrete sites. Many have been recorded together under the same site number and others have had their existence only noted.








TABLE 2 - List of sites

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Field No.</u>	<u>Site Description</u>
N29/31	1	Midden lens with <u>tuatua</u> , some burnt; 20 cm thick; roadside cutting; associated with peat layer.
N29/32	2	Pa with midden exposures; shellfish from various midden lenses include catseye, cockle, <u>tuatua</u> and <u>toheroa</u> ; obsidian and chert; middens c. 50 cm below surface of hummock.
	3	Deflated midden represented by a few shells and rocks existence only noted.
N29/33a	4	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; rock and charcoal
N29/33b	5	Deflated midde; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; rock, charcoal, obsidian and chert flakes.
N29/33c	6	Deflated rock working area; rocks and obsidian - all material collected.
	7	Midden; revealed by rabbit warren; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> , scallop, ostrich foot; existence only noted.
N29/34a	8	Midden lens above dark peat layer; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> ; rock and charcoal; heavily eroded.
N29/34b	9	Deflated midden; recently exposed; shellfish, ostrich foot, catseye and scallop; rocks.
N29/34c	10	Midden lens; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; above dark peat layer.
	11	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> ; existence only noted.
N29/34d	12	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> , cockle and ostrich foot; rocks.
	13	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; only a few fragments of shell; existence only noted.
	14	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; widespread midden; existence only noted.

<u>Site No.</u>	<u>Field No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
	15	Deflated midden; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; existence only noted
	16, 18 and 19	Deflated middens; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> - others unidentifiable; existence only noted.
	17	Storage pit (?); in sand overlooking Lake Tomarata; existence only noted.
N29/35a	20	Deflated midden; disturbed by tree planter; shellfish; <u>tuatua</u> and ostrich foot; rocks and charcoal.
	21	Deflated midden; shellfish: cockle; represented by very few shells; existence only noted.
N29/35b	22	Midden lens; roadside cutting; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> ; charcoal.
N29/36	23	Hearth area; two scoops with charcoal and one with shells; rock piles; possible postholes; on top of a dark pan, possibly the aforementioned peat layer.
N29/37	24	Deflated midden; foredune site; shellfish: <u>tuatua</u> , scallop and ostrich foot; rocks.
N29/30	25	Midden lens; shellfish: cockle; charcoal; almost on top of the Arai Point.
N29/27		Deflated middens; about one mile of beach front has at least 16 large midden heaps; shellfish: cockle, scallop, <u>tuatua</u> , ostrich foot, <u>paua</u> (<u>Haliotis iris</u>); fish bones.
N29/28		Terrace and middens; midden on the terrace and exposures of other middens elsewhere in c. 100 m ² area; shellfish: cockle, <u>tuatua</u> .
N29/29		Pa at Eyres Point. Now destroyed by council quarry. Midden and other evidence of activity seen at the quarry. Mr R.D. Bull of Mangawhai camped very near the site during World War Two and said it had pits, terraces and a ditch (?).

TE ARAI POINT - POUTAWA STREAM SITE SURVEY

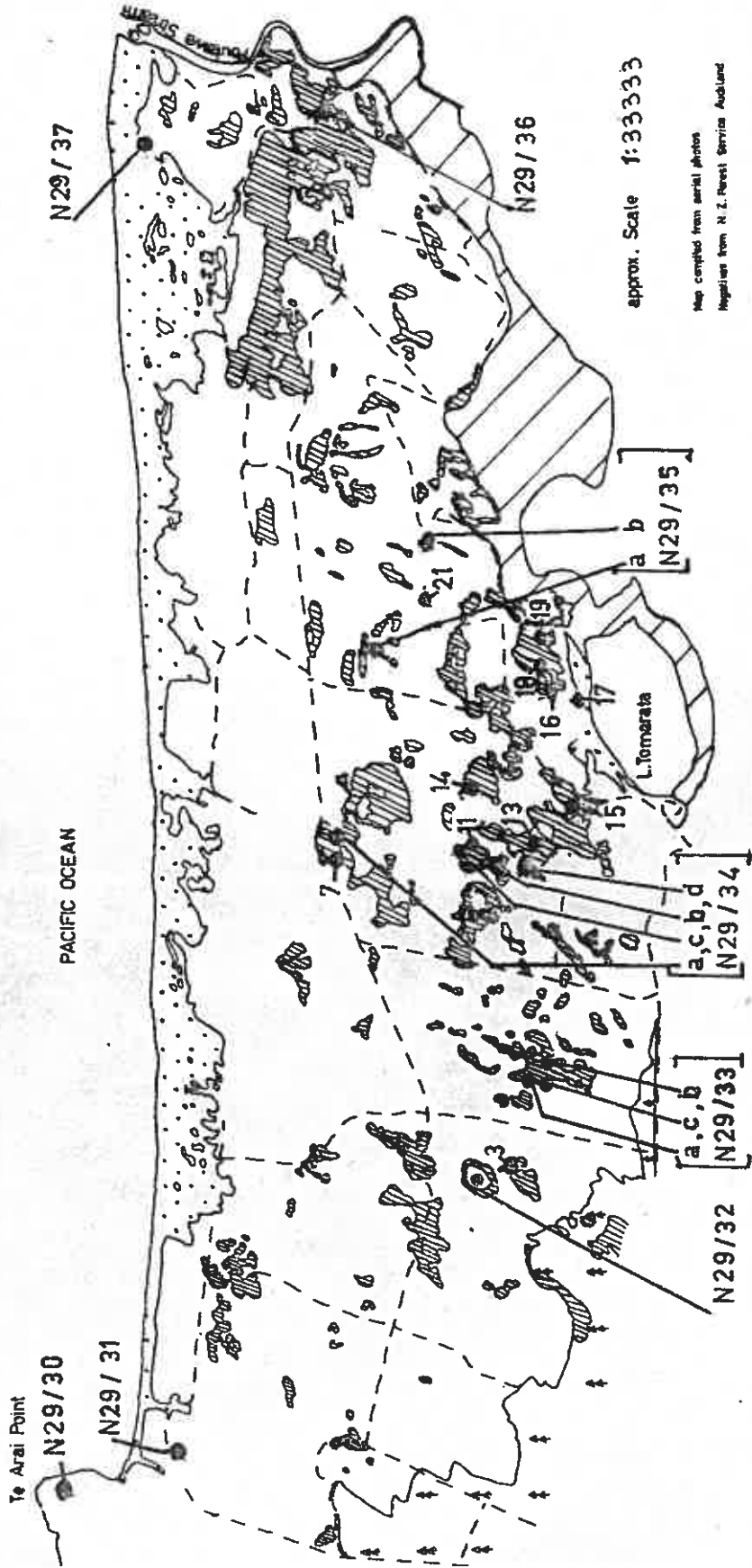
w. s. well surveyed
 u. s. unsurveyed

-  Sand (W.S.)
-  Pine trees (large) (U.S.)
-  Swamp (U.S.)
-  Pine trees (small) with (U.S.) lupins and grasses
-  Clay and sand pans (W.S.)
-  Sites N29/ site no. 3 field no.
-  Roads (W.S.)

approx. N

PP

Fig. 1.



approx. Scale 1:33333

Map compiled from aerial photos
 Negatives from N. Z. Forest Service Auckland