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A Hundred Years of Otago Archaeology: A Critical Review

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It should be made clear from the start that this review is a consideration of archaeology not prehistory. Under this title is included an examination of surface collecting, methods of digging and recording, objectives of excavation, qualifications of the participants, the ultimate repository of the artefacts recovered, financial aspects, and personal characteristics of the key figures of Otago archaeology where these have relevance.

The original purpose behind this research was to explain the complex situation in which Otago archaeologists find themselves today, a situation which prevails more or less in many other parts of New Zealand. Symptomatic of this are the difficulties encountered by even the large provincial museums in the acquisition of the finer pieces of Maori material culture, the attraction of professional archaeologists away from local studies to research programmes conducted overseas, the continued prevalence of private curio-hunting by excavation, the decline in interest in local archaeological societies, the widening gap between professional and layman, the recurrence of obsessive provincialism, and what seems to be a growing distrust of the archaeologist's objectives by the Maori community.

No historical analysis can hope to elucidate the cause of provincialism, for example, or of private curio-hunting; but it can indicate that at one period, provincialism was a theme common to many aspects of life from politics to sport, and that curio-hunting was both the pastime of the rich and respectable, and an additional source of intellectual stimulation to educated men trained in a variety of natural sciences. In both these cases the attitude or activity in question has become a source of dissatisfaction long after its original development. The growth of the discipline of archaeology in New Zealand has rendered them anachronistic, and, because of their competitive and undisciplined nature, a threat to future progress along currently acceptable lines. Needless to say, many current precepts

by which past attitudes are judged and condemned will themselves be the subject of future criticism.

Interest in prehistoric remains was first evident in Otago well over one hundred years ago. W. B. D. Mantell, son of Gideon Mantell who was intimately connected with the rise of European prehistoric studies, was New Zealand's first recorded archaeologist, possessing that all-encompassing Victorian curiosity characteristic of the times. His brief visit to Awamoa in North Otago in 1852, which involved some strenuous and artefactually productive digging, led him to suggest man's contemporaneity with the moa, an issue which raised decades of controversy mostly because of conflict with traditional evidence.² At this time, however, the European residents of Otago had little or no interest in this find; indeed, publication of this discovery appeared only in Wellington papers, in 1853.³ However, the colourful, dogmatic and thoroughly professional von Haast may have been attracted by this report to experience for himself the archaeological riches of Murihiku beaches. During the 1870s he dug in Otago at Shag River (1872) and at the mouth of the Otokai Creek (1879) at Brighton.⁴

The discovery of these sites cannot be definitely attributed to him, but it does seem that he was the first to excavate them. As a prehistorian von Haast was advanced for his times. He was interested in the economy of the Moa-hunters as evidenced in midden,⁵ and was thoroughly acquainted with Palaeolithic research in Europe. His knowledge of zoology and geology put him in the foremost ranks of these disciplines. It seems likely however, that his view of European prehistory seriously affected his interpretation of the New Zealand archaeological evidence—after all, prehistoric archaeology had not yet emerged as a separate discipline from geology. Perhaps for this very reason Alexander Mackay, lacking von Haast's professional training, was in some respects the better equipped New Zealand archaeologist. Mackay, however, did not excavate in Otago.

Strictly speaking, neither Mantell nor von Haast can be described as Otago archaeologists. Even B. S. Booth who dug at Shag River as early as 1874, under instructions from Hutton, is not really a 'founding father' of Otago archaeology. Although he spent three to four months trenching at this site, his objectives were primarily moas and not Moa-hunters.⁶ His contemporaries, Murison and Hector, were also involved in the 'age of the moa' controversy, working in Central Otago from the 1860s.⁷

The effective trend setters of Otago archaeology were in fact the miners, especially those digging for gold at Shag River, and farmers, whose ploughs revealed stone tools of a race of which they knew few details except their association with moas. This association was probably the spark for the kindling of serious curio-hunting which was to reach its greatest intensity in the provinces of Otago and Canterbury. The apparent absence of Moa-hunter camps elsewhere in New Zealand may have delayed the growth of fossicking in these areas. Fifty years later, the demand for artefacts, both as curios and as objects of monetary value (especially those in nephrite), was such that attention was directed at the Classic Period North Island sites.⁸

Two sites were of great importance in this era of private collecting (lasting from approximately 1860 to 1919)—Shag River Mouth and Murdering Beach. Of the former, few details are recorded except of von Haast's visit in 1872, and Hutton's in 1875.⁹ Booth's trenches dug in 1874 were found by David Teviotdale in the

course of his collecting and digging at this site between 1914 and 1924.¹⁰ Mining for gold, which was present in the adjacent area, went on for some decades in the 19th century, and the great deposit of moa bones first noticed by the miners was sent by a man named Hollis or Hollons to the bone mills, 'some four or six railway trucks of them'.¹¹ There was still plenty to be found when two young men of superior education and means developed an interest in curios which became widespread among the professional men of Otago society. Frederick Revans Chapman and Augustus Hamilton began digging together at Shag River late in the 1880s. Hamilton kept plans and records but these were never published; however, Skinner notes¹² that Chapman 'carefully preserved the three adzes found by him below beds of interlaced moa-bones'.¹³ What survives of Hamilton's notes suggests that stratigraphy was of some importance, for a section drawing does appear.¹⁴ At that time, the controversy concerning the relationship of Moa-hunter and Maori was still very much alive. Von Haast (who died in 1888) had earlier maintained that neither polished tools nor greenstone occurred in Moa-hunter levels. Hamilton's section, however, drawn in 1890, showed this to be untrue. The key find was in fact made by Hamilton who found a polished greenstone implement under a thick bed of moa bones.¹⁵ To this extent stratigraphy mattered, but on the whole the trenching was untidy and primarily designed for efficient recovery of curios rather than information.¹⁶ The width of trenches, for example, varied according to the richness of the deposit.

At the time of these excavations Hamilton was a newcomer to Otago. Originally a teacher in the North Island, he was appointed Registrar at Otago University in 1890. In Hawkes Bay he had collected wood carvings, flax fabrics, fishing gear, and other ethnographic items. In Otago, according to Skinner,¹⁷ the most interesting part of his collection was acquired by collecting and excavating on the Otago beaches. Like von Haast, he studied and published on botany and zoology, and these wide ranging interests made him a typical figure of the Otago Institute at the time. Indeed, he was President and Secretary of the Institute for several terms. In the early 1900s he was active in promoting a national Maori Museum and was rewarded by being appointed as Director of the Colonial Museum in 1902 (afterwards the Dominion Museum).¹⁸ In return, it appears that the Government, and in particular the Colonial Museum, acquired his extensive collection.

Frederick Chapman was educated in Australia and on the Continent and settled down to a law practice in Dunedin 18 years before Hamilton's arrival. According to Skinner,¹⁹

'his fieldwork in ethnology was confined to collecting on the rich Otago sites . . . the summer holidays spent with his family on these delightful beaches, still unspoiled by weekend shacks, yielded the bulk of the great collection afterwards presented to the Otago Museum.'

It is believed that the Waikouaiti estuary area was most frequently visited during these vacations. Chapman also held office in and contributed much to the Otago Institute which must have been the chief meeting place of the well-educated collectors. One is told that Chapman

'boasted proudly on two points, namely that nothing in his collection was purchased and that he had collected the rough unpolished tools and pieces that all other collectors had thrown away.'²⁰

How then did the majority of collectors operate? When visiting Murdering Beach, the other key site during this period, Hamilton noted in 1890 that

'the sandflat is riddled with holes which have been dug by a man named Reynolds, a most industrious collector, who makes his living by this work. On the edge of these diggings I found the various pieces of stone and bone which he had turned up when digging and thrown on the bank, but had not taken them away, the kind of specimen not being of market value.'²¹

Hamilton, like Chapman, was interested in these rougher items and was proud to collect them. It is interesting to note that Chapman's partner in law, John White, held no such scruples in this regard, and indeed purchased much of his his collection from the notorious Reynolds.

The activities at Murdering Beach during this period are more fully documented than those taking place at Shag River. Murdering Beach had been settled in the 1840s by Driver and his Maori wife, and later by the Colemans in the 1850s. Mr Coleman picked up a patu at the beach about 1860 and his widow who became Mrs Hunter found a Cook medal in 1863. Murray Thomson lived with the Hunters between 1862 and 1865, and records that many items were turned up by the plough about this time.²² These were added to his own and others' surface collections. He remarks, however,

'it was not until 1883 that methodical, scientific (*sic*) digging with the spade was introduced. The credit for imparting method to the work belongs to Alfred Reynolds.

Alfred's plan was to prospect round for a whare, or the remains of a whare, and when found, to work back through the hut, leaving plenty of room for tailings. He would first open out a wide face in the sand, at the spot where he wished to operate. He would then gradually cut this away in vertical downward slices, throwing clear the sand he dislodged, so as not to hamper operations. By this method he appreciably lessened his chance of losing articles through re-burying them . . .

In many places on Murdering Beach excavation disclosed three distinct Maori 'marks', in other words, three distinct occupation levels. These were dark layers separated, usually, by a thickness of clean white sand. Articles were sought for in each 'mark', but it was in the topmost 'mark', the most recent occupation level, that most of the manufactured greenstone articles were found.

Digging was an interesting occupation and, if the ground proved fairly good, was intensely fascinating . . . The digger's great ambition was to strike a fireplace. He knew then, that he was in the centre of a whare and that he should work outwards to the walls where the Maori in most instances kept his valuables.'²³

Murray Thomson was quick to learn these methods, and remarked, at the age of ninety, that

'I found digging to be not only interesting, but beneficial, and I am convinced that to that form of exercise is due in great measure the excellent health I have enjoyed throughout life.'²⁴

Reynolds was assisted by his three brothers and another five or six friends. While Thomson gave or sold items to other collectors such as George Thomson, Willi Fels (Treasurer of the Otago Institute), and much later to the Otago Museum, the Reynolds material was usually distributed in two ways: to Murray Aston, a

Government Insurance agent, who would pay ten pounds for a *hei tiki* and who sold principally to tourists, and to John White, the aforementioned barrister who made a very large and important private collection, of which two thirds at least was from Murdering Beach.

The history of the John White collection is very complex. According to Skinner,²⁵ on White's death in 1904 the collection was divided in two: nephrite and non-nephrite. This latter, commercially less valuable half was given to the Otago Museum in 1922 by his son, Neil White. The nephrite half was valued by Hamilton at five hundred pounds and sold to an Englishman named Robinson. It was not unpacked in England until after his death in 1912, and was then offered for sale. Selected items were bought by the British Museum, and the museums at Bristol and Devizes, while the Pitt-Rivers Museum also obtained a part. The bulk of the collection, however, went to Captain T. E. Donne who kept the *hei tiki* and other pendants, but sold the rest to the Field Museum, Chicago. Donne later sold the pendants to Armytage and these, through the co-operation of Kenneth Webster, were returned to New Zealand. So after all these years selected *hei tiki* of White's Murdering Beach collection returned to Dunedin and were placed in the Otago Museum.

Skinner commented that with the death of John White and the departure from Dunedin of Frederick Chapman and Augustus Hamilton, interest in Otago archaeology languished.²⁶ Certainly the professional men dropped from the scene, but men like the Reynolds brothers still had ready markets. Alexander Thomson and others continued accumulating items for their private collections. Skinner's first meeting with Murray Thomson took place in 1910 at Murdering Beach, part of which Thomson actually owned, and from which Skinner surface collected. In 1910 T. M. Hocken made the first substantial gift of Maori material ever received by the Otago Museum which up to that time had a decidedly zoological bias under the curatorships of Hutton and Parker and later of Benham, all three professors of biology. One such gift was from Skinner, a massive bone comb collected at Warrington.²⁷ Skinner was a student at the time, studying classics and biology at Otago University. It may be assumed then, that surface collecting and digging continued throughout this period. Documentation between 1904 and 1919 is sparse and it is impossible to list the sites investigated, or even the main collectors involved.

In 1912 the Otago Museum Annual Report noted that²⁸

'Mr H. D. Skinner B.A., an authority on Maori objects arranged a new table case in the Hocken Hall, with fishhooks, sinkers, and crude stone implements. He also rearranged some of the other cases of Maori articles, to which he made some additions from his own collection.'

This ushers in the beginning of the next phase in Otago archaeology, aptly described as the museum period by Groube.²⁹ Two men were outstanding: H. D. Skinner and David Teviotdale. Perhaps Skinner's most important attribute was that he believed that a museum was the only proper home of the evidence of prehistory, where, correctly arranged along typological and technological lines it could tell the story of the past to the public at large.³⁰ When considering Teviotdale one has to imagine a man who could excavate 160 cubic feet in one day,³¹ and who could claim at the beginning of his paid career as an archaeologist:

'The sites I have worked over are Waitaki River Mouth, Shag River, Kaikai Beach, Harrington Point, Onepoto, Little Papanui, Sandfly Bay, Anderson's Bay, Greenhills near the Bluff, and Wakapatu near Orepuke.'³²

This was in 1932—a year later he could add Oruarangi, Waipapa Landing, Kaikoura, D'Urville Island, and other sites in Nelson and Marlborough. He also failed to mention Hooper's Inlet, Taieri Mouth, Rakaia Mouth and Tumbledown Bay on Banks Peninsula. Between 1936 and 1940 he added a few of the famous South Otago sites, for example, Kings Rock and Papatowai. After 1942 he moved to Invercargill, and although of advanced years he continued to work on sites along the shores of Foveaux Strait until he died in 1958 aged 88. In contrast to Teviotdale's obsessive preoccupation with actual digging, it is very much easier to understand Skinner's actions and attitudes to archaeology—he had several roles to play: he was a university lecturer in Anthropology; he was also an important figure in the city and was often called on to support cultural activities and work in close association with the patrons of the arts. Perhaps foremost, however, was his ambition to create a museum whose ethnographic collections were unrivalled. The interplay between these factors can be both observed and understood; with David Teviotdale, however, understanding does not come so easily—the impetus behind his endless archaeological labours is obscure.

Teviotdale was born in Central Otago in 1870, briefly educated, and then put to



Papatowai 1936. D. Teviotdale (left) watches P. George. In the foreground moa bones are stacked like firewood.

work looking after his father's sheep and mining alluvial gold.³³ At the age of 42 he gave up agriculture and moved to Palmerston where he opened a shop as a bookseller and stationer. When 44 he began private digging at Shag River. This continued for ten years until in 1924 he moved to Dunedin. Over the next five years he worked systematically over the local beaches until, aged 59, he was appointed as Assistant to the Keeper of Anthropology at the Otago Museum.³⁴ Skinner allowed him a free hand in his work, but when Teviotdale turned 67, the age of retirement, Skinner could only arrange an unpaid position as Honorary Archaeologist. Teviotdale displayed an extraordinary energy at a time of life when other men would adopt a quiet indoor hobby. This energy alone made him an important figure in Otago archaeology. He admitted in 1932 that he had started as a curio-hunter but, he says,

'fortunately before much damage had been done I was given sound advice as to the proper way of carrying out the work. Since then my work has been done with two objects in view; first, securing information, secondly curios.'³⁵

This advice came from Skinner in 1919. Teviotdale wrote, for example,

'I commenced this register at the request of Mr H. D. Skinner as a slight record where the adzes etc. have been found.'³⁶

In fact the map of Shag River which he supplied at the front of this register could not have been vaguer.³⁷ Once Teviotdale settled in Dunedin, Skinner was able to effect other changes, for from 1926 the diaries become more detailed. In these, every day spent excavating is described, from time and means of arrival, where digging took place, what was found, who was present, to details concerning his meals and his trip home. Until he was employed by the Museum he also noted the day's expenses. Certainly to some extent, with unusual items, one can with some effort establish provenance to layer and trench by use of these diaries and a few other notes. On the whole, however, the aim of securing information was a rather shallow one.³⁸ In his synthetic papers, which were influenced by Skinner, Teviotdale expressed concern with the following issues:³⁹ Do these ancient sites show evidence of a culture different from the Maori culture? Has there ever been in New Zealand a race different from the Maori? On what sites is there evidence of consumption of the moa for food? Did the Moa-hunters use greenstone and to what extent? These questions could be answered to the satisfaction of Teviotdale and Skinner by trenching supplemented by surface collecting (which Teviotdale called 'fossicking'), with only a brief concern for stratigraphy.

Teviotdale wrote in 1932 that a handicap to his work was

'the great amount of digging that has been done in the past by energetic collectors who thought of nothing but amassing collections of curios, and therefore kept no record of the position or nature of the deposit in which the articles were found. Such collections have little archaeological value, and the indiscriminate digging that produced them has completely ruined more than one important site.'⁴⁰

It should be made quite clear that Teviotdale's records were specifically oriented around the issues mentioned earlier. Apparently no information was recorded which was irrelevant to these narrow themes. This might be viewed as problem solving archaeology at its worst.⁴¹ By today's standards Teviotdale's excavations were at the level of the indiscriminate digging that he abhorred. One might suppose that his lack of formal training coupled with age produced some resistance to adopting

more scientific methods. In support one could cite Skinner's remark in Teviotdale's obituary:

'His excavation technique was his own, applied with keen eyesight trained to close observation by alluvial gold-mining . . .'⁴²

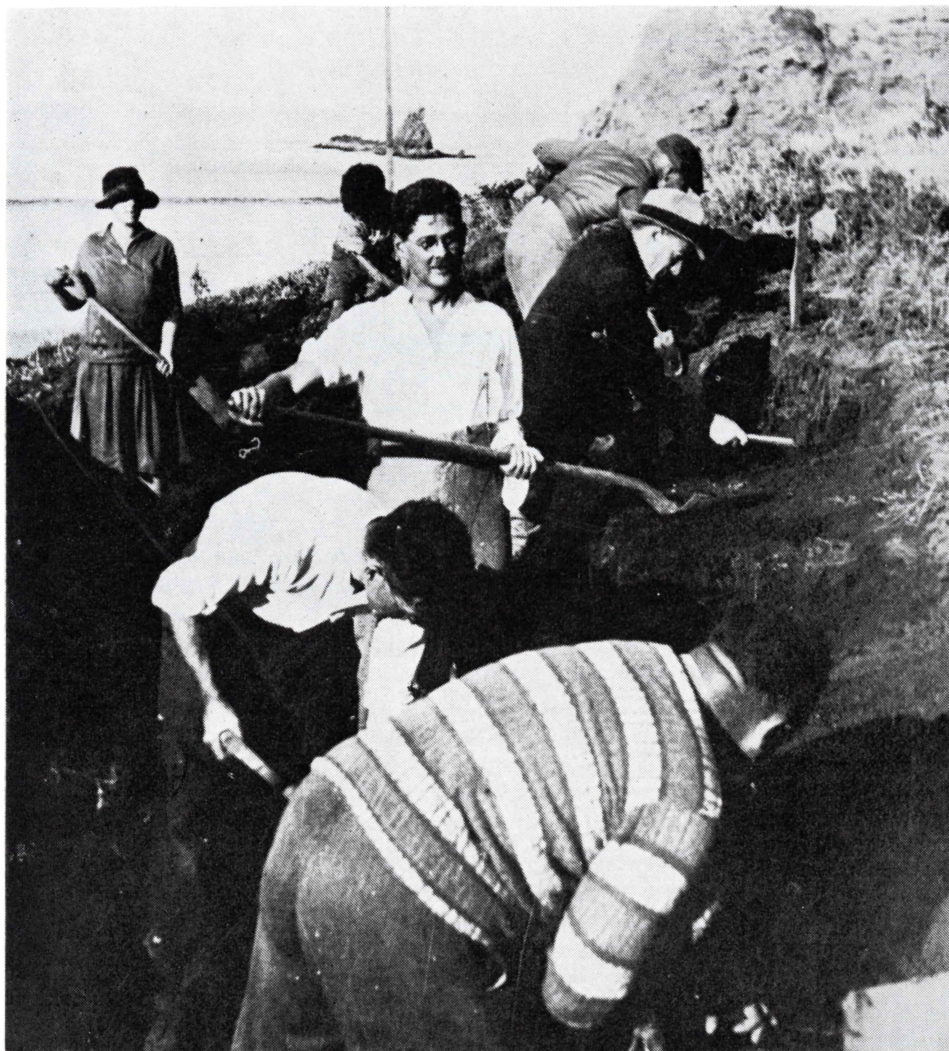
The more reasonable explanation, perhaps, was that no-one in Otago in the 1920s and 30s knew anything about archaeology, at least by comparison with Alexander Mackay's work, some six decades earlier.

To document this one needs to go back to Skinner's first years as Keeper in Anthropology. Skinner's appointment to the staff of the Otago Museum in January 1919 was due to the gift by Willi Fels of £1000, a gift later increased forty times over. Willi Fels' intention was to secure a keeper who should develop the museum's anthropological collections. Dr Andrew Cameron, Chancellor of Otago University, pointed out that if the appointee would undertake to teach anthropology as a university subject the gift of £1000 would carry a Government pound for pound subsidy. To this the Education Department agreed. A practical difficulty arose in the lack of any museum room suitable as a keeper's office. However, at this time, the University advertised the appointment of a librarian in charge of the Hocken Library at an annual salary of £25. Skinner was appointed, holding the position for the next nine years, and securing a warm and attractive room in the Hocken Wing. Skinner's duties were thus threefold: the administration of the Hocken Library; the teaching of Anthropology; the curation and development of the anthropological collections of the Otago Museum. It was the view of Fels and of Skinner himself that the third was the most important, and that the most important sub-section was the prehistory of New Zealand. About 1924, under his guiding hand, interest in local and general archaeology had revived to the extent that an Archaeological Section of the Otago Branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand was formed. In January 1925 the Section, comprising well educated young people, mostly students and friends of Skinner, undertook on behalf of the Otago Museum, excavations at Murdering Beach. Skinner admits that

'No member had received instruction in archaeological field methods or had previously taken part in any archaeological excavation.'⁴³

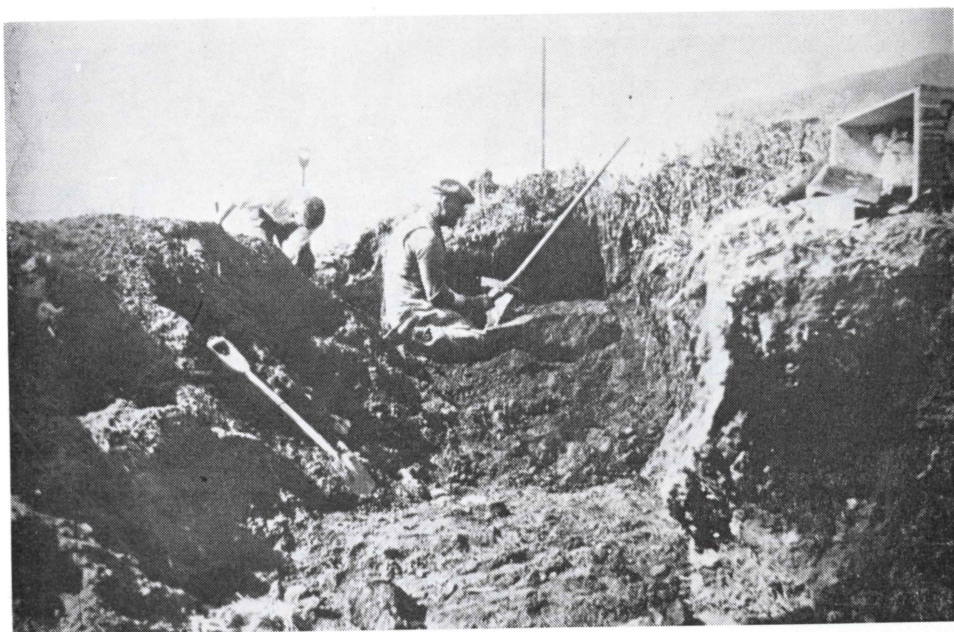
The majority of the party were women to whom removal of the overburden presented such difficulties that the lowest occupation level could not be investigated. Skinner advocated the use of 'mechanical excavators or a team of professional shovellers.'⁴⁴ The Archaeological Section spent three seasons trenching at Murdering Beach, and two seasons at Little Papanui.⁴⁵ There are signs of improvement, however, by the 1930s. Although Teviotdale was still using a grubber, small fire shovel, long-handled shovel, or trenching tool (sent to him from England),⁴⁶ and although one landowner 'told us to give up digging after today as he didn't like the look of the ground after we had done with it,'⁴⁷ some of Teviotdale's helpers seemed a little more sensitive to the prehistoric evidence. For three trips in 1931 Teviotdale was joined by 'two of Mr Skinner's pupils R. Duff and A. Murray.'⁴⁸ On one of these trips,

'Duff came upon a skeleton in the sand between the two occupation layers and Mr Skinner and he uncovered it in a very careful way with the result that we could see how it lay in the grave.'⁴⁹

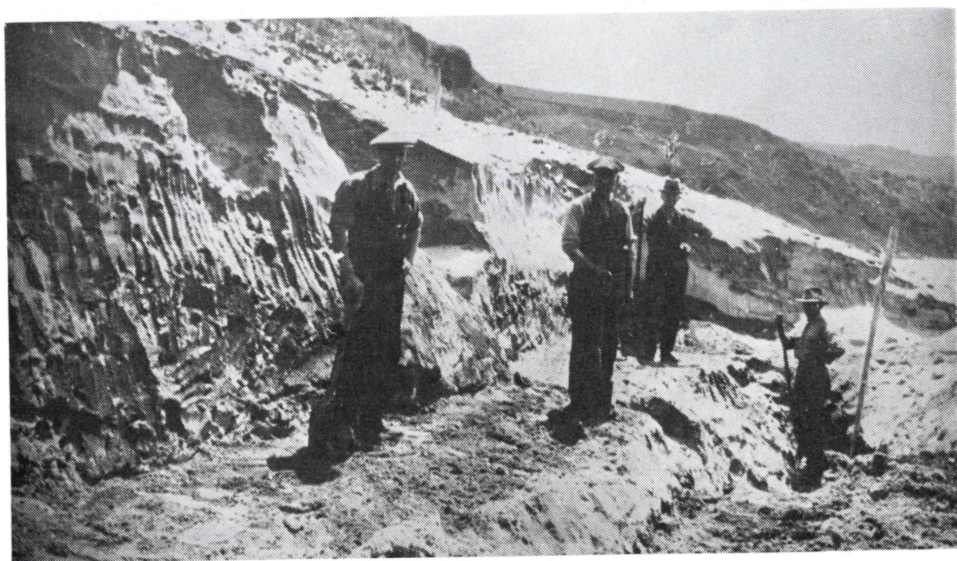


Little Papanui at the time of the excavations conducted by the Archaeological Section. From the front of the trench to the back are R. Steele, H. D. Skinner, W. Fogg, G. Dempster, David Teviotdale, H. R. W. Skinner(?) and Mrs H. D. Skinner.

Three days later Teviotdale remarked: 'Mr Duff is a very fine young man, keen on his work and unassuming in manner, with the opportunities Mr Skinner is giving him he ought to go far.'⁵⁰ None of this care seems to have affected Teviotdale. He mentions that he gapped an adze with his pick,⁵¹ broke a whale-bone peg 11 inches in length with his shovel,⁵² lost his grubber in the debris,⁵³ and excavated a large part of the Little Papanui site by working up the sandy slope throwing the spoil into the water, or directing the stream against the bank to undermine it and allow the spoil to be swept away.⁵⁴ At this time Teviotdale even referred to the site as the 'claim',⁵⁵ and writes that 'Duff got a large sinker in the tailrace.'⁵⁶ Gold mining and



Excavations at Little Papanui. Teviotdale is seated at the end of the trench, grubber in hand. Long-handled shovels and spades are much in evidence. H. D. Skinner appears in the background.



Little Papanui. David Teviotdale appears second from the left.

archaeology appear to have merged in his mind. More disturbing still was his association with Sonny Hovell at Oruarangi. Hovell had obtained some sort of rights to the site in 1931, and by arrangement with Skinner, Teviotdale went north to obtain artefacts for the Museum.⁵⁷ Soon after Teviotdale's return Hovell was charged before Justices of the Peace with 'committing mischief by entering upon the Oruarangi pa and digging holes thereon.'⁵⁸ It was widely known that there was a Maori burial ground on the Oruarangi pa. The court case concerned a complaint that it had been disturbed in the course of excavation, but the charge was dropped.⁵⁹ Teviotdale had been instructed by his director to avoid the burial ground, and this instruction was scrupulously honoured by him.

There is another aspect of this museum period which must be considered. It is perhaps best illustrated from the figures of the ethnographic accessions to the Otago Museum:⁶⁰

1893-95	170 items	1926-35	18,742 items
1896-1905	143 items	1936-45	12,516 items
1906-15	653 items	1946-55	6,263 items
1916-25	10,780 items		

A year before Skinner's appointment, but no doubt through his influence, the first part of the John White collection was given to the Museum. From that year on the Moritzson's material came in in a steady flow. In 1919 the Haines, which had much Dart Valley material, and part of Murray Thomson's collection were presented. In 1921 the bulk of the Chapman collection was registered and displayed. Teviotdale began to give his Shag River material in 1922. 1924 saw 2,000 pieces of the Fels collection donated. Teviotdale gave the final instalment of his material the year he was appointed to the staff; perhaps one could regard it as a dowry. In the same year two local fossickers Steele and Dempster gave over 1,100 pieces. In 1931 S. V. Johnson, who worked consistently with Teviotdale, donated another large collection and even the museum janitors added their share. Lockerbie added to the collections from 1935 and this culminated in the presentation of 240 items in 1947 when he was appointed Education Officer. Many other large donations could be cited for this period. What is important is that a donor to the museum acquired considerable prestige, and the gift was reported in both the local newspapers and in the Annual Reports of the Museum. This influx of material was largely Skinner's work. As early as 1919, Benham, the Curator, wrote:

'It is owing to Mr Skinner's enthusiasm and energy and knowledge that so much new material in this section has been rendered available to the public. It appears that people who have objects of this kind in their possession find it difficult to withstand his powers of persuasion.'⁶¹

However, Skinner was not always successful in obtaining donations. The activities of White, Aston and Reynolds had resulted in some public recognition of the monetary value of artefacts and some collectors treated the museum as any other purchaser. Others gave on an exchange basis, like Sonny Hovell.⁶² That a museum might enter upon an exchange arrangement with a fossicker seems remarkable today, but to Skinner, it seems that the over-riding purpose was to enrich the museum collections by any means available to him. It would have been futile and perhaps impossible for any museum man of this period to hold many scruples as to the

means of acquiring collections. These attitudes have, in the long term, been detrimental to archaeologists and museum alike. Incentives to fossickers, such as prestige and money, undoubtedly increased the destruction of sites and, of more concern to the museum, forced the market value of artefact collections generally beyond the range of any museum purchasing fund. So today, in Otago especially, undisturbed sites are rare and museums cannot afford to buy more than a few artefacts from any collection. The dealers in antiques and curios have the demand and the money and it is believed that many of the best pieces slip quietly out of the country unprovenanced and unpublished. Historically speaking, museum policy must take some part of the blame.

Skinner wrote in 1960⁶³ that Lockerbie's excavation in 1940 of the Kings Rock site opened a new era:

'The method of recording followed there and in his subsequent excavations made theoretically possible the reconstruction of the site with artefacts in place. In the sites excavated before 1940 this could not have been done.'

Skinner's characterization of the pre-1940 period appears to be an accurate assessment. Certainly Lockerbie's work at Kings Rock is impressive for the time in its sophisticated approach to stratigraphy. The site was dug according to the following method:

'The camp-site was pegged out into parallel and adjacent trenches five feet in width. Excavation was commenced at the southernmost end of the area, and proceeding from east to west, trench 3 was opened. The sectional face thus exposed provided accurate data concerning the stratification of the deposit, while the floor served as a working-space. From trench 4 to trench 10, work progressed in a northerly direction, refuse material being deposited in the trench previously excavated . . . As the work progressed, measurements by means of compass and tape were taken, diagrams drawn, objects numbered and details of the excavation recorded in the trench-book. The stratigraphical position of every object of importance was accurately charted, any variation in the character of the deposit was noted, and it is now possible to take a specimen from the collection and after examining its number and referring to the records, point out on the map, or the actual site itself, exactly where the object was found.'⁶⁴

This was a decided improvement on all previous recording techniques used in Otago. Furthermore Lockerbie was aware of the more sophisticated British methodology advanced by Wheeler. In 1954, he wrote:

'Excavation no matter how scientifically conducted, invariably destroys stratigraphy. Stratification should therefore be observed and recorded with minute care . . . That stratigraphy may present problems of interpretation is to be expected, and the excavator should not always be impatient to interpret in a matter of moments, that which may have taken a thousand years or more to accumulate.'⁶⁵

This remark was in reply to Dawson and Yaldwyn's report on burials at Long Beach.⁶⁶

These workers quoted Duff's assertion that in New Zealand 'stratification virtually does not exist'.⁶⁷ Skinner⁶⁸ and Golson⁶⁹ echoed Lockerbie's denial. In 1956 Lockerbie undertook excavation of a large area at Murdering Beach with the assistance of Bell, Lister, Munro, Mabon and Trotter. Considerable attention

was given to the recording of post-holes, pits and ovens.⁷⁰ Other important excavations involving this team were at Hawksburn, Tahakopa, Pounaweia, Cannibal Bay, False Island and Hinahina.⁷¹ It was an important and productive era; prehistory was being written by systematic and careful research, involving a team with specialist skills and scientific background.

In 1955 Michael Trotter published his first excavation report.⁷² Trotter wrote of his methods:

'After clearing away the overburden a small lump of midden deposit is loosened with a weeding fork, broken up by hand, and then washed in a fine riddle (tenth inch holes). On finding a significant piece its location is recorded in relation to a base line measurement.'⁷³

Judging by the major content of this report, artefacts proved to be of prime significance. Trotter, who dug in a private capacity with the North Otago Scientific and Historical Society covered a number of North Otago sites.⁷⁴ In 1960 parts of the collections from these excavations were sold to the Otago Museum. His most important contribution during the 1960s was prompt publication of the results of his excavations. Particularly interesting is his Kartigi report in which the structural features of the site are clearly handled.⁷⁵ Midden analysis was less prominent and this was a feature of much New Zealand archaeology at the time. Usually only birds and mollusca were identified in any detail and there was little attempt at quantification.

Trotter's activities were restricted to North Otago, and in style fall within the period dominated by Lockerbie. In Dunedin, however, a new era had begun. Although Anthropology had been taught at Otago University as early as 1919 under Skinner, it had gone into recession after his retirement in 1955 and student interest in the subject was not revived until the appointment in 1958 of Peter Gathercole to the joint positions of Lecturer in Anthropology and Keeper in Anthropology at the Otago Museum. During this period when the interests of both institutions were served by the one man, the Otago Anthropological Society was founded (1960). Membership reflected this alliance, including Lockerbie and men who had excavated with him, a former Honorary Archaeologist to the Museum, long-established private collectors, university students and school children, and a sprinkling of university staff members with interests ranging from medicine to home science. For a time it looked as if the newly founded Society might be able to sustain its existence without domination by the Museum or the rapidly expanding Anthropology Department. However, with the resignation of Gathercole from his museum appointment in 1961, and the decline of Lockerbie's team excavations, Otago fieldwork became the province of the Anthropology Department, organised by university staff, and increasingly attended by students. For a while, the Otago Anthropological Society was nominally involved, but it was not able to provide the financial support nor undisputed leadership that was required for running successful excavations.

The Society's fieldwork programme had involved day trips to cave paintings, for example, and two week summer excavations at sites including Karitane,⁷⁶ Pleasant River,⁷⁷ Tairua,⁷⁸ and Waitaki Mouth.⁷⁹ Easter excavations were initiated and used by the Anthropology Department to give field experience to its students,⁸⁰ up to 50 at one time. Fewer and fewer of the original Society members attended. The most

likely reason was a generation conflict which expressed itself as open criticism by students of the methods employed by previous Otago fieldworkers, particularly the private collectors. The final stage of this decline was reached when the Anthropology Department organised its fieldwork independently of the Society, which in turn mobilised itself on only eight occasions in the year for evening addresses. This situation has left the lay members with little or no opportunity to attend organised excavations. As a result, private collecting, which has been so long a feature of Otago archaeology, continues to the present day. Professional archaeologists have come to regard Otago sites as largely despoiled and unsuitable for research, and have claimed that serious study is hampered by the weekend archaeologists who hold conservatively to the methods of their fathers in the belief that it is their right to excavate the Otago beaches by whatever methods they choose.⁸¹

The general condemnation of fossicking was not restricted to professional opinion in the 1960s. It has been shown that Teviotdale himself recognised the destructive nature of curio-hunting and 'indiscriminate digging'.⁸² Again, in 1933, Skinner left no doubt as to his views on private excavation when he arranged publication in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* of an article by D. Randall-MacIver. It contained the following passage:

'... no person who is not qualified by special knowledge and study should ever be allowed to excavate at all. And since individuals are not impartial judges of their own capacity this comes to mean that no person must excavate unless he is endorsed by a scientific institution or at least by a committee of scientific men ... The days are long past when the looting of sites for the amusement or personal profit of a private individual could be tolerated, and no government with any pretensions to enlightenment will ever again allow it.'⁸³

That this is a relevant comment in 1971, nearly 40 years later, not only for Otago but also for New Zealand as a whole, suggests that in this aspect of site protection very little has been achieved in the interval.

For convenience, this review has divided the complex history of Otago archaeology into four periods.⁸⁴ The first (1860-1919) was characterized by private collecting, with an important undercurrent of commercial dealing in artefacts. The second period began in 1919 with Skinner's appointment to the Otago Museum, and ended in 1940. This era could be labelled the museum period⁸⁵ for under the remarkable partnership of Skinner and Teviotdale, archaeological activity contributed thousands of artefacts to the Museum collections. The third period was recognised by Skinner as commencing in 1940. It was marked by a radical improvement in archaeological methodology, instigated by Lockerbie. The fourth period saw University influence dominant and began in the early 1960s. Archaeology during this time has contributed little to the study of Otago prehistory, despite growing sophistication in equipment, and the presence of professional archaeologists and students more highly trained than in any previous period. In fact, Otago archaeologists have turned their attention away from Otago archaeology and with these facilities, important discoveries have been made in other parts of New Zealand and overseas. From the provincial point of view, professional neglect of Otago sites must be regarded as unsatisfactory. On the other hand the professionals' attitude that few sites in Otago are now worthy of their research funds and time can be seen to be historically well founded. If this view goes unchallenged, then present trends suggest that in the absence of either museum or university leadership, Otago

archaeology may well stay in the hands of the curio-hunters. There is evidence, however, that even the heavily disturbed coastal sites can still provide valuable archaeological data,⁸⁶ if stratigraphical problems can be overcome. Again, the extensive collections assembled from the coastal sites are amenable to some of the new techniques of artefact analysis.⁸⁷ New methods of site prospecting could reveal additional coastal occupation areas, particularly sites not identifiable from the presence of eroding middens.⁸⁸

Probably the most promising field of research, however, lies in the valleys and plains of Central Otago, where the few sites excavated have revealed very early exploration and exploitation of this area's resources. Although Ambrose sees little archaeological potential in the Mackenzie country to the north,⁸⁹ there are indications that this is not the case further to the south. The many orthoquartzite quarries around the headwaters of the Taieri River and Clutha tributaries⁹⁰ have been known for many years. So too, the important nephrite source at the head of Lake Wakatipu⁹¹ was extensively used by the prehistoric inhabitants of Otago. It is currently believed that Central Otago was visited only sporadically, and then for the prime purpose of exploiting these vital stone resources. On the other hand, as Lockerbie's excavations at Hawksburn demonstrated, many other activities besides quarrying were in evidence, including moa hunting and transportation of coastal resources inland.⁹² Insufficient is known of the extent of Central Otago occupation simply because of the lack of systematic site prospecting. The features of the Hawksburn habitation site are mute evidence that the prehistoric role of this area was more complex than is widely assumed. The future of Otago archaeology may well depend on accepting the challenge of this relatively unexplored region.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of a paper delivered to the Annual General Meeting of the Otago Anthropological Society, held in October, 1970, ten years after the founding of the Society. This study owes a great deal to Dr H. D. Skinner who has not only published several papers on the topic but has placed many relevant manuscripts, diaries and photographs in the keeping of the Hocken Library, thereby making the historian's task much easier. The author's personal experience of Otago archaeology goes back to 1960. Beyond that time the paper relies considerably on Dr Skinner's observations.
2. This controversy is summarised in Groube 1965: 6-9.
3. *N.Z. Spectator*, August 27, 1853: 3.
4. The Shag River excavation is reported in von Haast 1874: 91-98; the Brighton excavation is in von Haast 1880: 150-153.
5. Davidson 1967: 206-209, 211-212.
6. Hutton 1875: 103-108; Teviotdale, Scrapbook 4: 42 (Hocken Library).
7. Murison 1871: 120-124; Hector 1871: 110-120.
8. e.g. Oruarangi, discussed in Shawcross and Terrell 1966: 404-409.
9. Von Haast 1874: 91-98; Hutton 1875: 103-108.
10. Teviotdale, Diary 1922—(This and other Teviotdale diaries subsequently referred to are all to be found in the Hocken Library).
11. *idem*.
12. Skinner 1938: 2.
13. See also Skinner 1913: vi and Teviotdale 1932a: 97.
14. Hamilton 1890, Shag River MS (Hocken Library). The Hocken also holds a generalised section drawing from about 1892, the work of Chapman.
15. Teviotdale 1932a: 97.
16. Skinner 1933: 104.
17. Skinner 1913: vi.
18. Proceedings of the Otago Institute for 1903 in *Transactions of the N.Z. Institute*, 36: 538, 542.
19. Skinner 1938: 2.
20. *idem*.
21. Hamilton 1890, Murdering Beach MS (Hocken Library).
22. Thomson, ed. Eccles 1944: 50-52.
23. *ibid*: 50-51.
24. *ibid*: 63.
25. Skinner 1959: 222.
26. *ibid*: 223.
27. Otago Museum Annual Report 1911. (Future references will be abbreviated e.g. O.M.A.R. 1911).
28. O.M.A.R. 1912: 4.
29. Groube 1965: 13.
30. O.M.A.R. 1922: 8; see also O.M.A.R. 1919, 1934, and Skinner 1933: 104.
31. Teviotdale, Diary 1927: Aug. 28. Teviotdale's field methods are indicated in his paper on Oruarangi (1947), later assessed by Shawcross and Terrell, 1966.
32. Teviotdale 1932a: 82. 'Site reports' published by Teviotdale include 1924: 4-11 (Shag River); 1927: 292-293 (Pipikaretu); 1932b: 238-239 (Little Papanui); 1937: 134-153 (Papatowai); 1938a: 27-37 and 1938b: 114-118 (Papatowai); 1939a: 108-116 (Tarewai Point); 1939b: 167-185 (Waitaki Mouth).
33. Skinner 1958: 321.
34. O.M.A.R. 1929.
35. Teviotdale 1932a: 82.
36. Teviotdale, Diary 1922—
37. It was used as the basis of the sketch map appearing in Teviotdale 1924.
38. c.f. Simmons 1967: 2.
39. Teviotdale 1932a: 81.
40. *ibid*: 82.
41. It has been argued that problem-solving archaeology (advocated by R. G. Collingwood in his Autobiography (1938)) can lead to the conscious or unconscious neglect of archaeological information which is not relevant to the questions asked of the site. Much depends, of course, on how generally the problem is formulated.
42. Skinner 1958: 323.
43. Skinner 1959: 223. In 1917-18 Skinner had taken A. C. Haddon's course in Anthropology at Cambridge. At that time 'dirt' archaeology was not taught there or anywhere else in Britain.
44. *idem*.

45. Anon. 1932: 62.
46. The use of these implements is described in Teviotdale, Diary 1926: Feb. 14, April 2, May 30.
47. Teviotdale, Diary 1929: Sept. 1.
48. Teviotdale, Diary 1931: Aug. 25.
49. Teviotdale, Diary 1932: Sept. 6.
50. *ibid*: Sept. 9.
51. Teviotdale, Diary 1930: Aug. 2.
52. Teviotdale, Diary 1931: Aug. 30.
53. Teviotdale, Diary 1932: Sept. 17.
54. Teviotdale, Diary 1931: Sept. 3.
55. Teviotdale, Diary 1930: Jan. 19.
56. Teviotdale, Diary 1931: Aug. 30.
57. Anon. 1933: 31; O.M.A.R. 1932, 1933.
58. Teviotdale, Scrapbook 4 (newspaper clipping).
59. The Hocken Library holds a number of photographs of the excavations at Oruarangi. On the back of one there is a note that over a hundred skeletons were found in one locality.
60. O.M.A.R. 1954-1955.
61. O.M.A.R. 1919: 1.
62. O.M.A.R. 1934.
63. Skinner 1960: 188-189.
64. Lockerbie 1940: 396.
65. Lockerbie 1954: 142.
66. Dawson and Yaldwyn 1952. The first report on these burials appears in Dawson 1949: 58-63.
67. Duff 1949.
68. Skinner 1953: 400-402.
69. Golson 1955: 114.
70. Bell 1956: 35.
71. Lockerbie 1959: 75-110 discusses these sites in detail. The Papatowai (Tahakopa) site was also the subject of an earlier report, Lockerbie 1953: 13-32.
72. Trotter 1955: 295-303.
73. *ibid*: 295.
74. Trotter 1959: 10-13; Trotter 1965: 109-114; Trotter 1967a: 137-142; Trotter 1967b: 56-61; Trotter 1968: 94-102; Trotter and McCulloch 1969: 124-140; Trotter 1970a: 469-485; Trotter 1970b: 135-142, 198-199.
75. Trotter 1967c: 235-250.
76. Knight 1964: 124-127.
77. Anon. 1960: 13-18.
78. Gathercole 1961: 32-33.
79. Knight and Gathercole 1961: 22-25.
80. Sites excavated over Easter periods include Karitane, Goat Is. (Mapoutahi), Little Papanui, Oturehua and Tiwai Point. Most of these were also excavated at other times.
81. Both L. M. Groube and D. Simmons expressed these sentiments in their final addresses to the Otago Anthropological Society before their departure from Dunedin.
82. Teviotdale 1932a: 82.
83. Randall-MacIver 1933: 9. Reprinted in J.P.S. 42: 120-123.
84. Skinner 1960: 187 divided Otago archaeology into three phases: the first covered the period 1925-1940 and involved excavations by the Archaeological Section and by Teviotdale; the second (1940-1950) was marked by methodological improvements initiated by Lockerbie; the third (1950-) began when Lockerbie instituted the collection of C-14 and other samples from significant strata.
85. Groube 1965: 13.
86. Simmons (1967) found this to be the case at Little Papanui, while current excavations at Papatowai are revealing much new evidence (Mrs J. Hamel, pers. comm.).
87. e.g. functional analysis by examination of wear traces, establishing parent rock sources (e.g. Simmons and Wright 1967: 71-78), and estimation of age by hydration layer measurement in the case of obsidian.
88. Proton magnetometer and resistivity surveys might be useful, in addition to chemical methods of prospecting.
89. Ambrose 1968: 585-593.
90. e.g. Nenthorn discussed by Trotter 1961: 29-32, and Oturehua in Leach 1969: 52.
91. The Lake Wakatipu area was the source of a number of artefacts of archaic form collected in 1874-5 and discussed in Keyes 1967: 21-27.
92. Lockerbie 1959: 85-87, 107. See also Lockerbie 1955.

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