

The Coronation North Project 2016 - OceanaGold.

Archaeological Assessment Report on Remains of Maori Origin.

B.J.Allingham

Archaeologist; April 2016

1. Introduction

Plans by Oceana Gold (New Zealand) Limited (OceanaGold) to extend operations north of the Macraes Flat area to open a new pit (Coronation North Pit), deposit waste rock (Coronation North Waste Rock Stack) on adjoining ground to the east of this pit and construct a water storage reservoir in Coal Creek (refer to attached map of the project area) led to an archaeological survey of the area proposed for development, concentrating on values of Maori origin. The survey area and wider surrounds are known to have contained useful natural resources that would have been harvested by Maori on a seasonal basis, and was part of an important trail linking the Taieri lakes and beyond with the Waihemo – Waikouaiti coast. The survey area in this report refers to the extent contained within the proposed project area as marked on the attached map.

2. Background

Natural resources still existing within the survey known to have been useful to ancient Maori include tikumu (mountain daisy) and taramea (“Spaniard”), used for making rain-capes and perfume respectively. Ground birds occupying the general area included weka, quail and moa, the latter made extinct before the arrival of Europeans. The NZ Quail was shot out of existence by Europeans in the mid 1870s and weka were poisoned out locally by rabbiters in the 1920s; both species were hunted by Maori prior to this, the weka normally during winter while carrying extra fat. Koura (fresh-water crayfish) and tuna (eels) are still known to live in the area.

The schist outcrops with natural or potential shelter qualities would also be useful to ancient Maori passing through, or gathering local resources. In terms of being part of an important trail, schist outcrops within the survey area carry a slightly higher potential for occupation than perhaps more suitable shelters away from the beaten track. Rock shelters within the survey area were searched for any signs of former occupation, either as archaeological deposits in the floor, or cultural marking on the shelter walls or roof.

The significance of the survey area as part of a major trail lies in the strategic position sited between the north end of Patearoa (the Rock and Pillar Range) and the East Otago coast,

along which were located numerous Maori settlements dating from at least the 12th century AD onwards. Oral history records the annual hikoī from Waikouaiti to Tuna heketaka (Taieri Lakes) to bring back stores of preserved eel and other resources (Matapura Ellison pers. com). This strategy proved sound, as the vast resources in the lower catchment of the Waikouaiti River, where eels abounded, were kept in reserve for emergency, as required during the siege of Te Pa O Te Wera by Taoka and allies around 1750 AD. As well recorded in several sources, the pa on Huriawa Peninsula at modern day Karitane was put under threat, and the local area stripped of food and stored within the pa before being placed under siege by forces unable to rely on local food resources to any great extent. None the less, the siege lasted around six months before the attackers gave up, no doubt having to bring in food supplies over the duration.

Long before these tumultuous events, however, archaeology informs us that natural resources from well beyond the Taieri catchment were brought overland from the Upper Maniototo in the form of porcellanite, and orthoquartzite from quarries such as at Oturehua, to coastal Otago settlements from at least the 12 century AD and probably earlier. Even closer along the Taieri River catchment west of the survey area, quartzite was quarried on the south side of Fullerton Creek near Hyde, and chert was obtained from the hills further north. The survey area lies between these resources and populous settlements on the east coast. Travellers from the interior avoided the rough country occupied by the Shag River valley by taking the easy way through what is now the survey area on eastwards to the saddle between Highlay Hill and the Sister Peaks to the coast following the main ridges that now support modern roads leading to Palmerston and Waikouaiti.

Of interest is the presence of source material for red and yellow ochre in the catchment of Coal Creek exposed in the road cutting just north of the Longdales station homestead outside of the survey area. No natural (or artificial) exposures were found in the survey area itself to indicate obvious Maori use of this source.

Spurs and ridges dividing the creeks provide flat surfaces and easy slopes giving an ambience that allowed smooth access through an otherwise fairly broken rough topography. Plant, fish and bird life supported in this landscape were gathered and hunted by generations of Maori over the centuries.

3. Description of the Area

This development proposal is sited at the northern end of Taieri Ridge which lines the eastern side of the Taieri River. The Taieri River flows southwards at this part of its extended course, and the Rock and Pillar Range lines the western banks. These parallel ridges (Taieri Ridge, Rock and Pillar Range and Rough Ridge beyond) reflect in Maori history the waves that led to the capsizing of the Arai Te Uru waka that beached at Shag Point on the nearest stretch of coast line to the survey area. The northern end of the main body of Taieri Ridge

branches at the survey area forming a shallow basin between the eastern branch comprising Sister Peaks (738 metres) and Highlay Hill (820 metres), and the lower western branch of Taieri Ridge running northwards.

Within this basin the proposed Coronation North Pit and adjoining Coronation North Waste Rock Stack (as outlined on the attached map) are sited in the catchments of Trimbells Gully Creek and Maori Hen Creek that unite west of the proposed development along with Coal Creek where the proposed water storage reservoir is sited. All three creeks are tributaries of the Mareburn which flows into the Taieri River. These creeks and the un-named tributary between Trimbells Gully Creek and Maori Hen Creek run more or less east to west through the basin, draining the western sides of the Sister Peaks and Highlay Hill. Well defined gullies supporting these creeks cut into the underlying schist in some places, providing natural shelter in circumstances where overhangs form a degree of roofing without modification. Many more such localities would provide shelter with a minimum of cover added to exposed sides of the outcrop in one way or other. Such shelters could be used by Maori as overnight camping places when travelling through the area, but this would require archaeological testing to verify without producing any meaningful result. Absence of evidence should not be seen necessarily as evidence of absence. The shelters with most archaeological potential are marked on the map; grid references are listed below.

4. The Archaeological Survey

In keeping with earlier archaeological surveys for OceanaGold by this reporter, strategic areas were visited on foot over two days in March 2016. On the first visit (1-3-16) the more open spaces were scanned from high ground with binoculars in low light where possible and photographed for later examination on a computer screen. These images were closely examined for shadows of anomalies such as umu pits to pin point any areas requiring a look on the follow up visit which took place on the 9th March 2016.

During both visits surface features only were examined by eye and camera. Under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPT Act) any suspected archaeological sites conforming with the Act (whether recorded or not) require a legal authority from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga to disturb or examine through excavation. Rock shelters with suitable surfaces were closely examined for any signs of Maori cultural marking, as found near the Tipperary Rock-stack area east of Macraes Flat on a sheltered schist face. This art comprised faint designs that relate directly to other Maori graphic art such as taniko weaving on korowai (cloak) borders and tukutuku panels within wharehau (formal houses). Computer analyses using the program image-J revealed no signs of rock art on the suitable surfaces examined.

5. Survey Results

All grid references relate to Kyeburn NZ Topo50-CC16 Edn.1.02 2015

Coronation North Pit

No archaeological sites of Maori origin were found in the proposed Coronation North Pit area as outlined on the map, although the area includes schist outcrops with shelter qualities that may contain archaeological deposit. These shelters are relatively small and exposed making it unlikely that anything other than stone, ash, or charcoal of an archaeological nature would survive into modern time given the low amount of natural deposition of protective cover affecting the wider survey area.

Given the prospect of total obliteration, shelters at the following locations in upper Maori Hen Creek should be test pitted by spade or the like for signs of any archaeological deposit:

- 949E; 781N
- 948E; 782N
- 948E; 783.5N

The first two sites in the above list may already be consented (Nov.2012 survey) but under the circumstances it would only take 10 minutes at each site with a spade or grubber (the ground can be hard) to determine if legally protected or not given the physical survival issue at hand. Whatever the status, if cultural material pre-dating 1900 is found to be present at any of the sites listed in this report, the whole shelter floor should be excavated formally under the relevant legal authority from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.

Coronation North Rock Stack

While no archaeological material was found at any location in this survey, several other rock outcrops with natural shelter qualities may contain material offered protection under the HNZPT Act; grid references are given below. These sites will require formal excavation under the relevant legal authority to modify. This applies whether modification is through archaeological excavation or obliteration by mining. Archaeological examination may start with test-pitting, but this can miss important material, which is why the wider excavation is recommended at these more likely sites. Excavation may ultimately prove the site is culturally 'sterile'. A potential umu (earth oven) also requires archaeological excavation to determine true origin; the grid reference is given below.

Grid References of Potential Archaeological Sites in Maori Hen Creek Requiring Legal Authority:

Rock Shelters:

- 949E 787N;

- 948.5E 787.5N;
- 945.5E 790N; and
- 945.5E 794.5N. Two larger shelters along the gully side here.

Possible Umu Pit:

- 946.5 E 788N This site may be a gold prospect but the presence of charcoal and/or fire-cracked rocks will indicate origin.

Grid References of Potential Archaeological Sites in Trimbells Gully Catchment Requiring Legal Authority:

Rock Shelter

- 953E 794N

Possible Urupa (human burial site; Wahi tapu) .

- 951.5E 795N May be avoided by the proposed waste rock stack; requires examination if not. This area comprises numerous gold mining remains in the floors of the valleys nearby, and the grave, if that is what it is, may date from this mining era. However, some Maori graves are marked by upright stones set in the ground like the example involved here (refer to Photo 1 -the schist slab is around 0.5m in height). This site may be able to be avoided given the close proximity to the east boundary of the Coronation North Rock Stack as presently outlined (map).



Photo 1 – Possible Urupa Site with upright schist slab

Other locations of potential archaeological interest are located in the proposed Coronation North Rock Stack zone as marked on the map. They may be sites of archaeological interest, but need sub-surface examination, ie. test-pitting, to determine. The grid references for these sites follow:

Maori Hen Creek Rock Shelters:

- 948E 787N;
- 948E 787.5N;
- 946.5E 789N;
- 945.5E 790N The southern smaller shelter at this locality; (see above)
- 945E 794.5N;
- 945.5E 794.5N The smaller northern shelter of three in this locality; (see above)
- 946E 797N Just below cultivated paddock level;
- 945.5E 797.5N Several small shelters here; and
- 945N 798N.

Trimbells Gully Catchment Rock Shelters:

- 958E 786.5N; and
- 955E 783N.

Rock Shelters on Ridge Between Maori Hen Creek and Coal Creek

- 935E 791.5N; and
- 937E 792N.

Coal Creek Water Reservoir

The following rock shelter sites were identified in the Coal Creek Catchment.

- 933E 789.5N; and
- 934E 790N.

6. Recommendations

Of the sites listed above, three fall within the footprint of the Coronation Pit, ten are within the footprint of the Coronation North Waste Rock Stack and one falls within the Coal Creek Water Storage Reservoir footprint (note this lies at the edge of the maximum extent of the reservoir). These are shown as blue dots on the attached map (note location are approximate). OceanaGold has agreed to modify the eastern boundary of the Coronation North Waste Rock Stack to avoid the possible grave site (note this is also recorded in the Origin Consultants Limited Coronation North Archaeology Report as a possible structure)

and to avoid a rock shelter identified by this author and also by Origin Consultants Limited. A plan showing the revised boundary will be prepared and submitted for approval by the author, Origin Consultants Limited and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Toanga.

OceanaGold should apply for legal authorities for archaeological examination of the sites as outlined above. Communicate with Dr Matt Schmidt of the Dunedin office of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Toanga for advice regarding the application to modify suspected archaeological sites. This will also involve consultation with the local iwi authority Kaiti Huirapa Ki Puketeraki through Justine Marshall at their Karitane office and KTKO.

