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Getting to Know You: Dr. John Flenley, Massey University, New Zealand

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Q: How did you get into anthropology/archaeology, and specifically that of Easter? What triggered your interest?

By being a palynologist. Palynology has always had close links with archaeology. And, while I was school, I read Heyerdahl’s Aku Aku.

Q: Who or what do you consider to be your most significant influence (scientific or otherwise) either as a person or a particular work, or series of works?

The use of Easter Island as a warning for our planet, in the book Easter Island, Earth Island.

Q: What theory or project of yours turned out to be either different from what you expected, or surprised you?

I had expected the New Zealand academic community to be more open minded about the presence of people in New Zealand before AD 1200.

Q: What would you have done if you had not pursued your current line(s) of research and interests?

Become a landscape gardener.

Q: What was your best Eureka moment?

Finding that the palm fruits from Easter Island were closely related to the Chilean wine palm.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish (in anthropology/archaeology) on Easter Island in the future?

I hope to take cores to the bottom of Rano Kau and do the palynology and dating of them.

Q: What are you currently reading?

Krakatoa by Simon Winchester

Q: Date and place of birth?

Ormskirk, England, 15 July 1936

Q: A list of your major publications?


