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A FUTURE FOR OUR PAST?

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In 1972 three angry young men got together in Dunedin to further the cause of archaeological site protection in New Zealand. Park, Sutton and Ward (in alphabetical order, as agreed) were later variously to become, among other things, Director of Auckland Museum, Dean of Arts at Auckland University and Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. As graduate students of Otago University's Anthropology Department they were keen to try to improve the protection of archaeological sites through the creation of a Department of Antiquities. The Department would have the power to prevent any activity that might affect any archaeological site. Because fossicking for artefacts was seen as a cause of considerable damage to archaeological sites the Department would also own on behalf of the State (Crown was much too soft a term for the intrepid trio) all newly discovered Māori artefacts (I doubt that any of them had read the Treaty of Waitangi in those days), beef up the Historic Articles Act's provisions in respect of the export of artefacts, and preferably ban or else strictly regulate any trading in Māori artefacts.

They suspected that the creation of a whole Department of Government might be a big ask, so they saw political lobbying as essential (not that any of them had done much lobbying before). They realised that public opinion would be important, they saw the opposition of farmers (perceived, rather erroneously, as conservative owners of much land containing archaeological sites), antique dealers and auctioneers (involved in the trade in artefacts) as possible hurdles, and the support of Māori as likely to be important (a realisation that was probably not there at the beginning of the campaign). They knew they had to convince the lawmakers in Parliament, and the bureaucrats of the public service.

In hindsight the campaign hit all these targets, though it clearly changed, developed and grew as it went along. All three young men were involved in the New Zealand Archaeological Association, variously at times as Council members and filekeepers, and in its local offshoot, the Otago Anthropological Society. Neither of these organisations had any money. Although the infrastructure of the Otago Museum and the University of Otago Anthropology Department provided

some support (mostly unwittingly) a campaign would require some real money. The Mobil Oil Company had set up a scheme to provide grants to conservation organisations. Park and Sutton, the original pair, applied to Mobil, in the Association's name, with a proposal to publish a pamphlet advocating the protection of archaeological sites. This found favour, and a grant was made. Text was drafted, debated and written, and photos sourced. The best image anyone could find of a site being destroyed was in fact a shot of a bulldozer filling in an excavation on Mt Roskill after the archaeology had been completed, but it looked impressive. Full colour was out of the question, but spot colour on one side gave the hei tiki on the cover a nephrite appearance.

A varsity friend had dropped out of theological college and set up a public relations and printing business (at that time he too had more enthusiasm than experience). Sutton and Park said to him, "design us a brochure and print as many as our money will afford." At this remove of time I can't recall exactly how many that was, but I think the first run was some 20,000. As we got more money from other sources we had more printed; a grant from New Zealand Breweries supported one later print run.

Which then had to be distributed. Some went by direct mail, but we wrote to all sorts of magazines, asking them to insert the leaflet, free, and quite a number agreed. There will be files (in the NZAA or at Otago Museum) that would enable this to be quantified, but in the end I think that over 100,000 were distributed. During this time Graeme Ward, slightly older and perhaps a little more politically savvy (though none of us had much experience in this respect) offered to help, and the devious duo became a battling trio.

Straight Furrow, the journal of Federated Farmers, said they couldn't include an insert, but if we wrote an article, they would happily print it. So Park and Sutton (1973) appeared. A similar offer came from *NZ Environment* so another in the series of essentially similar articles, slightly rearranged to suit the particular audience, appeared as Ward, Park and Sutton (1973, names rearranged to allow due credit to all). Sutton, Ward and Park (1973) appeared in the Māori magazine *Te Awatea*, which was, I think, rather short-lived (hopefully not for that reason). There was also Park, Sutton and Ward (1973) in the *NZAA Newsletter*.

While this public lobbying was going on there was enthusiasm also to draw the attention of lawmakers and law drafters to the range of possible legislative and administrative mechanisms for protecting sites. Jim McKinlay had recently completed his thesis at Auckland University on public archaeology, and publishing Jim's thesis became a primary goal. It too was published in Dunedin (McKinlay 1972), using the same varsity friend as a production source. Fund-raising for this monograph was a combined effort: Jim's preface

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One powerful weapon in the arsenal, a weapon that sometimes seemed ponderously slow to fire, gave off clouds of smoke (pipe rather than powder) and whose effectiveness was perhaps underestimated at the time by our trio, was an Assistant Secretary of Internal Affairs, Bob Cater. Bob had a longstanding involvement in archaeology and was a notorious mover of points of order at NZAA AGMs. His advice often seemed to our trio overly cautious, and too bound by his bureaucratic background. He persuaded us a bid for a full Department of Antiquities was unlikely to succeed, and offered wide-ranging advice on ways to proceed, though sometimes his need not to be seen to be acting politically made his advice seem rather sphinx-like.

And of course there must have been other things going on within and outside government that we were not necessarily aware of. Janet Davidson in Auckland had been a lobbyist for site protection long before this, for quite a while probably a lone voice in advocating the use of the Town and Country Planning Act to protect sites. Janet served on several influential bodies and made good use of her opportunities to persuade.

The eventual result of all this work was the passing of the twin pieces of legislation, the Antiquities Act 1975 and the Historic Places Amendment Act 1975, both coming into effect on 1 April 1976. There was not to be a single Department of Antiquities, and divisions were made between what the Dunedin trio saw as an integrated package that, in our view, weakened the effect of the whole. The divided responsibilities meant a lack of coordination, and the resources for the implementation of these new laws seemed pitifully thin.

But this was ground-breaking legislation, even in a world scale, with its preparedness to “trample on the private property rights of individuals, long enshrined in Anglo Saxon law”, as one opponent put it. Its enactment was the result of a lot of hard work by many people, only some of whom are mentioned above; I am sure I am unaware of the contribution of many. The trio always felt that Māori voices were a very powerful ally, even though as pretty monocultural southerners we had little direct communication.

The resulting legislation was by no means perfect. The Department of Internal Affairs previously and now the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has been reviewing the Antiquities Act for well over a decade—a revision is keenly anticipated in the life of the current Parliament (though this is not the first Parliament in which that has been said). The archaeological provisions of the Historic Places Act have also been amended more than once, and are still subject to scrutiny and review, both legal and processual. But all those involved, and especially the New Zealand Archaeological Association, as the base organisation

in whose name so much of this was carried out, can rightly feel proud of a considerable achievement towards providing a future for New Zealand's past.

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