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HOW MANY SITES? THE CLARENCE COMPLEX

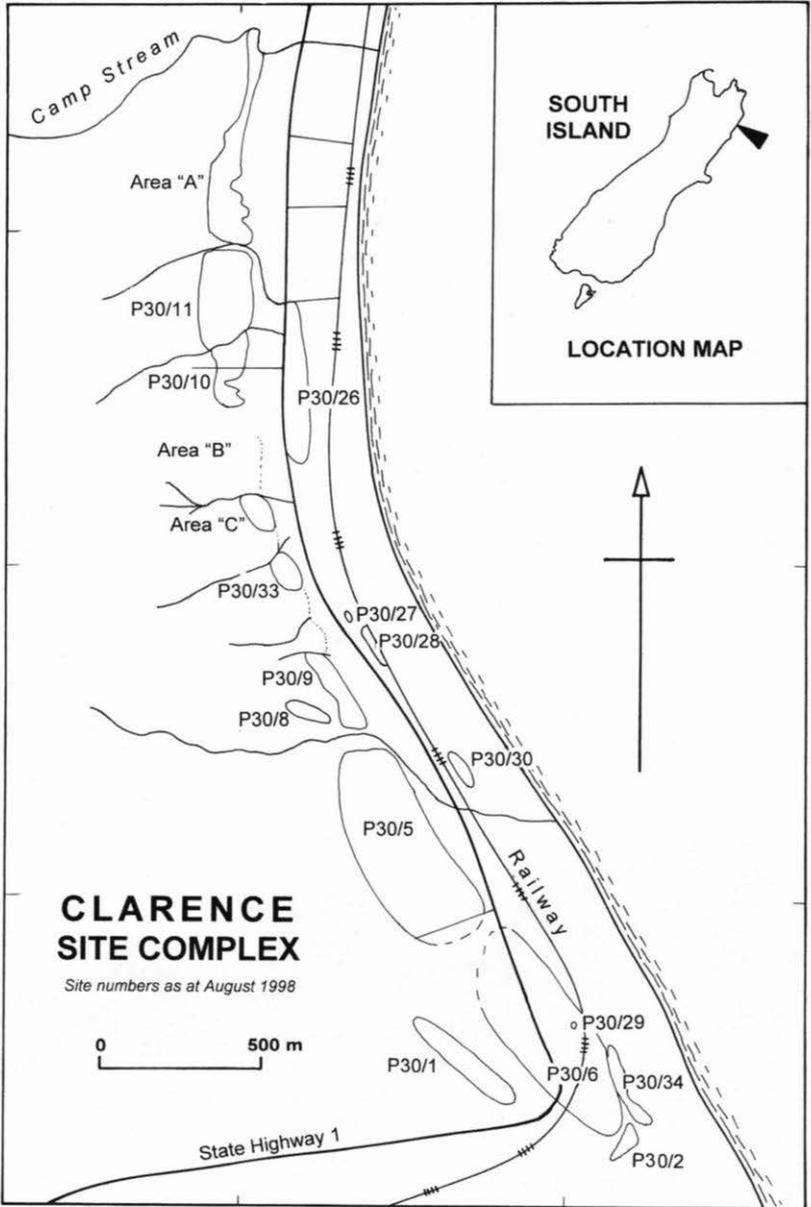
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Summer Wine Initiatives
Tuahiwi, North Canterbury

Macduff: "*Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!*" Wm. Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 1606.

In January 1966, Roger Duff was shown over an area of archaeological features north of the mouth of the Clarence River in southern Marlborough by a local landowner, Ross Murray. He recorded these as a single archaeological site, number S42/11, noting that (and here we paraphrase) stone walls occurred on the lower slopes of hillsides for a distance of about three miles, wherever the grade was not too steep. In addition, on nearly every suitable promontory where a water-course dissected the hill slope, there was a cluster of raised-rim pits, some remarkably deep. He identified all these features as "Presumably a kumara cultivation complex." (Site Record S42/11; Duff 1966: 102.)

Prior to this, two sites had been recorded in the area, both in 1959 by Tony Fomison – Matariki pa on the prominent hill around which the main road curves at the Clarence corner (Figure 1, site S42/1) and a site that Tony described as "at least" twenty raised-rim pits and a stone heap (S42/2). At an unknown date someone has written on Tony's site record in reference to the stone heap: "Dumped by farmer Now ploughed". Part of this site containing about a dozen of the pits has also been described as a pa (Trotter and McCulloch 1979; Brailsford 1984) and more recently as a village site (Trotter and McCulloch 1998).

In 1973 Bruce McFadgen made a separate record for part of Duff's Clarence complex that was adjacent to the village-cum-pa-cum-raised-rim pit site,



Map 1. Map of the Clarence Site Complex, southern Marlborough, showing sites recorded as at August 1998.

recording it as S42/13 and describing it as “a man-made agricultural soil composed of grit dug into a deposit of loess” and covering an area of approximately 2.5 hectares, together with an associated series of borrow pits “where sandy gravel has been obtained, presumably for use on the adjacent garden site”. Numbers of large stones had been left in the pit hollows. On a subsequent visit we noted that the area recorded by Bruce as the agricultural soil also contained a pit (possibly one of Tony Fomison’s twenty or so raised-rim pits), a short length of stone wall (the rest of it having been ploughed out), and a stone heap on the edge of the ploughed area; this heap was probably derived from the section of garden wall which had been cleared to facilitate ploughing.

About the same time as this we became more involved in the investigation of sites in the Clarence area, particularly with a moa hunter site at the mouth of the Clarence River (which was nothing to do with the agricultural complex though it did have a stone line on it that we interpreted as probably indicative of gardening). Later in the 1970s we had a 1:2000 scale contour map drawn up of the main area of garden walls at the southern end of the Roger Duff’s site, and carried out some minor excavations there with the assistance of



Figure 1. The first site to be recorded in the district, by Tony Fomison in 1959, was Matariki Pa on this hill above the main highway (site P30/1).

Barry Brailsford's team from Christchurch Teachers College. This latter work was supported by the local residents and on account of their interest a brief 'popular' booklet was published, without listing site numbers (Trotter and McCulloch 1979).

Barry Brailsford went on to survey features further north than this (but still part of the complex first recorded by Roger Duff), and a number were described in his book *The Tattooed Land* (Brailsford 1981: 98-104). At this time the site records were revised so that S42/11 (Roger Duff's three-mile complex) was reduced to the 600 metre long main garden area that we had mapped in the 1970s, and four new site numbers were allotted to cover other sites recorded by Barry within the complex – S42/15 for a 'pa' on a ridge immediately north of this garden, S42/16 for pits and terraces on the flat below it, S42/17 for an area of garden and another 'pa' further north, and S42/18 for 'gardens and pits' further north again. A locality plan in Barry's book, Map 48 on page 98, was unfortunately published with an incorrect scale (5 kilometres instead of 2 kilometres) so it wasn't altogether clear exactly where sites 17 and 18 were. It appears also that although these numbers were published in Barry's book, no actual site record forms were filed at that time. Barry also noted that Tony Fomison's pit site (S42/2) was known locally as "Matariki", rather than the pa on the hilltop of the opposite side of the road.

Site record forms for the more northern sites, S42/17-18, are markedly deficient in information. Nevil Matthews, the Marlborough filekeeper at that time, mentioned to us that he had some difficulty in knowing exactly where the sites were, as besides the misleading locality plan, there seemed to be a major confusion with the grid references. As a result, the site records are not in accordance with the published information; Barry's 17 was divided and the northern part given the number 18, leaving Barry's published 18 without a record – though this wasn't clear until we looked at the area in 1998, and were able to identify S42/17 (now P30/10) from one of Barry's aerial photos.

At the beginning of 1986 Tony Walton filled in a site record for Barry's first pa site, S42/15 (though he noted that "some people have expressed doubts about whether this is a site"), and also one for the group of pits and terraces below it (S42/16) – both using Barry's published numbers and referring to his accompanying information for details. Tony also revised the record for S42/2 (Fomison's raised-rim pits etc.) noting that the pits were visible on a

1950 aerial photograph but six of them had since been ploughed out, and that the stone heap was still intact.

To further complicate matters, there is a note on record that at the time of metricating the Marlborough file it was decided to divide site number S42/13 (Bruce McFadgen's record) into two separate sites – the garden soil to retain the given number, and the borrow pit(s) to get a new record – though the new number does not seem to have been allotted at that time. By now Roger Duff's single record for the Clarence agricultural complex had been divided into six (plus Tony Fomison's two earlier records, S42/1 and 2, now becoming P30/1 and 2). There was no problem with this in principle – it was in complete accordance with scripture in the site-recording “bible” (Daniels 1970: 12-13 – or pages 20-21 in the second edition) where reference is made to sub-dividing what was initially a single site and to divisions being made on the basis of the ‘lie of the land’ and other criteria. In practice, however, the whole situation was incredibly confused, and parts of the area hitherto recorded collectively by Roger Duff had fallen through the cracks.

In 1998 we carried out a survey of sites alongside State Highway 1 for Transit New Zealand (Trotter and McCulloch 1998), and in the course of this came to realize that besides location data for existing records being somewhat less accurate or detailed than might be considered desirable (i.e. it was difficult to relocate some of the sites) there were other archaeological features that had not been recorded at all (e.g. Figure 2). Granted, everything in the area had been covered by Roger Duff's initial record, but this now had been cut back, and the subsequent records left gaps so that someone using the site records – or worse, using only the Central Index – might believe that there were areas where no sites existed. We plugged in a few more records for obvious sites that had clearly been omitted (for example, the borrow pits originally part of Bruce McFadgen's S42/13-P30/6 are now recorded as P30/34), but for the purposes of our Transit New Zealand work marked the whole area as “Clarence Site Complex” – a strictly interim measure to ensure that it was realized that the *whole* area would require archaeological monitoring in the event of road works being carried out there.

This is not a problem (or rather, a series of problems) that can be resolved on paper. During our Transit New Zealand survey we twice walked from end-to-end of the complex (it's actually only 3.5 kilometres or a little over two miles long – somewhat less than Duff's three miles and considerably less than the eight kilometres stated by Barry Brailsford on page 98 of his book)



Figure 2. One of the sites that “fell through the cracks”. Artificially levelled areas and pits occur on the terrace in the centre of the photograph and there are the truncated remnants of garden walls at its base, site P30/33. Photograph taken from State Highway 1, 1998.

and we came to the conclusion that the whole area needs to be resurveyed and some accurate mapping carried out – something we hope to do this forthcoming summer.

Until then, the accompanying map and table indicate the current situation at the time of writing. Areas marked A, B, and C are those about which the greatest confusion exists; we have intentionally not made any modifications to records at this stage for fear of adding to the existing chaos! (For example, our “Area A” is the S42/18 published by Barry in 1981 but for which there is no record in the Marlborough file.) The preferred grid references listed are interim figures only, but are an improvement on the recorded figures (taken from the Central Index figures as at 19 May 1998), two of which were as much as 1.7 kilometres out of place. And we feel confident that other archaeological features will be found to occur in areas we haven’t marked on the plan.

In the meantime the question of “how many sites” remains, and it seems a great pity that Duff’s “blanket” single site record of 1966 (S42/11) has been

reduced in such a haphazard manner that it now covers but a fraction of the original area, leaving large parts of the complex excluded from the records – and therefore with substantially less protection than they had originally. And if, now that you have finished reading, you are confused – well, we're not surprised. It was not for nothing that we titled this The Clarence "Complex".

Acknowledgements

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<i>NZMS 1 Site No.</i>	<i>Info 260 Site No.</i>	<i>Given Grid Ref.</i>	<i>Preferred Grid Ref.</i>	<i>Main Archaeological Features of Site</i>	<i>Notes on Original Record and Comments on Present Status</i>
S42/1	P30/1	867 944	866 945	Pa – terraces, pits	Recorded by Fomison as Matariki Pa (see Figure 1)
S42/2	P30/2	871 941	872 942	Village – 12-14 pits	Originally at least 20 pits – also described as Matariki Pa
S42/11*	P30/5	867 948	864 952	Walls, soils, pits	Duff's original 3 mile cultivation complex, now much reduced
S42/13	P30/6	871 944	870 944	Walls, soils, pits	McFadgen's agricultural soil (S42/13) minus his borrow pits
S42/15	P30/8	862 955	–	Possible ditch	Published by Brailsford as a pa; recorded but queried by Walton
S42/16	P30/9	863 954	863 956	Pits, walls, terraces	Published by Brailsford as pits and terraces; recorded by Walton
S42/17	P30/10	865 950	860 965	Pits, walls, terraces	Published by Brailsford as garden and pa; recorded as a pa
S42/18	P30/11	865 952	859 968	Pits, walls, terraces	Site figured by Brailsford as part of S42/17 but recorded as a separate site in the Site Record File
	P30/26	–	862 965	Firestones, middens	Recorded in 1998
	P30/27	–	863 958	Shell midden	Recorded in 1998
	P30/28	–	864 957	Borrow pit	Recorded in 1998
	P30/29	–	870 946	Borrow pit	Recorded in 1998
	P30/30	–	867 954	Firestones	Recorded in 1998
	P30/33	–	861 960	Pits, terraces, walls	Recorded in 1998 (see Figure 2)
	P30/34	–	872 944	Large borrow pit(s)	Recorded by McFadgen as part of S42/13
	Area A	–	859 973	Walls, terraces, pits	Published by Brailsford as S42/18 but not recorded as such in File
	Area B	–	860 963	Pit, ?terraces	Not recorded in File
	Area C	–	861 961	Terraces, pits, ?wall	Not recorded in File.
* All sites except the first two (S42/1 and S42/2) were originally covered by Duff's S42/11					
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE CLARENCE COMPLEX					