



NEW ZEALAND  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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SITE SURVEY METHODOLOGY: A SUGGESTED BASIS FOR STANDARDIZATION.

B.A. Vincent

The methods outlined below were employed while site surveying the Waipori Goldfields area, in Otago, over the summer of 1978.

Faced with 15,650 hectares of mainly tussock covered, finely dissected landscape of a very homogenous nature, and the task of surveying, as near as possible, every square metre; a 'text-aided' area reference system was adopted. Known sites were listed onto index cards. Each card related to four amalgamated 1 inch to 1 mile topographical map area reference squares, and was given a Roman letter-Arabic number symbol, corresponding to the eastings and southings respectively.\*

Fieldworkers were allocated an indexed square, within which they remained for as long as it took to complete their surveying. Features that passed through several squares (e.g. water-races), were matched sequentially square by square rather than traversing them from source to end, thus saving considerable walking. Known, reputed, or documented features were confirmed or denied by field observations on the index cards.

In remote featureless areas, particularly where aerial photographs were of an unsuitable scale for easy position pin-pointing, the larger area references provided a useful broad-scale locational guide and reduced the likelihood of initial locational mistakes. The index system allowed approximate completion time predictions for individual squares and the entire survey programme. This method also allows piecemeal surveying while still providing an intelligible continuum of the overall programme, useful if time does not allow programme completion in one season or bad weather interrupts progress. Where marked variations in site densities occur, or the topography is difficult or without precise features to aid map or aerial photograph interpretation; the method proved invaluable.

This simple system, used as a supplement to the standard New Zealand Archaeological Association's site recording procedures, allowed precise time and personnel allocation area by area and produced a permanent record for future analysis. Examination of surveys completed along the lines described above could prove helpful to intending site survey parties when taking out estimates for future projects, and may also provide a basis for the standardization of site surveying methods in New Zealand.

This paper will, hopefully, stimulate some interest in this important area of archaeological endeavour.

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\* A larger grid was superimposed on the S.162 series Lands and Survey Department topographical map.