



NEW ZEALAND  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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## WHITHER THE SITE RECORDING SCHEME ?

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### Abstract

A review of the history of the site recording scheme reveals trends which are of interest in considering the future of the scheme.

The site recording scheme has become one of the New Zealand Archaeological Association's major activities and achievements. At present, however, it faces a minor crisis with the introduction of metric maps (which will eventually replace the NZMS 1 series on which the administration of the scheme is based), and the possibility of a major change in administration should the scheme be taken over or replaced by an official antiquities agency. It therefore seems appropriate to review the development of the scheme, its strengths and weaknesses, in the fifteen years of its operation.

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHEME

The site recording scheme, as we know it, was born at the Association's Wanganui conference in 1958. It had, however, a lengthy period of gestation extending back in time before the formation of the Association. In 1951, the Historical Section of the Hawkes Bay Branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand had received a grant to investigate the setting up of a scheme to record sites of early Maori occupation in New Zealand, and particularly in Hawkes Bay. At the inaugural meeting of the Association in 1954, J.D.H. Buchanan presented the outline of a scheme, and a sub-committee consisting of Messrs Buchanan, Barwick and Yaldwyn was set up to investigate further (Mumford 1959). Buchanan accepted a suggestion by H.W. Wellman that the record form should be based on the Geological Survey's fossil record form. Yaldwyn and Barwick recommended two forms.

The 1958 conference considered field recording in some detail. Professor McKenzie spoke on aerial photography, and Mr Golson on field monuments. The latter stressed the need

for "full, systematic but uncomplicated records", a plea which could well have been adopted as a motto for the scheme. Buchanan again spoke about the possibilities of a national site recording scheme, and discussion centred on the following points: the desirability of such a system; the type of system required; the choice of maps (NZMS 1 series was recommended); the number of districts; district boundaries; district and central file-keepers; and the selection of filekeepers; access to files (including provision for secret files); the definition of an archaeological site; sources of archaeological information; details of record form; finance; (Scarlett 1958 and N.Z.A.A. papers). Although much of the discussion was purely administrative, Buchanan also raised some major points of principle. His talk covered most if not all aspects of the possible scheme, and in fact the system we now have largely followed his recommendations.

The idea of a national site recording scheme was enthusiastically adopted at Wanganui, and less than a year later the scheme was in operation. In July 1958 an extended Council meeting was held in Wellington, to which a number of people in addition to Council members were invited, and the proposed scheme discussed in detail. In October the Auckland Archaeological Society held the first of several organised recording trips to South Kaipara Head to try out recording methods, and largely from this experience developed the first site recording handbook (Golson and Green 1958). In November results were reported back to Council, which set up a sub-committee to finalise the scheme. A grant was received from the (then) National Historic Places Trust to purchase maps and filing cabinets, and the scheme was launched (Numford 1959). It is important to note the close co-operation between the Historic Places Trust and the Association in establishing the scheme.

In general, implementation of the scheme followed Buchanan's recommendations. The principal difficulties arose over the district boundaries, concerning which latent territorial ambitions flared up. Buchanan's original recommendation, that boundaries follow maps, was opposed by several people who preferred to use geographic boundaries, which might be expected to have been significant in prehistoric times. It became apparent, however, that the boundaries of filing districts would have to follow maps. The boundaries were eventually drawn up by Green, a relative outsider to the New Zealand situation (Green pers. comm.).

## THE EARLY YEARS OF OPERATION

In March 1959 the first results of the Kaipara survey appeared, together with a discussion of the project.

The amount of time needed for covering a small area is very deceptive; an area like Kaipara may take many days of recording before it is finished. We covered on the day no more than twelve square miles, the five parties surveying a little more than two square miles each. From this small area, twenty-four sites were recorded, fourteen of them pa sites. This high concentration of sites in South Kaipara is surprising - but on close field investigation, many other areas will probably yield greater concentrations. We hope the result of our activity will lead to other such expeditions, for, as we all know, sites are rapidly disappearing all over the country. (Groube and Green 1959: 13).

This account of New Zealand's first experience of intensive site recording within the framework of the new national scheme largely speaks for itself, although it is interesting to note the awareness at that time of the rate of site destruction. The Kaipara project continued for several more years and is further discussed below.

In the same issue of the Newsletter, Green reported on a survey of sites along the Coromandel coast, using official site numbers for the first time (Green 1959). Green's influence in the establishment of the scheme is widely apparent - in the handbook, in the Kaipara survey, and in the use of site numbers, and it is thus hardly surprising that he has continued one of its major champions.

From other areas it was reported that about 50 sites had been plotted in the Gisborne district (Pullar 1959: 28) and the "compilation of an impressive record" begun in the Rotorua-Bay of Plenty district (Golson and Stafford 1959: 29).

In September 1959, the then central filekeeper, Miss Mumford, summarised the state of the scheme. The definition of a site followed Buchanan's original suggestion as "any specific locality for which there is physical (as opposed to traditional) evidence for its occupation by the pre-European

peoples of New Zealand even though the occupation has been transient." (Mumford 1959: 11-2). The important parts of this definition are the emphasis on the physical evidence, and on pre-European sites. The scheme officially continued to be restricted for some time to sites which complied with this definition, but in practice sites which did not qualify under the definition were from time to time included.

Mumford also emphasised the need to record sites before they were destroyed, but at this period there was little idea of using the information in the scheme to prevent site destruction - the scheme was still seen entirely as a research tool.

Remaining issues of the Newsletter in 1959 carried reports on field surveys in Queen Charlotte Sound (Palmer 1959), Wellington (Davis 1959) and Kaikoura (Fomison 1959). Fomison's report on his work in Kaikoura was a good early example of research carried out specifically within the framework of the scheme.

The next year, 1960, saw the continuation of the trends already set, and some interesting new developments. During the year the forms were revised, and the system of filing in envelopes introduced, but despite separate proposals by Groube and Smart for extensive revision of the infant scheme no substantial changes were made (Mumford, Daniels and Smart 1960).

The Newsletter carried reports from a number of districts, some encouraging, some ominous. The Rotorua-Bay of Plenty recorder reported that work in that district was confined to site recording (as opposed to excavation); and "although there has not been a great number of forms sent in to date, work is progressing at a satisfactory rate" (Stafford 1960: 7). He noted that Watt had records of over 300 pa, and information on these was steadily being transferred to Association forms. Reports also mentioned recording in Canterbury (Fomison 1960), Otago, where the newly formed Otago Anthropological Society was recording steadily (Otago Anthropological Society 1960: 13), Taihape (Batley 1960), Taranaki (Buist 1960), Wanganui (Smart 1960), Wellington (Daniels 1960), and Nelson (Wilkes 1960). It is interesting to note a strong environmental bias in some areas, notably Taihape, where Batley's work foreshadowed much of the more recent vogue for ecological or environmental archaeology.

In Auckland, a second trip to Kaipara late in 1959

revealed 20 new sites, and the Kaipara project seemed as far from completion as ever (Rowell 1960). The first of several papers by Brown on Tamaki Isthmus sites appeared, using traditional and historical as well as archaeological field evidence (Brown 1960). Brown was one of the few people who consistently made use of a wider range of sources of information. Mapping was reported to have started on Mount Roskill, Mount Albert, Mangere Mountain and Mount Wellington (Rowell 1960). Groube's (1960) report on the Mount Wellington survey is particularly revealing. A system of record cards (over 300) appeared to solve the problem of what features were to be recorded and in what detail. Fresh problems arose, however, in filing the data, which were never satisfactorily solved.

The other major development took place in Canterbury. Fomison recorded 185 sites with rock drawings for the Historic Places Trust during a nine week survey in South Canterbury (Fomison 1960). This survey was undertaken specifically with a view to fencing and other preservation measures, and was the first large scale survey carried out with such aims. Ambrose and Davis had earlier recorded rock shelters for the Trust at Waipapa (Davis and Ambrose 1957) and at Benmore (Ambrose and Davis 1958; Ambrose, Ambrose and Davis 1959; Ambrose and Davis 1960), but these surveys had involved small numbers of known sites deemed to be flooded or otherwise destroyed by major works projects.

Another interesting development in Canterbury, reported by Fomison, was that field data from the Kaikoura survey were supplied to the Marlborough Regional Committee of the Historic Places Trust to assist in pinpointing and signposting sites, and locality maps were supplied to the Kaikoura County Council, through the County Engineer, for use in the preparation of the District Scheme under the Town and Country Planning Act (Fomison 1960).

The late '50s and early '60s was a time of rapid development in New Zealand archaeology. While the site recording scheme was still being established, another major project, the artifact recording scheme, was launched in 1961 (Phelan 1961). Although it was discussed and tried out for several years (Daniels 1963b, Oliver 1963) the artifact recording scheme never really worked satisfactorily, and was quietly allowed to lapse. A few individuals have continued to use the artifact record forms to record artifacts in private collections. It is significant that the site recording scheme, which could

have been seriously affected by the deflecting of energy to another major project, continued to develop and function reasonably well.

In 1961 the last major organised trip to South Kaipara took place and still more sites were found (Russell 1961). At the same time Brown (1961) began writing about the despoliation of Auckland sites. Preparation of a list of important sites from or at least in conjunction with the site record file, was begun.

Buist and Robinson extended their work from South Taranaki to North Taranaki, increasing the records of sites in the Urenui area from 26 pa recorded by Best (1927) to 45 (Robinson 1961). This is an interesting example of a rule which suggests that intensive recording in areas already recorded will nearly always produce new sites. In no area of New Zealand has recording yet reached saturation point.

Also in 1961 occurred one of the rare published expressions of dissatisfaction with site categories. Daniels, reporting on site recording in Wellington, particularly Whitireia Peninsula near Porirua, expressed doubts about the category "terraces", which, he thought, could cover a multitude of quite different functions (Daniels 1961: 28). Similar doubts were voiced by others, but did not find published expression.

Throughout 1962 the Newsletter continued to carry reports of reconnaissance surveys. Smart embarked on two ambitious recording programmes - a midden survey and sampling project and a more general site survey of the Waitotara - Nukumarū area near Wanganui (Smart 1962a, 1962b). In Auckland, Brown contributed another major paper on site preservation, which included a specimen record form specifically designed for a site survey concerned with preservation (Brown 1962: 71).

At the end of 1962 Daniels, who had now replaced Mumford as central filekeeper, summarised the scheme and gave the totals of sites recorded as follows: Auckland 234; Waikato 13; Rotorua-Bay of Plenty 10; Gisborne 7; Taranaki 212; Wanganui 4; Hawkes Bay 10; Wellington 60; Marlborough 11; Canterbury 83; Otago 10; total 654 (Daniels 1962). Obviously, substantial numbers of sites had been recorded only in Auckland, Taranaki, Wellington and Canterbury. The majority of sites in Auckland had been recorded by Brown, often using non-archaeological evidence, and although the Kaipara sites were included in the number for

Auckland, the record forms were not actually in the file. The files in Taranaki had been almost solely the work of Buist, while small groups of individuals were responsible for the Wellington and Canterbury totals. Very little had actually been filed by other areas that had been reporting steady progress, and there was little sign of the 50 sites from Gisborne, 300 from the Bay of Plenty, or indeed of the steady recording of the Otago Anthropological Society.

Nevertheless, by the end of 1962 the scheme was well established, and the major trends were already set. It is interesting to summarise them.

The scheme was basically the same then as now in its administration, and provided in fact for Golson's full systematic but simple records. The regional organisation and record forms were much the same as they are now.

In the early stages there was close liaison with the Historic Places Trust, which had made the scheme possible by its financial assistance.

The scheme was thought of as essentially for research, but there was a strong awareness of the rate of site destruction, and a modest use of the scheme in site preservation including the compilation of a list of important sites from the records; the undertaking of rock drawing surveys with preservation in view; and the making available by Pomison of data on sites to a Trust Regional Committee and a Local Body.

The scheme was using archaeological evidence almost entirely. Only Brown was using other sources of data extensively, and many workers were ignoring even obvious sources of supplementary information.

No old data were coming through into the files. The burden of transferring such data, whether Brown's early Waipu survey, Watt's Rotorua pa sites, or Buchanan's own material, to site record forms was proving too much of a burden. Even sites which had recently been excavated or were still under excavation were seldom recorded in the files.

There was a proliferation of forms designed for special purposes which were not incorporated in the scheme, probably because the burden of completing them was too great. Terrace

record cards, pit record cards, platform record cards, midden analysis forms, site preservation forms, were designed and in a few cases actually used by individual enthusiasts, but not accepted by other workers.

There was little disagreement about what constituted a site. The official definition explicitly excluded post-European or traditional sites from the scheme.

There was only slight anxiety about site categories, although some of the terms used at this time, notably the much abused "kaainga" and "occupation" were extremely imprecise, and others, such as the category "terraces" covered a variety of manifestations of past activity.

Some individuals were finding it possible to pursue their own particular interests successfully within the framework of the scheme, notably Buist in his work on pa, and Batley in his work on ecology of the Central North Island.

All the major intensive recording projects were to some extent failures.

After three trips to Kaipara site numbers had been assigned to 52 sites, 19 on map N33 and 33 on map N37. Records for most of these had not been filed. A later Auckland file-keeper managed in 1968 to assemble information on all but five sites from records in the Anthropology Department at Auckland. There is still no information at all on N37/1, N37/3 and N37/29, while sites N33/14 and 15 lack grid references. Of the sites for which records are available, 18 were definitely recorded in 1958, 9 in 1959 and 4 in 1961. The other forms are undated. Since 24 sites were found in 1958 and 20 in 1959, it appears that the four sites known to have been recorded in 1961 may have been the sole result of a weekend in which a number of people were involved. A few of the recorded sites have been shown to have incorrect grid references, but on the whole the standard of recording is very good. The great problem was in the processing of the records after the various fieldtrips.

The Mount Wellington survey was particularly important because it represented an attempt to grapple with the problem of multiple features on one large site, a problem still present today. But it was not a success, again largely because of a failure in compilation and processing. The map, which was an

integral part of the survey, was eventually completed by the Mount Wellington Borough Council, but the 300 record cards were abandoned. Here it should be noted that maps of three smaller but still complex Auckland sites, (Mount Hobson, Green Mountain and Hamlins Hill) were subsequently completed successfully, and added to the files, without resort to the detailed but complicated system of feature record cards.

The failure of Smart's Waikanae and Waitotara surveys seems also to have been a failure in processing. In the case of the Waitotara survey, which continued into 1963, with financial assistance from the Historic Places Trust, numbers were assigned to a large block of sites for which records were never filed. The Waikanae middens, which were sampled as part of the recording process, suffered a similar fate.

In the case of the South Canterbury rock drawings, too, there were hitches in getting the information into the files, in particular prolonged difficulties over the form in which the information should be published, and disagreements over the appropriate repository for the information. Although this survey came closest of the major surveys of that period to reaching a satisfactory conclusion, later workers have found the material at times inadequate for more recent attempts at preservation, largely because of difficulties in relocating some of the sites.

### 1963 TO 1973

In 1963, the central filekeeper reported district totals which gave an overall total of 1110 sites (Daniels 1963a). The majority of recorded sites were still in Auckland, Taranaki and Wellington, but Canterbury, Wanganui and Rotorua-Bay of Plenty were also showing signs now of steady progress. The artifact recording scheme, however, was languishing.

Smart now reported that over 400 sites had been recorded in the Waitotara - Nukumaruru survey, and that financial assistance from the Historic Places Trust had enabled aerial surveying to be undertaken (Smart and Smart 1963). No further progress, however, was to be made with this project, and the majority of sites did not reach the files.

Green published summaries of sites at Opito, Sarah's Gully and Great Mercury Island (Green 1963a) filling out site record forms and obtaining numbers for sites which had been excavated by various people over the years. The fact that

it was necessary for him to do this was a sad reflection on the extent to which excavators had felt it incumbent upon them to file record forms for sites they had excavated.

In the same year Green published a report on his own project in the Kauri Point area, which included the recording of a number of shell middens (Green 1963c). The implications for the site recording scheme of the large number of small sites in one small area were not stressed at that time, but it has become increasingly apparent as more intensive surveys have been undertaken, that a major problem facing the scheme is the extremely large number of small sites in some areas.

Also in 1963, Brown published a report on sources of information which could be used in the site recording scheme (Brown 1963). The point was strongly made that any information from documentary sources should be checked in the field. Brown's approach was, of course, strongly influenced by his involvement in what he called "despoliation surveys" which determined the amount of damage and destruction that had already taken place. Although documentary evidence has occasionally been used as a supplement to field evidence, the majority of those contributing to the scheme have preferred to stick to "physical evidence of occupation". Brown's work in the field of site destruction, as well as that of Green and others, was reflected in the interim report of the scheduled sites subcommittee (Green 1963b).

The next few years saw no major developments or alterations to the site recording scheme. Research carried out within the framework of active recording was particularly well illustrated by the work of Buist, on a large scale in North Taranaki, and on a smaller and less intensive scale at Kuaotunu on the Coromandel Peninsula (Buist 1964, 1965).

At the same time, sufficient work had been done for some results to be expected in studies of site distribution. The year 1965 began with a Science Congress in Auckland which included a symposium on the analysis and recording of field monuments. Papers included contributions by Buist and Groube on fortifications; a discussion by Daniels on site types and distribution in the Wellington district, and a report by Leahy and Nicholls on site mapping and surveying in the Auckland area. The last mentioned recounted the experience of members of the

Auckland Society, with limited skills and equipment, in surveying large sites. It is interesting to note that the other three contributors based their discussions largely on their own fieldwork and experience, rather than on the data other workers had contributed to the files.

Two subsequent Association conferences dealt with site distribution and site types, with contributors drawing at least some of their data from the site recording scheme. The New Plymouth conference in 1967 dealt with fortifications, while the meeting at Wanganui the following year concentrated on undefended sites. It is perhaps significant that neither conference produced papers of any great value for more recent work. A few people continued to use the data in the site recording scheme for research, notably Groube in his continuing studies of pa distribution (e.g. Groube 1970) and Gorbey in a similar study (Gorbey 1970), but each found that data in the files provided at best a starting point which needed to be supplemented by other sources of information.

During the 1965 Science Congress, a stormy special general meeting of the Association considered the site scheduling system. Terminological difficulties were overcome, but at the annual meeting the following year the relevance of the system was challenged, and it was referred back to Council, and to all intents and purposes abandoned. The interest in site preservation, however, remained strong. For some years thereafter, the Association's main efforts in this field were concentrated, on the national level, on sites on Crown land.

Several problems of administration arose during the '60s. The first occurred in 1965 when it appeared that access to a regional file housed in a public institution was unduly restricted. The thorough airing which this problem received in Council at the time caused the central filekeeper to produce a document setting forth clearly the basis of deposit of files with a public institution. It appeared, however, that the situation which gave rise to this problem was exceptional, and no difficulties have been experienced with regional files housed in other public institutions. From time to time, also, complaints have been received that regional files housed in filekeepers' residences were not as accessible as they should be. Such complaints, however, when investigated, have been found to have little basis.

A small but irritating problem arose when new editions of

NZMS 1 maps appeared with a slightly different grid, meaning that grid references for sites recorded on old maps needed correction, and recorders had to specify which map edition they were using. Some filekeepers were able to effect rapid corrections, others continued to use old maps, and a certain amount of confusion arose. It was, however, a minor muddle rather than a major upset.

Another problem was a matter of principle. The concept that the scheme was or should be restricted to prehistoric Maori sites was seriously challenged and a lengthy debate ensued in Council. Supporters of the proposal to broaden the scope of the scheme included Messrs Batley, McFadgen, Simmons, and Miss Davidson, while foremost among the opponents were the central filekeeper, Mr Daniels, who was concerned that the scheme might be swamped with historic sites, and the Wellington filekeeper, Mr Keyes. Eventually Council decided to broaden the extent of the scheme and passed a resolution as follows: "that all sites, prehistoric or historic, be filed in the N.Z.A.A. site recording scheme if they are capable of being described, discovered and examined only by standard archaeological techniques." This decision, recorded in Council minutes, was conveyed to members of the Association in the central filekeeper's annual report for 1966-67. The change in policy did not produce excessive numbers of records of historic sites. The central filekeeper now agrees that the correct decision was made.

At the 1968 annual meeting in Wanganui it was suggested that site record forms could be published, or could be used as the basis of publications of regional site surveys. This topic was discussed on several occasions by Council, but was eventually dropped, following forceful arguments against it by the editor of the Newsletter.

The year 1969 saw, at last, the permanent appointment of an archaeologist to the staff of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust - a development long hoped for. This appointment brought the Trust and the Association together in a way not previously possible, despite the indirect representation of the Association on the Trust by individual Association members. The appointment of the Trust archaeologist was perhaps symptomatic of increasing official sympathy towards archaeology, and the increasing involvement of archaeologists in active site protection. Data from the site record files began to be more widely used in seeking protection of sites under the Town and Country Planning Act (Daniels 1970a), and were also increasingly used in attempts to preserve sites on Crown Land.

The central filekeeper's review in 1970 (Daniels 1970b)

mentioned an increase in site recording being carried out beyond the framework of the site recording scheme. This was one aspect of the development of intensive research projects characteristic of this period. Such projects and the problems they engendered are discussed in the next section.

The most significant event of 1970, however, was the publication of the new handbook (Daniels 1970c) which had been long awaited. This embodied much wisdom derived from experience of the running of the scheme, and positive statements on some areas of uncertainty. The aim of the scheme was seen as "to record adequately by written description and appropriate illustrative material as many as possible of the individual archaeological sites throughout the country." It was emphasised that the site recording scheme was an aid to research. In 1968, revised record forms had been produced for use in conjunction with the new handbook. The 1968 site record form is, if anything, closer to the 1958 site record form, than was the intervening site reference form.

The publication of the handbook did not lead immediately to either an increase in the number of sites recorded, or an improvement in the standard of recording. At the Auckland conference in 1971, when the central filekeeper again reviewed the scheme, there was considerable discussion, and some expressions of dissatisfaction with the scheme. On that occasion the central filekeeper felt it necessary to emphasise the continuing value of the scheme.

The scheme aims to provide a national framework for the recording of prehistoric sites in a simple but systematic way. The scheme was designed to encourage contributions by non-specialists as well as experts.

Whatever criticisms may be levelled at the scheme, it is still widely accepted that site recording has a vital part to play in New Zealand archaeology. As long as this remains so, the desirability of a national scheme is clear. (Daniels 1971: 77).

Deficiencies in the scheme in 1971 were seen as slow recording, uneven progress between regions, and the persistence of low standard recording. Problems centred on recording outside the scheme, and the fact that some areas remained inactive. It was admitted that although the scheme was originally designed for research, it had not been so used as

much as had been hoped. Site protection was an unforeseen but vital use, which, however, the central filekeeper believed should remain secondary to research.

The extensive airing the scheme received in 1971 may have served to dispel some of its immediate difficulties, for in 1972 the central filekeeper was able to report the largest increase in recording for any one year in the entire history of the scheme. The total number of sites recorded jumped from 4964 to 6251 (Daniels 1972). Although this spectacular increase was not repeated in the following year, it did appear to represent a revival of interest in and enthusiasm for the scheme.

Some minor revisions were made as a result of the discussions in 1971, the most significant being the switch to plastic bags for filing, which permitted easier handling of records and, as a side effect, enabled more records to be stored in each filing cabinet.

The proposed revision of the Historic Articles Act has led to a thorough consideration of ways of protecting both artifacts and sites. The Association has asked for an official register of all sites to be compiled. Any attempt to meet this demand might be expected to take the present site recording scheme as a starting point, and indeed, the experience of the site recording scheme should provide some important guidelines for the development of an official recording system.

#### LARGE RECORDING PROJECTS

A major cause for concern throughout the history of the site recording scheme has been its failure to accommodate the results of large scale surveys, or alternatively, the failure of those involved in such projects to process their data and file the necessary minimum information in the scheme. The fate of early ventures in this field has been summarised above. The achievements of more recent large scale projects has been hardly more encouraging.

In the mid 1960s, Groube initiated a major research project in the Bay of Islands. The associated site survey was continued and expanded by Kennedy who incorporated the data in her M.A. thesis and resulting publication. She listed 69 sites, apparently by site number, in her work (Kennedy 1969: 202-5). This list has presented problems for the Northland filekeeper, who never received any record forms for the sites. The problems were compounded by the fact that some of the numbers she used had already

been assigned to other sites.

A major project of quite different origin, also undertaken during the '60s, was the archaeological survey carried out by the N.Z. Historic Places Trust in the area of the Tongariro Power Development Project. Here, sites of both Maori and European origin were recorded and entered on site record forms. The records are at present retained in the Inland Patea file. They will be forwarded to the central file, but access to them will be restricted, pending publication by the Trust of an appropriate report on the project. This was decided with the agreement of the Association. The parallel with the South Canterbury rock drawing survey should not, however, be overlooked. In such cases, any competition for possession of the data and rights to publication could obscure the basic principle that the information is collected in order to place it on record and make it available to all legitimate researchers.

The Trust's next venture in major recording, the Kapuni pipeline project, passed through a number of different filing districts and could not be regarded as a unified survey of the same type as the Tongariro project. In this case records were filed with the various filekeepers and site numbers assigned. The number of sites involved was not nearly so great.

Some other major surveys undertaken with conservation in view have also been successful, in that site record forms have been duly added to the scheme, and site numbers correctly assigned and used. Examples are the Te Pahi Archaeological Survey in the Far North, undertaken for the Lands and Survey Department (Davidson 1971), and a survey at Mimiwhangata in Northland, undertaken for private consultants acting on behalf of New Zealand Breweries, in which 112 sites were recorded (Calder 1973). A warning note must be sounded, however. The old problem of processing records remains. Thus records have not yet been filed for a survey of North Kaipara Head carried out in 1971, and the same problem has arisen for those who conducted a recent survey on D'Urville Island.

Other large scale surveys have been research projects, usually based on Universities. The Wairarapa project, conducted by researchers from Otago University, did result in records being filed. In the long run those involved in the project found it beneficial to compress some of their data on to site record forms - particularly in determining the extent

of individual sites. Cassel's Aotea survey, however, has not yet produced site record forms and it will be interesting to see what his experience reveals, especially as much of his survey deals with shell middens.

Another problem which has been highlighted by recent intensive work is the question of how to handle very large and complex sites within the scheme. As mentioned above, this was tackled by Groube in the early days of the scheme with only limited success. The problem is tentatively dealt with in the current handbook, where it is recommended that large areas of occupation be treated as one site, rather than artificially split into separate sites (Daniels 1970c: 13). Some recorders have followed this advice and included very extensive areas under one site number. The problem has been emphasised recently at Wiri near Auckland, where Sullivan has been recording stone walled systems covering many acres. The correct procedure for numbering sites here has posed a severe problem for recorder and filekeeper alike. Another problem arose when the same recorder located 60 discrete middens in a very small area surrounding Pukaki Creek in the same general area. This is the Kauri Point midden survey enlarged and intensified, with frightening implications for the scheme as a whole. Over the years, most recorders have neglected to record the enormous numbers of small middens which undoubtedly exist in some parts of the country. The advent of increasingly intensive regional surveys, however, suggests that they cannot be ignored for ever, and that if and when they are recorded, problems in processing and filing data will be intensified.

#### THE PRESENT POSITION

That the original scheme was soundly based is shown by the fact that it has functioned successfully for 15 years with only minor revisions. A review of the points discussed by Buchanan in 1958 illustrates this.

The desirability of the scheme, accepted readily in 1958, would be equally readily conceded by most Association members in 1973. Possible disappointment in its present value as a research tool is outweighed by recognition of its value in conservation. The type of system has turned out to be very much in line with Golson's ideal of full systematic but uncomplicated records. The fate of ambitious recording projects, and particularly of all the more complicated variant record forms designed by individual enthusiasts, shows that the present scheme is quite complicated enough.

The NZMS 1 series maps have served well in the past 15 years. The fact that they are now to be replaced by metric maps could not have been foreseen in 1958. Although the change in maps appears to present a major obstacle now, there is little doubt that the scheme is strong enough and important enough to overcome it.

The question of district boundaries was one of the most contentious when the scheme was initiated. Once boundaries were decided, however, they worked well. Minor changes have been made over the years, but without causing difficulty. The problems posed by the new maps may mean a fixing of the boundaries once and for all; the relatively small change required in the past should mean that the boundaries could now be safely fixed. Provided the scheme continues in its present form, this would certainly be so; consideration could perhaps be given to whether the development of an official national scheme should necessitate the rearrangement of boundaries to coincide with administrative areas such as land districts.

The number of filekeepers, like the district boundaries, has remained fairly constant, and major changes could be anticipated only if the scheme becomes part of the work of a government antiquities agency. Similarly, on the question whether filekeepers should be institutions or persons, the compromise adopted has, on the whole, worked well. A disproportionate amount of recording has been done by some of the filekeepers in more remote areas, who are not associated with public institutions. Any alteration to the scheme which tended to undermine the position of these people would be undesirable at this stage. The selection of filekeepers has proved difficult only in inactive areas, where it is difficult or impossible to find anyone willing to accept the responsibility.

The relatively strict rules regarding access to files and particularly to the central file have probably been waived as much as they have been observed, with some regional filekeepers more generous than others in making files available. There have, however, been no complaints to Council from members denied access to files by filekeepers. The provision for secret files is one of the issues which generated more heat in discussion than was justified in retrospect by its actual use.

The record forms have probably attracted more attention than any other aspect of the scheme's administration, which is hardly surprising. It is interesting to note, however, that despite several revisions, the present forms are very similar to those of 1958. There is no doubt that the present forms and filing system permit the filing of extremely detailed and useful records. A weakness of the scheme, on the other hand,

is that the minimum record is of a very low standard, many forms being submitted which contain almost no information beyond the fact that a site of some kind exists at a certain place. Many supporters of the scheme, however, would argue that even this minimal information is better than nothing.

The definition of an archaeological site, so fundamental to the scheme, has attracted rather less attention over the years than might have been expected. It is interesting, 15 years later, to note the confidence with which the scheme's originators were presumably able to identify "pre-European Maori sites", and their lack of interest in, or unawareness of, a proto-historic period. The issue of whether the site recording scheme caters for the study of New Zealand prehistory or New Zealand archaeology, however, is one which must be fully considered in planning any further national recording schemes. The present definition permits the inclusion of archaeological sites of European origin as well as Maori sites of protohistoric or historic age - a great extension of its original scope - but there are still Association members who would prefer it to be restricted to pre-European Maori sites.

Another major aspect of site definition is that of recording large and complex sites, discussed above. Individual recorders and filekeepers have tended to make their own decisions about these - as indeed they themselves have tended to decide which sites can properly be included in the scheme, regardless of official definitions. The question of large and complex sites, however, must become more of a problem as the standard of recording improves, and the requirements of conservation demand precise delimitations of site area and descriptions of legal ownership.

Sources of archaeological information have, in keeping with the definition of a site, been based on field observation first and foremost. Various people have suggested other sources of information, and some have used them, but such sources are unlikely to be fully exploited unless the introduction of an official recording system gives trained people the time necessary to explore them thoroughly.

#### THE FUTURE

From the above summary it is possible to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of the scheme in a way which may

be helpful for the future. The strength of the scheme is undoubtedly its simplicity and the fact that any interested person may contribute.

One of its principal weaknesses is the fact that filling out record forms is basically a clerical job which does not appeal to many people - the number of sites visited by fieldworkers always greatly exceeds the number for which records are actually filed. The moral in this is that any future extensions of the scheme or officially sponsored recording projects must have built-in safeguards to ensure that records are completed and properly filed - otherwise, as recording increases, so the number of sites never filed will also increase.

It may be thought by fieldworkers that provided they keep full records themselves, the essential data can always be transferred to record forms at some later date. The answer to this lies in the famous epigram cited in the handbook: "a discovery dates only from the time of the record of it, and not from the time of its being found in the soil" (Pitt Rivers, cited in Daniels 1970: 7).

Another weakness is the possessiveness towards their data displayed by those who fear that others will make use of their material before they themselves are able to, if it is made generally available in the site recording scheme. This results in unwillingness to file records until the material has been published in full. Given New Zealand's poor record in archaeological publication, such an attitude is hard to justify. The limited extent to which site record files have so far been used in research should render fears of this kind groundless. If the attitude persists, a likely consequence is that the scheme will be added to and used largely by those involved in conservation rather than research, while those who might derive most benefit from its development as a research tool will help to reduce its research value by their own failure to contribute.

If present indications are any guide, the next few years should see a steady increase in regional surveys undertaken by trained individuals, and sponsored by organisations such as the N.Z. Historic Places Trust and the Lands and Survey Department, both of which have accepted the value of the existing scheme and made considerable use of it. At the same time, however, the individual recorder, working in his own time on an amateur basis, must continue to play an important

part. It will be many years before intensive surveys achieve a reasonable coverage, even if there is an immediate and dramatic increase in funds and personnel devoted to site recording, and until such coverage is achieved, the scheme depends on continuing contributions from those who have already made it what it is today.

Any increase in intensive surveys may place additional strain on the administration of the scheme. But this should be alleviated by the additional funds which should accompany intensive surveys, and, as noted above, such surveys should have built-in safeguards to ensure the prompt and adequate processing of records.

It is impossible to predict what may develop from the present proposals for an official antiquities agency to undertake, among other duties, full recording of New Zealand archaeological sites. Several points can be made, however. The Association and the N.Z. Historic Places Trust have been closely associated in the development of the existing scheme. Both will be able to contribute to the development of a new and better scheme. The architects of any new or modified scheme would be well advised to consider not only the present state of the existing scheme, but its history and development. In particular, the failure of the many suggested alternative more complex record forms, to replace the original simpler forms, is worthy of note. The site recording scheme, despite its deficiencies, has served New Zealand archaeology well, and proved its value. The potential for improvement and development may lie within the scheme itself, rather than in its replacement by a new scheme.

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