

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey

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SUMMARY

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland has included field survey among its interests for most of its 200 year history. Comments on certain aspects of field work published in the *Proceedings*, brief notes on some other bodies responsible for field survey and on work by individuals provide the background to this review of the Society's recent Archaeological Field Survey project. Opportunity has also been taken to consider possibilities for the future of archaeological field survey in Scotland.

INTRODUCTION

Development is a term used as frequently among archaeologists today as among businessmen and planners, but to archaeologists *Development* may represent *Threats* and generally will provoke limited response – *Rescue*, *Survey* and, less frequently in the last two or three years, *Excavation*. The scale of development in Scotland today is considerable, but it is by no means the only threat facing archaeology, since changing agricultural practices, land drainage, marginal-land ploughing, forestry, pipelines, road building, metal detectors, neglect and natural causes, for example, are some of the threats to archaeological remains. There are few field archaeologists in post in Scotland and the greater part of the responsibility for responding to threats lies with the various public bodies concerned with field antiquities, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAMS), the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division (OS), and the Scottish Development Department (Ancient Monuments) (SDD(AM)), though it is chiefly the last named which has had an official role to play in archaeological assessment for development and rescue archaeology. The lack of field archaeologists in post throughout Scotland has meant that matters concerning some important sites or monuments may be dealt with centrally, at SDD(AM) in Edinburgh, but there is no mechanism which can normally ensure an archaeological assessment being available locally at the right time in most other cases. In most Region and District Planning Departments, for example, the only immediately available archaeological information may be the Ordnance Survey Record Cards, a useful document, but not designed for such a purpose.

If future archaeological needs are to be met it is urgently necessary to assemble the information for as complete a database as may still be available to us today. Only from such a base can the full range and density of sites and monuments of all periods be estimated, and understanding of earlier human activity be gained. As part of a programme of gathering such information the

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Society of Antiquaries Archaeological Field Survey was founded in 1977, initially for a three year period, but extended for a fourth. This review has been written to mark both the conclusion of this phase of the project, and its transfer to the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, where it continues.

BACKGROUND

Before examining the Archaeological Field Survey in detail a brief summary of some aspects of earlier field surveys, as published in the *Proceedings*, will provide an indication of their range and development as well as of the Society's interest, particularly in the publication of the results of fieldwork by Fellows. The Society's objects, as set down in the *Laws*, included 'the promotion of archaeology especially as connected with the investigation of the antiquities and history of Scotland'. In the Society's formative years field monuments took second place to the acquisition of objects for the Museum, as recently shown by Stevenson (1981). Gradually the emphasis changed, and sites ceased to be regarded chiefly as quarries from which to obtain objects for the Museum's collections, and increasing attention was paid to the sites themselves. At first only the most obvious monuments, like forts and brochs or stone circles, seemed of interest (Duns 1883), as Fellows came to grips with site recognition and problems of terminology. To modern eyes descriptions were often superficial, but as time passed increasing attention was paid to detail. Angus Graham, in two important review papers (1970, 1978) classified the types of paper published by the Society from 1780 to 1930 and from 1930 to 1970 in which awareness of archaeological problems, as shown in the pages of the *Proceedings*, was discussed. Graham noted (1970, 263) that by the 1880s surveys of monuments by areas or classes were becoming 'systematic inventories and are quite different from the desultory notes on things seen . . .'. The realization that inventories were needed became a matter of great concern towards the end of the 19th century, not just within the Society, and this was one of the reasons for the founding of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAMS) in 1908. The papers of greatest interest in the present review are those in the *Proceedings* concerned with inventory-type surveys, rather than those which have sought to locate potential excavation sites, although some such examples have been quoted, as Piggott & Piggott (1946). Two early papers by Angus Graham on the antiquities of Skipness, Argyll (1919, 1920), stand out from the whole body of fieldwork papers, even from many of more recent date. The survey of Skipness was carried out in response to a request for assistance from the Ordnance Survey, who wanted detailed information on 'all the archaeological remains found within a limited area'. Graham compiled a numbered list and distribution map, describing sites and noting topographical details. He included in his list descriptions of industrial sites of the more recent past, which he considered worthy of study, as well as notes on a small excavation and an assessment of some of the sites listed. The improvement in the level and accuracy of observation were significant, and it is interesting that he considered it necessary to write a second paper, a year after the first, listing sites not observed on the first occasion. This was a valuable realization that one visit to an area was unlikely to prove adequate for total recovery of sites. The President of the Society, Lord Abercromby, suggested in the Anniversary Address (1920, 7) that 'such work might be undertaken by other Fellows of the Society during holiday seasons and the results would prove most useful at some future date for the RCAHMS, as well as to anyone studying any particular type of prehistoric monument'. Few Fellows published similar surveys in the *Proceedings*, although fieldwork continued to be reported, as Crichton-Mitchell (1933) and Kinghorn (1935) on sites in Benderloch and Berwickshire respectively, though later there were some extremely valuable surveys combining documentary

research on sites and monuments with fieldwork such as that on mid-Argyll (Campbell & Sandeman 1962). Various papers reflected the close relationship between the Society and the RCAMS, as Graham (1939), on cultivation terraces, and Graham & Childe (1943), on a variety of known but previously unrecorded monuments, examined as part of the wartime programme of work mainly concentrated in areas unlikely to be surveyed by RCAMS for some time to come. The *Proceedings* provided a suitable publication medium for such work.

In the post-war period there was a sense of urgency about some archaeological fieldwork, partly as a result of a conference held on the *Future of Archaeology* (London 1943). Later *A survey and policy of field research in the archaeology of Great Britain* (Hawkes 1948) claimed its object was '... to consider briefly the present state and future direction of British field research in archaeology for the prehistoric and early historic periods'. In chapter 1 there was an outline of present research and in chapter 2 there was a statement of outstanding problems. This was reflected in the pages of the *Proceedings* which reported the above conference (Steer 1948, 188) and also in fieldwork in Colonsay (Piggott & Piggott 1946) where a programme of visits to known sites was conducted as part of a plan to add to archaeological information about these sites, and to select one of the 'best' for extensive excavation, perceived as the only way to solve certain problems of dating these monuments. A new standard was set in this paper, providing as it did high-quality plans, measurements, good general descriptions and topographical descriptions. Two further papers from the *Proceedings* indicate the progress of fieldwork reporting. The short report on Dun Lagaidh (Calder & Steer 1949), a rare example of problem-orientated research, concerned a broch within a vitrified fort; and, much later, Aitken (1970) concluded an excavation report on bloomeries with a survey, bringing an important but little-known type of human activity and its remains to attention, in addition to providing pointers for further fieldwork.

The papers quoted above must serve as an indication of the wide range and level of fieldwork undertaken by Fellows and subsequently published in the *Proceedings*. Little of the research was problem-orientated, but built mainly on the research interests and geographical preferences of individual scholars, often following the lead provided by RCAMS, whose Investigators sometimes used the pages of the *Proceedings* for individual contributions of items not related to the current *Inventory*.

Several public bodies in Scotland include a field survey role in their wide responsibilities. Since these have had influence on the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey and, since in some cases they have also had financial and administrative involvement, a brief comment is provided below on certain aspects of the work of some of these bodies as well as of individual researchers, as background to the discussion of the Field Survey.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland was founded in 1908 to compile an inventory of archaeological and historical monuments in Scotland and to recommend those of special interest for preservation. This was a most specific remit, requiring, by definition, intensive and, therefore, time-consuming field investigation, a formidable task. Progress has been slow, partly as additional types of monument have been included in the surveys, and partly as the quality of the fieldwork has developed, but this intensive work has been seen as the definitive record for each successive area. Although revision of previous areas investigated has been carried out, work has normally been concentrated on a particular county at any one time. Many parts of Scotland however have not yet been investigated, and are unlikely to be investigated to the same standard of field investigation and publication in the foreseeable future with the facilities and staff at present available.

An important piece of research carried out in 1956 was the RCAMS Marginal Land Survey in which the 1948 air photograph cover was examined, seeking archaeological remains in upland

areas. Many sites located in this way have found their way into the archaeological literature, but archaeologists have been less active than geographers in assessing the human potential of this material (as Parry, 1976).

Another body which has had a considerable impact on archaeological field survey in Scotland has been the Ordnance Survey, Archaeology Division. All archaeological fieldwork has for many years been dependent for accurate topographical information on the OS 1 inch, 6 inch and 25 inch maps (more recently metric versions). The OS included many antiquities on its maps, thus providing a substantial field record from the mid-19th century. This non-intensive archaeological record was based on rapid surveys, the purpose of which was to substantiate the publication of sites and monuments on OS maps. In the course of compiling these records an archaeological card index was built up by the OS Archaeology Division, providing the only record of antiquities compiled to the same standard for the whole of Scotland. Many groups and individuals have depended on the OS Record cards and maps for planning purposes, for example, as well as for archaeological fieldwork, though in the past the OS Record has not always been as well used by archaeologists as it deserved. As part of a scheme for national reorganization within the OS, the Archaeology Division is in process of being transferred to the RCAMS, a move which it is hoped will be of benefit to both bodies, and to all those who may require archaeological information.

Much archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken outwith the various bodies mentioned above, some published in a variety of journals, some in definitive works, as Henshall (1963, 1972) on chambered tombs, and in other cases published to meet the needs of a wider public, as Feachem (1963). In addition, *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* has provided an opportunity for amateurs and professionals to publish brief annual accounts of their current work, a useful, if uneven, cover of various kinds of fieldwork.

An example of valuable archaeological fieldwork interpretation coupled with environmental studies, particularly of soil and pollen, was conducted in Orkney (Davidson, in Davidson *et al* 1976) as part of a programme aimed at understanding the environment of Neolithic man and his exploitation of it. Contributions to archaeology by geographers have not been widely accepted or followed, yet the potential of such problem-orientated research has great implications for our understanding of human activity in space and time.

There has long been a deeply held conviction among many people that it is important to learn as much as possible about the past, though often interest has centred only on the most spectacular remains, such as the broch of Mousa. However, as Lowenthal says, '... more recently we have come to value the surviving relics not merely for their symbolic references to an ideal past and because they are scarce or sumptuous but for three other reasons: representativeness, congeniality (sense of continuity), economy...' (in Lowenthal & Binney 1981, 11).

This observation embodies an important conceptual change; that we no longer value only the pre-eminent, but now desire to have a total understanding of a place, its monuments and the people who lived there. The heritage is considered to be a national concern, an asset, which enhances the quality of life, something for which Government acknowledges responsibility. Considerable sums of public money are now spent each year on the heritage, and this is considered an appropriate and important use of public funds. Government responsibility for the heritage is acknowledged in various ways, as in the RCAMS, but currently its main responsibility is vested in the Secretary of State for Scotland, with administration being carried out by the Scottish Development Department (Ancient Monuments).

SDD(AM) is concerned with Guardianship sites, scheduling, and relevant rescue excavation and survey. Archaeological field survey has become of great importance to SDD(AM), as the pace

of development has quickened, and as it has been required to provide more and more archaeological information both for internal use and for outside bodies. The only standard, national source of archaeological information, as already noted, has been the OS Record Card Index, but this is non-intensive, and its revision has recently been slowed considerably. In order to supply information rapidly to Planning Departments, the Forestry Commission and other bodies, the SDD(AM) has, for example, sponsored intensive rapid surveys of large areas. It has also sponsored a programme of air photography to acquire additional information, particularly from areas where sites may no longer be upstanding. The main flying programme, which has located many new sites, is organized by RCAMS, and the results are published annually in list form (as RCAMS 1980). An example of a rapid forestry survey is that conducted by Mercer (1980) in N Caithness and Sutherland. During such surveys sites may be found which are of sufficient importance that they should be scheduled and preserved within a Forestry Plantation. Other sites may be found which it may be considered necessary to excavate. Such surveys have been quick and effective, as well as cost effective, though not always highly regarded. However, it would not at present be feasible to survey the whole of rural Scotland, or even the threatened areas, in this way, largely because of the lack of skilled manpower and funds. There remain, therefore, and will remain, substantial areas of Scotland for which the OS Record Cards and some air photographs will continue to provide the only guide to the occurrence of archaeological sites.

SDD(AM) is required to carry out archaeological work on its own account, especially in relation to Guardianship and scheduled sites, in order that the Secretary of State's obligations can be met. Some of this work is carried out by internal office staff, some by the Central Excavation Unit, and some is contracted out. Examples of this last are the Scottish Burgh Survey, at the University of Glasgow and the Industrial Archaeology Survey, at the University of Strathclyde. Both Surveys have been preparing urgently needed data, for recording purposes and for 'implications studies', especially on topics of medieval and later date in urban contexts, relatively new areas of archaeological research. A further example of this kind of SDD(AM) contracted work has been the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey, established to provide information about rural areas. As part of a rationalisation of activities SDD(AM) and RCAMS have recently reconsidered their respective roles in relation to surveys, so that in future SDD(AM) will concentrate its efforts on surveys of areas under immediate threat, while RCAMS will deal with areas where the threats are longer term. Consequently there are certain changes of funding and organization which have resulted in some projects being wholly or partly transferred to the control of RCAMS, eg the Industrial Archaeology Survey and the Orkney archaeologist post. It is as part of this reorganization that the Society's Archaeological Field Survey team has been transferred to the RCAMS.⁵

THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND FIELD SURVEY

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey was initiated in 1977 on the recommendation of the Rescue Excavation Committee of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland. Funds for the Survey were to be provided by SDD(AM) and the staff were to be supervised and accommodation provided by the RCAMS, though the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland was to be the employer. All three bodies were represented on a Management Committee, which also included individuals with specific expertise in archaeological field survey. Three Field Officers were appointed,¹ initially for three years, from April 1977, but the project was, in fact, extended for a fourth year, throughout 1980, before being transferred directly to the RCAMS, where it continues.

The stated aim of the Archaeological Field Survey has been ‘... to carry out a rapid archaeological survey of selected areas of Scotland with a view to identifying hitherto unrecorded monuments and bringing them to the notice of central and local authorities’.² In addition the first *List* is described in its Introduction as ‘... part of a project...’, but no direct information is provided about other elements of the project.

In the discussion of the Archaeological Field Survey which follows, the work of the Survey, its approach to the problems to be solved, and organizational difficulties it faced are examined, chiefly by reference to its published work.³ The writer is grateful to many colleagues for fruitful discussions about the project: their views have broadened the perspective of the Survey given here, but all views expressed are the writer’s own.

There are many bodies and individuals requiring archaeological information at various levels, SDD(AM) itself, Regional and District Planning Departments, developers, scholars, educators and tourists, for example. While the database must be the same for all users the method of presentation and level of information required are unlikely to be the same. However, the Archaeological Field Survey was set up to provide accurate archaeological information rapidly in a form best capable of serving the needs of a majority of users. Firstly it was to provide back-up data to assist the SDD(AM) with its Scheduling and Rescue Excavation policy in areas outwith those served by RCAMS *Inventories*, where recent archaeological fieldwork had been minimal, and where there were prospects of development, by forestry, pipelines, road building and other large-scale land users. Clearly, identifying hitherto unrecorded monuments was likely to be invaluable for this purpose. Regions and Districts have a somewhat different need for archaeological information, particularly in preparing Structure and Local Plans, where knowledge of the location and archaeological significance of all known sites in the area is desirable in order to comply with legislation as well as for development, tourist or educational reasons. Bodies like the Forestry Commission, farming concerns, and many other land users could benefit from readily available, up to date archaeological information in order to evaluate archaeological constraints on their activities. A major requirement for archaeological data, of uniform standard, comes from scholars, who are charged with the task of interpreting known as well as new sites, and with placing these in context.

The Archaeological Field Survey had to devise a scheme of recording and publishing archaeological sites and monuments data which would be of maximum value to the various categories of users summarized above and for future users. It had to be relatively simple, to achieve results quickly, especially with limited personnel, and so the compilation of lists and location maps was considered most appropriate. The work falls into three basic categories, preparation, fieldwork and publication. The OS Record Cards and the First Edition 6 inch maps are scrutinized and evaluated first, so that the team may rapidly become acquainted with the district to be surveyed. Available air photograph cover is studied and sites are plotted and then other documentary sources, including estate and other early maps are examined. Additional information may be sought from museums and also from local researchers and fieldworkers but the level of collaboration is variable. All this information provides a basis for fieldwork and for publication. Ideally every recorded site should be visited, and all available land fieldwalked, but in practice the latter can rarely be achieved: selection has been essential in maintaining the impetus of the programme.

Although the Field Officers work as a team, under one of the Investigators of RCAMS, they also work independently, since they have differing skills and interests, coming together, however, to plan the fieldwork campaigns, each normally of two weeks’ duration. The main thrust of fieldwork has been to assess the present condition of known sites as well as to record details of new

sites, with written descriptions, and, in some cases plans, but photographs have not normally been taken. Site visits involve discussions with owners and tenants, not only to gain access but also to discover future intentions for the site and its environs and perhaps hear of other sites in the area. Shortage of time, as well as often difficult local conditions, have prevented total fieldwalking in most areas as part of this field survey. Investigation has therefore been chiefly in the vicinity of known sites and monuments, as well as in areas potentially suited to settlement or other human activity of earlier times. Such areas may be identified from air photographs, maps or by flying over the terrain, the latter technique being beneficial for locating shadow sites.

During the period under review 14 Lists have been published, though List 11, *Sanday and North Ronaldsay* was prepared by R Lamb of the Orkney Heritage Society, in co-operation with the Field Survey. It is hoped to extend the Field Survey coverage by similar co-operation in the future.

Each publication follows a specific pattern, listing the Management Committee, and including an Introduction, District location map, list of sites and monuments and site location map. The important editorial information in the Introduction requires careful study because in it is contained relevant information about the publication, what it contains and what is omitted. Listed items range from prehistoric burial cairns through to deserted farms, but buildings of special architectural and historic interest, and buildings within medieval burghs have not been listed. Roads, railways, canals and most structures of 19th-century and later date have also been omitted. An important point for the user to note, but one not stated in the publications, is the reason for the non-inclusion of such remains in the Archaeological Field Survey: they may be eligible for listing by the Historic Buildings Council or perhaps they could be included in the Medieval Burgh Survey or the Industrial Archaeology Survey.

The editorial notes indicate that sites have been classified as *destroyed*, *not visible but potentially important*, or *scheduled*. A fourth category, *other surviving remains*, is not stated, but in fact contains a substantial proportion of listed sites. Sites have been further classified for internal use by SDD(AM), but this information is not generally available, although users are advised that SDD(AM) '... will be happy to advise on archaeological sites affected by planning proposals', this being the only clue to one reason for the lists. No mention is made in the Introduction of how complete a list might be for the categories of site published. The proportion of sites published to those omitted would have been a valuable aid to the user, who might then be alerted to the possibility of the existence of other sites. Moreover, omitted sites, discredited by one field worker may be valid in the opinion of another, while such sites will probably continue to be held in other records. It is regrettable that no simple analysis was published with most lists, indicating total sites recorded, numbers published, previously known sites, new, cropmark, destroyed and omitted sites, easily calculated during the preparation of the publication, but time-consuming for the user to work out. Some analysis of the nature and range of sites began with List 12, *Upper Eskdale* (1980). The user is referred in the Introduction to each list to the aerial photographs of many sites recorded in the lists and available for inspection at the National Monuments Record for Scotland, but there is no mention that the Field Officers' records have also been deposited there, a regrettable omission, since these records contain plans and more detailed notes, not included in the lists. It would have been valuable to elaborate on the statement in the Introduction that the list is '... part of a project ...', information which would have been most helpful as part of the Introduction to the first list, but also useful if included in subsequent issues. The remainder of the 'project' may be presumed to consist of the investigations of the RCAMS, as well as the various SDD(AM) sponsored surveys referred to above. From the third list, *Dumbarton District* (1978), a map of Scotland showing the areas already surveyed was introduced, and these areas were numbered in List 14 (*South Carrick*, 1981) (fig 1).⁴

The publications comprise two main sections, a descriptive text and numbered maps at 1:50 000 scale. Numbered entries have been arranged alphabetically, by theme, in a general chronological progression, and this number has been used to identify the site on the location maps in the second section. Each entry has been recorded under site name, with a six-figure grid reference and, where known, OS Record Card number, followed by a brief description of the site, accompanied by the date of visit and, for previously known sites, a short bibliography.

The first areas investigated by the Field Officers were the Clackmannan and Falkirk Districts of Central Region (February 1978), selected partly because an area easily accessible from Edinburgh was thought to be appropriate during the training, formative period of the Survey. Both Districts presented varied terrain, had been previously surveyed (RCAMS 1933, 1963) and many changes were known to have taken place since those dates, while future development, largely oil-related, could probably affect sites in the areas. Another aspect of the first areas selected was that loss or damage to previously recorded sites could perhaps be assessed, as could the possible level of discovery of new sites.

Although the results of an examination would vary from list to list the value of the Survey may be indicated by examples taken largely from List 1, for Clackmannan and Falkirk Districts. For example, of 35 entries in the *Inventory for Clackmannan* (RCAMS 1933) two had been destroyed by the time of the Field Survey (February 1978), which listed 63 sites in all. Five sites were previously unrecorded, while some 10 sites known from documentary sources were assessed for the first time. Such an increase may be attributed in part to documentary recording, in part to improved fieldwork techniques, and in particular to the range of sites and monuments now considered archaeologically important and worthy to be recorded. Analysis of this material indicates that a significant amount of relevant additional archaeological information was obtained, though the total number of new sites was small. At this formative stage of the Field Survey the presentation of the published information was not always consistent, but by the time the third list, *Dumbarton* (1978), was prepared a number of improvements were introduced, including fuller descriptions. The value of the Archaeological Field Survey for increasing and improving the archaeological database can best be noted in the lists for some of the more remote areas, such as in *Eskdale* (1980) and *Ewesdale* (1981), where numbers of new sites were recorded. Platform buildings, of relatively recent date, a previously unrecorded type of site, were recorded, for example, at Blackhouse Hill, Eskdale (1980, no 108).

The lists form an impressive record of the present state of archaeological knowledge for the 14 areas published to date, bringing together, as they do, the basic OS record, air photograph and survey evidence and information from a variety of other sources, updating earlier records, especially in the case of the field records. The accompanying 1:50 000 maps have been simply presented, using a numbered circular symbol to locate a site, the number referring to the accompanying list. No value judgements have been made about the material, apart from the four basic categories already discussed, though an indirect grading can be detected in many cases in the wording of the description. Words like *possible*, *what may be*, *may indicate* have generally been used when there may be a degree of uncertainty; while *complex*, *impressive*, *extensive* have been used to indicate sites still of considerable proportions; and terms like *denuded*, *severely reduced*, *ploughed down* have been used to indicate damaged sites. There are other pointers to the presumed importance of recorded remains, as shown by the use of *mere*, *modern* or *only*. Such subjective indicators must be treated with caution, but they may reflect the perceived archaeological potential of a site. Descriptive terms like *oval*, *pear-shaped*, *rectangular* may be useful pointers to the physical appearance of a site; while *summit*, *saddle*, *bluff* may aid relocation, but many entries do not have such aids. Topographical descriptions have frequently been included. Their omission

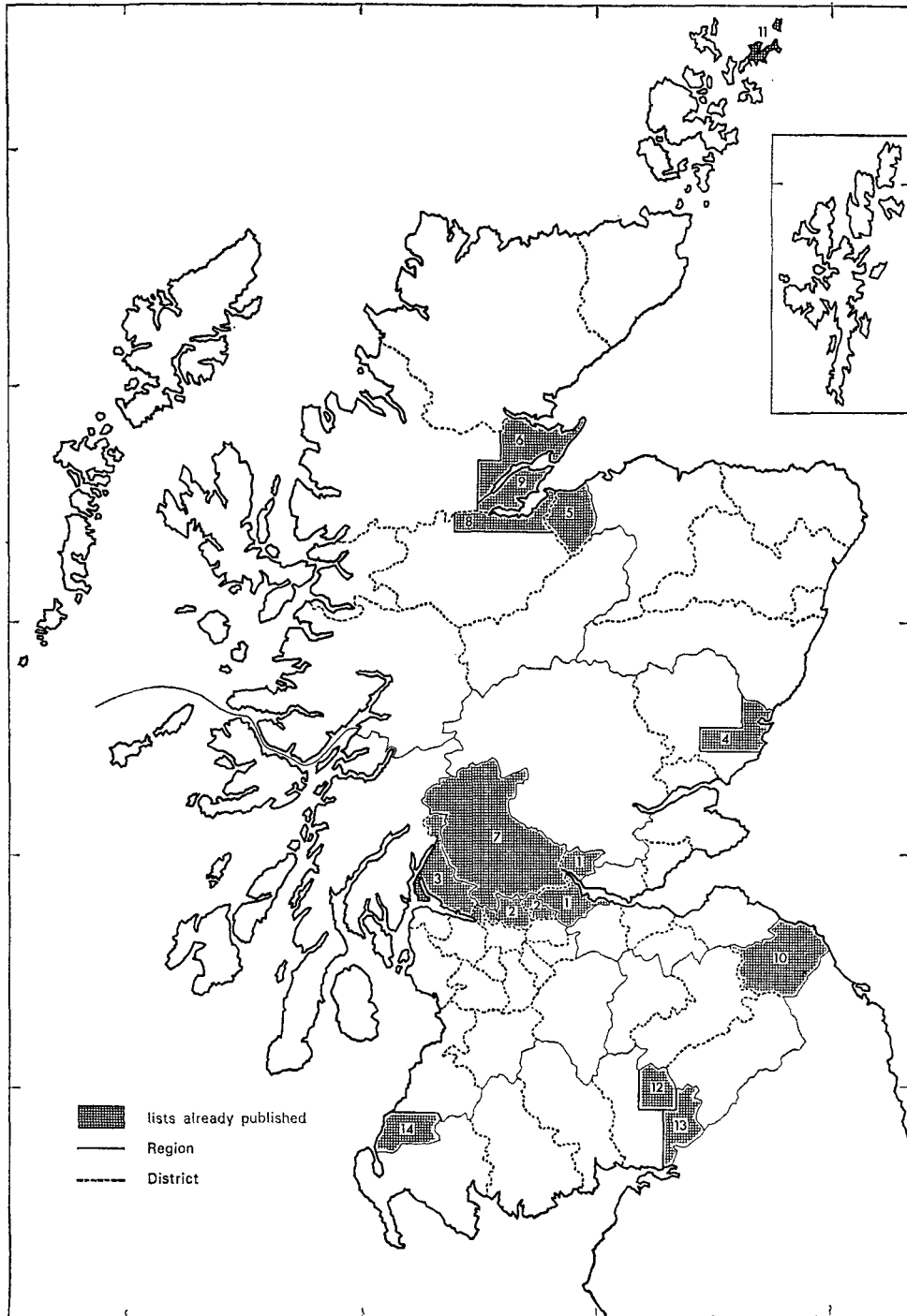


Fig 1 Areas surveyed and published by 1981

could make relocation by others difficult on occasion, but it may also suggest preoccupation with the site and less interest in its environment. Occasionally, valuable references to modern features have been included, related, sometimes stratigraphically to the site, as at Gilnockie, Ewesdale (May 1981, no 71) where '... practically the entire NW side is overlain by a modern farm track and a railway embankment has encroached on half on the SW side'; or at Douglas Farm, Ewesdale (May 1981, no 41 . . .), 'a plantation bank which caps the outer bank . . .'.

In the early lists descriptions were sometimes cryptic, or even omitted, as for the cairn at Blochairn, a scheduled site in Strathkelvin (February 1978, no 3), where the entry reads 'About 16.8 m in diameter and 2.1 m in height', while the entry for a Roman site at Balmuldy, Strathkelvin (February 1978, no 26), reads 'Bridge', followed by a reference. In later lists the information has been improved, so that comments have been included for sites where there may be nothing to see today, an important addition, as at Mountrich 2, Easter Ross (February 1979, no 35), where the entry states 'Nothing can now be seen of this shell-midden'. Other entries provided excavated detail, as at Broomholm Roman Fort, Ewesdale (May 1981, no 70), valuable perhaps for an archaeological user, but visible features and dimensions were not given, yet these would be helpful to all users, especially non-archaeological ones. Dimensions have been a recurrent omission, as at Lady's Brae, Clackmannan (February 1978, no 46). In particular it would have been valuable, especially for poorly preserved sites, if heights had normally been recorded.

Although the Archaeological Field Survey publications have been widely circulated, to SDD(AM), to Region and District Authorities, museums, the Forestry Commission, academic and other users, they seem to have been prepared mainly with archaeological users in mind. However, it should also be borne in mind that other users of the lists may have different needs, and that such users may have difficulties in using them. For example, many users may find the apparently equal weighting given to all sites difficult to interpret. The further information and advice, readily available from SDD(AM), or RCAMS, would undoubtedly be beneficial to local authority users, for example, but the need for such help may not always be recognized. Many users have indicated a desire to have sites graded within the lists, but this has always been considered archaeologically unacceptable, this then being the reason users have been encouraged to contact the central agencies, in the absence of an archaeologist based within the local authority.

There has been wide acclaim for the quality of the Field Officers' fieldwork, for their enthusiasm, for their understanding of difficult sites, and recognition of new sites, for example Gibb's Hill, Ewesdale (May 1981, no 24), a multi-period palisaded settlement of great complexity and interest, or the settlement of Dalbeath, Upper Eskdale (October 1980, no 115). Their thorough coverage of the ground and of documentary evidence in the time available has been part of the success of the project, as has the skill and co-operation of RCAMS, and of other bodies. It must be remembered, however, that the *Survey* of the title does not imply the precision of detailed surveying, as by the OS, for the Field Officers have been required to work to a tight timetable, in order to gather as much information as possible in a short time. This is entirely appropriate to the concept of 'rapid archaeological survey', as originally intended, though perhaps the term 'reconnaissance' would convey more accurately the nature of the fieldwork.

In some cases whole Districts have been surveyed, but smaller units have been selected in other cases, partly to standardize the size of the areas involved. All the Districts selected for survey had inadequate existing records and all were in development areas where threats to sites from various causes were expected or where considerable damage had already been done. The scale of some aspects of threat and damage, as well as the mechanisms causing such damage were already well documented, as for example, Hinchliffe & Schadla-Hall (1980) on plough-damage assessment, or Jackson (1978) on forestry and the survival of field monuments in SW Scotland. In addition,

development, particularly oil-related development, was a factor in choosing certain Districts for Field Survey, as Nairn (1978), Inverness (1979), and Easter Ross (1979), while Lunan Valley (1978) and Berwickshire (1980) were surveyed because of the large numbers of cropmark sites which had been recently recorded, in areas of intensive agricultural land use. It was considered important to examine such sites to estimate levels of destruction or possible survival. In areas such as Ewesdale (1981) and Eskdale (1980) forestry was the reason for the survey, to assess damage to sites in existing woodlands as well as to discover new sites which might exist on land zoned for afforestation, and which should be preserved wherever possible.

The Archaeological Field Officers, in preparing the 14 published lists have visited many sites, often more than once, always with another team member and often in company with other field workers, normally archaeologists rather than users for other bodies. They have added considerably to the archaeological database in Scotland, recording sites essentially to the same standard of information. Many recently recorded sites have been visited for the first time for detailed archaeological assessment. Locations of cropmark sites have also been examined, while a valuable body of new, and new types of sites, has been recorded. The importance of certain sites has been pointed out to SDD(AM) through the internal grading system, while SDD 'threat slips' have been used to back up this information on some occasions. However, it has not been easy to assess the impact of the Archaeological Field Survey on SDD(AM) and its work. At the time of writing (Spring 1982) the writer has been unable to identify any sites which have been scheduled, or may be being considered for scheduling, as a result of discovery by the Archaeological Field Survey team. It was not possible to evaluate the reaction to the Lists of Local Authority planners, Forestry Commission, Countryside Commission and other large scale land-users, and much will depend on how the Lists are perceived to relate to the work of such bodies. However, in the 14 areas which have been surveyed, the bodies charged with protecting the environment now have a useful tool to assist them in their planning, while other bodies such as the Forestry Commission have a tool which could be of use to them when they develop new areas.

CONCLUSION

Scotland has always been poorly provided with archaeologists to deal with collecting archaeological information and with all the forms of study appropriate to such material. Although there are many more individuals in post today than a few years ago, there are still great tracts of land where there is no professional archaeologist and where active amateurs are few in number. The official bodies and the universities pursue their designated activities, which leave them little time for additional, field survey, work. No system of local or even Regional Units has been developed, from which archaeological information-gathering could have been organized, though small groups, individuals and local committees have shown considerable enterprise in organizing some kinds of archaeological work. As with the reports discussed in the first part of this paper, much current archaeological fieldwork stems from a dedicated individual, influencing others locally. Basic archaeological cover therefore is minimal, with pockets of additional, but not consistent, information for some parts of the country, while there may be no input at all in other areas. The limited nature of official support for archaeology in recent years has been discussed widely and the reasons for it lie beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that the level of information about Scotland's field archaeology is far below that in England. There is reason, therefore, to consider carefully what Scotland's archaeological needs might be, and how best to fulfil them with the finance and manpower available, before the damage caused by the wide range of activities classed as *development* removes the surviving traces of early settlement and other

human activity. One of the first needs should be to establish a set of priorities. What should be preserved, excavated, recorded in detail, or allowed to be destroyed can only be decided if informed decisions can be taken. A minimum standard record is required for the whole country before any priorities can be estimated, but that is only the beginning, not the end, of archaeological decision-making.

From the brief summary of the various strands of archaeological field survey in Scotland it may be seen that the main elements have been individual research, as indicated in the *Proceedings* and other publications, for example Mercer (1981), the non-intensive records of the OS and the intensive records of the RCAMS, as well as the rescue excavation and other work of SDD(AM). As already noted, much of the information is variable in quality and quantity, and many areas lack all but a minimum coverage. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey was set up to provide for certain, selected, areas an archaeological record produced to a consistent standard. Fourteen areas have been studied to date (Spring 1982). However, it should be recognized that if the Field Survey continues on its present course at a rate of about three lists a year, it will take many years to complete its archaeological record of Scotland, even at the level of recording of the already published lists. Time is not on the side of archaeology and it is regrettable that unless something is done to augment the Survey many parts of Scotland may well not benefit from even a modest archaeological assessment of their sites and monuments until it is too late. It is even more regrettable that this should happen at a time when archaeological fieldwork has made tremendous progress, benefiting from improved approaches and techniques, such as geophysical survey, air photography and interpretation and sampling. There is a growing ability to recognize in the field even slight physical remains of relict landscapes, and all aspects of the past, including remains of widely differing character, industrial and domestic, some of comparatively recent data, have now been recognized as important for archaeology. All these add to the well-known problems of shortage of funds and of trained personnel, because they increase the volume of material available for study and lengthen the time taken in its assessment.

Such problems are by no means unique to Scotland, but are of world-wide concern, though the scale of Scotland's threats and problems may be difficult to parallel. Such resources as may be available should be devoted to seeking explanations about past populations and land use, through posing questions about environment and settlement and exploitation – whether the density of known sites in an area reflects the true possible or actual total and whether it reflects the use to which the sites were put. In fact it is not enough to record sites and monuments. They should be assessed and an attempt should be made to understand the sites in their physical and human context. Some questions which should be asked at this level of archaeological work have been summarized by Shennan (1980, 126), whose main theme is sampling methods, their interpretation and value to archaeology. He points out that many surveys being carried out do not ask or answer the questions archaeology should be seeking to answer, since they may be in fact only looking for surviving remains and not for the potential human activity in an area through time. The fieldwork strategies outlined by Shennan (1980), and sampling discussed in detail by others, for example, Binford (1975) or Redman (1974), require more than just a change of policy to specific sampling of areas. A carefully balanced research programme would be required, combining intensive field-walking, limited, problem-orientated excavation, and the use of other documentary and scientific research tools, to build up detailed understanding of the total human activity of an area through time, by means of sampling selected geographical units within that area.

The value of such work may only be fully understood when there are more comparable surveys available, perhaps only after many of the surviving physical remains have been reduced still further by the many destructive agencies which are of such concern today. At present research-

orientated excavation, often site specific, would seem to be the ultimate goal of many archaeologists, with rescue excavation less well regarded, but considered necessary. Salvage work has been decried as not worth the effort. Sites and monuments records, once thought to be the basis of future archaeological assessment seem now to be regarded as inadequate research tools, probably because they were seen as an end, not as a beginning to problem solving. Sampling has been put forward as a scientific method of obtaining data on which to base future research strategies. Surveys vary from being the means of locating sites for excavation, to non-intensive, through random, cluster, probability and other sampling techniques, some of which still seem, however, to be more concerned with improved methods of data handling in response to threat assessment than with solving problems of the 'Universal study of man' (Clark 1943). Most writers on sampling have become more problem orientated, however, and are now more concerned with human activity, population densities and related problems, and therefore with devising sampling techniques with such problems in mind.

When time was available much could be done by an individual with clear research priorities in mind, as shown by the work of Jobey on prehistoric settlement in Northumberland in the last 20 years (Jobey 1974) or Fairhurst on deserted clachans in the highland zones of Scotland (Fairhurst 1960). On the other hand, much recent work would seem to have been poorly co-ordinated salvage work and much of this has recently been highly criticized. Sampling as a method of survey has become fashionable and much effort is being made to encourage individuals and groups alike that this is the scientific approach to an intractable problem, a panacea which will answer all questions about the human past. However, as Rahtz (1974, 57) states 'the aspects of archaeology that appear important to the present generation may not seem so to future workers'. Ammerman (1981, 72) believes that a sense of problems begins to emerge from a closer description of the environmental variables and also (1981, 74) that major factors in the success of projects would appear to be the sheer volume of work done and the experience that workers gradually build up over the years. These comments have a bearing on the needs of the future field strategies for Scotland, since the chronic shortage of trained and dedicated fieldworkers will be a key matter as will be the priorities to be assessed once the Archaeological Field Survey has progressed further, and provided more adequate information for analysis from sufficiently extensive geographical areas.

A recent survey proposal which has much to commend it, should probability sampling techniques become a significant development in archaeology in the next few years, is that of Haselgrove (1981). A well-argued proposal for a study in industrial NE England has been based on a version of the method used by Shennan (1980). The time-scale of the project has been considered, with a 10–20 years' survival period estimated for sites in some areas, indicating the short time available for detailed survey. Emphasis would be on recording and preservation, in certain fixed blocks of countryside (a 20% sample), with the initial stages of work to be completed in five years. An advantage of a programme such as this should be the careful planning of the research and its intensity, as well as the realization that there would be difficulties in extrapolating from the information collected. However, the method would be assumed to give valuable detailed information for the areas studied rather than to provide a thin spread of information, gathered only from the most obvious sites in a wide area, as is more common at present and which is probably misleading when assessed. Another advantage claimed for schemes such as those of Cherry & Shennan (1978) and Haselgrove (1981) would appear to be that the research has been planned to cover the major physical and environmental zones in an area and not just to elaborately survey preferred areas and sites.

The case against sampling and for complete recording, though not at the present intensive level of the current RCAMS research, has been put forward most convincingly by Taylor (1977).

An estimated five years would be required for this level of recording (of an English county), which would be less intensive than the sampling method outlined above. For fully trained fieldworkers this method has been described as quick and thorough, but there would be considerable scope for superficiality by less-skilled fieldworkers working under pressure.

Whatever the approach to the archaeology of Scotland in the next few years it is urgent that a research plan should be developed, to identify priorities and to build on the work of the Archaeological Field Survey, especially on the field experience of the Field Officers who are now skilled at this work, and are not 'failed excavators', as has been said of some people engaged in fieldwork elsewhere.

An important point was made by Shennan (1980, 125) when he wrote 'collations of currently available information, supplemented by new aerial photographs are of little use, especially since the various outside bodies whose decisions archaeologists wish to influence will accept the results at face value'. This statement should be seriously studied. While archaeological data should be collected on a scientific basis and assessed scientifically for archaeological use, the methods of disseminating the information to other users should provide balanced information in a form suited to the user's needs. There has been a lack of understanding among archaeologists about the requirements of bodies like the Forestry Commission, Planning Departments, the Countryside Commission, developers, farmers, teachers and tourists. More effort should be made by archaeologists to understand these needs. Among other things this would require value judgements to be provided with archaeological information. For this, better knowledge and understanding of the totality of the human past would be essential. Some approaches to solving this problem have been mentioned, but it will be important to ensure that some of the energy spent on questions of sampling be spent on the issue of the quality of the recovery (Ammerman 1981), and on the reasons for needing the information in the first place.

NOTES

- 1 Peter Corser, Stratford Halliday, Robert Mowat.
- 2 In a letter (1978) to recipients of the Archaeological Field Survey *Lists* from the Society's then President, Mr R B K Stevenson.
- 3 *The Archaeological Sites and Monuments of:*
 - 1 Clackmannan District and Falkirk District
 - 2 Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District and Strathkelvin District
 - 3 Dumbarton District, Clydebank District, Bearsden and Milngavie District
 - 4 Lunan Valley, Montrose Basin, Angus District
 - 5 Nairn District
 - 6 Easter Ross
 - 7 Stirling District
 - 8 North East Inverness
 - 9 The Black Isle, Ross and Cromarty District
 - 10 Berwickshire District
 - 11 Sanday and North Ronaldsay
 - 12 Upper Eskdale
 - 13 Ewesdale and Lower Eskdale
 - 14 South Carrick
- 4 The map, fig 1, was prepared by the University Cartographer, University of St Andrews, on a base supplied by RCAMS.
- 5 The writer is indebted to Mr J G Dunbar for some of this additional information.

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