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Editorial

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland: a policy for publication

The main purpose of this Editorial is to advise Fellows and contributors of the Society's new policy for publication which has been devised by a Working Party of the Society and endorsed by Council. The new policy represents the Society's response to the ever-increasing volume of data and comment which modern excavation reports comprise.

The Working Party was convened six years after the publication of the Frere report in which four 'levels' of description of excavated sites were defined, level III being the full data and level IV synthesized descriptions with supporting data. Those six years had seen a steady expansion in the size of excavation reports leading to a rapid increase in the size of the *Proceedings* which grew from 248 pages in 1968 (volume 100) to 688 pages in 1982 (volume 112). Yet even with this 175% expansion it has not always been possible to print all the material submitted by authors of excavation reports. Several reports in recent years have been cut and their appendices and other sections archived. We are approaching, or are perhaps already in, the situation described so vividly as 'Frere Level III½' - 'too much detail for general purposes but not enough to satisfy the specialist' (Lavell 1981, 103).

The impetus to consider such matters, as far as the Society was concerned, came from the publication in volume 109 of these *Proceedings* of Professor Leslie Alcock's critique of the Frere report (Alcock 1978) in which he raised a number of practical and philosophical issues. In particular Professor Alcock called for 'the abandonment of conventional methods of publication . . . at [an] exhaustive level . . .' and their replacement by 'a primary report, comprehensive in analysis and discussion of the site evidence, which would be deposited in an archive, and made available on payment, probably in microform. This exhaustive write-up would then be distilled into an illustrated summary account, which would itself be published in the conventional manner, in book or journal form' (Alcock 1978, 6).

Council set up a Working Party under the convenorship of Dr D J Breeze to consider these issues more fully, and in particular the implications for the Society's publications. The Working Party¹ included the editors of two sister journals, *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* and the *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire & Galloway Natural History & Antiquarian Society*, and representatives from the National Monuments Record of Scotland and the Council for British Archaeology as well as some members of the Society's own Editorial Committee. Coincidentally, the deliberations of the Scottish Working Party were paralleled by one set up in England by the Council for British Archaeology in conjunction with the Directorate of Ancient Monuments of the Department of the Environment. This working party, under the chairmanship of Professor B W Cunliffe, subsequently produced a report (CBA 1983) which has been accepted by the Ancient Monuments Board for England and is the subject of further discussion at the CBA.

Over the course of seven meetings (and two Council meetings) the Scottish Working Party

agreed a policy for the Society with regard to the two-level simultaneous publication of excavation reports and a set of *Guidelines* for their preparation. On 14 November 1983 the Council of the Society accepted the policy and *Guidelines* in principle and requested that they be published in the *Proceedings* to facilitate their wide dissemination and discussion.

POLICY

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland intends to introduce a two-level system of simultaneous publication of excavation reports. (Other types of papers may be found suitable for similar treatment.) It is envisaged that a summary of the report will be printed in the volume and the full report will be published on microfiche, to be issued with the journal. The details of the new system are contained in the *Guidelines for the preparation of two-level reports* which are printed in the next section.

Note; a microfiche is a flat sheet of film, 105 mm by 148 mm, on which is printed a grid of 98 frames (14 frames in 7 rows) at a reduction of approximately $\times 25$. Textual or tabular material, line drawings, half-tones (and, in special circumstances, colour) can be reproduced. The microfiche is read in viewer, and printed enlargements of the material can be obtained.

While the Council feels that this will represent the normal style of report writing, it accepts that in some circumstances it may not be possible or desirable to produce reports in this manner. In these circumstances the contributor should advise the Editor as early as possible in the process of preparing the report so that the matter can be considered by the Editorial Committee. The *Guidelines*, however, are advanced as the norm towards which authors should be working. Council accepts that it will not be possible to move over to the new format immediately; there will be a transitional period, which has already commenced, during which there will be opportunity for widespread discussion between interested parties and it is only during this period that the best patterns of publication will emerge. It is not expected that the *Guidelines* will become the norm for the publication of work begun before 1 January 1985. Nevertheless contributors are encouraged to make as much use of the new arrangements as possible, for example, using the fiche to present complete reports, or to publish an expanded range of data in specialist reports or finds catalogues, or to achieve greater flexibility in the use of illustrative material, etc. An example of the new format will appear in volume 114 of the *Proceedings*. It is hoped that as a result of this change the *Proceedings* will be able to carry more synoptic papers which will be of wide interest.

With regard to the practicalities and economics of this change, the Society sees no serious practical difficulties in the introduction of two-level reports, although it is accepted that there may be teething problems. The level of financial savings as a result of the use of two-level reports remains to be seen as the balance between printed and fiche reports becomes established.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF TWO-LEVEL REPORTS

These *Guidelines* apply primarily to excavation reports but writers of other papers are encouraged, where appropriate, to take advantage of these arrangements.

It is envisaged (a) that the full account of the excavation will be reproduced on microfiche (copies of which will be mounted in every copy of the *Proceedings*) and (b) that an illustrated digest and synthesis of this report will be printed in the volume. The full account could, if desired, include material which at present cannot be published. For example, additional details such as more complete specialist reports, better catalogues, or more illustrations can be included. Completely new forms of illustration, such as stereomicrofiche, or the use of the whole fiche as a

site matrix or as components of a single picture, and colour fiche are possible in certain circumstances. The production of additional copies of fiche is extremely cheap, so a great deal of information can be disseminated widely.

While it is intended that the new arrangements will be phased in as appropriate, beginning with volume 114, it is appreciated that not all contributors will be able to comply with the new arrangements: such contributors are requested to contact the Editor as soon as possible.

FULL ACCOUNT (MICROFICHE TEXT)

Although the precise balance between the information content of fiche and print may vary from report to report, it is envisaged that the full account will contain all necessary details of the excavation: stratigraphy; details of all features, fills and layers; record plans and sections; complete catalogues of the artefacts and accompanying illustrations; as well as environmental and other specialist reports. All tabulated data should be placed on microfiche: some tables may, and in every case C14 dates will, appear in the summary.

In preparing the full account, authors are advised to ensure that the various sections of their text are complete in themselves. That is to say, *all* the layers, features, pottery, bone, seeds, metal analyses, etc should be presented (and, if necessary, fully illustrated). Where particular items from the microfiche catalogues are referred to in the printed summary, illustrations of them, when necessary, will be repeated in the volume.

SUMMARY REPORT (PRINTED TEXT)

The summary report should present a brief outline of the history of the site and the reasons for its excavation; short descriptions of the significant structures, the stratigraphy and the most characteristic finds; summaries, where appropriate, of specialist contributions and the principal conclusions which the excavator wishes to argue from the data, justified as economically as possible. Any points whose interpretation may be open to doubt should be indicated, referring, where necessary, to the relevant details in the microfiche text. The summary report is also the place for any discussion of the broader implications of the excavation.

Illustrations accompanying the summary report may include representative plans, sections and finds (repeated from the complete units of the microfiche text), but there will also be scope for more synoptic or interpretative drawings which serve to clarify the writer's argument. Radiocarbon dates and other radiometric determinations will be printed in full (including laboratory numbers). The printed summary will be prefaced by a short abstract normally of not more than 250 words and a contents list of the print and microfiche sections.

Advice on the technicalities of preparing typescript copy and illustrations for microfiche reproduction can be found in the new *Notes for contributors to the Proceedings* which are available from the Editor. Contributors may also find the relevant *British Standard* (BS 1977) and the new *CBA Manual* on microfiche (CBA forthcoming) helpful. Copies of these three documents will be available in the Society's Library. In common with scientific journals using microfiche, contributors normally will be expected to provide camera-ready copy. The Editor is available for consultation over the preparation of the final copy.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

As well as introducing the two-level report the Editorial committee has been reviewing the content and format of the *Proceedings*. Some innovations have already resulted from this process, others are yet to come.

Most important is the decision to commission a number of review articles and general papers in order to increase the interest of the journal to the general reader. One such paper has already been published – Mrs E V W Proudfoot's review of the Society's Field Surveyors – in volume 112 (Proudfoot 1982) and this present volume contains the second, Mr J C Murray's review of the Scottish Burgh Survey (p 1). Papers already commissioned will examine the Scottish Mesolithic, the Neolithic, the Bronze Age, recent Roman publications, the new studies on Iona, and the current state of research on Scottish castles.

It has also been decided to resume the practice of printing summaries of the lectures delivered to the Society. The first summaries appear in this volume (p 647).

The recording of coins will also, coincidentally, change. Finds of Roman Coins from Scotland have been recorded periodically from 1917–18 onwards in the *Proceedings*. The latest list, from 1971–82, is published in this volume (p 405). Professor Anne Robertson, who has compiled the recent lists, has handed over this task to the present curator of the Hunter Coin Cabinet, Dr Donal Bateson, who writes, 'The opportunity will be taken to include finds of medieval coins as well as Roman ones. The terminal date will coincide with the end of an independent Scottish coinage following the Act of Union in 1707. Since a greater number of finds is expected, future lists will have to be more concise but will be published in the *Proceedings* more frequently. Would anyone excavating finds or hearing of finds of any coin up to 1713 please communicate with:

Dr J D Bateson,
Curator of Coins and Medals,
Hunterian Museum,
University of Glasgow,
Glasgow G12 8QQ

All letters will be acknowledged and identifications provided'.

With volume 114 the Society will cease its 130 year association with hot-metal letterpress printing, for reasons of economy and speed of production. One noticeable benefit to Fellows of printing by litho offset will be the integration of plates and text, resulting, it is hoped, in a more attractive and usable volume. It is not envisaged that the changes outlined above will affect the newly launched *Monograph Series* which will continue to publish long excavation reports; indeed, the second *Monograph* (Murray 1982) pioneered the use of microfiche in one of the Society's publications.

In the transitional period which the *Proceedings* is now entering, the Society will welcome the views of Fellows and other users on the usefulness of the changes.

NOTE

1 The Working Party on Publication (October 1981–November 1983) consisted of:

Convenor: Dr D J Breezè (Convenor, Society's Editorial Committee)

Secretary: Mr I A G Shepherd (Assistant Editor, 1980–82; Editor, 1982–, *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*)

Dr D V Clarke (Editor, 1978–82, *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*)

Mr W F Cormack (Editor, *Trans Dumfriesshire Galloway Natur Hist Antiq Soc*)

Miss K Cruft (National Monuments Record of Scotland)

Miss C Lavell (Editor, *Brit Archaeol Abstrs*, Counc Brit Archaeol)

Dr E MacKie (Editor, *Glasgow Archaeol J*)

Mr R J Mercer (Treasurer, Soc Antiq Scot)

Mr R W Munro (Editorial Committee)
 Mrs E V W Proudfoot (Editorial Committee)
 Dr I B M Ralston (Co-Editor, *Soc Antiq Scot Monogr Ser*)
 Dr T F Watkins (Secretary, Soc Antiq Scot)

The Council is indebted to the members of the Working Party for their efforts, and to Professor L Alcock, Mr J Barber, Dr H Cleere, Mr J G Dunbar, Mrs V Horsler, Mr I MacIvor, Mr A MacLaren, Dr H K Murray, and Mr J R Seaton (National Library of Scotland) for additional advice and assistance.

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 DOE 1975 *Principles of publication in rescue archaeology*. (Report of a Working Party of the Ancient Monuments Board for England, Committee for Rescue Archaeology.) Dept of Environment. London.
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 Murray, J C (ed) 1982 *Excavations in the medieval burgh of Aberdeen*. Edinburgh. (= *Soc Antiq Scot Monogr Ser*, 2.)
 Proudfoot, E V W 1982 'The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archaeological Field Survey', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 112 (1982), 1-16.

Ian A G Shepherd
Aberdeen, April 1984