

# Antiquity

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## Editorial

STONEHENGE certainly never seems to lose its news value. This year work on the straightening and securing of the stones was done in May and June. It was known that this work, supervised by Professors Piggott and Atkinson, would not be finished by the summer solstice, on which occasion in previous years the Ministry of Public Building and Works have, in our view mistakenly, allowed strange groups of people calling themselves Druids to disport themselves at Stonehenge and practise their recently invented religious rites. We are all for strange fringe religions, if in that unreasoning way their devotees get comfort and hope, but not if their activities affect the safety of our ancient monuments. We have written about this before (ANTIQUITY, 1961, 173).

It had seemed to us obvious that this year, when extensive and important restoration work was in progress, it would be folly to permit any performance of bogus Druidical rites and invite the possibility of Ostend-Margate hooliganism on Salisbury Plain. Sensible of these dangers the Ancient Monuments Board for England, whose report for 1963 has just been published, requested the Minister to ban ceremonies which, in the words of *The Times* for Wednesday, 3rd June, 'in the past have been preceded by unseemly roistering'. The Ancient Monuments Board in their report say that they have more than once condemned these celebrations and advised that the Ministry 'should take the strongest possible measures to prevent rowdiness'. They go on:

We heard with regret that these measures were less successful in 1963 than in 1962 . . . Climbing or leaning against the stones constitutes a grave potential threat not only to their stability, which must be our main concern as a board, but also to the safety of the public . . . Should it be impossible to prevent behaviour likely to lead to damage we urge you to consider imposing a total ban on all solstice ceremonies. This would be a lesser evil than the risk of further damage.

The Minister of Public Building and Works regrettably did not take the advice of his Ancient Monuments Board but arranged a craven compromise in which Stonehenge was closed to the public from 7 p.m. on 20th June to 9.30 a.m. on 21st June but was open to the dotty Druids Lair! 'Stonehenge Rite for Druids Only' is the memorable headline in *The Times*. And what happened? An eye-witness reports: 'Stonehenge was encircled with two lines of Dannert barbed wire coils; there were 50 civil and military police, and four police-dogs with their handlers, the contents of 30 cars of journalists and photographers, 16 Druids and a little orderly crowd of not more than 100 spectators who obediently watched in the dim and drizzling dawn from the road outside.' More ceremonies took place at noon on the 21st, by which time the public were allowed in; it was raining, and the lady harpist had to have an umbrella held over her by the Chief Druid to prevent damage to her strings.

What a ridiculous, ludicrous, silly affair. There should be a total ban on all solstice

ceremonies from now on. These strange neo-druidic organizations have no claim in history and archaeology to Stonehenge. The Minister should accept the advice of his Ancient Monuments Board. Indeed it is to us most mysterious why these latter-day Druids were ever allowed their junketings at Stonehenge, and why the permission is annually continued. There must be some very special reason. Could it be that the staff of the Ministry of Public Building and Works is riddled with secret Druids? Shall we hear, if we visit the Ministry, a curious melodious twang echoing down the corridors, and, suddenly turning a corner, find a harpist with furled umbrella at the ready?



And now, if it was not enough to have Stonehenge appropriated by neo-Druids and surrounded by coils of Dannert wire and police-dogs, here is Professor Gerald S. Hawkins of Boston University and the Harvard-Smithsonian Observatory telling us that it is a Neolithic Computer. This he does in an article in *Nature* for 27th June 1964. ANTIQUITY has published much on the possible astronomical aspects of megalithic monuments, and we hope to publish comment from astronomers and archaeologists on Professor Hawkins's idea. Keen readers from the very beginning—and it was the very beginning—will recall the article 'Orientation' by Vice-Admiral Boyle Somerville (ANTIQUITY, 1927, 31) and that by A. P. Trotter on 'Stonehenge as an Astronomical Instrument' (ANTIQUITY, 1927, 42) which ended with the splendid words:

It is easy to bring all sorts of theories and conjectures now that this grand and simple monument is there. We may prolong the axis to the north-east and find it hits Copenhagen; or ten and a half miles to the south-west to the village in which I live; and then down to the coast, passing a little to the right of the megaliths of Carnac, and out to sea to the district where the lost Atlantis may have flourished. And we may prolong controversies about it until we fill a library.

The man who has written most about megaliths, mathematics and astronomy in the last decade or so is Alexander Thom, Emeritus

Professor of Engineering Science in the University of Oxford, whose papers on 'A statistical examination of the megalithic sites in Britain' (*Journ. Roy. Statist. Soc. A*, 1955, 275), 'The geometry of megalithic man' (*Mathematical Gazette*, 1961, 83), and 'The Megalithic Unit of Length' (*Journ. Roy. Statist. Soc. A*, 1962, 343) will be well known to all concerned with this subject. Professor Thom has now written his comments on Professor Hawkins's theory in an article entitled provocatively 'Observatories in ancient Britain' (*New Scientist*, 2nd July 1964, 17). We hope that we can persuade Professor Thom to set out all his views about megaliths and mathematics for readers of ANTIQUITY, who already know of his MY or Megalithic Yard. This unit of length of 2.72 feet lingered on into modern Spain, he tells us, as the *vara*, and then went to South America where Professor Hawkins says it still exists.

Nevertheless he says he 'cannot prove beyond all doubt that Stonehenge was used as an astronomical observatory' but hopes he can 'reduce the doubt to a shred by showing how other features of Stonehenge are explained by the astronomical theory'. We particularly like the last two sentences of Professor Hawkins's article: 'The Stonehenge computer will function until well beyond A.D. 2100, when it will require resetting by one hole. It will then function for at least another 300 years before further resetting is required.' On the normal expectancy of life, it seems unlikely that Professors Piggott and Atkinson will be available in A.D. 2100 to reset Stonehenge. And we expect that the young lady's strings, and for that matter the stays of the Chief Druid's umbrella, will be rust by then.



It is particularly appropriate, a century later, to think about that remarkable decade following the *annus mirabilis* of 1859 which saw the publication, among other things, of Charles Lyell's *The Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man* (1863), Sir John Lubbock's *Pre-historic Times* (1865), and Thomas Huxley's *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863).

In his *The Problem of Man's Antiquity: An Historical Survey*\* Dr Kenneth Oakley looks back to the 1860s, and beyond them to the beginnings of the science of man, and then forward to the present day. This new book should be read by everyone interested in the development of ideas, terms and methods in prehistory, human palaeontology, and quaternary geology; and by all who realize that the study of man's most ancient past demands a knowledge of the development of that study.

In his comprehensive survey Oakley reminds us of things that many of us have forgotten, and some of us have never known: that Mercati, in the second half of the 16th century, thought 'ceraunia' (the thunderbolts which were presumed by most people to be the explanation of flint implements), were not produced by lightning, but 'broken from very hard flints . . . in the days before iron was used for the follies of war', that it was Benjamin Franklin who (according to Boswell's *Life of Johnson*), defined man as the 'tool-making animal', and that Darwin admitted that when he read the work of Boucher de Perthes he thought it rubbish. In view of the present preoccupation of some people with the status and nomenclature of *Homo habilis* it is interesting to have recalled to us Gabriel de Mortillet's creation of *Homosimius*, a Tertiary ape-like precursor of *H. sapiens*, with three species, *Homosimius bourgeoisi*, the maker of the Thenay chipped flints found by the Abbé Louis Bourgeois, *Homosimius ramesi*, the maker of the Puy Courney chipped flints found by J. B. Rames, and *Homosimius ribeiroi*, the maker of the chipped flints found by Carlos Ribeiro at Otta near Lisbon. De Mortillet ought also, surely, to have created a *Homosimius harrisoni*, to take in the Ightham coliths! But soon all these invented characters and their dubious implements disappeared when Marcellin Boule observed the pseudo-artifacts in the cement-mixers at Mantes (incidentally, Mantes, between

Paris and Vernon, and not Nantes, as in the text).

Interesting, too, to recall the various views put forward to explain the find made at Neanderthal in 1856. Virchow said it was the skull of a pathological idiot, Mayer thought the remains were those of a 'rickety Mongolian Cossack', who, on his way through Germany towards France in 1814, had crept into the cave and died. Schaffhausen of Bonn, however, believed the remains to belong to a barbarous and savage race and might 'be regarded as the most ancient memorial of the early inhabitants of Europe'; Huxley accepted them as human and undiseased, but representing no more than an extreme variant of *Homo sapiens*. It was William King, anatomist at Queen's College, Galway, who argued for a distinct species, and proposed the name *Homo neanderthalensis* at the Newcastle meeting of the British Association in 1863.

*Homo neanderthalensis* has lasted a hundred years: not so some of his 19th century contemporaries, quite apart from the disappearance of the homosimians in the Mantes cement-mixers. Dr Oakley is very good and very fair in his account of the forgery of artifacts and skeletal remains which has dogged, confused and bedevilled the development of archaeology and human palaeontology. He reminds us that Falconer in 1868 recorded that the fabrication of counterfeit implements was being actively carried out at Abbeville and Amiens 'to meet the lively demand among collectors of antiquities caused by the authentic discoveries made by Boucher de Perthes' and says that 'Strangers were usually asked to pay 5 francs for the privilege of detaching from its gravel bed the *hache* professing to have been discovered in situ by the *terrassier*.' He reprints the fascinating drawing from an 1863 issue of *L'Illustration du Midi* of the discussion of the Moulin-Quignon jaw at the Académie des Sciences in Paris: he had allowed us to reproduce this in these pages in advance of his own publication (ANTIQUITY, 1964, 6).

He describes the Calaveras Skull as 'the most ridiculous Pliocene pretender'. The Calaveras Skull, the 'Auriferous Gravel Man', was found

\* Kenneth Page Oakley, *The Problem of Man's Antiquity: An Historical Survey*. London: Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History); Geological series, Vol. 9, No. 5, pp. 83-155, 1964. 73 pp., 3 pls., 44 figs. 28s.

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in 1866 by a miner called Mattison working at a depth of 130 ft. in his goldmine at Table Mountain, County Calaveras in California. It—a typical American-Indian skull—was allegedly found in a gold-bearing stratum of early Pliocene age, that is to say at least ten million years old. Sir Arthur Keith once said that this made as much sense as finding an aeroplane in a church crypt that had been bricked up since Elizabethan times. The whole

thing was perhaps a cowboy hoax with Mattison as the dupe, as Sonia Cole suggests in her *Counterfeit* (London, 1955), but there was, Oakley reminds us, 'a strong subconscious desire to establish the antiquity of man in the New World'. This was particularly so in California, and Robert Heizer has listed no less than 40 claims of discoveries of early men in that state. Bret Harte wrote a poem about the Calaveras Skull:

*Speak, thou awful vestige of the earth's creation,  
Solitary fragment of remains organic!  
Tell the wondrous secret of thy past existence—  
Speak thou oldest primate!  
Which my name is Bowers and my crust was busted  
Falling down a shaft in Calaveras County,  
But I'd take it kindly if you'd send the pieces  
Home to old Missouri.*

Oakley rescues from oblivion an eleven-page pamphlet published in 1951 by the Evolution Protest Movement written by W. E. Filmer and called *How they Choose Our Ancestors: a Protest to the Trustees of the British Museum*. Filmer alleged that the British Museum had suppressed important evidence by omitting all reference to the Calaveras skull from their handbook *The History of the Primates*, written by Sir Wilfred Le Gros Clark. It is always worth being reminded how dotty the lunatic fringes of our subject can become. Oakley also reminds us that the late Vayson de Pradenne, who was the first person in the present century to recognize the significance of Carnot's discovery in the 1890s that the accumulation of fluorine in fossil bones is an invaluable method of relative dating, observed that the human bones from Calaveras contained no fluorine but that the allegedly associated and genuine rhinoceros bones contained nearly 5 per cent. This was in his *Les Fraudes en Archéologie Préhistorique* (Paris, 1932), a book which should long ago have been translated into English. Vayson de Pradenne was characteristically cautious in his application of the fluorine test to Calaveras; the skull contained no fluorine, or, as he said with a delicious cynical wit, 'traces which escaped the

chemist': but, despite this, he concluded there was 'no possible comparison between the ages of the two bones. One is geologically ancient, the other modern.'

But what does Oakley now say, if anything, about Piltdown, in the detection of which remarkable forgery he played such an important part? He reminds us that as early as 1899 Dawson had noticed a patch of gravel at Piltdown which he thought was a possible source of fossils, and which yielded 'eoliths'. Was not this the place for *Homosimius* to be found, for a European version of *Pithecanthropus erectus* (published by Dubois in 1894), for a British version of the Heidelberg jaw found in the Mauer sandpit in 1907? Oakley writes: 'Whether it was Dawson, or one of his acquaintances, who first thought that this would be an excellent finding-place for a fabricated "missing link" we may never know, but in due course this idea bore fruit in the form of "*Eoanthropus*".'

But why should we never know? Calaveras might have been a cowboy prank, or the work of someone anxious to prove the antiquity of man in America. Was Piltdown the work of someone anxious to prove the antiquity of man in Britain—to find what Sir Arthur Smith Woodward called 'the earliest Englishman';

or was it a prank, not of cowboys, but of that brilliant group of hoaxers led by Horace de Vere Cole? Is there the ghost of the Sultan of Zanzibar at Piltown? It was not within the scope of Oakley's book to discuss this, but someone should, and while we still have with us men who were involved in those famous hoaxes of the years before the 1914-18 War.

Whenever one writes or talks about fakes and forgeries in archaeology one is accused of doing a disservice to the subject and distracting attention from the true and the good. It is certainly bad form in current French archaeological circles to mention Glözel and Rouffignac and Moulin-Quignon. But we should always remember what Sir John Evans said when disposing of the Moulin-Quignon jaw; he emphasized that the finding of fakes and forgeries had 'nothing whatever to do with the evidence afforded of the antiquity of man by his work discovered in the drift . . . the general rule holds good, that the existence of counterfeits presuppose the existence of genuine originals' (*The Athenaeum*, 4th July 1863).

Finally, Dr Oakley does not merely look back; his last chapter on the principles of relative and absolute dating is a clear and most useful systematization and analysis of relative, and what he would now prefer to call chronometric, dating. He distinguishes four forms of relative dating which he labels R<sub>1</sub> to R<sub>4</sub>, and four forms of chronometric dating labelled A<sub>1</sub> to A<sub>4</sub>. This analysis of eight forms of dating, which he first set out in an article in A. L. Kroeber (ed.), *Anthropology Today* (Chicago, 1953), will become standard archaeological usage, and rightly so.



The work of Dr J. K. St Joseph in aerial photography and interpretation has long been well known, even before his appointment as Director in Aerial Photography in the University of Cambridge. It is good to see that his outstanding services to air archaeology have recently been recognized by the award of the O.B.E. in the Queen's Birthday Honours List—the very same list which also contains the good news of the conferring of a Knight-

hood on Professor Ian Richmond, the new President of the Society of Antiquaries of London, who, among his many and varied activities, finds time to represent the British Academy on the Cambridge Committee for Aerial Photography. We congratulate them both. The publication of new discoveries made by air photography is often a matter of delay while articles are written and learned journals printed. *ANTIQUITY* has always been forward in the publication of air photographs, and we recently published an article by Dr St Joseph on his work in northern France (*ANTIQUITY*, 1962, 279) followed up by Monsieur Agache's article in our last number on 'Aerial Reconnaissance in Picardy' (*ANTIQUITY*, 1964, 113). We hope in 1965 to publish an article by Dr St Joseph on some of the discoveries he has made during his 1963 and 1964 air reconnaissances in Ireland. But there are constantly new discoveries which cannot wait for the preparation of articles, and we have offered Dr St Joseph one plate in each of our numbers in the next few years so that our readers may learn quickly of these discoveries. He has readily accepted this offer and the first of what we hope will be a long series of contributions appears in this issue (p. 217 and PLATE XXXVII) in which two new henge monuments are described. One of them is in process of excavation and we are glad to publish (p. 218) a note by Miss McInnes of the Hull Museums describing the results of the first season's work.



In 1955, at the height of the BBC's programme *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?*, when anyone connected with that programme or with a museum was being inundated with parcels containing objects grave and gay, a Mrs R. G. Carter called at the Cambridge house of the present Editor of *ANTIQUITY* bearing in her hands a small parcel containing an object which she said she had dug up in her dahliabed at The Old Vicarage, Markyate, Hertfordshire. With trembling hands we opened this little parcel wondering what worthless bric-à-brac was here, what odious rusty knife, what yellowing bone handle, what folding shaving-set

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from the Great Exhibition! The phrases were ready: 'Not I am afraid of much intrinsic interest or value, but it is always right to bring things you have found to an archaeologist. One time in a hundred, what you find *may* be of interest and value.' They were not necessary; the ready words froze as the wrapping was removed. This was one time in a thousand. Mrs Carter had found a Hiberno-Saxon gilt-bronze mounting of the 8th century, which she and her husband were happy to place on loan in the British Museum. We publish here (p. 219 and PL. XL) a note by Mr Rupert Bruce-Mitford on this find.

By a most curious chance, three weeks after Mrs Carter rang our door-bell, we were in Oslo looking at the two mountings from the Oseberg ship with which Mr Bruce-Mitford compares the Markyate mount. We saw them again, earlier this year, in the extended Viking Ship Museum at Bygdo, where now the finds are displayed—and very well displayed—in the same building as the ships. This is a moral tale, and it has many morals. First, bravo Mrs Carter! Secondly, we must urge the men and women of England to dig more assiduously in their dahlia beds—indeed in every kind of bed and everywhere. We are said to be a nation of gardeners as well as shopkeepers and dog-lovers. Dig that ground. But, thirdly, what about all those unopened parcels that lie in the dusty corners and on the high shelves of every archaeologist's inner office? There ought,

perhaps, to be every year, an opening day, an examination of the unconsidered trifles, a study of the fine things found by accident in dahlia beds, and sewer trenches. Never mind about that; dig, as Rudyard Kipling said (not in his *In the Neolithic Age*):

*. . . take a large hoe and a shovel also  
And dig till you gently perspire.*

Your exciting finds should be sent to your local museum curator and not to the ANTIQUITY office.



We have been sent an article by Helge Ingstad in the *Arctic Circular*, Vol. xv, No. 1, describing the author's discovery and excavation in 1961–2 of the foundations of a settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows on the north tip of Newfoundland, which he believes to be the Viking site of Vinland. There were houses with turf walls, one of which was 60 × 45 ft., and contained a hall 48 ft. long, with a central fire pit, and four rooms. The hall is said to be of about the same size as that of Leif Eriksen in Greenland, which also had a central fire. Seven carbon dates cluster about A.D. 1000, which is when the Vikings are reputed to have sailed to America. The presence of a smithy with hundreds of pieces of iron and slag appears to rule out the possibility that this is an Eskimo or American Indian site.

## Book Chronicle

*We include here books which have been received for review, or books of importance not received for review, of which we have recently been informed. We welcome information about books, particularly in languages other than English and American, of interest to readers of ANTIQUITY. The listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its review in ANTIQUITY.*

**Cornwall** by John Betjeman. *London: Faber and Faber*, 1964. 144 pp., 140 pls., 4 maps. 15s. A Shell Guide, *Cornwall* was the first to be published nearly thirty years ago; John Betjeman has completely rewritten his earlier volume. Many of the photographs are taken by Mr John Piper, now joint editor of this well-established series with Mr Betjeman.

**The Iron Age Culture of Latium** by Pär Göran Gierow. Part II, Excavations and Finds: 1. The Alban Hills. *Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, Series in 4°, XXIV: 2. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup*, 1964. 418 pp., 237 figs. in the text (mainly half-tones). Sw. Crs. 175. Parts I and II: 2 are in preparation. The text is in English.

[continued on p. 178]