

Antiquity

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Editorial Notes

MANY times already we have discussed Museums in these notes. We almost hesitate to return to this subject, for fear lest our readers may be bored ; but it is one of such outstanding importance that the risk must be taken. For Museums are essential to the study of local history and antiquities ; and without such there can be no understanding of national culture. The museum should be the rallying-point of all who are interested in the history and prehistory of their home-region ; it should help students and inform the general public. Its charge is a whole-time job. Its activities should include excavation and publication, as well as the primary function of conservation, and should be closely linked with the *normal* syllabus of education.



We shall describe and illustrate one of the functions successfully performed by museums in Germany, where they flourish as nowhere else, in the hope that the description may be found helpful and suggestive. We would gladly have selected examples from nearer home, had such been available. That must not be taken to imply that we have no good museums in Great Britain ; we have a few, whose excellence is due to the efforts of individuals rather than to official encouragement. Those who delight in odious comparisons are recommended to inspect the museums of Cologne, Kiel, Halle and Bonn, and the corresponding institutions in, say, Southampton, Portsmouth and Bournemouth. The comparison is a fair one, whatever standard be adopted.

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The Halle Museum authorities are responsible for two excellent illustrated posters aimed at the preservation of antiquities brought to light accidentally. The first (page 131) is concerned with the discovery of museum-objects, such as burial-urns, made in the course of some industrial operations. August Tropf (the equivalent of Bill Sykes) finds a cinerary urn (FIG. 1) and immediately smashes it in hope of treasure (2). Finding it contains only ashes and bones (3) he walks away in disgust (4), leaving the broken sherds to be discovered by his better-informed comrade, Klug (5), who collects them and takes them to the Clerk of the Works (6). He then carries them off to the museum, where they are laboriously put together by the official pot-mender (7); the urn is shown restored (8), and the site is reserved for excavation (9). August reaps his well-earned reward, not a fortune but 'Zigarre und 'nem gut Glas Bier' (10). Meanwhile the official excavator, Doktor Faust, is rapidly mobilized (11, 12), and gets to work on the site with the implements of his trade, recovering another urn from the cemetery site, this time intact (13, 14). It is triumphantly displayed, with the information that it was discovered during the construction of a Reichsautobahn (15); which may be regarded as the equivalent of a national arterial road. Prominently displayed at the foot is the *immediate action* to be taken in such cases—leave the finds undisturbed and immediately ring up the proper authorities, Halle 25851.

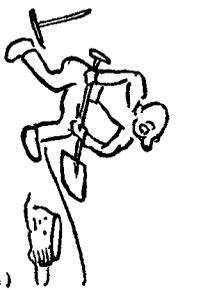


It should be noted that the provincial town of Halle contains two authorities which are concerned with such matters, the Museum and a body which has no equivalent in this country, the Landesanstalt für Volkheitskunde. It should further be noted that the Museum has on its staff as a matter of course both a pot-mender and a qualified excavator.

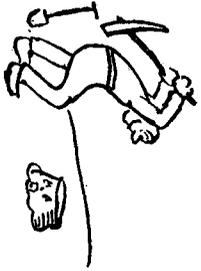


The second poster (page 133) seeks to enlighten the workman about the meaning and importance of such finds as prehistoric house-remains and burials. The illustration shows (top right) a gang of men at work on a Reichsautobahn. On the left are shown, diagrammatically of course, the plan of a wooden house, indicated by marks of post-holes and a stone-set hearth, and in the middle a stone burial-chamber with peristalith. Below are shown the restorations, with the added explanation in words—What do these finds signify? The homes and graves of

Zogen 1.



1. Der Erntevoll hat seinen Zopf gebunden hier auf dieser Zopf!



2. „Das sind auch nicht im Geheimen hier“ sagt er, „stehen hier im Uffeln Bereich“



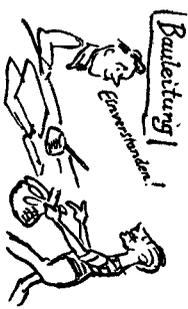
1. O Herr, es gibt hier nichts zu sehen, es sind nur Stein, Sandsteine, Gesteine.



4. Das zeigt Zopf voll Steinsteinegen, das hier stehen stehen stehen.



4. So kommt Herr! Ich gemacht hier: „Das stehen das sind hier gemacht“



4. „Sie sind auch noch hier oben stehen“ brüder zu dem stehen bringen!“



7. So ist Sie auch, wie man die Zeit mit die und dem Jahreszeit.



1. Das sind, das heißt aufgebracht, das ist eine erste 8 1/2 gebildet.



1. Wenn Sie die gerade werden lassen, so wird ganz von und bekannt.



14. Hier hat Sie bereit gestellt. — So hat nicht ganz und nicht hier — das recht's gebracht, das ist die Zeit, der Schritt und dem der sein Sie.



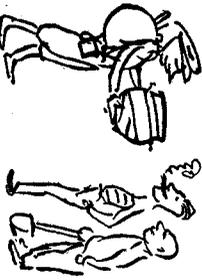
11. Sie haben ein Zeitplan! — Sie sind stehen — bei dem sein! oder 2381.



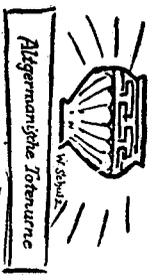
12. Sie sind hier kommt der Schritt steht sind von stehen stehen.



13. Sie sind hier kommt der Schritt steht sind von stehen stehen.



14. Sie sind hier kommt der Schritt steht sind von stehen stehen.



15. Sie sind hier kommt der Schritt steht sind von stehen stehen.

Jeden Fund unberührt liegen lassen und sofort dem nächsten Museum oder der Landesanstalt für Volkshilfe in Halle melden! Der Staatliche Vertrauensmann, Fernsprecher Halle 25 851.

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our ancestors. At the top the workman is told what to look for—Dark marks in the soil, animal-bones, potsherds, stone-settings, pots and such like things.



A more comprehensive pamphlet has been produced by the Reichs- und Preussischen Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, under the editorship of Dr Buttler, of Köln-Lindenthal fame. It covers the same ground as the leaflets, but is able to give more detailed information about various kinds of antiquities. The first two pages explain their importance as documents from which, and which alone, prehistory is constructed. All such finds should therefore be carefully preserved; excavation is a skilled task that should only be carried out under expert supervision. Objects of scientific importance should be given to the museum (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*). Information about such matters should be diffused as widely as possible.

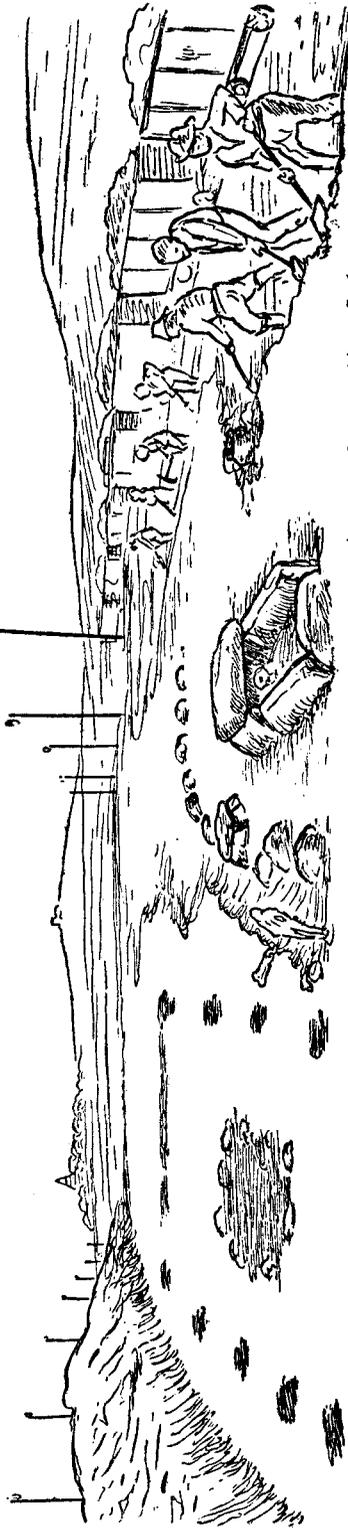


The pamphlet illustrates and explains the character of certain common antiquities, such as Hünengraber ('dolmens', or burial-chambers, and megaliths in general), with examples of how not to treat them. Do not, for instance, build your pigstye upon a chambered barrow, as did an unenlightened farmer of Steinbeck (illustration given). Do not use the ramparts of camps as stone-quarries (as was done at Müllenberg), or allow pigs to destroy them by rooting up the surface (as at Gross Wechsungen). The prehistoric chieftain of Aschersleben never dreamt that on his grave-mound a memorial to Bismarck would be set up; nor would the founder of the Second Empire have approved.



There follow illustrated examples of the technique of proper excavation and conservation, of the visible signs of ancient remains (post-holes, pits in the sides of a quarry, dark occupation-layers in the soil), Roman roads and buildings, typical objects of the Bronze and Iron Ages. The importance of microscopic and chemical examination is illustrated. Finally there are two pages describing some of the purposes served by the careful preservation of minor objects: each has its place on a distribution-map, which itself leads to fresh knowledge. As an example there are given three sketch-maps of Silesia illustrating

worauf muß geachtet werden?: Auf dünne Stellen im Boden, Tierknochen, Scherben, Steinsetzungen, Gefäße und dergl.



unserer Vorfahren

Grabstätten und

Haus und Hof,

Siedlung,

Sunde?

Was bedeuten die

Gräber?



Jeden Sund unberührt liegen lassen und sofort dem nächsten Museum oder der Landesanstalt für Volkheilstunde in Halle melden! Der Staatliche Vertrauensmann, Fernsprecher Halle 25 851.

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the Early Germanic finds in that province as known in 1896 (9), 1926 (52) and 1937 (147).

The authorities concerned are to be heartily congratulated upon a most useful publication. We hope that it will be distributed broadcast and will achieve the objects for which it is designed.



The conservation of antiquities in Great Britain is not neglected by the Government; indeed the work of the Ancient Monuments Branch of H.M. Office of Works has for many years past been a model of its kind, so far as it goes. What is lacking here is an organized effort to deal with chance finds and destruction, such as occur whenever digging takes place for industrial purposes. Hitherto such rescue-work as has been done has been mainly the work of voluntary associations and individuals. Without proper official endowment, and consequently without the qualified staff, our local museums cannot cope with situations that arise continually, and which will arise in increasing numbers. Moreover, even museums worth calling such are lacking over large areas. What happens is that valuable finds are made, often duly reported (for intelligent interest and goodwill are present more often than not); but there is no one to do the s.o.s. work required, the work has to continue on the site and its irreplaceable history is destroyed for ever.



An outstanding instance of such destruction is the gravel-digging round Oxford. It is tragic that, often within a few months of their recovery through Major Allen's brilliant air-photography, so many of these sites should be wiped literally off the face of the earth. The soil of England is the manuscript of its prehistory; once obliterated these priceless original documents can never be replaced. The air-photograph (where there is such) is a tantalizing record that cannot be fully interpreted without the help of excavation. Heroic efforts—all voluntary—are being made to salvage what may be; but the demand far exceeds the supply and meanwhile destruction advances with increasing speed as mechanical methods expedite the fell work. Future generations will curse us as heartily as we curse our predecessors for neglect of the national heritage, and they will bless those whose enthusiasm has rescued some fragments before it was too late.