

Editorial

Two papers in this number concern the restoration of the Bush Barrow gold lozenge, described in last number's paper on Bush Barrow goldwork by Kinnes *et al.*, members of the British Museum's departments of prehistoric antiquities and conservation (pages 24–39). It is right to set out the circumstances of publication, especially as I have an interest to declare in the matter, as a member of council of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, owners of the Bush Barrow goldwork.

Plates 1 and 2 of the March paper (pages 32–3) illustrate the transformation in the lozenge's appearance, from a flat, slightly crumpled sheet to a smoother shape, gently domed as if inflated a little. The British Museum, to whom the lozenge was on long-term loan at the time of the work, believe this recovers the original profile. Shell & Robinson (below, pages 248–60) think the domed profile is not right, but arises from stretching of the soft metal in the several times its shape has been interfered with, before, during and after its time in the ground.

Knowing some time ago of the lozenge's transformation, ANTIQUITY invited both opinions as to the correctness and wisdom of the work to contribute papers that would be published side by side. However, Kinnes *et al.* were not prepared to publish alongside Shell & Robinson unless that paper was substantially revised; so it was held over to this number, where it appears in the form its authors wish it to take. A third paper appears below, by Dr Michael Corfield, which looks at wider considerations in metalwork conservation.

Does the shape of the lozenge matter much? It is only one artefact; a matter of a few millimetres separates the views of its shape; and certainly it looks much smarter now. A colleague sent a postcard after seeing the March issue, astonished by 'all the palaver over a little ponk'. It is not a big ponk, or in a big lozenge – the object is smaller in size than an ANTIQUITY page – but it raises real and serious issues. Here are five that deserve thought:

First is that the British Museum does not own the lozenge; the Wiltshire society's Devezes museum, which does, seems to have had

neither advance knowledge of the intent to do work to the lozenge that would transform it, nor notice such work had been done. The Wiltshire view is expressed by Devezes having since withdrawn the Bush Barrow gold from the British Museum, by the tenor of Shell & Robinson's paper here, and in the way Devezes remembers that the gold was lent to London expressly because it seemed safer from harm there than in a small provincial museum

Second is the reason for the restoration of the lozenge: its surface characteristics and 'a likely continuing demand for the object to travel on loan exhibitions and to be further handled for the purposes of study' (Kinnes *et al.* page 27). One wonders if museum priorities have not been inverted in this case. Almost all museums are becoming more reluctant to lend, because loans mean risks – in transport, vibration, the unsettling results of a different environment, and possibilities of calamity (the V&A dropped a marble Ming statue last autumn and broke its head off). If an object is too frail to travel and to be handled, then it should not travel and it should not be handled. Is it improper to reply to 'continuing demand' for the Bush Barrow gold, and the 'wear and tear' (Kinnes *et al.* page 39) that would result, with a polite no?

Third is the balance between information and aesthetics, an old tension which will continue as long as museums are in the business both of scientific research and of public spectacle. One cost of the lozenge's now being more handsome seems to have been some loss of information and potential information. I am not competent to judge between the two cases made for the original shape of the lozenge, but notice what Corfield says on this (page 262): 'It is now quite impossible to settle the controversy as the only evidence was the distorted object.' In the case of the Coppergate helmet, as Corfield remarks (page 264), the wish of York City Council as proprietors of the helmet was to have it 'restored', not just to make good damage caused in its recovery, but to repair what it suffered before its medieval burial. The Council now possesses a helmet lacking even the slight distortions which were probably the way it was

made – a helmet which is finer, more perfect, than it ever was in its own time, ‘transformed’ but not actually ‘restored’. Its new state does not reproduce any form it previously had.

Fourth is another view of beauty, of how one prefers to see the Bush Barrow lozenge, questions of information and potential information apart. Its dulled and crumpled state, complete with museum accession number scratched into the side, was the record of how time and chance had treated it over three and a half thousand years. There was a beauty in that, like the beauty in an old person’s face, which may not be less than the fresher beauty of youth. Even if there were no doubt as to the original form, and no possibility of potential information being lost in a restoration, would it be right to re-make it as it once was? Could not a replica instead have been made of the lozenge, so its youthful appearance could be seen without destroying the other beauty that it took from its visible age?

Fifth, we see again how precarious can be the life of an artefact once it is out of the ground, for it is only the ground which offers a safe refuge for the long term on an archaeological time-scale. How close did the lozenge come to the goldsmith’s melting-pot when Stourhead fell on hard times and the antiquities collection seemed ‘like the refuse of a marine store shop’? How many of the valued objects in the cabinets of curiosities of Renaissance Europe have been melted or mislaid, or went the bonfire way of the worthless dodo in the Tradescant collection? And how many sites today do we remove from a tranquil stasis in stable sediments by a process which turns their physical reality into some incomplete record in fugitive pigments on acid paper or, nowadays, in magnetic media whose secure life-expectancy may be ten years? As if to underline the insecurity of the record, the transparencies from which the colour plates for Kinnes *et al.*’s paper were made went astray while at the originator’s and while *ANTIQUITY* was responsible for them.

Meanwhile, the authorities contemplating the long-term conservation of the Sphinx as it becomes saturated by polluted ground-water, must decide the best means to save that great emblem of Egypt and of archaeology. Jean Phillipe Lauer, who has worked on the archaeology of the area for a lifetime, thinks the answer lies in the soil: ‘The best and maybe only way to save the Sphinx is to rebury its body in the sand,

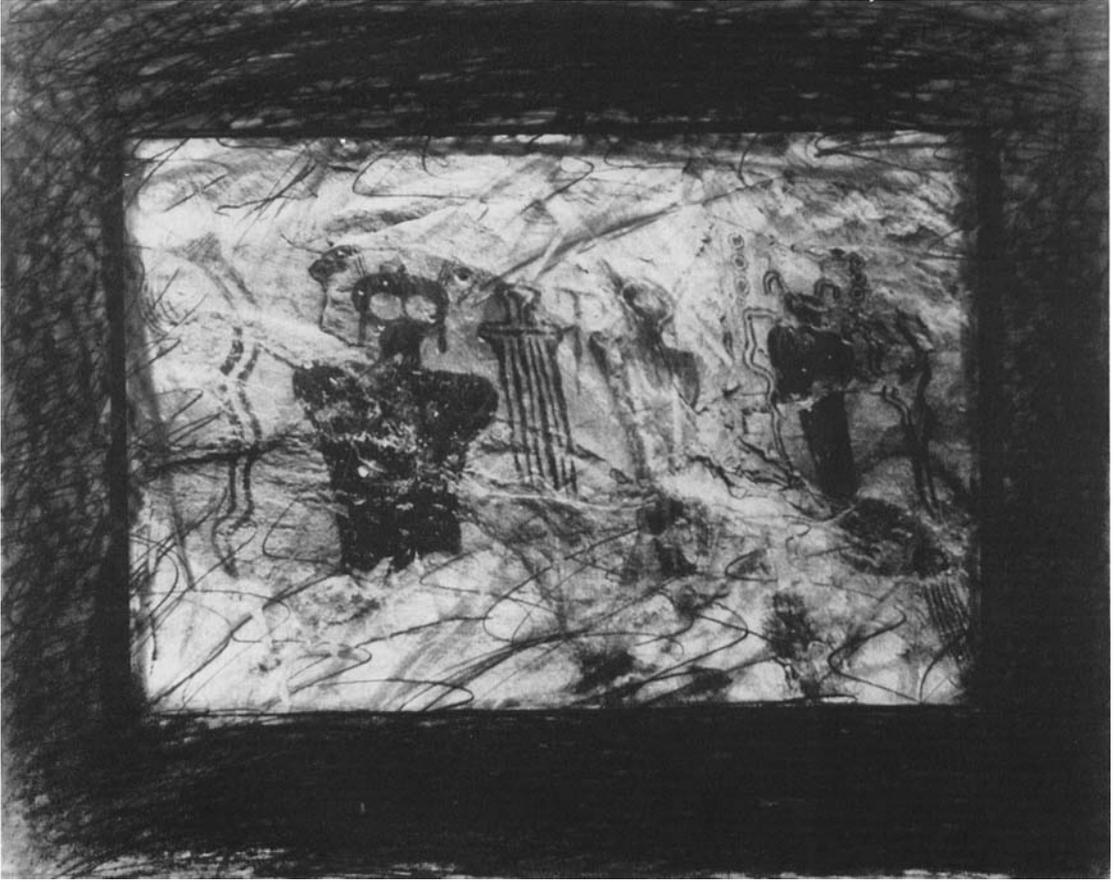
and thus isolate it from its destructive environment.’

¶ As the trade becomes more self-consciously a profession, so do the obligations placed on the archaeologist by codes of conduct and so on. (There will soon be some more as competitive tendering for salvage contracts becomes a British routine.) So here is another ethical obligation to place on ourselves.

The study of burials is essential to our business, but the archaeological value of a burial depends very much on the mortuary ritual, and on what actually goes into the ground. Consider a modern European cremation; it generates about a kilo and a half of calcined bone, which is ground to a fine powder, and then very often scattered. What archaeological trace does this leave for the long term? At best, surely, only a diffuse phosphate smear which may not be easy to distinguish from organic remains of a different character. The Church of England disapproves of scattering, and prefers ‘strewing’ which actually means the lifting of a portion of turf and the spreading of the cremated remains beneath it; the Church in Wales forbids scattering in its churchyards, and is also against the placing of ashes in imperishable containers which prevent the remains from returning to the soil. But what would the study of later European prehistory be without its cremation urns?

The 1848 Public Health Act ended, on sanitary grounds, the practice of burials in and under urban churches, of the kind studied at Spitalfields and reported in *ANTIQUITY* last year (61: 247–56). So cremation is now required as a preliminary to the interment of distinguished persons in St Paul’s or Westminster Abbey: there will be found the ashes, but not the bones, of the great and the good.

The modern rise of cremation is one change in fundamental human behaviour which will leave an archaeological trace – and largely a negative one. Cremation once again became lawful in Britain when Mr Justice Stephen ruled in 1884 (*R. v. Price, R. v. Stephenson*) that it was not an offence to burn a body (one must say ‘once again’ since it was clearly lawful in prehistoric times). Now more than 60% of British dead are cremated, and the proportion still rises – a transformation of mortuary ritual in a century, with no matching migration, population replacement or other social trans-



New responses to old things are the stuff of archaeology, and they can especially interest us when they are of a warmer character than the correct procedures of a secular archaeology. *Marks in place** is a book of 'contemporary responses to rock art' – colour and monochrome pictures by five contemporary photographers who visited petroglyph sites, mostly in the western USA, and made new images of them (not on them).

This is 'Snake Dance, Thompson Wash, Utah, 1982–86' by Rick Dings, whose accompanying text explains how the project attempted to discover a continuity that links the past with the present and future. The other photographers are Linda Connor, Steve Fitch, John Pfahl & Charles Roitz. They contribute essays as well. The pictures spoke to me more directly than the words of explanation, especially John Pfahl's which do not show rock-art sites at all, but postcard-pretty landscape views of the Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico which has been flooded over them. Lucy Lippard, Polly Schaafsma and Keith Davis contribute words alone.

formation as its simple cause. Habits are regionally variable, too, within Europe. The percentage of cremations in France was, in 1981, still below 1%. The negligible figure is due in part to Catholicism (the Pope's allowing of cremation was as recent as 1963); also, a French researcher thinks, to that English reserve which treats a funeral as a matter of

decent disposal more than an emotional affair. Americans, also, resist cremation (they do have more space, and British burials are reckoned to take about 500 acres a year), and they are attached to embalming, as no culture has been since pharaonic Egypt.

With burials should go grave goods: it is dispiriting to excavate burials and find no

* xii + 133 pages, 87 plates. 1988. Albuquerque (NM): University of New Mexico Press; ISBN 0-8263-0975-5 hard-

back \$45; ISBN 0-8263-0976-3 paperback \$24.95.

artefacts beyond the coffin nails (maybe coffins nowadays are held together only with glue?). Here, as in so many matters, Queen Victoria set a model for us. Ask Sir James, Michaela Reid's admirable biography of Sir James Reid, personal physician to Queen Victoria (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987), reports the very minute directions the Queen had prepared in a memorandum to indicate the many things to be put in her coffin, some of which none of the family were to see, and the care with which her instructions were followed: photographs of the Prince Consort and her children, a garment worked by Princess Alice, rings, chains, bracelets, locketts, photographs, shawls, handkerchiefs, casts of hands – all souvenirs of her life – early, middle, and late. 'No friend or servant was forgotten, and each member of her family was remembered.'

With a responsibility to be buried with grave-goods goes, surely, a duty to provide a durable monument. A cautionary tale from the Strzelecki Creek area of outback South Australia about 1920 indicates the risks caused by difficult circumstances. Arch Burnett records (in his *Wilful murder in the outback*, Adelaide, n.d.) his burying Bill Kleeman when he died unexpectedly on the road to Innamincka; Burnett 'went down to the creek, cut a straight grey gum pole, barked it, and placed it at his head. When I passed again two weeks later there were fresh camel tracks and the remains of a camp fire, but the post had been removed.' Obstacle today in more usual places comes from managers of cemeteries and tidy-minded incumbents who like graves to be set flat in grass, without markers that obstruct motor-mowers.

What is also required is some clear indication that the deceased followed the profession of archaeologist. A trowel among the grave-goods might do – or has that been taken as emblem already by builders or, worse, by freemasons? Maybe, but the wear patterns on an archaeologist's trowel will be diagnostic, and his choice of brand (Smith's in England, Marshalltown in America) also a guide. The monument surely should be a barrow, at least for a prehistorian; a modest bowl- or bell-barrow does not take much building. But has any archaeologist been buried under a barrow? Not that I have been able to find – or any other class of person in recent time. Crawford & Keiller's *Wessex from the air* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923: plate XII) shows

Farley Mount in north Hampshire, a round barrow with a small pyramid that was built on it in the 18th century. Its purpose is explained on a cast-iron plate:

Underneath lies buried a horse, (the property of Paulet St John Esq. that in the month of September, 1733, leaped into a chalk-pit twenty-five feet deep, a-fox-hunting with his master on his back, and in October, 1734, he won the Hunters' Plate on Worthy Downs and was rode by his owner and entered in the name of 'Beware Chalk-Pit'.

A burial under a barrow, but not very recent, not of a person – and not a new barrow: Crawford comments that the mound is undoubtedly a prehistoric burial-mound which, though big, is not bigger than many undoubted barrows. The fully ethical archaeologist should do better for his future colleagues.

Our ethical archaeologist, contemplating his duties to provide representative grave-goods and a distinctive style of barrow, must also have regard for where his barrow will be built. The same question arises with plans for new barrows to be built near Avebury – but these are to be barrows for the living rather than the dead.

For some years one of the less lovely buildings in the Avebury landscape has been the transport café at Overton Hill, on the chalk hilltop where the Ridgeway crosses the A4, the old London–Bath main road. (It is not only the building which is unlovely; I remember stopping there early one morning for one of the nastiest breakfasts I have ever tried to eat.) Opposite the road lies the Sanctuary, the henge-circle where one of the Avebury stone avenues terminated; in 1930 it was excavated by Mrs Maud Cunnington, who re-located the site from Stukeley's description.

Somewhere, as I remember it (perhaps in the Public Record Office WORK14-series papers that deal with ancient monuments), is record from the 1930s of the setting-up of a little teashop by the Sanctuary for the benefit of visitors to the restored site. Perhaps it is this archaeological provision which has grown into the truckstop there now.

The proposal now is to build on the site a tourist hotel, hostel and restaurant complex in the form of three large conical buildings, each 14 metres high: pastiche oversize barrows in



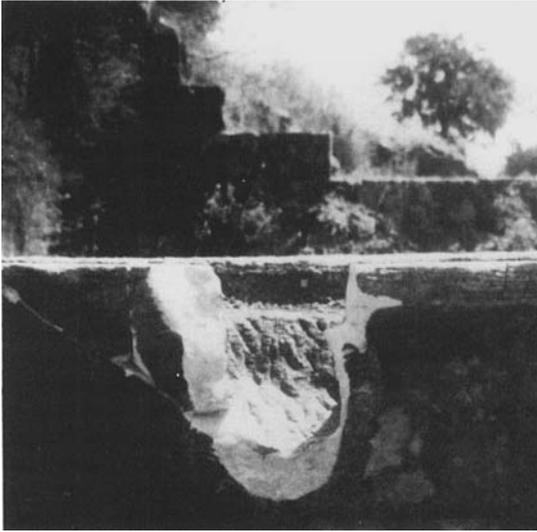
The great dolmen, *La Grotte des Fées*, at Saint-Antoine-du-Rocher, Indre-et-Loire, west central France, in a splendid lithograph by Noel, published in *Souvenirs pittoresques de la Touraine* (1824). It is the cover illustration of Gérard Cordier's megalithic inventory of the département, first published in 1963 as a supplement to *Gallia Préhistoire* in the series *Inventaire des Mégalithes de la France*, and re-published by the author in a fully revised second edition (1984; available from G. Cordier, 1 rue Marcelin Berthelot, 37300 Joué-les-Tours, France).

which to place the living. Archaeologists have mostly been hostile – Don Brothwell and Isobel Smith, who live in Avebury, leading the opposition. Kennet District Council, the planning authority, heard of opposition from the National Trust, the Countryside Commission, and others, before narrowly voting to approve the scheme, against its own planners' advice. It has now been 'called in' and will be subject of a public inquiry.

I rather like the idea of building concrete barrows (but will people pay to live under barrows?). Overton Hill is entirely the wrong place for concrete barrows, which may stand against the skyline and overshadow the smaller, real barrows on the ridge a few yards away. The

café should go, the downland should be restored, and Kennet should provide for its tourists in barrows, if it wants, set somewhere more decently removed from the ancient sacred places.

Procedures for the radiocarbon dating of the Turin shroud (*ANTIQUITY* 61: 6–7, 168) have been announced (*Nature* 332: 482). Determinations will be made by three AMS laboratories, Oxford, Tucson and Zurich, rather than the seven AMS and conventional laboratories at one time envisaged. Each laboratory will have a 40 mg sample of whole cloth, plus two known-age control samples, numbered just as 1-2-3, so the test will be 'blind' (although a laboratory



In how many places can a photograph like this be taken?

When David Harvey (Department of Classics, Exeter University) visited the Lower Gymnasium at Priene, in September 1986, he admired the water-spouts in the form of lions' heads on the north wall of the wash-room (M. Schede, *Die Ruinen von Priene* (1964): 83–6, Abb. 95, 99–100), and then turned to look at the corresponding spout on the east wall. He was shocked to discover that the lion's head had been crudely hacked out. The job had been so clumsily done that most of the mane and ruff were still in situ. The marble exposed by the looter was sparkling white. Two chunks of the guttering lay on the ground. He replaced them and took the photograph reproduced here.

Somewhere – on offer, or already snugly in a collection, public or private – is the lion's head. As it lacks about two-thirds of its facial hair, the piece may be recognizable.

that wanted to could try to distinguish shroud from control samples by careful study of all three). The cutting of the samples, from a single site on the shroud away from patches or charred areas, and their packaging in numbered steel containers, will be watched over and certified by Cardinal Ballestrero of Turin in collaboration with Dr M.S. Tite of the British Museum Research Laboratory. Dr Tite expects a radiocarbon date to be released by the end of 1988.

The suggestion has been made (*Nature* 332: 300) that the shroud may contain asbestos; it seems to have been scorched but not consumed

by fire. Marco Polo talks of asbestos fibres being spun like wool and woven into napkins which may be cleaned by being put into the fire, and he tells of the Great Kaan sending a napkin to Rome in 1269 expressly to wrap up the sacred shroud of Our Lord. What does asbestos do to a radiocarbon assay? Nothing, presumably, if it is filtered out in pre-treatment.

PETER FOWLER writes: The British Government's response to the *First Report of the Environment Committee of the House of Commons on Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments* (21 January 1987) was published on 3 February 1988 (HC 1987–88: 268; London: HMSO; £3.90 paperback), so I can now write the last two paragraphs of 'What price the man-made heritage?' (*ANTIQUITY* 61: 409–15).

In view of the Committee's monetarist approach to the heritage, it is chillingly interesting to note the Secretary of State's endorsement of the Report as 'a rich quarry of ideas and data for the refinement and development of policy towards the heritage . . . likely to remain valid . . . for a considerable time. . .'. His current proposals for the privatization of National Nature Reserves and Guardianship monuments follow logically though foolishly from this position. So too does his confirmation that the 'promotion of tourism' is indeed one of the 'prime duties' of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. Those not already aware of the sillinesses down this route should read the English Tourist Board's heritage-trivializing and exploitative development strategy, *A vision for England* (undated but 1987), glance at English Heritage's *Events diary '88* (complete with 'chivalric entertainments' and 'Alice at Belsay', no connection, Wonderland indeed), and ponder on the serious issues underlying Robert Hewison's *The heritage industry* (1987; also *ANTIQUITY* 62: 8–9). Presumably it is in the context of this sort of vision of the future of England's past that the Department of the Environment will 'remain receptive to imaginative new ideas for the conservation and presentation of the heritage, having regard to such things as value for money. . .'

The Government's response to many of the specific recommendations is 'no'. Archaeologically, significant negatives are those to proposals for more Areas of Archaeological

Importance and for direct funding of archaeological work necessitated by both Government and private development. While attention is drawn to the power of Local Authorities to impose on planning permissions conditions about access for archaeological work (DoE Circular 1/85: Annex paras. 60, 61), the question of 'Who pays?' is presumably left to market forces and entrepreneurial flair. One clear decision, however, is, 'We have no plan for seeking to change the present arrangements' with regard to the relationship between HBMC and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England. Ironically, the results of a policy review by management consultants of the rôle of the English, Welsh and Scottish Royal Commissions could well cause that statement to be revised soon, though probably not towards the merger HBMC wants. Another division of opinion within the body of the Church (literally) is nicely revealed by the response of the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral (which I specifically mentioned for its visitor arrangements) to the response by the Deans and Provosts of English Cathedrals (Annexes 3 and 4). I suppose that this schism was as predictable as the rest of this *First (un)special report*.

It is invidious to give notice of only a few conferences from so many that take place, but here are a pair that may be special: the first AURA Congress and the CHAGS5 conference, to be held together in Darwin, northern Australia, from 29 August to 2 September this year. AURA is the Australian Rock Art Research

Association. Given the high standing of Australian work in rock-art and of AURA's journal *Rock Art Research*, and with a large international contingent expected, the AURA Congress promises to mark an important step in the flourishing of rock-art studies, and to show the substantial contribution it makes to 'mainstream' archaeology. CHAGS5 is the fifth meeting of the Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies: again the standing of Australia in the field needs no underlining, and previous CHAGS conferences have done well. Both programmes look diverse and strong.

There is provision to attend sessions of both meetings, so the optimal intellectual forager will be able to combine the resources offered by location in Darwin adjacent to the hunter-gatherer and the art eco-zones. An extensive programme of field visits includes Kakadu national park near by. Australia is a long way for most of us, but this will be the time to go.

Details: for AURA from Dr R.G. Bednarik, AURA, PO Box 216, Caulfield South 3162, Victoria, Australia; for CHAGS5 from Dr L.R. Hiatt, c/o Oceania Publications, Mackie Building, University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia.

Following George Boon's appointment as Curator of the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, Stephen Green has been appointed Keeper of Archaeology and Numismatics in the Museum.

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