

# Editorial

☞ The future of the British and the European countryside is up for grabs. For two generations the farming interests have enjoyed a double standard. They have been free entrepreneurs, dealing with their land as market forces instruct, in just the same way as any industrialist organizes his assets – more so, in fact, because farming practices and farm buildings are exempt from the planning controls which in Britain strictly regulate industry and mineral extraction. At the same time, agribusiness has been feather-bedded with subsidies, and by intervention and purchase schemes when market forces work against it.

This cosy arrangement has given farming interests the advantages both of being in the market-place and of exemption from market

rules. The consequences have been bizarre: when land is drained (with a subsidy) so as to increase its productivity, the newly increased production is bought into store (by a subsidy), and in time removed from store (by a subsidy) and dumped on the world market or used as farm-animal feed (!). Meanwhile, a little or large bit of wetland, with its archaeology, has been erased. Overall, the result has been the transformation of the British countryside, the rooting-out of ancient woods and hedges, the conversion of old pasture and wetland to arable, and the turning of – especially – much of southern England into, ecologically, an agricultural desert. So many of the standing earthworks of the English chalkland, for example, are now destroyed that the military training area on Salisbury Plain, which seemed



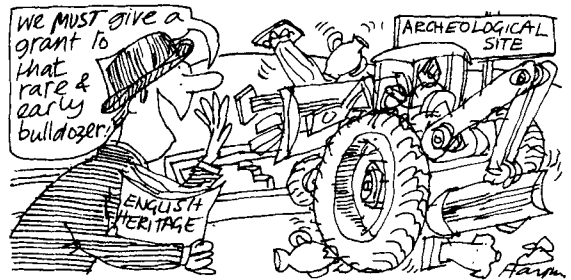
to O.G.S. Crawford in the 1920s already ruined beyond hope, is now an island of (comparative) preservation in a waste of lost field systems and flattened barrows.

Now this particular gravy-train seems to have hit the buffers, as European governments refuse to fund bigger butter mountains and larger olive-oil lakes, and the fashion in taste moves towards vegetable wholefoods. The farmers will have to recognize that the price for continuing state support will be a placing of environmental concerns alongside, and often equal to, farming priorities. There will be other consequences: the National Trust's financial health has in the past depended on profits from commercial farming of its larger estates to make good the cost of conservation – an equation that now looks in doubt for the long term.

Reliable estimates suggest that over 20% of British farmland will go out of production over the next 12 years or so, one hectare in four or five and mostly in the marginal uplands – the land which, the record of medieval and ancient fields shows, has gone into and out of production with the longest-term economic cycles of agriculture. What is to happen to this land will largely depend on who shouts loudest – and it is a fact that archaeology has not been very audible; the new study of archaeology in the future of British uplands (reviewed on p.343) is a response, necessarily belated, to the almost-complete absence of archaeology from the debate on that issue.

The running so far is being made by the foresters. Already 13% of Scotland is under trees, and the Forestry Commission expects 30% by the end of the century; these will not be natural woodlands of mixed species, but artificial monocultures – usually of Sitka spruce – implanted with machinery that smashes archaeological sites with exemplary ease. No wonder that the Scottish Royal Commission estimates that 760 sites in Scotland are being destroyed yearly.

With responsibility for archaeological conservation divided among separate agencies for each of the UK's constituent nations, there is no national voice for archaeology inside government. The closest we have is English Heritage, already the largest and most visible agency, and wanting to consolidate its position by merging with the English Royal Commission,



whose role as agency of record complements English Heritage's management responsibilities.

But how much clout does English Heritage really carry at Environment, its sponsoring ministry, and in government? Not too much, to judge by recent events. And it cannot help that much publicity was given in March to English Heritage underspending its budget for the 1986–7 financial year, planned to be £65m, whilst it was turning down requests for salvage-archaeology funding (hency Harpur's cruel cartoon from the *Guardian*). There was a small underspend, but it is not easy to manage long-term projects to fall exactly into year-by-year budgets; and the 1987–8 salvage budget, at £7.09m, is up by just more than inflation.

The Department of Transport (DoT), responsible for roads as a sister to the Environment ministry, gives three warm pages of its glossy freebie about London's new motorway ring-road to the rescue archaeology; if you read carefully you find the catch. Everything in the book is costed, £5.7 million for control systems, £70,000 to shift one 19th-century house. The archaeology seems to be priceless – and it was: the DoT didn't actually pay a penny for it. This is quite wrong. It is a fair principle that the developer should pay for the environmental impact of his development. The DoT makes greater impact than any – its road budget runs to £5,000 million – but its attitude is shameful. Instead the best practice is coming from private business – from Exxon (Esso) with its Fawley pipeline, and from an increasing number of city-centre developers who will follow the British Property Federation's code of archaeological practice, for which full marks to its main instigator, Brian Hobley at the Museum of London.

There was public embarrassment last autumn, when the Lain's Farm iron-age site

near Andover was bulldozed – although it was a major site that had been known for decades in the path of a road that had been planned for years. Following that scandal the DoT has coughed up a miserable £100,000 annually for all archaeological rescue work in advance of new road-building – a figure which looks like one-500th of 1 per cent of its road budget.

One of many schemes which that £100,000 has to cover is the new Dorchester by-pass, cutting between Maiden Castle and the Roman town of Durnovaria, which sits under medieval and modern Dorchester and on top of major neolithic sites. The road runs through complex field systems, barrow cemeteries, and a linear urban settlement (perhaps precursor of the Roman town). A new causewayed enclosure turned up during advance survey. The cost of a proper salvage job, in the Wessex unit's opinion, is 18 months and £500,000; the amount allocated is 3 months and £60,000.

How might that gap – seven-eighths of the proper funding – be filled? A major landowner affected is the Duchy of Cornwall, which is compensated for the land-take and will own archaeological finds from its land. The Duchy is the Prince of Wales's estate. No landowner has done more for archaeology, by the Prince's own interest and by his having an archaeological advisory committee. But there has been no volunteering of Duchy funds for the salvage archaeology – rightly: it is the DoT which is the developer and it is the developer who should pay.

Even some attitudes give cause for concern within English Heritage, where archaeology appears in danger of sliding far down its agenda of concerns. English Heritage feels it can make serious money available to buy historic houses – and, earlier this year, to try to keep intact a very odd collection of surrealist furniture – but not to purchase archaeological sites in any number. When an archaeologist among its commissioners resigned last year, there was a pause before it was decided another archaeologist-commissioner was in order. And when a commissioner gave the last RESCUE conference his vision of its future, this was mostly concerned with the prettier castles and investing in a growing 'portfolio' of stately homes. Archaeological sites, he explained, were more statutory duties than major interests. They could be given lavatories, tea-cabins even,

but would never have the potential of something you could roof, furnish, and turn into a serious business.

English Heritage should remember that private owners only give up their delicious country houses because they are so ruinously expensive. The National Trust is very chary of taking them on because, lacking English Heritage's state support, it has to make the books more nearly balance. In any case, a high proportion of all the English stately homes ever built are now safe in perpetuity. The time may well have come to let the rest fall down, and concentrate on the less glamorous and more vulnerable remains of archaeology and of industry. English Heritage has a defined and critical role within historic conservation, especially for archaeology. The reason it has a state subsidy is that many of its duties are commercially unrewarding, not so it can have an edge over competitors in the stately home industry.


The main new initiative for archaeology at English Heritage is the Monuments Protection Programme, a scheme to rationalize what sites are protected and increase their number: there will be a full report in the November ANTIQUITY. Meanwhile fears are voiced that it will depend on existing records in county Sites & Monuments Records – already known to be deficient and partial – while the review a few years ago of listed buildings, the equivalent protection for standing structures, was based on a complete new field survey. Why cannot archaeology be treated the same way?

¶ This is not the moment to declare a general crisis in British archaeology, but the view from the universities which David Austin gives in this number is dark. This issue goes to press with the future of university archaeology buried in a Chinese box of reviews: the electorate is reviewing what government it wants; the outgoing government is reviewing the University Grants Committee (UGC); the UGC is reviewing itself, and also reviewing whether it should review the archaeology departments; the archaeology departments are reviewing themselves.

May whatever is done to university archaeology be, please, visibly rational? Both precedents have been secret and obscure. In 1981 four departments were listed for closure

by the UGC: no reason was given for the choice. In 1985, at the UGC's instigation, an unknown person or persons classified the quality of research in the departments as good, average, or poor by unknown criteria applied to unknown evidence: no proper peer review is known to have taken place; no explanation has been given of what will be decided on the strength of this ranking. (Students of elementary statistics have noticed that rather more departments were above average than below, which makes one wonder how average the average is.)

Hard decisions are going to be taken. The least that can decently be done to those who will suffer them is a clear policy of public statements by the UGC as to who is deciding what, why and how.


 I was startled, in a little town in Nevada last year, to come across a mummified Indian burial, wrapped in a mat and put down with other by-gones and curios in the back basement of a private 'Wild West' museum. Startled because I did not think human remains were still treated that way, and because it was so visible an affront to human dignity. But how different is this from the conventional ordering of western cultural institutions, so visible in the USA? Civilized European, and European-settlers', art is in art galleries. Civilized European, and European-settlers', history is in history museums. Geology, dinosaur bones, stuffed elephants, dried flowers and American Indians are in natural-history museums (except the more civilized artefacts which are in the exotic departments of the art galleries). Knowing that this is a historical accident, the result of 19th-century circumstances, does not lessen the affront much. There is a proposal for a new Museum of Native Americans, in a place of honour and independence alongside the other great museums on the Mall in Washington, which would symbolize a new separation of native American people from native American dinosaurs in the museum order of things: it deserves the warmest support.

These things run deep even in the language. The New World is only called new because it once was new to ignorant Europeans. American Indians are only called Indians because ignorant Europeans once thought they had sailed to another side of the globe. A Chicano acquaintance stops me if I accidentally call him

American: he says he is not American, that is, not of the United States, a state to which he feels no allegiance. 'American', the word which should mean of the land or the continent, has been hi-jacked for the narrower allegiance, 'of the United States'. 'Native Americans', looked at this way, is an odd phrase, as insulting as 'American Indian' may be.

In the United States, as in Australia (p. 292), the re-burial of human skeletal remains has become a large issue, and much larger than agreeing what constitutes proper treatment of dead human beings. Advocates of reburial are starting to talk of 'repatriation', and the recovery of control over the bones is clearly related to recovery of a cultural identity, to recovery of land, to recovery of mineral rights. In fact, circumstances are very variable region by region and state by state. Relations are good in, for example, Florida and Wisconsin; the Zuni Pueblo in the desert southwest directs its own archaeology programme. It is in places like California, where the history of Indian-Anglo relations has been the nastiest and some kind of an Indian identity is now being built from few shattered fragments, that the re-burial issue is most polarized.

Senator Melcher, a Republican from the West, has introduced a Bill into the current session of Congress which would give control over native American materials already under direct or indirect federal jurisdiction, whether in museum collections or in the ground, to a board representative of native Americans, archaeologists, museum curators, and politicians. The Bill is unlikely to be passed in its present form, but it is a serious venture. It goes much wider, but the human bones remain the heart of the issue – with some irony: after so many decades of conscientious measuring, of sorting by head shapes which mean one knows not what, and of ageing and sexing by criteria of uncertain reliability (see p. 253), the physicals have a whole new set of techniques, such as dietary study by stable-isotope analysis. As at last they can really make research sense of all those boxes of bones, the boxes may disappear.

 The Melcher Bill follows from the understandable failure of archaeologists and native Americans to build an effective alliance of all those who care for the native American past, in opposition to the pot-hunters, the

dealers in looted antiquities and those many commercial interests who find old things an obstacle to profit and progress. It also shows the effectiveness of the reburial lobby, especially Jan Hammil's pressure group AIAD, American Indians Against Desecration. Her standing, and her organization's, has been raised by her being co-opted on to the standing committee of the World Archaeological Congress, set up after last year's Southampton meeting, where she represents 'indigenous minorities' interests'. It is not clear to me that archaeology is part of the apparatus by which indigenous minorities are oppressed. If it is, it is not clear to me that the interests either of archaeology or of indigenous minorities are best served by co-opting into the Congress's structure the most vocal of the lobbyists, splendid and theatrical though her rhetoric was at the Congress's plenary session. Certainly, fêting Ms Hammil at Southampton was not a friendly act in relation to our American colleagues and their real difficulties in this field. Perhaps it was not meant to be.

Behind the South African ban, the specific reason for the splitting-away of the World Congress from the UISPP, are older issues – especially the discordance between the formal purpose of the UISPP as the body representative of archaeological researchers world-wide and its reality as dominated by Europeans of an older generation. (The tale goes – and it has the ring of truth – of the UISPP commission which felt in need of vigorous new blood; searching about, it came across a distinguished man in the field who was just retiring, and gratefully invited this bright young talent on-board.)

Archaeology is in need of two organizations. It needs a broad-based world conference, with a strong third-world representation. And it needs a European regional conference, a sister to the north American, Pan-African, or Indo-Pacific conferences, to deal with European-parochial concerns (not that these are small: the Neanderthal question, the relations of the Mediterranean to the north, and the pattern of classical civilizations, for example).

In the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) and in the UISPP we have complementary organizations which are close to fulfilling these roles. If, that is, the South African issue can be de-fused, and if the personality clashes and bitteresses can be reburied.

There is no sign of peace breaking out. The first *World Archaeological Bulletin* from the WAC is combative in tone, and largely concerned with the South African issue (there is a better-informed alternative to Southampton's simple view in a special report in *Nature*, 29 May 1987). Peter Ucko, organizer of the Southampton conference, has written a book, *Academic freedom and apartheid*, which 'presents the traumatic affairs of 1985 and 1986 unashamedly from his own perspective'; it will act more to keep old wounds open than to promote reconciliation.

On the other side, the UISPP seems still to inhabit that lost world in which civilized human beings conducted conversations uniquely and diplomatically in the French language. The circular for this summer's official UISPP Congress comes in French alone. It announces the Congress as being in 'Mayence', a place-name which may puzzle those of us who thought the Congress was at Mainz, in the Federal Republic of Germany. Only if you have a French-published atlas to hand will you find that Mayence is French for Mainz.

*Fennoscandia Archaeologica* is a new journal from Finland, replacing the defunct *Fennoscandia Antiqua*. The first three issues (1984–6) contain a wide range of papers on such diverse topics as ancient skis of central Finland, bronze age swords, pollen records of early cereals in the N, coin hoards, an appreciation of A.M. Tallgren, stone age figurines from Finland, and a review of lacustrine pile-dwellings from NW Russia. The papers are in English or have English summaries. *Fennoscandia Archaeologica* is edited by J.V. Taavitsainen and is available from Suomen Arkeologinen Seura, PL 913, SF-00101 Helsinki, Finland.

The first number of the twice-yearly *Archeomaterials* appeared last autumn with four papers in a 96-page issue covering steel, ceramics, copper and silver, and cast-iron artefacts, plus (already!) a retrospective on the changing profession of the archaeometrist. The journal plans to deal with any products or processes which materially influenced historical and social trends before the modern era, and is particularly anxious to place technology within cultural perspective and integrate archaeometry with archaeology. Annual subscription is \$35 (*Archeomaterials*,

3333 E 143 Street, Burnham IL 60633, USA); the editor is Tamara Stech, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA 19104.

¶ The Vatican remains reticent as to when the radiocarbon dating of the Turin shroud will be made known, but there is a further local tip to go with our March guide to the form (pp. 6–7).

The Templecombe painting is a depiction on wooden panels of a bearded face, set within a frame or box and painted in a medieval style. The picture was found some 50 years ago hidden in the roof-space of an old house in this Somerset village, which has connections with the Knights Templar; and this manner of depicting heads has been linked with the Templars and the Turin shroud. A  $^{14}\text{C}$  accelerator determination, commissioned from the Oxford lab by the local TSW television station, indicates a date in the late 13th/early 14th century AD, taking the picture back to but not beyond the later medieval period and its relic manufacturers.

¶ Richard Bradley has been appointed to a personal chair in the Department of Archaeology at Reading University – a welcome indication of confidence in a department not long ago threatened with closure.

From Harvard University, following the retirement of Gordon Willey, comes the news

that the Bowditch Chair he has held with such distinction since 1950 is to be left vacant – at least for some years. Since there are several first-rate Americanists who could well fill the post, this outcome – after prolonged dithering by Harvard – is as odd as it is sad.

In the University of Liverpool, following a report of a working party set up several years ago, the Department of Prehistoric Archaeology has been transformed into an Institute of Prehistoric Sciences and Archaeology, housed in the university's science area and intending to specialize in wetlands and early-man studies.

The University of Lancaster is closing its archaeology, in a move independent of the larger plans for rationalizing British universities' archaeology teaching.

¶ Some readers may have anticipated a fuller memoir of Glyn Daniel in this issue than the obituary note in the March editorial. There is not one. This is what Ruth Daniel prefers and I think is right, but not from any lack of respect or feeling. Glyn was a public man, and so much has been written already: one of his most distinguished friends now excuses himself from writing an autobiography because Glyn has already published all his stories. Instead of looking back once more, we are concentrating on building Glyn's ANTIQUITY for the future.

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

### **Preliminary statement on an error in British Museum radiocarbon dates (BM-1700 to BM-2315)**

A systematic error has been identified in radiocarbon measurements run in the British Museum laboratory between approximately mid 1980 and the end of 1984, when all dating was halted for a number of months. The measurements potentially affected have numbers between about BM-1700 and BM-2315, and correspond roughly to datelists XV to XIX published in *Radiocarbon*. The error is systematic, giving dates that are too young by varying amounts: some may have been underestimated by 200–300 years, whilst others may be little affected. BM dates issued during

this period should be used with caution. Dates obtained since mid 1985 are not subject to this error as evidenced by repeated radiocarbon measurements of dendrochronologically-dated wood (see for example BM-2432, datelist XX, forthcoming).

A comprehensive set of experiments to clarify and quantify the discrepancy is continuing. When sufficient data are available a full account of the problem will be published. Submitters of a series of samples during the period in question will also be notified individually.

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