Antiquity

VOL. XLV No. 179 SEPTEMBER 1971

Editorial

As part of the bicentenary of the birth of William Wordsworth, Mr Fred J. Nicholson of 186 Burneside Road, Kendal, Westmorland, gave a lecture entitled 'The Touch of Time: Wordsworth and Antiquity', which we hope will be published in full. Meanwhile he has allowed us to read the text of the lecture and to quote from it. He prints, at its head, Wordsworth's line 'Antiquity, the co-partner and sister of Nature'. The poet's imagination was stirred by institutions, events and remains of olden days; the sites he visited ranged from 'Druid' circles through Roman camps to medieval monasteries and abbeys, towers and castles. Tramping over Salisbury Plain, when a disturbed young man of 23, Wordsworth had an experience—an 'Antiquarian's Dream', which he later described in *The Prelude*:

> I had a reverie and saw the past,
> Saw multitudes of men, and here and there,
> A single Briton in his wolf-skin vest
> With shield and stone-axe, stride across the Wold;
> . . . . and lo! again
> The desart visible by dismal flames!
> It is the sacrificial Altar, fed
> With living men, how deep the groans, the voice
> Of those in the gigantic wicker thrills . . . .

And, at one moment, Wordsworth's dream seems to presage Hawkins and Thom when he writes:

> Three summer days I roamed, when 'twas my chance
> To have before me on the dreary Plain
> Lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes
> Such as in many quarters yet survive,
> With intricate profusion figuring o'er
> The untilled ground, the work, as some divine,
> Of infant science, imitative forms
> By which the Druids covertly express'd
> Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
> The constellations . . .
> I saw the bearded Teachers, with white wands,
> Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky
> Alternately, and Plain below . . . .*

In Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* he has a long note on the 'few circles of rude stones attributed to the Druids' and describes the discovery of a stone circle by his friend Thomas Wilkinson of Yanwath. He was enormously impressed by his first visit to Long Meg and her Daughters ('Itinerary Poems' of 1833):

> A weight of awe not easy to be borne
> Fell suddenly upon my spirit, cast
> From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
> When first I saw that sisterhood forlorn.

But the most interesting and arresting passage is that from *To Enterprise*, and Mr Nicholson quotes the following lines from the post-1822 version of the poem (see E. de Selincourt, *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, Oxford University Press, 1944, II, p. 283 fn.):

> Urged on by some insatiate Power
> Slow-climbing Man his foot hath set,
> Proud Jungfrau, on thy coronet,
> Hath pierced the deepest western wood
> For secrets older than the flood,

*The extracts above are from lines 320–53 of Book XII of *The Prelude* as it was read to Coleridge by Wordsworth at Coleorton in the winter of 1805–6. *The Prelude* was not published until shortly after the poet's death in 1850.

Unquarried the surviving bones
Of monstrous fossil skeletons,
Or tempted later Confidant
Of time and nature to disclose
The corse of uncorrupted elephant
Enshrined amid Siberia snows.

From discussion with Professor Piggott, we think it likely that the 'uncorrupted corse' was that of the frozen mammoth from the River Lena found in 1799. This seems most probable and it is worth quoting the account of the find from the 1939 English translation of E. W. Pfizenmayer's *Siberian Man and Mammoth* (pp. 7–8):

About 1799 a Tungus found a body embedded in a huge block of ice on the banks of the Lena delta. He kept it a secret for a long time, till he was able to loosen the teeth, which were frozen into the head. He sold these in Yakutsk, the great trading centre of Northern Siberia, but at first no one troubled to investigate the matter. Then the botanist Adams, who was on an expedition there, heard of the discovery and determined to salvage the carcass. By the time he reached the spot most of the soft parts had been destroyed, as the Tunguses fed their dogs on the flesh, and beasts of prey had also damaged the body. Only the head, with one completely preserved ear and eye, and also the lower parts of two feet, which were still covered with ice and frozen soil, had retained their soft parts. Adams brought these, and the skeleton, which was almost complete, to St Petersburg in 1806. The skeleton was displayed, as the first mammoth skeleton, in the so-called 'cabinet of curios', the collection founded by Peter the Great which later became the Zoological Museum.

But what were the surviving bones of monstrous fossil skeletons to which Wordsworth referred? In 1577 enormous human bones were found near the village of Reiden near Lucerne. A huge mammoth tusk in the Michaeliskirche at Halle bore this inscription: 'I was found on the 13th February, 1605, near Neubronn, in the district of Halle. Can you tell me, friend, what sort of thing I can be, with these huge bones and long joints?' The Giant Gate of St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna took its name from a mammoth thigh-bone which once hung inside the church near the gate. In 1663 numerous mammoth bones were dug out of crevices in the rock near Quedlinburg and were reconstructed by Leibnitz as the skeleton of a unicorn, with two legs, a skull like that of a horse with a tusk inserted into the forehead to do duty as the horn. All these and many other finds may well have been at the back of Wordsworth's mind when he wrote; and yet man piercing 'the deepest western wood for secrets older than the flood' demands further explanation. Was Wordsworth referring to the finds of Buckland and MacEnery, and was he already rejecting the diluvialist and catastrophic geology of Buckland and Cuvier? Are his secrets the same thoughts that made John Frere refer, in his famous letter of 1777 about the Hoxne hand-axes, to a period 'older than the present world'? It would be most interesting to know.

☙ By a curious chance, as we were thinking about Wordsworth and mammoths, we came across the account in *Nature* for 24 May 1971, 231, 83) of the finding of the intact body of a mammoth on a nameless tributary of the river Indirka in Siberia. This discovery was made by a worker called Struchkov, employed on the Abyiskii State Farm on the 69th parallel. He noticed the remains jutting out of the permafrost during a thaw. Until this the Berezovka find of 1900, now on show in the Zoological Museum in Leningrad, had been thought to be the best preserved. Struchkov's mammoth seems better; it is being studied by the Yakutsk branch of the Siberian section of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and preliminary reports indicate that the 'components' missing from the Berezovka mammoth are present in this new find. The Struchkov mammoth is to be preserved in the deep cave-laboratory of the Yakutsk Institute of Permafrost Laboratories where a permanent sub-zero (centigrade) temperature is maintained. We are told that work is in progress to enlarge the entry shaft and underground chambers of the laboratory to enable the mammoth to take up residence there.

☙ The production of facsimile reissues of books now out of print is a new and most

valuable aspect of modern publishing. The Clarendon Press, two years ago, reissued Paul Jacobstahl's *Early Celtic Art* which had been out of print since 1949, and the Cambridge University Press has reissued, with a new preface, Stuart Piggott's *The Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles*. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the Singing Tree Press, 1400 Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan, for reprinting the two volumes on *Archaeology* and the two volumes on *Romano-British Remains* from *The Gentleman's Magazine Library*: being a classified collection of the chief contents of the *Gentleman's Magazine* from 1731 to 1868. And now David and Charles have produced in their reprint series a facsimile of the 1695 Edmund Gibson edition of Camden's *Britannia* and prefaced it with a reprint of Stuart Piggott's lecture to the British Academy entitled 'William Camden and the *Britannia*', and a bibliographical note by Gwyn Walters, Assistant Keeper in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. This is a most lovely book to have and surely not too expensive at the price, namely £25 (there was a lower price of £21 for those who subscribed before 1 August this year): all archaeological libraries, private and public, who are not fortunate enough to possess an original 1695 *Britannia*, will want this book, and must have it.

The first *Britannia* was published by Ralph Newberry in 1586 in a small octavo volume: it had 485 pages and no illustrations, and Camden meant it to be a book which would 'restore Britain to its antiquities and its antiquities to Britain'. In this purpose he succeeded: when his book first appeared it was a most remarkable work in British scholarship. After his death he became known throughout the learned world as 'Britain's chorographer'. Among other claims to fame we must remember that he founded the first chair of history in an English university—the Camden Chair of Ancient History in the University of Oxford. The *Britannia* passed through six editions during Camden's lifetime—he died in 1623—all of them in Latin except the last, that of 1610, translated by Philemon Holland. The 1695 edition—reprinted by David and Charles—was edited by Edmund Gibson, then a Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. Gibson was only 25 years old at the time: he ended up as Bishop of London having narrowly missed, and then refused, the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Gibson was obviously a great editor because he managed to get men like Aubrey, Pepys, Evelyn, Tanner and Lhwyd to assist him in his revision, the finest ever of Camden.

Most people thought that Gibson's Camden had one outstanding success—the section on Wales, which he had given to a distinguished scholar round the corner from Queen's, namely Edward Lhwyd of Jesus College, second keeper of the Ashmolean Museum. In his preface Gibson says: 'When I tell you, that the whole business of *Wales* was committed to the care of Mr *Edward Lhwyd*, Keeper of the *Museum* in Oxford, no one ought to dispute the justness and accuracy of the Observations. His diligence, and known ability both in *Natural History* and *Antiquities*, as they remove all objections of that kind, so might they do great honour either to this native Country, or any particular County in England, wherein he should meet with an Encouragement answerable to the Undertaking.'

Is it not time to have facsimile reproductions of the work of Lhwyd himself? First his catalogue of fossils in the Ashmolean, and surely there can be no more exciting bibliographical moment for a modern antiquarian than turning over the pages of Pepys's copy in the Pepys Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge. And second—but of course Kenneth Jackson and Nora Chadwick and Idris Foster and many another would say, first—the *Archaeologia Britannica* itself, that wonderful first volume of a work never completed. If the archaeological volume of Lhwyd's work had come out, and if the *Monumenta Britannica* of Aubrey had met a fate other than to sit in the Bodleian, the true worth of British antiquarianism in the 17th century would have been more fully appreciated.

What, asks a recent article in *France-Soir*, have the following in common: Carcassonne, Vézélay, the wall-paintings of Saint-Savin, the

Pont-du-Gard, the Roman temple at Vienne, and the Carnac alignments? The answer is simple: they are of course famous antiquities of France, but they are antiquities which have been saved for posterity by Prosper Mérimée, who died in 1870 in despair at the defeat at Sedan. This centenary was commemorated by a special exhibition in the Hotel de Sully in Paris. Mérimée was born in 1803 and at the early age of 31 was offered the post of Inspector-General of Historic Monuments, which he accepted with alacrity: 'It's just the thing for my tastes, my indolence and my desire for travel.' The post had been created by Guizot in 1830 for Ludovic Vitet, who left it four years later to become Secretary-General of the Ministry of Trade. Mérimée held this important post until 1853. He was criticized for many things, notably his patronage of Viollet-le-Duc, though as A. W. Raitt says in his admirable new biography (*Prosper Mérimée*, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970, £4.50), 'It should be recognized that Mérimée had more to do with the discovery of a young man whose unique talents saved scores of priceless monuments from destruction than he had with the same man's later aberrations of taste.' To quote again from Raitt:

Against these few criticisms of Mérimée's long tenure of office, the credit side is almost incalculable. Under steady pressure from him, the state increased the money available for ancient monuments almost tenfold during his term of office; between 1831 and 1853, government expenditure on historic buildings (excluding the Inspector General's salary and expenses) totalled over nine million francs. By 1849 nearly 4,000 buildings had been classified as historic monuments, the great majority of them on Mérimée's personal inspection and recommendation; about a third of these were in receipt of subsidies from funds allocated by Mérimée. With very little administrative assistance, Mérimée organized the work of the Commission for Historic Monuments for over eighteen years, saw it solidly established as a respected and important government department, gave it a network of provincial correspondents, developed for it a specialised corps of architects and artists, defined its principles and tasks, and ran its day-to-day affairs with smooth efficiency and remarkably little friction. By his tireless journeying through France, his voluminous writings, his personal influence on ministers, deputies, prefects, local worthies and the public at large, he made an enormous contribution towards turning the preservation of historic monuments into a popular and reputable cause.

Mérimée retired in 1853 from a post that had been created in 1830. In Britain the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments was created as late as 1882 and we print in this number a letter from the first Inspector, General Pitt-Rivers, explaining the difficulties of his situation.

☙ A welcome to *Forum*, the review of the Groupe Archéologie Antique of the Touring Club de France. The Touring Club de France has long had a keen and informed interest in antiquities, and published *Guides-Répertoires* of great value—38 departments exist in print, and 27 are in course of publication, as well as technical publications about *terra sigillata*, amphorae, roman wall-paintings, and air photography. *Forum* (Frs. 13 a year) can be obtained from the headquarters of the *Groupe Archéologie Antique* of the *Touring Club de France, 65 avenue de la Grande-Armée, Paris 16*. The President of the group is M. Jean Conneau who will be very happy to deal with any queries about field archaeology in France. (Incidentally, anyone who has difficulties in getting French archaeological books should try M. A. Hogstrom, Librairie Le Kalevala, 151 bis rue Saint-Jacques, Paris 5. This is not a free advertisement. French bookshops are notoriously bad for archaeological books with the brilliant exception of Le Furet du Nord in Place Général de Gaulle, Lille.)

☙ While we welcome *Forum*, we say farewell to *Ago*, if we understand correctly the notice to members dated 13 May 1971 sent out by the Archaeological Centre, 50 Braidley Road, Bournemouth. It records the fact that the premises of the Centre are up for sale and says: 'In this situation the Trustees finally find themselves obliged to discontinue publication of *Ago*. Fortunately, Wendy and Andrew Selkirk, the editor-proprietors of *Current*

Archaeology, have agreed to purchase our magazine.'

☙ John Baker, who has, in the last few years, earned our gratitude for publishing many first-class archaeological books, has now added to his list *The Black Horsemen: English Inns and King Arthur* (176 pp., 7 pls., 6 figs., 1971, £1.80) by S. G Wildman who teaches biology at Wirral Grammar School, Bebington, Cheshire. The thesis of this book is that the name Black Horse, given to an inn, is originally connected with the stories of King Arthur. There are some very strange things in this very strange book including an account of the Gods of Tysoe: Mr Wildman has done a Lethbridge Gogmagog operation searching for the lost Red Horse of Tysoe and believes he has found two horses, a man with a whip and 'a goose about to take off in flight'. (The photographs are as unconvincing as those of Lethbridge's Gogmagog at Wandlebury.) 'It is heartening to think', says Wildman, in concluding his book, 'of Arthur and his men at Walsall or Wigan, Castleford or Consett. These places may count for little now, but once they may have been the scene of great deeds as a charismatic leader fought, and won, his battles for civilization against barbarism . . . people now living can take a pride in saying: Arthur fought here, where that slag heap is now, or that housing estate, or that field, or that little wood . . . it is good if when drinking with friends at the alehouse of their choice, they can sometimes lift a glass to the memory of the old story of the Black Horsemen, riding out along the boundaries in the forests and the hills, defending the weak against their oppressors in days when it seemed as if night without end was about to fall.' Mr Wildman gives in an appendix a list of the Black Horse inn-signs in England, Scotland and Wales.

Baker writes on the book-jacket: 'Some will say that this book is one of the dotty interpretations of history.' In our view they would be right. The quantity of lunatic-fringe archaeological literature that appears these days is interesting: we suppose it does indicate an interest, even if a misguided one, in archaeology and ancient history. But few things could be dottier than the *Annular News Letter* of which bizarre publication many readers have sent us copies. It is produced by *Annular Publications, 800 Palermo Drive, Santa Barbara, California 93105,* and says that its aim is 'to shake up the sciences of archaeology, meteorology, and planetary astronomy'. It is much concerned with Stonehenge and advertises some truly unusual publications such as *Chips from the Moon, Stonehenge Revisited,* and *The Birds and Bees of Antiquity,* as well as a *Do-it-yourself Stonehenge Research Kit,* costing one dollar, which contains complete instructions for making 'halo templates' and additional materials 'for performing original research on Stonehenge. Several unsolved mysteries have intriguing clues that may enable you to help clear up remaining problems of this period.'

We have ordered kits to be sent to Professor Piggott and Professor Atkinson.

☙ The ANTIQUITY staff outing this summer included in its itinerary Brandon and Grime's Graves, where Roger Mercer, of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of the Ministry of the Environment, is opening up a new shaft. A visit to 'The Flintknappers' in Market Hill, Brandon, revealed that flint-knapping no longer went on there, and indeed that Mr Edwards, whom readers will know through the late Rainbird Clarke's article 'The Flint-Knapping Industry at Brandon' (*Antiquity,* IX, 1935, 38–56), is no longer the landlord of that deliciously named pub. We found him in his retirement at 104 Bury Road, Brandon, and he told us that he and an assistant still knapped 'on three evenings a week'. They still make gun-flints and these are exported to many countries: the main country is, surprisingly, America; but this is only a surprise if one does not appreciate that flint-lock guns are now used only for sport, not warfare. There are, apparently, over a thousand sports clubs in the USA using flint-lock guns. So Rainbird Clarke was wrong when he said: 'We fear that the manufacture of these munitions of war can only look forward to a peaceful death in the near future. With the more general use of breech-loaders and the

perfection of cartridges for the tropics, the demand for gunflints will cease and with that the supply. This unique domestic industry is already languishing into decay. Soon it will perish and be numbered among the byegone handicrafts of rural England, leaving only the tradition of the age-long secrets.' Those words, written 35 years ago by an undergraduate friend and contemporary of the Editor, are, fortunately and amusingly, wrong. The age-long secrets still live and the industry, though smaller than before, does not languish. Mr Edwards and ourselves had Dr Louis Leakey in common: 'When you next see that Dr Leakey', he said, 'give him my best wishes. He couldn't make gunflints as well as we can, but I could never touch him when it came to making copies of genuine Old Stone Age implements.' This message has been passed on: and when the outing was drinking its tea in the Great Witchingham wild-life park, having inspected all Philip Wayre's treasures (and especially the Scottish wild pussy-cats), we remembered that it was Llewellyn Jewitt's record of Flint Jack's technique that started Louis Leakey off on his career of knapping.

Mrs Josephine Birchenough sends us the following comment on our June editorial:

. . . I must also add how much I enjoyed your note about Salted Digs. We have all salted digs for the television cameras or as a rather sick joke (incidentally, one which my late husband never appreciated!); but surely, we have also all missed some of the salt, and are our faces red when it happens! But I would suggest that the Mohawks could save even more time by doing what my husband and I did some years ago, and make a model excavation in a wooden box about 2 ft. × 1 ft. 6 in. We built a Roman wall, wattle sleeper beams and all, and burnt it down with a blow lamp (and it took a surprisingly long time to burn), and then weathered it, spread some soil over it and grew grass seed on it. The following year it made a splendid excavation for a school class, as we had made one of the sides of the box removable. You could excavate that in half an hour, and it produced a spendid section. The Mohawks needn't break their backs, or get their hands dirty, or their feet in the way, by using this refined mini-technique!

Mrs Birchenough also drew our attention to a letter in *The Guardian* for 29 May which, she says, 'arrived on my mat this morning with the current ANTIQUITY':

Sir, May I inform you of an outrageous example of the 'permissive society' to show the enormity of the task ahead of Lord Longford and his disciples.

My wife, seven children and I were sampling the glorious unspoilt Dorset countryside between Piddletrenthide and Rampisham when we came across one of the most appalling acts of obscenity and vandalism imaginable.

There, just outside the village of Cerne Abbas, cut in those beautiful chalk downs, was the crude representation of a full frontal nude man, 180 ft. high. I have since heard that photographs have appeared in Government-sponsored publications.

I can only assume that our morality-conscious forefathers are turning in their tumuli.

DAVID WITT

The Longfords and Whitehouses of the world must clearly take cognizance of the activities of our rude forefathers and the terrible pornographic prehistoric heritage which we have inherited. Thank you, Mrs Birchenough and Mr Witt.

Many of our readers will have read the account in *The Times* for 24 June of the discovery of a complete chariot burial of about 200 BC in Yorkshire: it has been described by archaeologists as 'one of the greatest Iron Age discoveries in Britain in this century'. The discovery was made in a quarry at Garton near Driffield, and was due to the acute observation of Mr T. W. Brewster from the air. Only eight other chariot burials have ever been found in Britain. Mr Brewster has readily agreed to provide us with a brief interim account of this most important and exciting discovery, and it will be published in the December number of ANTIQUITY. That number will also contain Professor Charles Thomas on Ethics in archaeology, Professor R. A. McNeal on The Greeks in history and prehistory, Dr C.-T. le Roux on A Stone axe-factory in Brittany and Dr Colin Renfrew on a series of twenty-six C14 dates from Sitagroi.