

# Antiquity

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## Editorial

PLATE XXVIII

On 3 July of this year H.R.H. the Prince of Wales opened the new British Museum exhibition *Archaeology in Britain: New Views of the Past*. This splendid exhibition, which will be open until February 1987, is concerned with some of the more outstanding advances made in the archaeology of England, Scotland and Wales in the last forty years. It is the work of many archaeologists and scientists, coordinated by members of the staff of the British Museum over the last four years. It begins with Star Carr, the Somerset Levels, the Cambridgeshire Fens and Oronsay and proceeds through long barrows, henges and megaliths to the settlements, burials and art of the Celtic Early Iron Age. There is a fine reconstruction of the chariot burial at Garton-on-the-Wolds, North Humberside, excavated in 1985 (*Antiquity*, LIX, 85–92), and the six gold torcs from Ipswich make a spectacular display. The exhibition is full of exciting things—the Lechlade pendant, the gold buckle from the Thetford Treasure, the head of Mercury from Uley, the lid in the form of a seated figure from the cremation urn at Spong Hill, and the deliciously amusing 13th-century jug from Netherton, Hampshire, in the form of a woman drinking from a shallow bowl.

The *pièce de résistance* is Lindow Man, the now famous ‘bogman’ found during peat-cutting at Lindow Moss, Cheshire, in 1984 (*Antiquity*, 1985, LIX, 25–9). This, probably early iron age, man was felled by a blow on the head, garrotted and bled before his body was thrown into the bog. Was he mugged or was he a ritual killing or sacrifice to some Celtic water-god?

The price of entry to the exhibition is £1.50 and there is a good short guide for £1.00 produced in association with the Halifax Building Society. The preface says, ‘Such a mass of material cannot easily be digested at one attempt. Therefore re-entry is permitted on the day that the ticket is purchased

allowing the visitor to take one or more breaks.’ An excellent and generous idea.

In connexion with the exhibition, Ian Longworth and John Cherry have edited a book entitled *Archaeology in Britain since 1945* (British Museum Publications, 1986, £9.50 in the Museum, £12.50 outside) which is reviewed in these pages by Christopher Hawkes (pp. 175–8). We have already (p. 85) drawn attention to the two books on Lindow Man. British Museum Publications is forging ahead: its ‘Introductory Series’ has already 14 titles, and a new series entitled ‘Reading the Past’ promises *Linear B and Related Scripts* by John Chadwick, *Cuneiform* by C. B. F. Walker, *Egyptian Hieroglyphs* by W. V. Daviss, and *Runes* by R. I. Page—to be published later this year or in the spring of 1987. Two other books in the ‘Introductory Series’, Ian Longworth on *Prehistoric Britain* and Ian Stead on *Celtic Art*, are reviewed in this number, together with other books, by Stuart Piggott (pp. 189–92).

The Museum of London, London Wall, is running its own exhibition in parallel with that of the British Museum. It is called ‘Capital Gains! Archaeology in London 1970–1986’ and runs from September 1986 to January 1987 (admission free: Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 am to 6 pm, Sundays 2 pm to 6 pm, closed Mondays).

Another publishing enterprise to be warmly recommended is the new series ‘Exploring Scotland’s Heritage’ edited by Anna Ritchie for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and published by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office in Edinburgh. These are eight regional guides, beautifully illustrated, describing about 100 of the finest, most interesting and best-preserved monuments (with references to other sites near by worth visiting). The first four published are *The Clyde Estuary and Central*

*Region* by Jack Stevenson, *Argyll and the Western Isles* by Graham Ritchie and Mary Harman, *Lothian and the Borders* by John Baldwin, and *Orkney and Shetland* by Anna Ritchie herself. At £6.95 a volume they are amazing value. The remaining four volumes to be published shortly are *Grampian* by Ian Shepherd, *Dumfries and Galloway* by Geoffrey Stell, *Fife and Tayside* by Bruce Walker, and *The Highlands* by Joanna Close-Brooks. Turning the pages of the admirable *Orkney and Shetland* has made the Editor of ANTIQUITY want to return again to those northern Isles. Warmest congratulations to RCAHM (Scotland) and Anna Ritchie. Let us hope the English and Welsh Commissions will follow the Scottish lead; and how nice it would be to have comparable guides for Ireland! Here is an idea for Bord Fáilte, the Irish Tourist Board, whose two-monthly journal *Ireland of the Welcomes* is one of the best promotional magazines produced—and we include in this evaluation the magazines given away in aircraft and by banks and motoring and tourist agencies. This year's July-August number is entirely devoted to the history of Ireland and one of the best things Bord Fáilte have ever done. (The Irish Tourist Board is at Baggott Street Bridge in Dublin: with offices at 150 New Bond Street in London, 9 Boulevard de la Madeleine in Paris, and 757 Third Avenue in New York: English price 95p, U.S.A. \$2.25.)

☞ We published in our last number Dr Switsur's account of the 12th International Radiocarbon Conference in Trondheim with its recommendations that conventional radiocarbon dates should be designated by 'upper case letters BP' and that after calibration they should be 'denoted by Cal BP, Cal BC, or Cal AD as appropriate'. Switsur said, 'This notation, though possibly inelegant, has the intention of deterring the possible multiple calibration of dates by authors who do not ascertain the definitive dates published in the journal *Radiocarbon* before attempting their own calibration' (*Antiquity*, 1986, 14).

In this issue we publish his reflexions on C14 dating and how we should refer to such dates before and after calibration (pp. 214–16). Dr Switsur shares, with apparently most of his scientific colleagues, the illusion that there was a year 0. The existence of the year zero is one of the strangest and most persistent of scientific myths: a wise Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, recently declared,

on his deathbed, that there was such a year and proposed to have his views soon confirmed by St Peter.

But he was wrong, as most historians and archaeologists have realized for long. Startled afresh by the assumption by all the merry radiocarbonaceous men of Trondheim that the zero year existed, we consulted half-a-dozen of the wisest ancient historians and divines we could find in Cambridge on a summer's morning in May Week. The unanimous verdict was that the scientists are wrong and should purge their historical ignorance. The Very Reverend Henry Chadwick, formerly Dean of Christ Church at Oxford and recently retired from the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Cambridge, writes: 'You are right that there is no year 0 in Dionysius Exiguus's (or Bede's) chronology. In Dionysius Christ was conceived on 25 March of year 1 and born on December 25 of that year.'

Dionysius Exiguus—or Denis the Little as he is known familiarly in English—was the celebrated canonist who is considered, and rightly, the inventor of the Christian calendar. He was born c. AD 500 in Scythia and arrived in Rome to organize the pontifical archives. He was highly reputed as a theologian and was an accomplished mathematician and astronomer. He discarded the Alexandrian era of Diocletian reckoned from AD 284 on the grounds that he 'did not want to perpetuate the name of the Great Persecutor, but rather to number the years from the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ'. The Christian era, according to Dionysius, commenced on 1 January AUC (*ab urbe condita*—from the foundation of the city of Rome or *anno urbis conditae*—in the year of the foundation of the city). Christ's birth was at first believed to have been on 25 December immediately preceding 754 AUC: but Dionysius got this wrong. It was not 753: the Gospels state that Christ was born under Herod the Great, i.e., at the latest in 750 AUC. Dionysius's dating was questioned by Bede and rejected outright by Regino of Prüm. Nevertheless it has continued in use to the present day with the result that Christ's nativity must have taken place in or shortly before the year 4 BC when Herod died.

We find it fascinating how slowly the Dionysian Christian chronology spread through Europe. It was adopted by the Synod of Whitby in 664, was not used in the papal chancery until the time of John XIII (965–72), did not become general in Europe until the 11th century: in most of Spain it

was not adopted until the 14th century and in the Greek world not until the 15th—an interesting example of slow diffusion. For a good account of these weighty matters see Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Bible Chronology* (1944) and E. J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (1968). The article on Chronology in the 15th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says firmly, ‘Chronologers admit no year zero between 1 BC and AD 1.’

But it is not only scientists who persist in believing in the year 0. We have just been looking at the first volume in a new series of regional histories of England: it is by Nick Higham, Staff Tutor in History in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Manchester, and entitled *The Northern Counties to AD 1000*. Higham’s Chapter Three is uncompromisingly called ‘The Metal-Users 2000—0bc’.

🏛️ Congratulations to the British School at Athens on its centenary and to *Current Archaeology* on the publication of its hundredth number. We also remember that this year is the sesquicentenary of the publication of the *Ledetraad til Nordisk Oldkyndighed* in Copenhagen (the English edition translated by Lord Ellesmere under the title of *A Guide to Northern Antiquities* came out in 1848), one of the most important books ever published in archaeology.

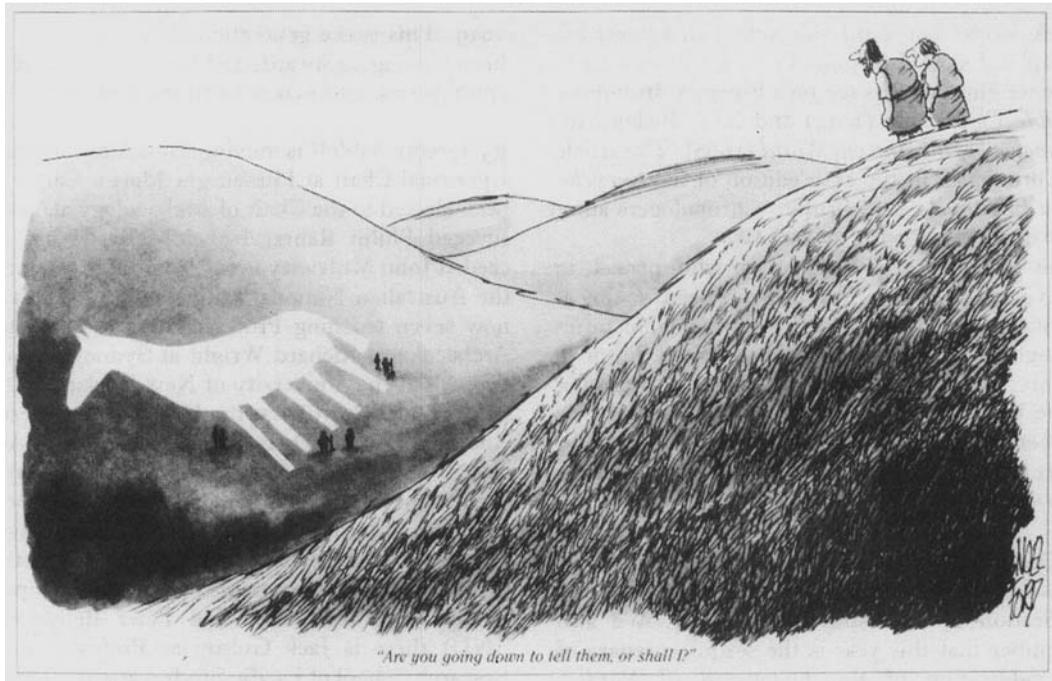
The British School at Athens mounted a special Centenary Academic Programme from 23 June to 27 June with 27 lectures by speakers including Professors Renfrew, Warren, Coldstream, Boardman, Tomlinson, Robertson, Hammond, and Skawran to mention a few of the star-studded assembly: and we look forward to their publication. Dr Hector Catling, the present Director of the School, has written a most interesting account of its first hundred years from the excavation by F. C. Penrose, the first Director, on the Temple of the Olympian Zeus in Athens in 1886, to the present day when the school is splendidly equipped with the Fitch Laboratory (*Illustrated London News*, May 1986).

*Current Archaeology* celebrated its hundredth number with a buffet lunch in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries in Burlington House attended by *le tout monde archéologique Britannique*, and an invitation to what it describes as five leading archaeologists of the period 1967–86 to look back and forward. These are Peter Addyman, Martin Biddle, Barry Cunliffe, Colin Renfrew, and Geof-

frey Wainwright—three born in 1937, and two in 1939. This is the generation after those who have been looking backwards and forward in our ‘Retrospect’ series, and makes fascinating reading.

🏛️ Jeremy Sabloff is moving from Albuquerque to a personal Chair at Pittsburgh. Martin Carver has been elected to the Chair of Archaeology at York to succeed Philip Rahtz. Isobel McBryde has succeeded John Mulvaney in the Chair of Prehistory in the Australian National University. Australia has now seven teaching Professorships of Prehistoric Archaeology: Richard Wright at Sydney, Graham Connah at the University of New England, Armidale, Sandra Bowdler at the University of Western Australia (Perth) where Sylvia Hallam is an Associate Professor, Jim Allen at La Trobe University, Melbourne, and John Campbell is an Associate Professor at James Cook University at Townsville, North Queensland: and of course as well as these seven teaching Professorships (and Readerships for Peter White at Sydney and Peter Bellwood at ANU) there is Jack Golson as Professor in the Research School of Pacific Studies at ANU. This is a truly amazing flowering of Prehistoric and Aboriginal Studies in Australia in the last decade for which the dedicated scholarship of Golson and Mulvaney and many another is responsible.

🏛️ Endless books pour from our presses introducing archaeology, describing sites, misrepresenting the past: we have often thought that there should be a special prize for the Worst Archaeological Book of the Year—the WABY prize (nothing to do with that elegant and distinguished Danish lady, Hofdame Kontesse Waby Armfelt, FSA). A high contender for this low award this year would be Gaynor Francis’s *The First Stonehenge* for which the publishers, Christopher Davies of Sketty, Swansea, have the effrontery to charge £9.95. While all these dotty, ill-informed and badly researched books are appearing, why does no one have the good sense and humour to publish a book of archaeological jokes? Dr Warwick Bray wrote a fine article entitled ‘Archaeological Humour: the Private Joke and the Public Image’ in (ed.) J. D. Evans, B. Cunliffe and C. Renfrew, *Antiquity and Man*. This should be expanded into a book ideal for the Christmas archaeological stocking: and may we suggest that it includes this exquisite cartoon which *Punch* have been pleased to let us reproduce. A book of funny drawings would not only be an amusing exercise in



itself, but a reminder that archaeologists, despite their talk of process, status, chieftains, territorial markers, leys and lines to the moon, are as human and fallible and funny as Asterix.

**U**The first answer to our archaeological quiz (July, Pl. xx) came on 3 July from Lesley Wynne-Davies, Honorary Curator of the Photographic Archive of the Prehistoric Society, who wrote: 'The WHAT is the statue of the Arvernian resistance leader Vercingetorix who opposed Julius Caesar in 52 BC. I assume it is being taken from the sculptor Bartholdi's workshop, to where it stands today in the Place de Jaude in Clermont-Ferrand, in the early years of this century.' This is true: it is possible that Bartholdi himself and perhaps Professor Camille Jullian are in the photograph. It was not possible to send it by rail so a De Dion-Bouton 'bus' with a 35 hp engine was constructed. It took 5–6 days, in 1901, at a speed of 6–7 miles per hour. Our PL. XXVIII shows the statue as it now stands in Clermont-Ferrand. There are other statues of this great Celtic chieftain: one in Bordeaux; that in St Denis was melted down by the Germans in the last war, and that commissioned by Napoleon III, executed by Aimé Millet (illustrated here) now stands at Alesia. Incidentally, it is interesting that

another head of the French State, President Mitterrand, in September 1985 declared Bibracte (Mont Beuvray in the Morvan) a national monument: 'C'est là que se situe la première manifestation d'unité nationale', declared the President. 'L'image des Gaulois et de Vercingétorix a toujours autant de force vivante dans notre imagination collective.'

**U**And now, no more Editorial rumblings and bumbblings from us. With this issue we, Editor and Production Editor, leave the scene, pursued by bears, probably the angry ghosts of Crawford and Wheeler. The curtain goes up on 1 March 1987 with a new Producer/Director/Editor all rolled into the one highly competent young energetic person of Christopher Chippindale. We wish him and the future of ANTIQUITY well. What ANTIQUITY needs in these difficult days of rising costs, necessarily increasing subscriptions and declining subscribers is one or two individuals or public bodies who would give money to our Trustees so that ANTIQUITY can go on as a totally independent prestige journal, and survey archaeology and archaeologists in a personal but responsible way without fear or favour.

Crawford was fortunate to die *en poste*. We, still alive, have had our obituary written by Philip



Howard in *The Times*, 17 May of this year, in an article entitled 'Digging up the Future'. We quote from it: 'Glyn Daniel . . . is about to retire as editor of *Antiquity*, the archaeological journal that is caviar to the field of learned publications. It was founded as a private venture by O. G. S. Crawford 60 years ago. For the 30 years since he died it has

been edited by Professor Daniel and his wife, Ruth, as essential reading not just for archaeologists and historians, but for everybody with any interest in the past . . . *Antiquity* is remarkable for its scholarly sprightliness. The book reviews are notoriously honest, in contrast with the log-rolling in most academic journals where, ladling butter from alternate tubs, Stubbs butters Freeman, Freeman butters Stubbs . . . Its style and authority have always attracted the best writers. Charles Lamb was ahead of his time in a letter to B. W. Procter on 22 January 1829: 'When my sonnet was rejected, I exclaimed, "Damn the age; I will write for *Antiquity!*"'

We quoted those words of Charles Lamb in our first editorial and they provide the title of the book which Professors Stuart Piggott and Barry Cunliffe are now preparing as a commentary anthology of ANTIQUITY over the last 60 years. Philip Howard goes on to say succinctly in his inimitable style something which encapsulates what Crawford and the present editor feel about the past and the necessity of a journal like ANTIQUITY: 'The past is a prologue to our world today', he writes. 'Those who say that the past is a bucket of ashes, and that history is bunk, are not fully human. We cannot make a success of our world, which we have on a rent for a brief lease, unless we try to understand it, and ourselves, and what makes us tick. That is why archaeology is not just fascinating, but also useful, quite as relevant as computer studies or supply-side economics. Neophiliacs who do not reverence age do not take Hobbes's point that our present is the oldest age.'

The essence of that paragraph could have been in Crawford's *Man and his Past* or for that matter Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*.

The world knows only too well what a special debt the present Editor owes to the Production Editor: indeed ANTIQUITY would not be what it now is without her devoted and unremitting care and relentless attention to detail. But for her a new Editor would have had to be appointed long ago.

Our thanks to all those in our printers and publishers, Heffers, who have helped, cared and cherished us for so long—and particularly Frank Collieson, that kind, wise *eminence grise* behind so many Cambridge authors and editors.

And now, *ave atque vale*: to parody Donne, 'Send not to know for whom the telephone bell in the ANTIQUITY office rings: it no longer rings for thee.'



PLATE XXVIII: EDITORIAL

*The statue of Vercingetorix by Bartholdi in Clermont-Ferrand*

*See pp. 172–3*