

# Antiquity

---

VOL. XXXIV No. 136

DECEMBER 1960

---

## Editorial

PLATE XXIX

IN the last few months Her Majesty's Stationery Office has published two books of great merit, importance and worth. The first is *Excavations on Defence Sites 1939-1945: I, Mainly Neolithic—Bronze Age*, by Professor W. F. Grimes; and the second is *A Matter of Time* by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). The details of these books will be found in the Book Chronicle (p. 294). *Excavations on Defence Sites* is the third in the series of archaeological reports issued by the Ministry of Works. The first volume in that series was *Excavations at Jarlshof*, by J. R. C. Hamilton; published in 1957, it was reviewed here by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in an article entitled 'Civil Service Archaeology' (ANTIQUITY, 1957, 234); the second volume was *Excavations at Clausentum, Southampton, 1951-9*, by Mrs M. Aylwin Cotton and P. O. Gathercole, reviewed in these pages by Lady Fox (ANTIQUITY, 1959, 149).

The third volume is the first of three which will deal with the excavation between 1939 and 1945 of some of the antiquities which were faced with destruction in the course of engineering and other activities relating to the Second World War. The two succeeding volumes will deal with Iron Age and medieval sites respectively. The present volume, as its author says, while dealing mainly with Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, does not keep to this chronological limit consistently, and rightly so. Thus the account of Burn Ground and Charmy Down deal with all the evidences of ancient occupation found there. The eight main chapters describe the Saltway Barn Long Barrow, the Burn Ground, Hampnett sites, two barrows on Chedworth Down, the henge monument and burial rings at Stanton Harcourt, the Salakee Down Chambered Cairn on St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, finds from Mixnam's Pit at Thorpe in Surrey, Neolithic Pits at Heathrow, Middlesex, and Charmy Down, near Bath.

This is a book which all archaeologists and archaeological libraries and museums will have to possess. It is a fine book and reflects great credit on the author and the printers, William Clowes and Sons. A very special word of praise, and unstinting praise, must be given to the maps, drawings and line diagrams with which the book is lavishly illustrated. They are all the work of Professor Grimes himself, and to say this in itself is to say a great deal, as all who know his high standard of draughtsmanship will appreciate. The history of archaeological draughtsmanship in Britain has not yet been written, but when it is, Grimes's work will rank very high in that account. It is one of the most amusing, if esoteric, intellectual quiz-games at the moment, to show an archaeologist a series of plans and sketches and see if he can distinguish a Heywood Sumner, spot a Grimes, and sort out Piggotts, Grinsells, and Wheelers.

## ANTIQUITY

*A Matter of Time* is an archaeological survey of the river gravels of England, prepared by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), and written mainly, we are told (is this the first moment that the Commission has, very wisely, broken its anonymity rule?) by H. C. Bowen and R. M. Butler of the Commission's staff. Four years ago the Commission undertook the new task of recording prehistoric and other early earthworks threatened with destruction by afforestation, opencast mining, and, above all, improved methods of agriculture. A very special problem arising from this commitment was presented by river gravels. In the last fifteen to twenty years it has become increasingly clear that the gravel terraces of the larger rivers of England were almost as thickly settled in prehistoric and Roman times as were the chalk downs. The total destruction of these early sites is threatened in many areas by gravel digging. The Royal Commission thought, very properly, that threats to sites on these gravels can be dealt with only by the anticipatory reconnaissance and vigilance of local archaeologists, and decided to produce for such local amateur and professional archaeologists (and at a modest price—this guide is remarkable value at 10s. 6d.), a guide to the types of sites to be found, together with a list of excavated sites, maps, diagrams and a bibliography. The result is *A Matter of Time*, which, beginning with an account of the history of archaeological air photography in relation to crop and soil marks on gravel, proceeds to a description of the various types of marks seen, classifying them into Enclosures, Circles, Cursuses, Pit Alignments, and Ridges. This is a well planned and well achieved book. Like *Excavations on Defence Sites*, it has been a long time in the press—too long; but the manifest inefficiencies and delays of Her Majesty's Stationery Office must not be visited on the Ministry of Works or the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). The Select Committee on Estimates should however, take cognizance of the working of a department of State which produces at the end of 1959 a book whose preface is dated 1957. Commercial publishers seem, at the present day, to have no difficulty in getting out books within ten to twelve months of receipt of completed manuscript. We suspect that many of the criticisms of the Royal Commissions voiced in this journal and many other places in the last few months are really criticisms of the Stationery Office. Their printing presses grind exceedingly well, as *Excavations on Defence Sites* and *A Matter of Time* show us, but they grind exceedingly slow.

The title of the Royal Commission handbook, which is an unusually fresh and journalistic one to come from a Royal Commission office, is deliberate and apposite. The closing words of the book emphasize the urgent immediacy of the problem of gravel digging and site destruction. 'But time is short,' the report says, 'for, as the demand for gravel increases and more efficient machinery is introduced, the process of destruction becomes faster and more thorough. Survey and excavation achieved now will disclose information about the settlement of ancient Britain and its peoples which might otherwise be irretrievably lost.' We hope these wise words will be pondered over and the whole book read, not only by all professional and amateur archaeologists but also by all those who, in and out of Parliament and Whitehall, are at present thinking hard about the future State organization of archaeology in Great Britain.

In his preface to *A Matter of Time* the Marquess of Salisbury writes: 'As will be abundantly clear to the reader of this survey, the whole enterprise could not have been begun without the remarkable photographs taken by Dr St Joseph.' Nineteen of the thirty-two photographs in this book were taken by Dr St Joseph, many of them during sorties made specially at the request of the Royal Commission and printed in this survey for the first time. Readers of ANTIQUITY will not need to be reminded of the great work in archaeological air photo reconnaissance and interpretation done by Kenneth St Joseph from 1942 onwards. On him has fallen the mantle of Crawford and Allen, and, Elisha to those two departed

## EDITORIAL

Elijahs, he wears it with distinction. His annual surveys have become one of our main primary sources of information about the ancient cultural landscape of Great Britain. *A Matter of Time* had to be completed and sent to the press before the results of St Joseph's 1959 survey could be studied. (And yet only out in late 1960. Why? Why, Her Majesty's Stationery Office? Why, Messrs John Wright and Sons, printers at Bristol?) The year 1959 with its fine summer was a great year for spotting crop marks; the sites found in this country must, we are told, 'run into thousands', and no year, since St Joseph's surveys began, has yielded discoveries in such number and variety. Three new henges were found, for example, and new examples of cursuses in the valleys of the Thames, east of Reading, and in the Stour in Suffolk.

In the concluding remarks and observations of *A Matter of Time* the Royal Commission says: 'Undoubtedly much urgent work remains to be done in the field archaeology of the river gravels of England. The requirement for continuing air survey and air photography, at increased tempo, is self evident.' It is good to know that the Committee on Aerial Photography in the University of Cambridge has been given £30,000 over the next five years by the Nuffield Foundation for continuing air survey and air photography, and, although the Editor of ANTIQUITY is a member of this Committee, it does not, we hope, preclude him from saying what a splendid bequest this is, and looking forward with eager anticipation to the results which Dr St Joseph will achieve, some of them, we hope, to be presented to readers of this journal.

But one man cannot do everything, and any man, subject as he must be to the rigours of disease and the dangers of motoring, is mortal. We who in British archaeology can proudly write down the names of Crawford, Hamshaw Thomas, Allen, St Joseph, John Bradford, and D. N. Riley—to mention only those who come immediately to mind—as pioneers and practitioners of air archaeology, still need to recruit new men for the specialized and intriguing and not difficult task of photographing the past from the air. We need men who can take good oblique photographs and also overlapping verticals which can be studied stereoscopically. The Government's vertical survey, made at the end of the last war, now available to serious accredited students at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is one thing; but it was not, naturally enough, done for archaeological purposes. We now need the efforts of St Joseph and the Cambridge Committee expanded to achieve what Crawford dreamed of—a complete and total archaeological survey of Britain from the air. Can this not be begun in the near future? Is its achievement also not a matter of time?



These words are being written in the bright September sunshine on the terrace of a café in Saint-Véran in the French Alps (Saint-Véran in the arrondissement of Briançon in the Hautes-Alpes; there is another village of the same name in the Côtes-du-Nord). Saint-Véran is the highest village in Europe and it is a surprise to those amateurs of records who find *The Guinness Book of Records* such an entertaining bedside book, that the highest European village is in France (just as the highest road in Europe is the Col d'Izère in France: it is 2770 m. and the Stelvio is only 2760). The height of Saint-Véran is given in guide books as between 1990 and 2040 m.; it is a village on a slope and perhaps the best datum to take is that the top of the church belfry is a trigonometrical point and is 2071 m. This picturesque village, well over 6000 ft. up in the Alps (and this is a fair figure for those who are not prepared to sit on the trigonometrical point on the belfry), has, according to that Bible of tourism, the *Guide Michelin*, 422 inhabitants. Its wooden chalets, haylofts, granaries and ovens are set in five separate groups to combat fire risks

## ANTIQUITY

and in each group the houses are set *en espalier* to catch all the available sunshine. The area was occupied as early as the Middle Bronze Age (*Dictionnaire Archéologique de la Gaule*, II, 595).

We walked through the village, noting the stocks of wood and hay stored underneath the houses and the way in which each house was a unit of animal quarters, fuel and forage store, and house for human beings. But there were no animals anywhere to be seen; and yet from the lingering fresh sweet-sour smell of cows and the *gaz de fumier* rising from the newly rotting dung heaps, it was obvious the animals must be somewhere. Consumed with curiosity we enquired at the post office-cum-village shop (which sold everything from skis and suncream to tinned tunny and *pâté de foie gras*). The answer was a simple one, and yet not one that appears in the classic studies of transhumance like those of Vidal de la Blache, Jean Brunhes, and Pierres Deffontaines. Here was not normal transhumance or even 'inverted transhumance' in the terminology of the human geographers, and certainly not the complicated fourfold transhumantic rhythm so brilliantly described by Jean Brunhes in the famous Chapter VII of his *Géographie Humaine*, where he seems to give the inhabitants of the Val d'Anniviers no peace in their complicated movements from pasture to pasture.

The fascination of Saint-Véran is that it is in itself a *montagnette*, a *mayen*, a *stavolo*; but one that is permanently occupied. Here is the *Hafod uchaf* which is never deserted. Like a Finnish farm, when the snows come, the animals and humans bed down—the animals to sleep, the humans to work precious stones and to carve wood. In the spring the sheep are taken up to the summer pastures on higher slopes, and return in the autumn from their long transhumance (PLATE XXIX (a)). The cattle of Saint-Véran on the other hand are taken out by day *en masse* and pastured on the high alps. Curious, we walked out from Saint-Véran up the valley towards the Chapel of our Lady of Clausis, where, on 16 July each year, the devout from the French parishes of the Queyras, and the Italians from the Varaita meet to celebrate the Festival of *Notre Dame du Mont Carmel*. We walked for a mile and a half along a road past quarries and rock cuttings from which came the green marble used to make the base of the tomb of Napoleon I in Les Invalides in Paris. And, suddenly, rounding a corner, there were a hundred and fifty cows grazing in the high pastures, guarded by an old crone knitting and nodding to the music of the cow bells.

It seemed, in a moment, living prehistory. We ought, in our interpretation of the prehistoric archaeological material of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic, at least, and probably the Bronze Age as a whole, to think more and more in terms of the semi-pastoral, semi-nomadic transhumantic patterns which we know to exist at the present day in so many parts of Mediterranean Europe (PLATE XXIX (b)). Colonel Louis has emphasized this point in his studies of the prehistory of the Languedoc. It is possible that the 'dolmens' on the *causses* of southern France are the tombs of transhumantics who lived in the winter in places like Fontbouisse. And is it not more than possible that the *drailles* are transhumance roads dating from at least 2500 B.C.? Here is a line of research for archaeologists and historians interested in the economy and ecology of the 3rd millennium B.C. in Western and Mediterranean Europe.



We have been asked by many readers of ANTIQUITY to tell them who designed the fleuron that we have been using to separate paragraphs in the Editorial since 1959. It was devised by Sebastian Carter, an undergraduate of King's College, Cambridge, and son of Will Carter of the Rampant Lions Press, Cambridge, and cut by the Monotype Corpora-

## EDITORIAL

tion, Ltd. It is, as most British archaeologists will recognize at once, based on the Presaddfed Burial Chamber in Anglesey.



Finally, two notes: one of apology and one of welcome. In the Editorial of the September number of *ANTIQUITY* (p. 163), by an unfortunate printer's error which crept into the final page proofs after they were passed, we were made to say 'We believe that, even if the Archaeology Division remains . . .', when what was meant and passed for press was 'We believe that, even if the Commission system remains . . .'. The printers, wrapped in a white sheet, join us in apologizing to all who have been concerned and confused by this sentence, and indeed we stress our hope that there is no possibility, however remote, of the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey disappearing. It does splendid work, and should be visited by all professional archaeologists who want to know how best to make use of its resources. We shall comment again on its work when the period map of Early Iron Age Britain is published early next year. The Editor would regard it as a personal favour if all librarians and private subscribers would amend p. 163 of the last number of *ANTIQUITY* without delay, and so give the lie to word-spinning Plautus: *Stultus es, qui facta infecta facere verbis postulas*.

The word of welcome is to the many new subscribers—over three hundred of them—to *ANTIQUITY* during 1960. We hope the variety and content of the articles and notes printed during 1960 pleases them. Among articles promised or commissioned for 1961 are Professor Hawkes's *Reflections on the British Iron Age*, Charles Green on *East Anglian Coastline Levels in Roman Times*, Claudio Vita-Finzi on *Tripolitanian Dams*, H. W. Catling on *A New Naue II Sword from Cyprus*, H. W. Barker on *The British Museum and Carbon-14 dating*, Dr Douglas Tushingham on *Canadian Archaeology*, Colonel Afonzo do Paço on *The Archaeology of the Battle of Aljubarrotta*, Professor R. J. C. Atkinson on *Neolithic Engineering*, and an article to which we all look forward with very special interest in which Dr Margaret Murray looks back at some aspects of her long life in archaeology. There is perhaps a particularly Eastern European flavour to this current issue which has three articles dealing with matters of archaeology behind the 'Iron Curtain' of the politicians. We welcome this, and we hope in due course to have an article on the new Russian excavations at Anau.

## Book Chronicle

*We include here books which have been received for review, or books of importance not received for review, of which we have recently been informed. We welcome information about books, particularly in languages other than English and American, of interest to readers of ANTIQUITY. The listing of a book in this chronicle does not preclude its review in ANTIQUITY.*

CRETAN SEALS. By V. E. G. KENNA. pp. 166, 23 plates, 172 text figures. Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1960. £5 5s. Has also a catalogue of the Minoan Gems in the Ashmolean Museum.

DIGGING FOR HISTORY. By EDWARD BACON. pp. 320, 58 plates. London, A. & C. Black, 1960. 50s. A Survey of Recent World Archaeological Discoveries 1945–1959.

[continued on p. 265.]

PLATE XXIX



(a)



(b)

EDITORIAL

(a) *Sheep at Tête de Longet (3,059 m.), returning in the autumn from their long transhumance, to St-Véran (2,050 m.).*

(b) *Transhumance in progress—a sight typical of much of Mediterranean Europe.*