

Editorial

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE

It is not many years since the Greens were the rising force of politics, sharing coalition government in Berlin and in Tasmania as first steps towards a greener world. Recent national elections in Britain, the USA, France and Australia have seen the Greens fade. Green parties seem to fly easily to pieces under the compromises of governing the real world, and the Green lobby to be comfortable only fighting the single issues. When I was in New South Wales, Australia, this time last year, the current Greenpeace campaign was to block the building of an incinerator in Australia to destroy nasty chemical waste. Back home in England later in the year, the current Greenpeace campaign was to block a ship unloading nasty chemical waste shipped from Australia for incineration in Europe. Was it the same stuff?

A famous villain of pollution in northern Europe is acid rain, poisoned by sulphur oxides from British power stations and by nitrogen oxides from British cars upwind from Scandinavia. Britons were last winter much exercised by decisions to close many of the coal-mines that fuel coal-fired generating stations, now being replaced by gas-fired stations which are more energy-efficient and cleaner.

Meanwhile the acid still goes up, and then comes down on Scottish and Scandinavian landscapes in the rain. Last year, John Coles published an alarming account, 'The dying rocks'*, of what he has seen happening to the Bronze Age rock-engravings in the Nordic lands where, he thinks, 'the carved rocks all over southern Scandinavia are now deteriorating at an alarming rate, through natural and human attrition, principally a combination of acid rain, agricultural activities and touristic pressure'.

The acid rain seems to be breaking up the surface of the rocks, so the crisp and distinct outlines of individual pecked figures go out of focus, by degrees turning into smoother

depressions with indistinct edges that are harder to see, and then vanishing entirely: from Deep to Medium to Shallow to Gone. And the change is rapid; Coles finds he can no longer draw several of the Boglösa Uppland sites (Övre Rickeby, for example) where some 10–12 years ago he could easily see, sketch, photograph and record all the figures. If they stayed sharp through 3000 years of Swedish rain, something must have changed; now it is from Deep to Gone in decades – or less.

Add to this haphazard attrition by farmers who dump stones from field clearance and pour cow-manure slurry on carved surfaces. And the marks left by the booted feet of tourists who slide down wet slopes when they lose footing, or choose to leave their own mementoes carved alongside the ancient ships.

Also involved may be the long-standing habit of Scandinavian archaeologists who paint in the engravings with a thick red pigment so the tourists can see them better. Paint certainly disconcerted me when I saw it at the great Bohuslän sites, but I am used to engravings *au naturel* and, sometimes, sharper in preservation; I enjoy teasing out the shape of the picture with my own eyes. It's certainly convenient (there's a rock-engraving by the railway line from Gothenburg to Tanumshede which, painted, you can see from the train as it speeds past 30 metres away). But . . .!

If you look carefully, you may notice where the red painter has mis-read the engraved line, and painted not quite along the figure. Those less obsessed with their archaeology, or delivered by bus to tour the Tanumshede sites in the middle of a midsummer day, cannot be expected to hang about till the late afternoon sun falls just right for a few minutes' perfect vision; this is why painting has benefit. If the slope is unlucky, or the trees shadow the oblique sun, perfect vision may never come.

* *Tor* (Uppsala) 24 (1992): 65–85.



Vitlycke surface, Bohuslän, Sweden: figures permanently painted in iron-oxide red for the tourists. Conservation consequences of the method, on balance, positive or negative?

The central human figure perhaps 30 cm high. Coarse pecking because on coarse rock – but the paint prevents you actually seeing the figures in detail.

Photograph of about 1989.

At Bro Utmark in the wood south of Tanumshede, a slithering, steep, soaked surface in the trees below two dark Iron-Age burial-mounds, the few minutes were so magic as to be worth all waiting. (I did slip; I did fall; it was well off the figures, I *know*; nothing metal caught or scratched, I *think*; there was only one of me; anyway, not many people go there, do they? Probably each individual who goes feels the same.)

Painting is known to help preservation, because visitors less often rub or scratch along the grooves so they will show in a photograph; it also, Coles thinks, has the negative effect of pulling away the rock surface as the paint itself erodes.

In Coles's view, drastic intervention is needed. Explore just what is happening to the rocks and just why. Record the many surfaces even in the classic areas of which there is no full account. Withdraw some surfaces by re-burying them under a membrane that will exclude rainwater and protected above with a

soil layer, with the idea of unearthing a few in perhaps 10 years to see how they have fared.

What about other engraving sites? Much the same in Norway, we are told by Gro Mandt. Richard Bradley has been working on the rock-engravings of northern Britain; he also notices how much sharper are the figures which have only recently been exposed, and how long-known ones are less clear than in the old records. In Canada, the Peterborough Petroglyphs, downwind from Ontario and north-east United States heavy industry, are (safely?) under a protective building, a spacious, splendid and most expensive piece of work in glass and metal. (So is one of the Swedish sites, Aspeberget, with a modest timber structure; more will surely follow.) The engravings on the uprights at Stonehenge, neither fully recorded nor properly published 40 years after their discovery, are a priority too.

One fears also for the unmatched rock-engravings of Valcamonica, in Alpine Italy.



Capo di Ponte surface, Valcamonica, Alpine Italy: figures that had a little time before been temporarily coloured white-against-black for recording by Anati's method. The black pigment had washed off, but the rock is very dark naturally; the white still remained in the engravings themselves. Conservation consequences of the method, on balance, positive or negative?

The human figures about 10 cm high. Fine pecking in fine-grained rock with superb detail visible. Photograph of about 1983.

Like other valleys of the high Alps, Camonica valley was industrialized when cheap hydro-electricity came in, so one looks down from the great engraved surfaces above Capo di Ponte on the roofs of steel mills and aluminium fabricators, and the growl of the trucks echoes up from the narrow valley highway. The Camonica rocks are different from the granites of Scandinavia, but air pollution is present as well; figures nearest the furnaces were recorded many years ago in a sad shape.

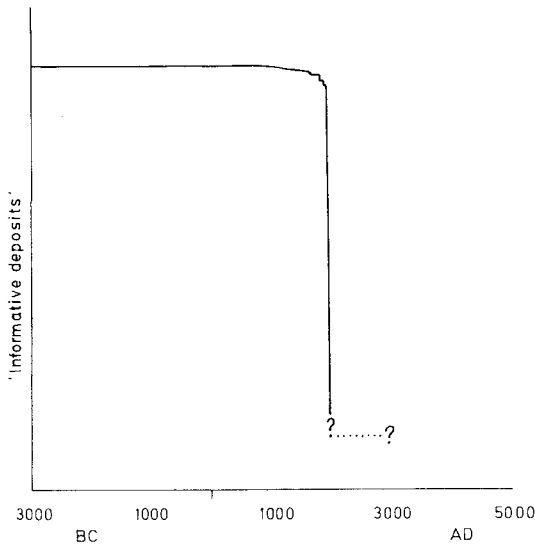
What about conventional archaeological sites in general? Naturally acid conditions do fearful things to artefacts of every kind, so late prehistoric and historic sites on, say, Dartmoor have lost all their pottery and metal to natural acid causes as well as their bone – leaving stone alone as the acid-resistant means to archaeological knowledge. The same is true right across the acid-soil lands of north-west Europe, and will surely come true for the lands that are now being turned acid. Is there now a moving frontier beyond whose front we can no longer expect metal or pottery to survive in the long or

even short term? Are neutral sites now turning distinctly and destructively acid? They try to save the fish by dumping chalk in newly acid lakes; should we be spreading lime on the archaeological sites of Scotland and Scandinavia to save the basic materials they still contain? I am told the Rudston monolith, the grandest standing stone in north England, now has a metal cap to keep the acid rain off. Will everything that matters need a lid?

What is the place of archaeology in the larger Green debate, as explored for Britain in a useful new book, *All natural things?** Marginal, often.

I reprint a sketch from an old editorial (ANTIQUITY 61 (March 1987): 8) which purports to show the destruction by archaeological study of one particular archaeological resource; these dates are for a

* LESLEY MACINNES & CAROLINE R. WICKHAM-JONES (ed.), *All natural things: archaeology and the green debate*. Oxford: Oxbow, 1992. Monograph 21.



Decline of the 'informative value' of archaeological deposits as they have existed for a set of sites abandoned and reaching a stable condition around 3000 BC, archaeologically explored on a modest scale from about 1700, and on the large scale within the last 30 years.

set of Irish sites, it happens, but the same-shaped curve must apply to many a class of archaeological remains which has been well explored in the two centuries so far of systematic excavation by destructive methods. The consumption of archaeological resources by archaeologists remains a first and difficult issue for any of us who wish to be good and green.

Archaeology does not conform well to the two standard models for resources which underpin the whole frame of conservation. Non-renewable resources – oil, coal, gas – exist in finite quantities, large or small, though changing discoveries, technologies and economics may change what are 'finite quantities' for practical purposes. Renewable resources – timber, endangered species, even whole ecosystems – can, it is supposed, regenerate from a reduced base, provided that is sufficiently large to support genetic diversity or other complexities.

Archaeology fits both and neither pattern. The supply of old sites is a non-renewable resource, now much diminished; they don't make Palaeolithic deposits in Pleistocene cave-sediments any more. Archaeological sites, of any given and ancient type, are not

renewed or renewable; instead, sites of new types are created on top of, out of, or in place of the old ones. The canals and railways that chopped through ancient European landscapes are themselves now historical objects, and we place a special and high value on sites and landscape that document successive land-uses, each destructive of the previous.

The unprecedented scale of archaeological destruction in the 20th-century developed world is matched by an unprecedented scale of archaeological *creation*, and a whole set of new site-types. Many of the new kinds of sites are destructive of all that went before, like city-centre basement car-parks or the 'agricultural deserts' of arable on English chalkland that in a few years erase everything down as far as the subsoil. Modern garbage dumps, made archaeologically famous in the United States by Bill Rathje in work which deserves to be much better known elsewhere, make a site-type rarely matched in physical scale and in archaeological potential. Their stratigraphy is bizarre, because in managed dumps the rubbish is dumped in 'lifts' of 10 to 20 feet against a face that spirals around the site. At any point, a stratum of up to 20 feet in thickness is all of the same week and even the same very day; below, a discontinuity in the sequence will jump back several or many years to the previous lift, another consistent block all of the same week or day or hour. To get sequence, you must work on the grand scale; Rathje uses a bucket-auger mounted on an immense crane that drills a core through the layered lifts. Common sense and refuse-ological wisdom says that the soft organic material in garbage dumps will quickly decay, leaving only the substantial residues. Common observation and Rathje's auger shows that it does not. American garbage dumps do not collapse down, like an overwintering compost heap; they settle a little and then they just sit there. The auger bucket, drilling in one of the deeper stratigraphies of New York garbage, brings up the *New York Times* of the early 1950s still fresh and readable, and mummified hot-dog sausages of the same era, recognizable, soaked in goodness knows what cocktail of chemicals (and even nastier for your stomach if eaten now than then). I enjoyed a few minutes (only) helping Rathje's Arizona students

A reader writes:

Archaeology and post-textuality

It is one of the ironies of post-processualism, and of post-modernism in general, that it has espoused the metaphor of the text just as text itself is losing its central place in world culture.

Writing has been around in a limited way for 5000 years, extensive literacy in some areas for perhaps 2500. Written records provided cultural continuity in China and western Eurasia from the urban societies of antiquity to the early modern period. Mechanized printing supported the global information explosion from the 16th century onwards. In the later 20th century, electronic media are displacing printed texts: first, through television, in popular culture; secondly, through computers, in commerce and academia; and now as the two interact in the mass availability of personal computers and video.

While written, linear text provided the model for the first generation of electronic information-processing devices (much as stone axes provided the model for the first metal ones), non-linear manipulation of both words and images is making itself felt through multimedia devices such as interactive CD-ROM. The first generation of 'computing in the humanities' was primarily text-based: counting the number of times that Shakespeare used the word 'and', or confirming the suspicion that Isaiah was in reality three different people. Even that was dealing with texts less as narrative, more as assemblages of words to be classed, sorted, and measured. This can now be done at home, desktop. The cutting edge is in GIS, image-databases, interactive expert systems, teaching programs. Cruise around ('graze'), home in, branch out. The experience, compulsive and habit-forming, leads to impatience with linear text.

As children, we preferred comics to 'proper' books; now we try to shift the balance of our own children's activity away from television and video-games to any kind of printed paper: but it is a losing battle. Advertising forms adult attitudes as much as analytical prose, and tabloid newspapers represent the backwash of non-linear models on older forms of textual organization. Visual presentation is primary; even olfactory sensations are added in 'scratch'n'sniff'. Writing is re-formatted on the paradigm of visual display and electronic networking: popular encyclopaedias are organized by spreads, and

boxed windows are the routine of 'textbooks' – holding fragments of text often quite unrelated to the other words that run next to the window. These aren't, in fact, 'text'-books any longer.

All this may be a better analogue to the sensory experience of the vast, non-literate majority than the constrained, hieratic medium of the text. Most anatomically modern humans have existed in a world of images and orally constructed meanings, not the narrower élite tradition of literacy. Icons were only captured by iconography in the civilizations of antiquity. The written form as a model for oral and visual experience is constricting where ancient societies are concerned. Words are cheap, by comparison with statues and monuments: it is easy to overlook the material of 'writing' in media which require earth and stones to be moved in large quantities, and to espouse an idealist conception in which the mental drives the material. Both are relevant: the causal arrow is double-ended.

The de-mystification of textuality has important consequences for archaeology. It has grown up in the shadow of text-based disciplines: history, classics, even anthropology – which in the earlier part of this century differentiated the unitary ethnology of the 19th century into an élite 'social' anthropology based on classic ethnographic texts, and a museological rump dealing with things. These processes are now being reversed. (In a small symptom of this, the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology has become the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology.) The partiality of the textual record is recognized, the evidential power of material objects and images demonstrated. As the dominance of text in our own society wanes, it is easier to see the relevance of the material record. In a post-textual world, archaeology is potentially in the main stream.

Text will not, of course, disappear – any more than bronze did in the Iron Age. Displaced by more utilitarian media, it can do what it is best at. As a source of evidence, it can be seen more clearly for what it is: a precious but partial insight into the communicative intentions of an important minority. As a medium for our own use, it can reach new heights of craftsmanship, not having to bear the total burden of information storage and communication. Post-textuality – unlike post-modernism – could be fun.

ANDREW SHERRATT
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

sorting fresh garbage to see what Tucson residents throw away nowadays. Rathje's crew keep the bags in a freezer, so the sweet, rich smell that pours from the old New York samples had not got going. Ignorant of Arizona climate, I mis-sorted lumpy brownish oranges and grapefruit as belonging to 'Fruit' rather than 'Yard waste', and was not blessed by finding 'Illicit drugs and equipment'.

Acutely identified by *All natural things* is a deep naïveté in green circles and in the bureaucracy of planning which thinks of the natural world of plants and creatures as quite distinct from the human world of made things, and as a better place. We 'reclaim' a redundant industrial site by demolishing its buildings as if they have no historical value, by moulding the distinctive topography of workings or tips into more 'natural-looking' smooth and gentle slopes, and then planting a new countryside of grass and trees. The word 'reclaim' shows the spirit is of *redemption*: this corrupted land, lost by human interference, is being restored to its old and natural state. Yet think of the landscape history of a north England coal-tip, like the great tips – black turned red where they smouldered and burned by the old Great North Road near Doncaster – that used to cheer this northern exile as a sign I was nearly home. This has not been a natural landscape at least since the Neolithic; the slag was tipped over an enclosure landscape of thorn hedges and square fields, a post-medieval creation that cut across older landscapes of medieval open fields, and before that the traces of 4000 earlier years of human interference. The smooth graded contours of a 'reclaimed' tip, with its planted rye-grass and planted copses, is a feature in the landscape that is neither natural nor old; it is a novelty which I do not like. The distinctive flora that has developed on some old mineral and metal-working tips, and along lead-mining trenches, may be a casualty of this virtuous greening.

When the Snowdonia National Park was created to preserve the mountain country of North Wales, a little area at its centre was cut out and excluded as having no part in the

Park. This was the slate-mining town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, a dark grey settlement surrounded by mountainous tips of dumped rock waste. Attempt was made to 'landscape' away and grass over a few tips, but so enormous are the big dumps from Oakeley, Llechwedd, Maenofferen and Votty workings which tower over the town that they stand untouched. Remembering the Romantic era, when the force of the sublime was rightly valued as an equal to the quieter charm of the beautiful, I enjoy their rude grandeur. Blaenau is a bit smarter now, and the sheep no longer to come down into the town on dustbin day to forage in the bins, but the essential impact of the place has fortunately survived. The slate-mines are now a tourist draw, and the danger-period is past when its history might have been smoothed away. Meanwhile, outside the Blaenau enclave, the 'natural landscape' of the Snowdonia National Park is kept in its natural (i.e. artificial) state of upland pasture and stone-walled sheep-farms by European Community and British government support.

☞ There has been a great deal of radiocarbon chronology in *ANTIQUITY* these last few years. There is more in this issue – Spriggs & Anderson on the radiocarbon chronology of the Pacific, and Forenbaier on the radiocarbon chronology of the central European Early Bronze Age, a key building block in the basics of European prehistory. I make no apology, even when their tables are hard going. Sound chronology is fundamental, and for much of prehistory and early history a sound chronology largely means radiocarbon. I wish radiocarbon was not so messy, either in its statistical uncertainty, or in the intricacies of calibration, or in the scattered publication (and non-publication) of determinations since *Radiocarbon* date-lists no longer kept up, but radiocarbon is what for the most part we have. More and more we have dendro dates, with the excitement of precision to nearly a single calendar year, as for the Flag Fen Bronze Age site (*ANTIQUITY*, June 1992) and – we anticipate – for Viking-Age ship burials from Norway (September 1993 issue).

Spriggs & Anderson and Forenbaier use

* The usual professional obligation that we leave good evidence for our future colleagues in our trade is my first responsibility. So I should set feeling aside and welcome

the archaeological evidence of a British wish to smooth away knowledge of our industrial history, and replace it with an unnatural re-manufacture of a rural pretence.

Stuiver & Pearson's Seattle–Belfast standard calibration curve, probably the most cited reference in the last seven years of *ANTIQUITY*, from the *Radiocarbon* calibration issue 28(2B) of 1986. Now it is superseded by a new curve in a new *CALIBRATION* 1993 issue.* Its papers report a huge mass of new, detailed work: Stuiver's two-page report on a single-year-by-single-year calibration for AD 1510–1954 depends on 440 determinations.** The German oak dendrochronology needed over 5000 sub-fossil tree trunks.

There are corrections to the Seattle–Belfast curve. A tentative European tree-ring chronology now goes back on oak so far towards the Glacial that the oak trees run out (too cold), and the dendro continues back on pine back to 9494 BC. Bernd Becker's paper* is a short and thrilling read of how that dendro bridge was made. As the oak crowded out the birch and pine forests from central Europe, a mixed pine/oak woodland briefly existed; sub-fossil remnants of these contemporary pine and oak trees have been dredged from gravels in the Danube and Rhine valleys.

Before the European trees start, there are ^{14}C determinations of coral tied into Uranium/Thorium dates that carry the calibration back nearly as far again. This work, first reported in 1990 for Barbados coral,* shows that ^{14}C determinations are too young for the later Pleistocene just as they are for the Holocene. The Glacial Maximum, for example, about 18,500 b.p. in an uncalibrated determination, is taken back to 22,000 BP when calibrated as a calendar-year date. This stretching of the later Glacial time-scale by about one-quarter is sure to have its consequences for Late Palaeolithic archaeology, as the Postglacial calibration had two decades ago.

To replace the old CALIB computer program, a new CALIB rev 3.0 is supplied with the 1993 calibration issue; it comes on an IBM-format 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch floppy, cheering proof

of the power of antique technology. An Apple Mac version is also available.

Does the new calibration kill all the work, in *ANTIQUITY* and elsewhere, that used the 1986 standard – including the two new papers in this issue which were finished before the 1993 calibration appeared? For the most part, no. Austin Long of *Radiocarbon* reports improvements, adjustments and extensions, but 'in only a few cases will the user notice minor differences in calibrated results from these new calibrations'.*

¶ A new calibration makes me think again about conventions for citing radiocarbon measurements. *ANTIQUITY* has stuck to its own convention, of lower-case 'b.p.' for uncalibrated determinations and small-capitals BP for calibrated dates; we encourage contributors to call uncalibrated measures 'determinations' because they are not yet dates – so the reader's understanding does not depend on the typography alone of a B and a P. Most archaeological publications, following the resolve of the radiocarbon community, use the other convention: small-capitals BP for uncalibrated determinations and cal BP (sometimes 'Cal BP' or 'calBP' or 'CalBP') for calibrated dates. That convention has the merit of common use, and little else to commend it. Its problem is in reserving the form BP, which parallels the real-year calendar of BC and AD, for the radiocarbon specific of uncalibrated determinations – which are not real dates in real years at all. And what is one to use for the non-radiocarbon measures – dendro, thermoluminescent, Uranium/Thorium, and all the rest – which give an age before present which is not calibrated because not radiocarbon? They cannot be called plain BP for Before Present because that plain form is pre-empted by the radiocarbon-specific meaning.

Even in *Radiocarbon*, guardian of the convention, the strain sometime shows. The editorial comment in *CALIBRATION* 1993 uses the convention ' ^{14}C yr BP' for

* *Radiocarbon* 35(1) (1993).

** M. STUIVER. A note on single-year calibration of the radiocarbon time scale, AD 1510–1954, *Radiocarbon* 35(1) (1993): 67–72.

* B. BECKER. An 11,000-year German pine and oak dendrochronology for radiocarbon calibration,

Radiocarbon 35(1) (1993): 201–13.

* E. BARD *et al.* Calibration of ^{14}C timescale over the past 30,000 years using mass spectrometric U-Th ages from Barbados corals, *Nature* 345 (1990): 405–410.

* A. LONG. Further editorial comment, *Radiocarbon* 35(1) (1993): iv.

uncalibrated dates,* and this encourages me to suggest what we actually need – a convention which makes clear how a date is arrived at, which does not impose the specifics of radiocarbon on all of us, and which is neatly related to the present dominant convention. Here is one for radiocarbon:

¹⁴**CBP** for uncalibrated radiocarbon determinations;


calBP for calibrated radiocarbon dates;

which also accommodates other measures of date:

TLBP for thermoluminescent;

UThBP for uranium/thorium series; and so on.

Part of an editor's job is to seek for consistency of style and convention, in the belief that clarity of information is a virtue.** Perhaps, in the real world, those who understand radiocarbon and its mathematics can handle any convention, or lack of convention; and those who do not are beyond help or rescue. There are apocryphal tales of the arithmetical alchemy by which innumerate colleagues extract calendar-year dates from radiocarbon determinations by fudges that have as little mathematical basis as taking off 1950 and adding the number you first thought of.

 Re-burial of human remains and return of 'cultural property' figured in the March editorial, and we shall continue to hear much of it. The March number of the British trade paper, *Museums Journal*, has the issue as its special feature; its cover presents me both with the power of the issue and with the unease I feel in how it is now being treated with new correctness.

The power. The *Museums Journal* cover reproduces the plaque marking the spot where Australian Aboriginal human remains in the collection of the Museum of Victoria were re-buried in 1985. It is set in a 7-tonne granite boulder that covers the new grave. (The mass a symbol of the certainty they will not be dug up again? Or of the force that will be needed to stop them being dug up again?) On the

boulder are the names of some of the tribes of Victoria: Bidawal Brabiralung Braikaulung Brataulung Bungjanditj Bunjilkraura Bunrong Dijilamatang Duduroa Gunditjmara Jaadwa Jaara Jaitmathang Jarijari Jupagalk Katubamut Kirrae Kolakngat Krauatungalung Kurnai Kurung Kwatkwat Latjilatji Marditjali Minjambuta Ngurelban Pangerang Tatititi Tatungalung Taungurong Tjapwuring Wambawamba Watiwati Wathaurung Warkawarka Watjobaluk Wurundjeri Yortatorta. These are people who lost their land and their lives to immigrant Europeans who took possession of Australia under the legal device of *terra nullius* (March 1993 editorial, page 6).

The unease. Under the picture of the plaque, the *Museums Journal* prints the words, 'REBURYING HUMAN REMAINS: Making amends for past wrongs.' There starts the question. What are the past wrongs? Does re-burying the skeletons make amends? If the past wrong was the scientific (or 'scientific' if you wish) curiosity of early anatomists and of biological anthropologists, then re-burying the skeletons begins to make amends because it removes them from scientific ('scientific') control and puts them in the ground. Then, please, remember that just the same treatment was given to poor people in 18th- and 19th-century society, whether the Edinburgh paupers dug up the night after burial and sold to the surgeons' school, or the peasants of Alpine Austria whose bodies were flayed and hung in mountain-side barns to freeze-dry over the winter and then brought down for the teaching museum of Innsbruck University's medical school. And remember the dwarfs, giants and other human beings of strange form, whose oddity excited medical interest, so their bodies might be stolen from the grave whatever their station in life. Was the European purpose, in seizing control of America, of Africa, of Australia, the securing of medical curios for their museums and medical schools? Not at all, this was a small and incidental side-effect of their real purpose, the taking of land as the routine business of empire – as empires have done

* MINZE STUIVER. Editorial comment, *Radiocarbon* 35(1) (1993): iii.

** An editor more neat-minded or mischievous than I might ask if it is time to move the date of 'Present' as a

benchmark radiocarbon work. It was fixed at AD 1950 as a convenient round date. As the millennium approaches, one wishes the rounder AD 2000 had been chosen.

before and as empires will do again (currently and with the usual single-minded self-interest of expanding empires, by Serbia in the ruins of former Yugoslavia). The 'past wrongs', the *large* past wrongs, were not in the taking of individual American skeletons, but in the taking of all America. Since that is the wrong, then what would amount to 'making amends'? Making amends, the dictionary says, amounts to 'reparation, retribution, restitution, compensation, satisfaction'. 'Making amends' in that proper sense would be on a matching scale; that would be to return not just the bones, but the *land*, to undo five or six hundred years of history. It is impossible for all Americans, Africans, Australians of European descent to 'return' to Europe, which has not been 'home' to them for generations. And why stop at the European Empire? Go back, and require all descendants of Islamic expansion in the medieval period to 'return' to their homeland. Come forward, and require all ethnic Russians to leave the non-Russian regions of the former Soviet Union. Correcting perceived errors in what happened in history is a meaningless and impossible task which has no end. Let us recognize what the reburial of indigenous human remains and the return of 'cultural property' actually is: a small gesture of symbol by those peoples who are powerful in the world and have no intention of 'making amends for past wrongs' if that would abridge their ownership of whole continents. Who advocates the evacuation 'back to Europe' of people of European ancestry from the Americas, from Australia, from Tasmania? This is why return and re-burial does *not* amount to making amends on the large and real scale. No one should pretend it does.

For the realities and the practicalities, there is much good sense in the *Museums Journal* special feature, especially John Terrell on the Chicago Field Museum's work with the Maori people of Tokomaru Bay, New Zealand, whose meeting house named Ruatēpupuke was sold via a dealer in Maori curios to the Field. It is good, it is important, it is the future of anthropological and some archaeological collections in the museums of empire. But it is not making amends for past wrongs.

Notice board

Conferences

15th International Radiocarbon Conference
Glasgow (Scotland), 15–19 August 1994.

With workshops on 13–14 August, one of which will be of archaeological interest.

Radiocarbon Conference Secretariat, c/o Mrs M. Smith, Department of Statistics, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QW, Scotland; FAX (44)41-330-4814.

Wetland Archaeology & Nature Conservation
Bristol (England), 11–13 April 1994.

Organized by the Somerset Levels & Moors wetlands project and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Dr Margaret Cox, Department for the Environment, Somerset County Council, County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, England; FAX (44)823-255426.

Anglo-Norman Durham 1093–1193

Durham (England), 13–17 September 1993.
To celebrate the 900th anniversary of the building of Durham Cathedral.

Dr David Rollason, Department of History, 43 North Bailey, Durham DH1 3EX, England; FAX (44)91-374-4754.