

Editorial

In 1980 we wrote (*Antiquity*, LIV, 4) that we had been planning for some while a series of occasional articles in which distinguished and elderly archaeologists looked back on their lives and what archaeology meant to them. The first in the series entitled 'Archaeological retrospect' was by Charles Phillips (1980, 110–117) and it has been followed by Robert J. Braidwood (1981, 19–26), Christopher Hawkes (1982, 93–101), Seton Lloyd (1982, 181–8), and Stuart Piggott (1983, 28–37). In our March 1984 issue we printed the sixth article in the series by Gordon Willey (pp. 5–14). There are four or five more in the pipeline and then they will all be reprinted as a book. So far only three archaeologists have declined our invitation to join in this back-looking curiosity: one was the late Claude Schaeffer who, at 80, said he was too young to look back on archaeology in his lifetime!

We had naturally asked Dr Caton Thompson to write an article in our series but she declined on the grounds that she was already writing her memoirs *in extenso* and that she could not make clear what she had to say in four to five thousand words. Now her retrospect has appeared in a book entitled *Mixed memoirs* (Gateshead, Tyne and Wear: the Paradigm Press, 1983, 346 pp., 1 pl.): it is privately printed in a limited edition but a few copies are available for the general public from *Heffers Bookshop, 20 Trinity Street, Cambridge, England*, price £15.00.

It is a long book, about 180,000 words, but fascinating and very well written (alas! there is no index). The account of her archaeological life and work is clearly and painstakingly set out and her reflexions in the tranquillity of old age—she is now in her 96th year—on her work and the criticisms of men like Fred Wendorf, are important. Indeed any library or institution which concerns itself with the archaeology of Africa and South-West Asia cannot be without this book for its archival information about the Fayum, Kharga, Zimbabwe *et al.*

But we have found the most entrancing part of

the book not the archaeology, but the person, and first the elegant, beautiful Edwardian upper-class young woman in her pre-archaeological days living in Maidenhead Thicket, being taught to play the fiddle by the brother of Stanley Spencer, riding to hounds with the Queen's staghounds and the Garth Foxhounds, fittings at Bradley's, balls at Cliveden, Taplow Court, and Bisham Abbey, constant ill health, wintering in St Moritz (and crewing on the Cresta runs), and travelling in the Mediterranean and Egypt—Shepherd's in Cairo, the Winter Palace at Luxor, the Savoy at Aswan, the Villa Politi at Syracuse. This is another world to which we modern archaeologists are introduced, as Margaret Murray also did in her *My first hundred years*. In the last quarter of the twentieth century we meet, in these memoirs, someone who was born in 1888, who kept a detailed diary from the age of 11, and was a most perceptive observer of the world and of herself.

She suffered no fools gladly (or even halfway to gladness) and some wise men have suffered from her sharp criticism and acid comment. Her comments on persons are devastatingly amusing: Lady Petrie 'would have been conspicuously good looking if given the chance', Freya Stark was 'someone whose scruples I had learnt to mistrust', Sir Andrew Cohen, Governor of Uganda (who had complained of the scruffy appearance of Mortimer Wheeler and Gervase Mathew, after weeks of arduous travel in Africa), 'a man of rather brooding power, difficult in human relationships, irritable with his staff, fixed in his intentions, contemptuous of lesser intelligence'. She had lunched with him and found the meal 'inadequate in quantity and over frugal in quality'.

Her own personality emerges clearly: fearless, fastidious to an Edwardian degree (dinner at the local inn . . . where one does not dare to enter the cabinet-de-toilette), forceful, fiercely devoted to friends and fieldwork. It comes through in the odd sentence, as in an entry for 1914, 'Meanwhile I

spent three weeks at Largs learning to drive a car, reading *Paradise Lost* and finally writing an article on 'Why we are at war' and having 1,000 printed.' Or again, 'It was my habit since Abydos days to carry a pistol in case of an encounter with an angry hyaena.' We have the wonderful account of the cyclone at Beira; 'It was a weird and wonderful noise. Mercifully I am not easily alarmed and was merely interested, though I took the precaution of remaining dressed and packed ready to bolt if the building collapsed, which seemed not improbable. The noise of the collapsing town and overhead wires, the river alongside roaring in flood, and the many ships in harbour, including ours, dragging their anchors and crashing into each other, hooting wildly, was dramatic. When dawn came our ship was seen, along with others, flung high and dry on to the shoreline.' And again, 'accompanied by a saddleless donkey and a boy, I combed the ground within a range of eight miles'.

She was unimpressed by Petra but tells us that when she was there, 'I espied the solitary figure of a small witch approaching, and it turned out to be Margaret Murray, not digging but nosing the scrapheaps of those who had.'

She writes of Wheeler and Leakey: 'In character they had much in common: an almost pathological physical vitality allied to brilliant perceptive powers which were directed to not dissimilar objectives—History and Prehistory . . . both were among the first to realise the value of world-wide broadcasting in the rising age of TV; both were showmen.'

An autobiographer can never consciously portray his subject correctly: it comes out in asides and in the denigration or appreciation of the person. In her biography of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Jacquetta Hawkes says that he 'will rise from these pages as a Hero figure', and the publishers' blurb says of him that he 'was a man of extraordinary energy and powers of leadership such as would have made him an epic hero of long ago'.

Dr Caton Thompson emerges from these pages as a Heroine figure, a woman of extraordinary energy and powers of leadership. She had much in common with Wheeler and Leakey: she had brilliant perceptive powers and great physical vitality—but it was not 'almost pathological' and she was never a showman. Indeed in her entry in *Who's Who* she gives as her recreation 'Idleness' and in her memoirs says, 'Idleness leads to folly'. It never did in her case.

This is a book about and by one of the great

archaeologists of the twentieth century. Let us hope that in 1988 she may be able, as Ma Murray, the little witch, did, to look back at her first hundred years. As she grows gracefully old in Court Farm, Broadway—the delightful home of Dorothy and the late J. M. de Navarro—it is nice to know that there are no angry hyaenas in the Cotswolds. She has put away her pistol but, to our great pleasure, not her pen.

¶ When you have put down *Mixed memoirs* take up two other books which we regard as compulsory reading for all archaeologists. The first is *The innocent anthropologist: notes from a mud hut* by Nigel Barley (a Colonnade Book published by British Museum Publications Ltd, 190 pp., with half-a-dozen madly funny drawings by Donald Room, 1983, £9.95). Dr Barley is an Assistant Keeper at the Museum of Mankind, who in 1978 set up home in a mud hut in the Cameroons to study the customs and beliefs of the Dowayo people. It was his first experience of anthropological fieldwork—and very nearly his last. He survived to write this funny and very sensitive account of his attempts to understand and record the elusive Dowayo society in which he lived. It revives our crumbling belief in anthropology: here is honest ethnographical reporting unbedevilled by the theoretical overtones so often raging through social anthropology. He has some sharp things to say about his profession: 'Anthropology is not short of facts but simply of anything intelligent to do with them' (p. 9), and 'African anthropology must be one of the few areas where dull pedestrianism is advanced seriously as a claim to merit' (p. 11). How amusing to call one of his chapters 'Honi soit qui Malinowski' and to set out frankly that his 'rather wobbly control of the Dowayo language was a grave danger', as when he thought he had said "Excuse me, I am cooking some meat" but 'owing to tonal error I declared to an astonished audience "Excuse me, I am copulating with the blacksmith"' (p. 57).

The other highly recommended book is *The invention of tradition* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: University Press, 1983, 320 pp., £17.50). This is a volume in the series 'Past and Present Publications' now edited by T. H. Aston of Corpus Christi College, Oxford: the first three volumes, including Sir Moses Finley's *Studies in Ancient Society*, were published by Routledge and Kegan Paul—the rest, and this is the fourteenth, are from Cambridge. For

once the publishers' blurb gives an accurate account of the purpose and content of the book: 'Many of the traditions which are today thought of as very ancient were in fact invented: some by movements of cultural nationalism; others by imperialist states; yet others by radicals who understood the power of conservative ritual and wanted to counter with rituals of their own.'

There are six chapters: Hugh Trevor-Roper (now Lord Dacre) on the Highland Tradition of Scotland; Prys Morgan on the Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period; David Cannadine on the Invention of the Tradition of the British Monarchy 1820–1977—what a wonderful picture of Reginald Brett, Viscount Esher, the *éminence grise* in British governing circles at the turn of the century, and the music of Elgar's 1897 *Imperial March* and his *Coronation Ode*, *Coronation March* and *The Crown of India* are sounding in our ears as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of his death; Bernard S. Cohn on the traditions of the British in Victorian India; Terence Ranger on the invention of tradition in Colonial Africa; and Hobsbawm on Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe 1876–1914.

Because of our special interest in Wales and the development of Welsh antiquarian thought we found the chapter by Prys Morgan, who is a Lecturer in History at University College, Swansea, of very great interest: he is excellent on Lhuyd, Rowlands, Theophilus Evans, and the Abbé Paul-Yves Pezron. It should be developed into a book although much is already dealt with by the author in his *A new history of Wales: the eighteenth-century renaissance* (1981). Can this wise man tell us when we changed from referring to Ancient British (pre-Roman was twentieth century) to Celtic antiquities? When, for example, did Stonehenge and other megaliths become Celtic?

But the most hilariously funny story in the book is Trevor-Roper's account of the origins of the Scottish kilt, regarded by many as one of the ancient traditions of Scotland, but invented by Thomas Rawlinson, an ironmaster of Furness in Lancashire who built a furnace and cut down forests at Invergarry near Inverness in the years 1727–34. 'The kilt', Trevor-Roper writes, 'is a purely modern costume, first designed, and first worn, by an English Quaker industrialist . . . bestowed by him on the Highlanders in order not to preserve their traditional way of life but to ease its transformation: to bring them out of the heather and into the factory. . . . When the great rebellion

of 1745 broke out, the kilt, as we know it, was a recent English invention, and "clan" tartans did not exist' (pp. 22–3).

I have just one complaint to make of this book: it has only one illustration, an aquatint which was used as a frontispiece to *The Bardic Museum* by Edward Jones (1802) with figures by Thomas Rowlandson and scenery by John Warwick Smith showing the essence of Welsh music, the harpist and *penillion* singers. But this fascinating and lovely illustration is only on the dust-jacket. When will publishers, even highly reputable ones like the Oxford and Cambridge presses and Thames and Hudson, realise that dust-jackets disappear and are certainly not kept by Copyright Libraries (or only very rarely)—although they should be? Any dust-jacket illustration of a book must be repeated in the book itself for bibliographical and other reasons. We may find room in a future issue to cock a snook at our friends the Cambridge University Press by reproducing the lovely and evocative frontispiece to *The Bardic Museum*: the jackets of *The invention of tradition* being now in the waste-paper baskets of the learned world.

☞ We said in our last issue that we had some curious things to reveal about the alleged decipherment of the Glozel tablets: suggesting that Glozel was a prehistoric sex-shop, which far exceeds the imaginary decipherments of Barry Fell and others, who have, so far as we and our research associates know, confined their invented readings of bogus runes and natural rock-scribings to decent matters. Not so Donald Buchanan.

The occasional *Publications* of the Epigraphic Society of America have now come our way: founded in Harvard in 1974, the Society is now run by the Editor, Professor Barry Fell, who, retired from Harvard, lives at 6625 *Bamburgh Drive, San Diego, California, CA 92117*; and is described as 'a major international vehicle for reporting the discovery and decipherment of ancient inscriptions, especially those of the Americas'.

That most archaeologists and readers of *ANTIQUITY* think there are no ancient inscriptions in N. America is hardly worth repeating; and it comes as no surprise that Volume 10 (1982) of the Society's *Publications* contains an article by Fell himself on 'Punic and Ogam inscriptions in Pennsylvania and Texas'. What does come as a surprise to us, case-hardened as we are and cynically prepared for the junk archaeology that daily rattles through our

letter-box, is an article by Donald Buchanan, of Vienna, Virginia, entitled 'A preliminary decipherment of the Glozel inscriptions'. Buchanan complains that Dr Morlet (whom God preserve together with Dr Strabismus!) even published some of the inscriptions upsidedown (but does it matter which way you look at these 1924-7 forgeries?). He concludes that Glozel 'was some sort of bazaar, whether seasonal or permanent is not known. Since the language was Semitic and the script Iberic, it would appear that Iberian Punic merchants were operating a trading centre and dealing with a predominantly Celtic population. The bazaar dealt in livestock, devices to ensure sexual potency [!! Ed], various salves and ointments, curative charms and amulets, and primitive tools suitable for customers engaged primarily in agriculture and animal husbandry.'

With this bland and entirely invented account of Glozel we turned with eagerness to Buchanan's decipherment of these bogus inscriptions. It is almost unbelievable what this man has made of the Fradin-Morlet forgeries and we must quote his fantasies verbatim:

Four artifacts which are . . . rings of relatively soft schist. Their size is not given, but it is believed that they are too small to be bracelets and too large to be finger-rings. In fact as the decipherments clearly show, they are primitive erection rings [*sic!*]. The first three inscriptions read from left to right: the last from right to left. [What does it matter? We thought they were upsidedown anyhow.—Ed.]

49/2. To make hard the lance of love.

50/1. To assist in approaching erection.

50/2. To restore potency to drooping desire.

51/3. To prolong arousal so that a scrawny penis can grow.

But this is porno-archaeology, not merely pseudo-archaeology. What lies behind the mental structure of men like Fell and Buchanan who can find the name of the Saviour Jesus Christ in natural marks in Virginia and flaccid pricks on upsidedown Glozelian inscriptions? If Buchanan is to be believed, and we believe nothing of his article, Glozel must really have been a bizarre bazaar.

Lionel H. Atkinson of *10 Neville Road, Gargrave, near Skipton, North Yorks, BD23 3RE*, tells us that he is the English representative of the Epigraphic Society of America and says 'over the past few months Barry Fell has deciphered many of the Cup and Ring marked rocks situated on Ilkley Moor and from this work we intend to publish a

joint paper'. We wait with interest this paper as the possibly ultimate folly in this kind of bogus archaeology. Is Ilkley Moor to be an Iberian bazaar or a Libyan bawdy-house? And will the cup and ring marks be found to speak to us in Berbero-Celtic? Perhaps they will say: Ogam, Onan, Odam. But we are prepared to be told of a prehistoric sex-shop in a Berber bazaar on Ilkley Moor. Surely there must come a moment when these lunatic archaeological fringers from California to Cornwall will look in their shaving-mirrors (to plagiarize the *Sunday Express* 'Crossbencher' column) and ask: Whom are we fooling? Can it be ourselves?

There were two important conferences in Oxford in 1983: one was the Seventh Celtic Congress and we print an account of it by Professors Christopher Hawkes and Martyn Jope (pp. 90-4). The other was the celebration of the tercentenary of the Ashmolean Museum (the centenary of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology falls this year—1984).

Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) found himself in Oxford in the Civil War and indeed for a few months in 1645 was in charge of the eastern defences of the city. He decided to avail himself of such facilities of study as the University afforded in spite of the war. He became a member of Brasenose and studied natural philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and astrology.

After the war he returned to London, and married a wealthy widow whose considerable income enabled him to form large collections of alchemical, astrological, medical, magical, and historical manuscripts. With the help of Dr Thomas Wharton he prepared the catalogue of the famous museum of the Tradescants at South Lambeth which was printed in 1656 under the name of John Tradescant the Younger. In 1659 John Tradescant, who had lost his only son and heir, presented the collection to Ashmole by deed of gift, provided that the donor and his wife should keep the collection in trust for Ashmole while they lived.

The details of Ashmole's life are set out in John Campbell's article in Volume I of *Biographia Britannica* (London, 1747 and 1778) and in the five large volumes by C. H. Josten: *Elias Ashmole (1617-1692): his autobiographical and historical notes, his correspondence, and other contemporary sources relating to his life and work . . . with a*

biographical introduction (Oxford, 1966). Josten, who was Curator of the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford, wrote a short article on Ashmole in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 15, July 1960, 221–30, and this has been reprinted and is on sale at the Ashmolean. We quote from this admirable paper (pp. 226–7):

In 1664 there was a lawsuit in Chancery, which Ashmole had instituted against the widow of John Tradescant in 1662 because Mrs Tradescant denied the validity of the gift to him of her husband's collection. A close study of the proceedings, which are preserved at the Public Record Office, and of other sources, has shown that, contrary to opinions advanced by some nineteenth and twentieth century writers, Ashmole acquired his title to the Tradescant collection by fair means and that he treated Mrs Tradescant (who was, to say the least, a tiresome person) with generous forbearance.

John Tradescant the Younger in his last Will requested that his collection should go to the University either of Oxford or Cambridge. In 1675 Ashmole began negotiations for the foundation in Oxford of a museum in which the Tradescant collection with large additions from his own collections would be housed. His offer was accepted: the beautiful building now known as the Old Ashmolean (and now devoted to the illustration and study of the history of science) was built between 1679 and 1683. Three hundred years ago the twelve waggon-loads of rarities trundled from Lambeth to Oxford. The Museum was officially opened on 21 May 1683 by the Duke of York (later King James II); and to the public on 6 June, the first institutional museum in Britain so to do, antedating the British Museum by 70 years.

The new Ashmolean building, designed by Cockerell, was constructed on the corner of Beaumont St/St Giles, and finished in 1845. Here last year the Museum celebrated its tercentenary with a special display of the cream of its collections, and an exhibition of portraits and manuscripts illustrating the life and work of Ashmole, whom Anthony Wood called 'the greatest virtuoso and curioso that ever was known or read of in England before his time'. The Ashmolean has published a guide and catalogue to this exhibition, *Elias Ashmole 1617–1692: the Founder of the Ashmolean Museum and*

his world compiled by Michael Hunter in conjunction with Kenneth Garlick, N. J. Mayhew and Albinia de la Mare.

As part of these celebrations there was held in July 1983 in the Museum, an international seminar on early collections organized by Arthur MacGregor and Dr Oliver Impey, with the publication of a remarkable and most rewarding book *Trades-cant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum 1683 with a catalogue of the surviving early collections*, edited by Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1983, 416 pp., 186 pls., 75 figs., 5 microfiches. £70.00).

¶ We were saddened to learn of the deaths of Dr Joan Liversidge, who had taught the archaeology of Roman Britain in Cambridge for so long, and of Professors Emrys Bowen and Joan van Lohuizen de Leeuw. E. G. Bowen held the Chair of Geography and Anthropology at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, from 1946 to 1968. A student of the great H. J. Fleure, he practised that polymath's work in physical anthropology, human geography, and archaeology: and is probably best known for his work on the Celtic Saints. We, who knew E.G.B. very well, and, it can now be revealed, were the runner-up when he was, very rightly, appointed to the Gregynog Chair in 1946, can do no better than quote *The Times* obituary of 12 November 1983:

The most vivid memories of Bowen, however, must be as one of the great exponents of the art of lecturing. He was a true polymath, so that the range of his topics was without limit—superstitions, the Age of the Saints, the Drovers, Welsh Settlements in Patagonia—as also the size and status of his audiences. But whatever the subject each lecture was meticulously structured, inevitably organized like any good baptist sermon with three points, with triads as sub-division. Bowen was quintessentially Welsh. Short and dark, dressed in bible black from shoes to hat, he was as distinctive as he was distinguished.

He had a most extraordinary sense of time: beginning his lecture at 5 minutes past the hour he finished, often with a *hwyl*-like peroration, at five minutes to the hour without ever consulting a timepiece.