

then tested against the data derived from field work.

One other point needs to be made. The jargon which so often appears to be a necessary medium for the dissemination of archaeological theory, surfaced in Edmond's paper and was highlighted in that by Bill Boismier. Arguably the latter's paper was one of the more useful attempts to bridge the theory-practice divide, although it is regrettable that two years after the fieldwork experiment on Broom Hill the material still awaits processing. But do archaeologists really refer to 'problem domains' and 'plough induced density gradients' in everyday archaeological conversations or are such terms reserved for conferences and publications? For those of us not conversant with this special language simultaneous translation is required. The problem is further exacerbated when a paper is read rather than delivered.

Did the session succeed in its stated aim? Where practice was viewed as a logical successor to theory (as in the latter papers) the desired integration appears to have succeeded. Interpretational models stand more easily by themselves than do field survey methodologies, and the two papers on lithic scatters and pottery distributions were disappointing solely through the lack of practical application. Yet there is obviously considerable potential in the systematic collection of material from the plough zone, as long as we can demonstrate that there is more to be gained from the expenditure of time and resources in this manner than simply adding spots to distribution maps and bags of rubbish to museum basements.

Bob Silvester
Norfolk Archaeological Unit

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TAG '84: A Review From Glasgow

Invariably TAG is never one conference, but rather a collection of small conferences, termed sessions. Reviewing the whole of TAG is well nigh impossible, for each session has its own character transcending the theme set for it. Arguably, this character owes much to the best papers received during its course; thus Mark Horton's paper on East African exchange centres, while provoking disagreement among the Glasgow contingent, set its stamp on the Fetish and Phantasm session simply by being the most entertaining paper I heard during the three days. Alas, all too many of the presentations at Cambridge, potentially very interesting, were destined to fall on deaf ears, for a multiplicity of reasons over and above mere absenteeism caused by alcoholic overindulgence and sheer fatigue. Some participants, for example, had written scripts which were read out at an incomprehensible speed, while others, apparently armed only with a collection of hastily jotted down thoughts, attempted impromptu to create a coherent speech and failed. Some never even finished; Mike Parker Pearson's ten-minute introduction had to be cut short after more than twenty minutes, forcing him to suggest that he would have to sum up Marx in two minutes. Organisational problems at Cambridge were due, in the most part, to the lack of punctuality by contributors.

Difficulties in comprehension for the audience were most marked in the sessions primarily composed of foreigners. Even the Dutch, rightly renowned for their excellence in speaking English, caused occasional confusion among the audience, although this problem was most apparent in the Italo-Iberian session. This was most unfortunate, for so much of 'theoretical' archaeology seems to involve no more than boarding the

latest band wagon and we might at least expect those from the continent to play us a different tune. In fact, I found one of the most interesting papers that of Anna Maria Bietti Sestieri. She suggested the active role of symbols not in reproducing social structures, but as a discursive method through which social reproduction can take place, and applied this theory to the Iron Age cemetery of Osteria dell'Osa. All too often theories reveal their inherent weaknesses when put into practice. Xenophobic as it may sound, I would suggest that session organisers vet their foreign invitees or, perhaps harsher, insist that a written script be prepared for an English speaking substitute to read.

The sheer size to which TAG had swollen made good presentation all the more essential if papers were not to be instantly forgotten, or indeed abandoned via strategically placed rear exits in the lecture rooms. John Barrett stated his belief that the traditional lecture was perhaps the least efficient method to transmit information -- although ironically the point was made effectively and to a very large audience in the form of a traditional lecture. If lecturing is so inefficient and if TAG 84 emphasised this inefficiency more than most conferences, then we must ask ourselves why did so many people pay money to attend last December? Did the 'Assendelvers Polder Project', 'Cultural Responses to Risk and Uncertainty' and 'Plough Zone Archaeology' combine with the other sessions to entice a combined audience of over 400 or did TAG '84 as a single entity attract the numerous spectators? I favour the latter explanation. TAG is becoming an international conference and, as such, is increasing its allure as something exotic. As size is often associated in mind with importance, TAG -- now one of the largest annual British archaeological conferences -- no doubt bene-

fits from this common prejudice.

Because of its size, TAG now runs the risk of becoming an archaeological Crufts; a place to be seen, a place to make a debut, a place to make and try to break reputations. When someone of the stature of Colin Renfrew appears in an opening session, we should perhaps expect him to be received like an infamous old gun-fighter of the 1860's who just rode into Dodge City, being called out by aggressive post-graduates with itchy trigger fingers, anxious to make a reputation for themselves. Nothing attracts the crowds like a good fight. Doubtlessly, this is the reason why the Fetish and Phantasm session was for me the most memorable. A single example of the cut and thrust must suffice: Richard Bradley's paper sought support from Ian Hodder's work in the Baringo area, which suggested that the identification of social groupings by diagnostic artefacts or decorations becomes more marked during times of stress. Bradley's ignorance, real or feigned, of Hodder's recent volte face was used against him to question his explanations of Bronze Age hoards. Fortunately, discussion centred on the validity of such assumptions, but could easily have devolved into a point-scoring argument.

Is TAG a forum for discussion, or an arena for combat? I have exaggerated the extent of personal vitriol that was heard at Cambridge in December. The numerous and competing sessions, in which individual contributions were meant to last only twenty minutes, ensured that any undue emphasis on 'stars' was diffused. However the session on the dissemination of knowledge touched upon a conflict of deeper significance when a crisis of near revolutionary proportions was forecast and blamed on the structural rigidity of teaching which reinforces the Establishment's view of

correct social organisation. The Archaeologists for Peace Workshop offered the active response of teaching and preaching to the public about, among other things, disarmament. Admirable as the concept working for Peace must be, I cannot help worrying that both prehistory and history offer little positive witness of "man's humanity towards man". Worse yet is the conscious use of archaeology for what could be termed political aims, whether to support or attack present social and political positions.

A different approach seemed more popular. Peter Ucko suggested that excitement and self-made discoveries should be encouraged in teaching. A primary school teacher, Wendy Richardson, almost stole the show when she discussed how a Junior school project on Early Man focused on the achievements of the individual, positively discouraging technologically oriented histories which stress continual progress through time and which reinforce prejudices against, for example, Third World societies. In essence, a form of humanism was being offered as the key to improving the transmission of archaeological knowledge to the public. It is a

pity that none of the contributions were aimed directly at TAG itself, asking how archaeological knowledge is or should be disseminated to archaeologists. Overall the 'humanistic' approach advocated was perhaps partly a backlash against the aggressive competition which itself is partially the result of attempts at career building.

So should we encourage consensus and discourage conflict? Offering papers at TAG, like making Moka, the presenters should be prepared for criticisms from recipients, if they believe, like those who feel themselves to have been given too few pigs, that they were not given work of sufficient rigour. For like the makers of Moka, speakers at TAG accrue prestige which may one day be turned into tangible wealth in the form of employment. The spectators, in return for the passive support they give to this form of academic reproduction, are at least entitled to audible, comprehensible and coherent talks, even if asking for entertaining, interesting and stimulating papers is requesting too much.

Ross Samson
Glasgow University

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No Longer Lavatories in a Landscape: The Stonehenge Proposal

A commentary on the Stonehenge Study Group Report (English Heritage 1985).

The establishment of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission/England (or English Heritage) in April 1984 was certainly not greeted with enthusiasm in all quarters. There were fears for the future of rescue archaeology and also concerns that among the other stated objectives was the intention to display and

market the monuments in its care much more than its predecessor. A shiver ran through the ranks when Stonehenge was singled out as the site in most urgent need of the HBMC(E)'s attention by its first Chairman, not because there was any serious disagreement about the need to do something but because of the fear about what the result might be. Stonehenge today is less satisfactorily managed than it ever has been (Chippindale 1983), and the editor of Antiquity has been pointing out this appalling state of affairs for years.

There is little enough pub-