

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.

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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 HBWC(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-

lished discussion on the treatment and display of archaeological monuments in this country; the neutral approach developed over the years by the DoE and its predecessors (Thompson 1981) was at least directed towards display, but recently the debate about explaining the past has become much more complicated. Hodder (1984), has indicated the failure of archaeologists to communicate, and the idea of "re-creating" the past in rather dubious forms has found increasing favour even if it is generally geared towards financial motives and attracting greater audiences, without a clear aim (Schadla-Hall 1984). This reviewer has always believed that "on moral, logical and economic grounds the proper aim" must be "to only display what is authentic" (Thompson 1981, 96). In spite of the apprehension existing in some quarters about any new Stonehenge proposals, many comforted themselves by reviewing the half-hearted way in which the problem had been tackled over the past twenty-five years: gravelling the path, building the bunker and tunnel entrance, the appearance of temporary fences, the lack of any real attempt to stop the damaging activities of the so-called festival, and the fate of the last major report on Stonehenge in 1979 which was never acted upon and never published.

By May 1984 the promised public meeting for interested parties had been held in Salisbury, and in June a Study Group was set up with clear terms of reference. These stressed the need to protect, preserve, explain and display not only Stonehenge but also the surrounding landscape and monuments; to examine the provision of facilities, to look at the wider implications of the proposed changes, and to indicate the costs. The report was ready within six months and Lord Montagu, on releasing the report for public circulation and consumption, was

also able to announce the initial decision of HBMC on the policy which it had decided to adopt from the options offered by the Study Group. The speed with which the work was carried out and the decisions reached is quite remarkable in view of the past history of attempts to produce a coherent policy. More significantly the wide release of the Stonehenge Study Group Report has made it possible to participate in, or at least understand, the initial decisions.

The most significant aspect of the report and its approach lies in the clear decision to consider the monument in its surroundings; the importance of the other monuments within the landscape has been previously well documented (RCHM 1979). Once the overall approach was established and the present situation condemned, the Study Group dealt with the problems and desirability of road closures and, more contentiously, the issue of visitor facilities. The report considers the need to protect the monument and control visitors and provides a thoughtful discussion about forms of barriers which could be installed around the monument. This visually most difficult element in the local landscape around Stonehenge is one which may yet prove the most intractable.

The alternatives offered for the roads is far clearer; for the A303 it is either a tunnel or a bank. The tunnel is far too expensive and the bank would need to be handled with care. For the A344 it could be a matter of closure, retention, restricted access or diversion. The advantages and disadvantages were well laid out in the report and there is little doubt that closure is the most logical option, which HBMC has now supported as the only acceptable answer. The case for closing the A344 was clearly made within the document and the full appendices

which were provided indicate the impact of such a decision. It also seems clear that a sensitively handled bank would certainly eliminate most of the unsightly traffic and sounds which impinge on the monument's surroundings from the A303.

The problem of visitor facilities is considerable, and the report wisely never deals in detail with what those facilities should consist of. Eight possible sites were identified to cope with the estimated million plus visitors expected every year. The evaluation of these sites takes into account the problems of keeping the landscape intact, preserving archaeologically sensitive areas, the difficulty of varying land ownership, the requirements of making the monument accessible to as many people as possible, the need for large car parking space, and the overall costs. Again the overall position was summarised clearly with maps and also with approximate comparable costings. In each case a summary is provided of the relative advantages and disadvantages bearing in mind the factors listed above. Two nearby sites were considered (the existing car park area and Stonehenge Bottom). Both were shown to have serious disadvantages, not least in terms of visual interference, cost and space. The distant sites (Vespasian's Camp, and Durrington Walls) would create transport difficulties and could have serious archaeological implications. The middle distance sites (Fargo Plantation South and West and Larkhill East and West) are obviously a preferable group of sites and in this case HBMC(E)'s initial decision was to suggest Larkhill West which would involve a minimum of road construction and displacement to the existing communities and also to the visual aspects of Stonehenge.

The Study Group also examined

economic benefits for the planned changes and developments in the Stonehenge area. Far too often in the past attempts to evaluate the likely impact of developing ancient monuments and landscapes in terms of economic benefit has been ignored, not least because of the difficulty of demonstrating and quantifying the value of such developments. All the information provided in the various appendices indicates in a clear fashion the full implications of the potential alternatives. The bulk of information provided allows any interested reader to make up his or her own mind and compare his or her final decision against that of the HBMC(E).

The report leaves several problems unresolved, particularly the nature and purposes of the visitor centre; there have been many appeals for the development of a replica of Stonehenge (e.g. Antiquity 1985, 2-4), in most cases this has been proposed to relieve pressure on the real site, although the Study Group leaves the option open. HBMC(E)'s initial recommendation has been to reject this proposal, arguing that any reconstruction would compete with the actual monument which should continue to be a focus of interest and the climax of a visit. It certainly seems unnecessary to create a full-scale replica when the actual monument is so nearby, no matter what the current fashion might be for recreating the past. At the same time there seems to be little justification for displaying artefacts from the Stonehenge area, or indeed models to any great extent; the recently opened displays at the Salisbury Museum (Antiquity 1984, 166) and those existing at the Devizes Museum would seem to provide much of the background information that might be required by visitors. There would obviously be a need to use models and possibly imaginative audio visual displays to explain

the site area, and one hopes that these would be included in the centre, where the area surrounding Stonehenge as well as the monument itself would be better illustrated. Surely there can be little requirement for much more than this?

One of the other challenges which faces the HBMC(E) is that of visitor control, especially in terms of damaging turf. Downland turf is undoubtedly tough and could carry, if properly managed, a very large visitor inflow -- sadly the lunatic fringe is already suggesting astro turf! Finally there is the matter of admission charges, which is not dealt with in the report. The new decisions so far taken will undoubtedly require greater numbers of personnel and more land management with obvious increased revenue and capital implications. The site is one of world importance, and the proposed alterations will cost a great deal of money; obviously the proposal is to provide more for the visitor but it is to be hoped that HBMC will allow the admission charge to remain as low as possible. Having made the landscape more available and more accessible, it should be shown to the greatest possible number of people.

The Stonehenge Study Group Report is a milestone in the treatment of prehistoric monuments. Firstly it comprehensively deals with the landscape (rather than an individual site) in terms of preservation, explanation and display. The area is seen in turn within a regional context which will hopefully make the archaeology of Wessex (as a whole) much clearer to the visitor. Secondly, it considers the potential economic benefits of developing such a site.

Finally, and most importantly, it provides an example of 'open government' in the management of ancient monuments. HBMC(E) has not only provided an initial decision based on the Study Group's Report but it has also provided the basis for any informed reader to see how that decision was reached, and in turn has provided a model for the future treatment of the display of ancient monuments in this country.

HBMC(E) must be congratulated not only for the speed and efficiency with which it carried out its initial intent but also the swiftness with which it reached an initial decision based on the published document. Having shown how capable it is of adopting an open approach, and at the risk of appearing churlish, it seems a great shame that the pattern could not have been adopted for Maiden Castle.

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