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A NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGIST VISITS THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Auckland Museum

From May 1988 to the first day in February 1989 I enjoyed study leave overseas with the family. A few weeks were spent in North America before we went on to Cambridge, England, our base for seven months. My interests mostly concerned museum presentation, collections and storage, and in these areas the study leave was immensely exciting and stimulating. I also proposed to visit as many archaeological sites as possible to see the places themselves and to look at methods and issues in site protection and presentation.

There are, of course, so many archaeological sites in the United Kingdom we could visit only a very small part of them. Based in Cambridge we saw a number of sites in Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties. We also spent some time in south-west England, in north and west Scotland, and on Hadrian's Wall. In the following pages there is no attempt to cover all the places we visited. Nor am I at all consistent in the kinds of things I relate about different sites: this is not a travel guide. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this brief account will assist other New Zealanders interested in archaeology to make the best of scarce and very expensive time in the antipodes.

Archaeologically-minded visitors to the United Kingdom who are based in one part of the country should begin by acquiring the local Ordnance Survey maps. These show much archaeological information such as moats, standing stones, barrows, hillforts, Roman roads, running earthworks and the like. The 1:50,000 'Landranger' series is probably most useful. More detailed again is the 'Pathfinder' series. Much of England is a maze of narrow roads and footpaths; detailed maps are often needed to find even quite important sites.

Many archaeological sites are in the hands of English Heritage and there is a charge for admission. We saved a great deal of money joining English Heritage at the first of their properties we encountered. Not only do they own archaeological sites but numerous castles, great houses, etc., as well. In London entry to the Tower, Kensington Palace, and Hampton Court Palace will alone cover the cost of membership. Equivalent organisations in Wales and Scotland give half price entry on English Heritage membership (and vice versa).

New Zealand visitors to the U.K. with the slightest historical interest must join the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (you should already belong). It is only a fraction of

the price of membership of the equivalent National Trusts of England, Scotland or Wales, and gets you into all their properties free. Note that this is not the same as English Heritage which you must join separately. We saved many times our annual family subscription of the N.Z.H.P.T. during our travels about Great Britain.

Just one other piece of general advice before we proceed: warm clothes, raincoat and gumboots are essential, summer and winter, if our experience is anything to go by.

Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties

For Cambridge and its environs we obtained the local maps, and also guides to local walks many of which took in archaeological sites or made their way along Roman roads and the running earthworks common in this part of England. We also acquired Pevsner's guide to Cambridgeshire buildings and enjoyed visiting churches and other buildings of Anglo-Saxon, Norman and later origin. Scarfe's 'Cambridgeshire' in the excellent Shell Guide series was also invaluable. We learned a little - and wish we could have learned more - of the wonderful architectural heritage of the place. And we discovered that for many local archaeologists the built environment is an important part of their archaeological interest.

Having said that, however, I must turn to the more strictly archaeological remains. The first site we visited once we had a vehicle was Wandlebury, an Iron Age hillfort at the north end of the Gog Magog hills out of Cambridge. This was our introduction to the immense scale of these sites: at Wandlebury a ditch 3 m deep and 10 m across encloses an almost perfectly circular area of 12-15 acres. Much was destroyed in the 18th century; what remains is now in public ownership.

A short walk beyond the hillfort brings you to a Roman road which ran from Colchester to a crossing of the Cam where the settlement and town of Cambridge later grew. We walked this road on several occasions, at Wandlebury and near the lovely old town of Linton further to the south-east. But we never did organise transport at the other end to enable us to tramp miles of a Roman road as the legions would have done. The roads are superbly engineered and are today supremely evocative archaeological remains.

Perhaps the best known and most interesting of sites in the neighbourhood of Cambridge is Grimes Graves, situated in the Norfolk 'brecklands'. The main period of working these Neolithic flint mines was 2100-1800 B.C. The site consists of 20 acres dimpled by large open pits rather like enormous Taranaki rua. Some are the result of opencast mining of flint seams near the surface; others are filled shafts of as much as

40 feet where deep seams have been exploited. One of the shafts is open. A ladder leads to the floor from which radiating galleries follow the main flint seam, the galleries unfortunately closed off by iron grills.

The seam flint is of superb quality. Flint is also available in nodule form in the overlying chalk. In the nearby town of Brandon the craft of flint knapping was carried on until recently. The Flint Knappers Arms stands at a corner in the centre of town. The lack of good building stone in East Anglia and Cambridgeshire has led to much use of flint cemented into walls in cobble form or split to present the lustrous brown stone itself, often decoratively arranged.

One memorable day in autumn was spent walking a section of Devil's Dyke near Newmarket (Fig. 1). This enormous earthwork extends from Reach at the edge of the Fens some 12 km south-east. The section we walked consisted of a bank 4-8 m high, the top of which is as much as 15 m above the bottom of the adjacent ditch. The whole earthwork is 50 m across. Nearby Fleam Dyke, while not nearly so impressive, also offers lovely walks. Both were thrown up by the Anglo-Saxons to protect their East Anglian heartland after the great victory of Arthur's Britons at Mons Badonicus in 499 A.D. A public footpath extends the length of Devil's Dyke.

Other sites we visited from Cambridge included the 'Bartlow Hills' in Essex which our guide book described as "undoubtedly the finest group of Roman barrows in Britain". There were once eight, but only four survive of which one is inaccessible on the wrong side of a railway cutting. The three we saw are 7-12 m in height, circular and, unlike most barrows, very steep sided. The site is not signposted, is overgrown and suffering from visitors like us who will scramble up and down the steep mounds.

On the outskirts of Royston in Hertfordshire is the Therfield Heath barrow cemetery, the most extensive such site in the Chiltern Hills. Visitors must look out for flying golf balls. The twelve barrows are of Neolithic and Bronze Age date. Finds from 19th century excavations are held in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Also in Hertfordshire is the Roman city of Verulamium at St Albans. The modern town is one of the more attractive we saw in England, its historical centre unusually built on top of a hill. The cathedral was reconstructed by Lord Grimthorpe in heavy style in the 19th century from the remains of the ancient abbey church.

Verulamium itself is situated on gently sloping ground just west of the modern town. Visitors can walk over the site which



Figure 1. Devil's Dyke, Cambridgeshire - November 1988.



Figure 2. 'The Cove', Avebury, Wiltshire - July 1988.

is now covered in playing fields and grassed paddocks. Most of the Roman remains are invisible but the theatre, some of the city wall and a section of hypocaust (in a grubby little shed) can be seen. The most interesting is the theatre (on private ground which costs extra) excavated by Kathleen Kenyon in the early 1930s. The site museum is well worth a visit, but dated - and I do dislike mosaic floor set up vertically on walls. There is an excellent archaeological guide to Verulamium available at the museum with many plans and some stunning reconstructions by Alan Sorrell.

Before shifting our attention to the south-west two other sites of particular interest must be mentioned. In the Civil War of the 17th century were thrown up some earthwork redoubts not dissimilar to 19th century military redoubts in New Zealand, although much bigger in scale. We visited the Queen's Sconce near Newark (Nottinghamshire) and The Bulwarks, near Earith in Cambridgeshire.

The former is an enormous hill of a redoubt. The ditch and parapet present a 30 ft high wall to any attacker. Within is an earthwork approximately 70 m square of standard four bastioned style, like Pironia. In the centre a pit 20 ft deep may have served as a magazine. There is no room for accommodation as in New Zealand redoubts; the Queen's Sconce is nothing more than an enormous gun platform.

We were directed to The Bulwarks, which has no sign or notice, by a man in a butcher's shop with a remarkable bright red bifurcating nose. This redoubt too has four angled bastions, the basic square being 60 x 60 m. The bastions have 20-25 m outer faces and 6-8 m re-entrants. The ditch is 20 m across. From the south and west curtain walls two sets of double ditches extend to the nearby waterways presumably to secure the rear of the fort.

The south-west

I was twice in the south-west during our time in England: we all went in late July, while in November I had a week on my own, kindly put up and guided by Aileen Fox who will be well known to many New Zealand archaeologists.

On our way down in July we visited Avebury and Stonehenge. The former gave us one of our more wonderful experiences in England, the latter also gave us a not-to-be-forgotten experience, but for very different reasons.

At Avebury (Fig. 2) a ditch and outer bank 430 m in diameter enclose a circular area of 11.5 ha within which are numerous standing stones. The greater part of the stones were broken up for building material in the 17th and 18th

centuries. Most of those now standing were re-erected by Alexander Keiller in the 1930s having been knocked over centuries before to comply with a papal edict concerning pagan remains. To the south-west a double row of stones, the West Kennet Avenue, extends to 'The Sanctuary' of concentric wood and stone circles, now hard against the busy A4 road. The great ritual complex at Avebury is thought to have been in use for as much as 1000 years in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, ca. 2600-1600 B.C.

We left our van in the carpark of the Red Lion at the centre of the Avebury circle. The site is much bigger than I had imagined from the photographs I had seen. The sarsen stones have not been squared off as at Stonehenge but are perfect in their unfashioned shapes. Despite being the height of the summer season there was plenty of room for all and unrestricted access to the stones and earthworks. Six or eight informative notice boards are strategically placed about the site.

There are three museums at Avebury. The Alexander Keiller Museum displays archaeological material excavated by Keiller and others in Wiltshire. A Museum of Wiltshire Folk Life is displayed in a superb 17th century great barn, but the bits and pieces on show reminded me of far too many colonial museums in New Zealand. The third museum, run I think by English Heritage, was closed despite a notice saying it was open.

In the archaeological museum we encountered a group of Germans browbeating an unfortunate curator about ley lines and such like. Later we came upon them being lectured near some stones on 'energy levels' and 'force fields'. Then they pointed little metal rods about, warmed their hands on the stones and waved to and fro small wooden balls on 6-12 inch lengths of No 8 wire attached to short wooden handles.

Near Avebury are Silbury Hill, highly visible on the A4, Windmill Hill Causewayed Camp and the West Kennet Long Barrow, as well as many other sites in a quite remarkable archaeological landscape.

We drove directly from Avebury to Stonehenge (Fig. 3). Here peacefulness and contemplation were left behind. From a large car and bus park enormous numbers of visitors are directed to a bunker-like ticket office and bookstall and on beneath the road to a roped path which leads around the famous stones. When we were there it was cold and wet and the unsealed path all mud and puddles. Some brave people hurdled the rope and dashed among the stones while supervisors in little sentry boxes were distracted.

There is much discussion in English archaeological and



Figure 3. Anna Prickett and Stonehenge - July 1988.

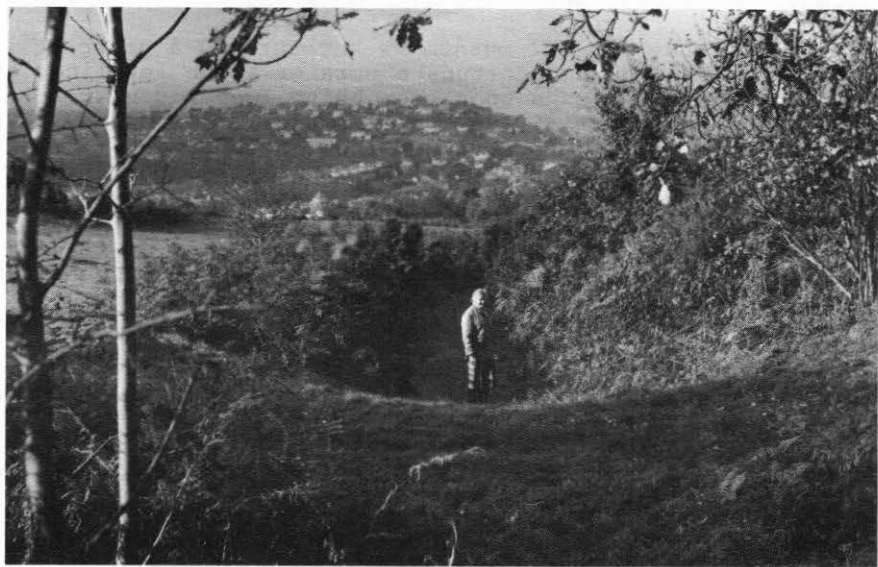


Figure 4. Milbur Down Camp, Devon - November 1988.
Aileen Fox provides scale in one of the defensive ditches.

heritage industry circles on what to do about Stonehenge. Certainly presentation and visitor experience alike are awful. But what to do about the enormous numbers? let alone the 'druids' and 'hippies' who periodically claim it for their own. Some have proposed to build a plastic replica over the road. But this surely will not do; people want to be there and experience the real thing however unsatisfactorily.

John Aubrey, writing in 1663, remarked that Avebury "does as much exceed in greatness the so renowned Stonehenge, as a Cathedral does a parish Church". I hope those who now flock to Stonehenge do not find this out.

On our way to the south-west we saw Knap Hill causewayed camp on the high scarp above the Vale of Pewsey in Wiltshire, looking for all the world like a pa. To our uninitiated eyes it was a hillfort, the difference between hillfort and 'causewayed camp' depending apparently on the degree of access through the defences. In Exeter I was to visit more hillforts with Aileen Fox as guide.

In July she took us to Woodbury Castle south-east of the city where ditch and bank defences of familiar New Zealand scale enclosed an area of 5 acres. The hillfort dates from the late Bronze Age and Iron Age, ca. 1000-300 B.C. In November I was taken to Milber Down Camp (Fig. 4), a 1st century B.C. fort on a north facing slope near Newton Abbot. Four concentric ditch and bank earthworks defend 8-10 acres. For both these places there are little leaflet guides published by the Devon Archaeological Society under Aileen's supervision.

Also in November Aileen took me to two more hillforts on the fringe of Dartmoor. Prestonbury is a multiple enclosure fort like Milber Down Camp and like it dates from the 1st century B.C. Many of these hillforts were designed to hold cattle at night as well as being fortresses pure and simple. On the opposite bank of the Teign Gorge is Cranbrook Castle of 6-7 acres where upper defences comprise a double ditch and bank and downslope defences a single bank only. Bracken and blackberry did not make for easy viewing. From Cranbrook Castle we could see Lutyens' extraordinary Castle Drogo high above the river to the north-west.

Before leaving the subject of hillforts I must mention Maiden Castle (Fig. 5). This amazing site looms above the new Dorchester bypass just south of the town. When I was there most vehicles in the carpark had not brought archaeological visitors but locals out exercising their dogs. The paddock beyond was a minefield. A noticeboard anticipated renewed archaeological excavations to take place in the summer of 1985.

As with Avebury I had previously seen numerous aerial and



Figure 5. Maiden Castle, Dorset - November 1988.
The southern defences.



Figure 6. The Merry Maidens stone circle, Cornwall
- July 1988.

ground photos of Maiden Castle. Nothing, though, prepares a visitor for the scale of the place. An area of 45 acres is defended by three immense ditches and associated banks. Along the two sides banks are 40-50 ft high while at the two ends entries are defended by complex earthworks more than 100 m across. My visit enormously increased my admiration for Wheeler who excavated this site in the 1930s and gave us a basic chronology.

There was a causewayed camp at Maiden Castle as early as 3000 B.C. Later Iron Age occupation saw four phases of defences dating from ca. 350 B.C. and ending 200 years later when the fortifications now visible were in place. The great citadel was taken by the Roman 2nd Legion under Vespasian ca. 44 A.D. In the 4th century a Romano-British temple was erected within the old earthworks and is now on view near the western end. Finds from Maiden Castle can be seen in the Dorset County Museum, High Street, Dorchester.

From Exeter I also saw something of the remarkable archaeological landscape of Dartmoor, again guided by Aileen. In July we took the B3212 through the heart of Dartmoor on our way to Cornwall. With us was Jolanda Cupido who had worked two seasons on the Raupa (Paeroa) dig and who I met quite by chance at the entrance to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter.

Dartmoor was occupied and farmed from the late Neolithic into the Bronze and Iron Ages after which, because of deforestation, soil exhaustion and changing climate, it was left to extensive grazing which today shares the upland with the army. The houses, fields and ceremonial centres of the early occupants are marked out or built in unyielding native granite. This gives us a detailed map of prehistoric settlement and land use.

We drove up through Moretonhampstead before turning off to visit several little Bronze Age hut sites hidden in the bracken along with their associated field systems marked off by very familiar looking stone rows. The circular huts are enclosed by large granite boulders, the upper part presumably being timber framed. Many have small porches or sheltered entrances, generally facing south.

A mile or two further on we left the road and walked to a broad saddle in which nestled the late Bronze Age settlement of Grimspound. ('Grim' or 'grime' is the devil; places of unknown origin are surely the Devil's work and hence Grimspound, Grimes Graves and numerous Grim's Ditches etc. throughout England.) At Grimspound a massive stone wall encloses some 4 acres within which are more than 20 circular huts. Aileen herself was responsible for the major investigation of this important site, published in 1957.

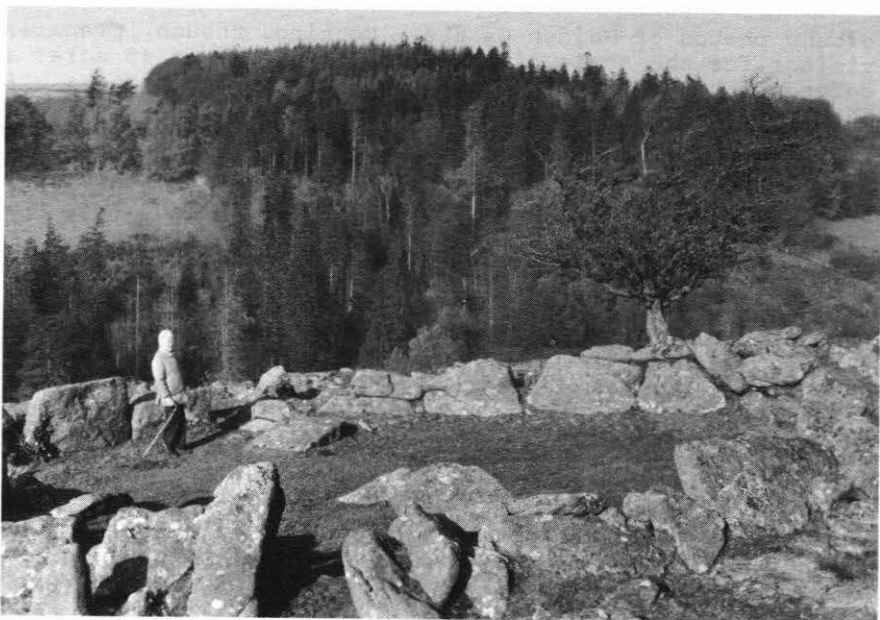


Figure 7. Round Pound Iron Age homestead, Kestor, Devon - November 1988. In the picture is Aileen Fox who excavated this site in the early 1950s.

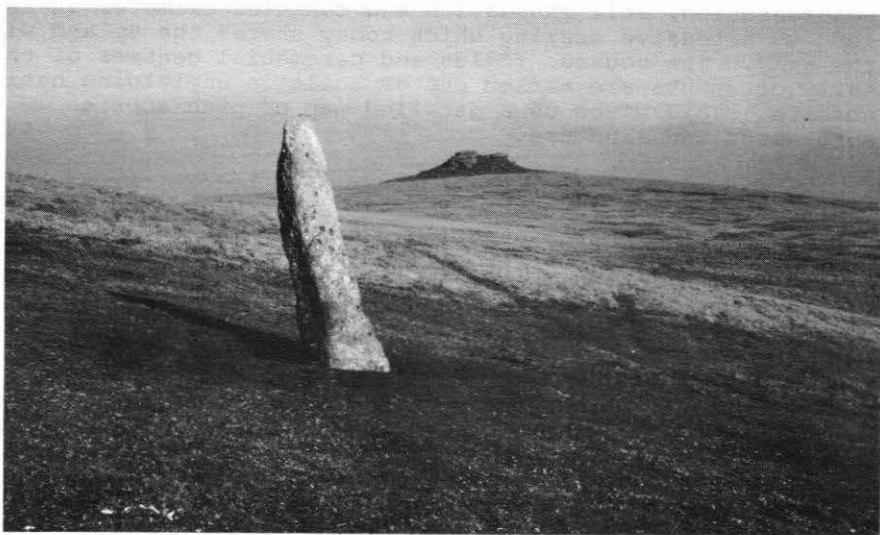


Figure 8. 'Longstone' menhir, Dartmoor - November 1988. In the background is Kestor.

Leaving our guide we drove over Dartmoor through Postbridge and its medieval 'clapper' bridge to Merrivale. Here on the western edge of the moor is a complex of standing stones, parallel stone alignments and a stone circle which looks curiously like the fins of 15 circling sharks. All the remains are said to date from the Bronze Age.

Merrivale was our first stone circle, and indeed 'menhir' familiar to all Asterix readers. A more impressive circle not far from Lands End in Cornwall is the Merry Maidens (Fig. 6). Nineteen evenly spaced stones standing ca. 1.2 m high make up a complete circle approximately 25 m in diameter. To the north are 'The Pipers', two very much taller stones which clearly relate to the circle. Once upon a time pipers played for dancing maidens on a Sunday and for this transgression on the Lord's day all were turned to stone.

The exposed tableland west of Penzance has many important sites. Regrettably we had time only for the Merry Maidens and the Iron Age and Romano-British village of Chysauster. The latter English Heritage site consists of nine stone-built courtyard houses, five of which are excavated and reconstructed. The children were reluctant to leave the van near the end of a long day but were soon enjoying themselves greatly, zooming about the site and laying claim to the snug little 2000 year old rooms.

When I returned to the south-west in autumn Aileen again took me to Dartmoor. This time we went through Chagford, an old granite-built stannery town, and on by the Batworthy road. Beneath Kestor is a wonderful landscape of Bronze and Iron Age date (Fig. 7). Huts and enclosures, fields and stock races are mostly Iron Age. Ceremonial sites are Bronze Age. Among the latter are the Shovel Down Stone Rows - we would call them alignments - leading to cairns on the ridge top. Aileen suggested these might be processional ways or paths. Nearby on the other side of the ridge is a 3.2 m high menhir called Longstone (Fig. 8), with the initials of three parishes which meet here now carved into the base.

A mile away to the north, over small tributaries of the Teign crossed by single spans of flat granite slabs, is the Scorhill Stone Circle. Twenty-three stones describe a circle 27 m in diameter on ground sloping gently to the west. The stones are mostly 1-1.5 m high with a tall one of ca. 2.5 m. Of all the stone circles I saw Scorhill is the most memorable. Its location high on an open moor, the rough lichen-covered stones themselves and the peacefulness of the place under a thin wintery sun combined for a wonderful experience. Dartmoor is a place I would like to go back to.



Figure 9. The Ermine Street Guard on parade, Corbridge, near Hadrian's Wall - August 1988.

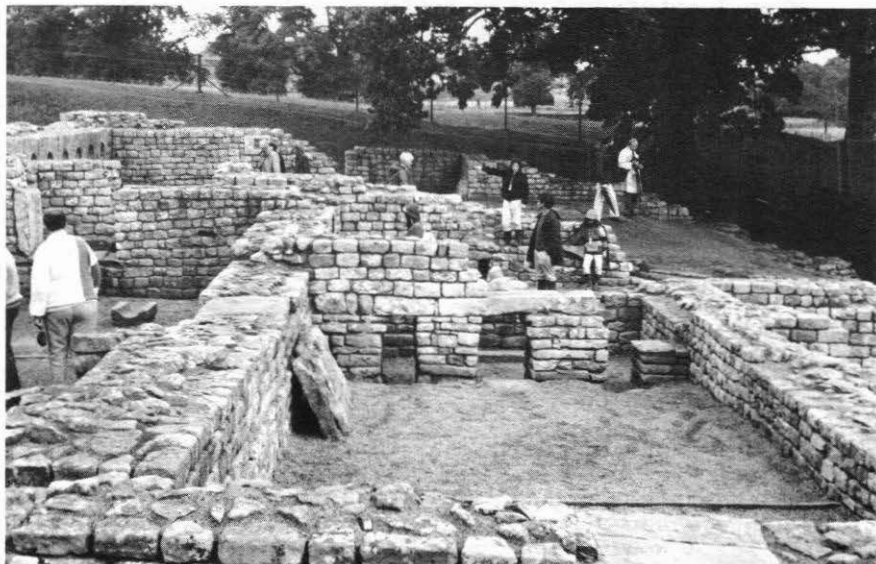


Figure 10. The bathhouse, Chesters Roman fort, Hadrian's Wall - August 1988.

Hadrian's Wall

In late August we had two days at Hadrian's Wall. Twenty years ago when doing my regulation 'O.E.' Corbridge was one of the few archaeological sites I visited. At that time there was a dig on and I recall a shed full of recent finds. When we visited this time the Roman army was in possession.

Corbridge is not on the wall itself but a few miles south where the east-west and north-south Roman roads intersected at what was for some time the lowest crossing of the Tyne. Excavations have revealed the headquarters, granaries, temples, officers' accomodation and workshops of the 1st and 2nd century fort. There is an excellent modern museum and information centre where we bought an inexpensive 48 page, full-colour, archaeological guide to the wall sites, published by English Heritage in 1987 and quite the best such guide we encountered anywhere.

To return to our meeting with the Roman army, the latter called itself the 'Ermine Street Guard' and was made up of 30-40 men committed to accurate reconstruction of clothes and equipment and demonstration of training methods and battle tactics (Fig. 9). The day of our visit was their only day at Corbridge. As an entirely volunteer group public performances are limited each year to a handful of days at different sites throughout England. They were superbly outfitted - both legionary troops and auxiliaries - and put on an exciting show of 'square-bashing', weapons training, the 'turtle' (for advancing beneath an enemy fortification), a charge which scattered part of the crowd and the use of a variety of artillery pieces. It was incongruous at the end to speak with a Roman soldier who soon learned that I was from New Zealand and only wanted to talk about his brother who spent some years here.

Next day we went on to Chesters Roman fort (Fig. 10) which stood astride Hadrian's Wall in the valley of the North Tyne River. Here was a site museum dating from 1903 and looking its age, but which contained much excellent material including sculptures, inscriptions, pottery and a range of carpenters' and workman's tools remarkably similar to those in use today. There was also a charming two inch long Scotch terrier in bronze. As at Corbridge the site is partly excavated with consolidated and reconstructed defences, gateways, barracks and, outside the fort itself, a fascinating bathhouse complex.

Our afternoon was taken up with Housesteads fort and the adjacent wall. Superbly sited high on an exposed ridge the reconstructed walls of Housesteads enclose 5 acres of barracks, granaries, headquarters building, hospital and commanding officer's house. At one corner is the very communal latrine.



Figure 11. Dun Beag broch, Isle of Skye - September 1988.



Figure 12. Clava Cairns, near Culloden - September 1988.

We were at Housesteads in the middle of summer dodging cold south-west showers: in winter the place must have been cold indeed for soldiers from the sunny Mediterranean.

From Housesteads we walked along the wall to the south. I wondered, where is the archaeological demonstration for the battlements shown on all the pictorial reconstructions? Everywhere along the wall were parties of English people dressed in olive green Wellingtons and anoraks. It is an advantage and a weakness to have such enormous visitor numbers: sheer numbers damage the sites but entry and shop sales pay for presentation and upkeep. Almost all the archaeological remains of Hadrian's Wall are in the hands of English Heritage.

Scotland

I found it interesting that in Scotland we encountered sites very different to those with which we are familiar south of the border. Brochs, duns, cup and ring petroglyphs, vitrified forts and boulder cairns encircled by standing stones we had not encountered before. In Scotland we visited sites on the islands of Skye and Arran, in Caithness, Invernessshire and western Argyll.

On Skye we saw our first broch. These are circular fortified towers, originally 30-40 ft high but now almost all in ruins. They are built of dry stone walling and have rooms within a double wall encircling a small open yard. They date from the Iron Age ca. 500-200 B.C. Dun Beag (Fig. 11) is on the western side of Skye above Loch Braccadale near Struan, well signposted on the A863. Entry is by a passage on the south side to the 10 m diameter central yard. To the left narrow steps lead up to now vanished rooms in the broken down walls. From Dun Beag we looked out across the sea to the Hebrides.

A second broch we visited just north of the vast Victorian pile which is Dunrobin Castle, on the east coast north of Inverness. Carn Liath broch has clearly undergone some reconstruction. The hollow wall and steps to the upper levels are as at Dun Beag. Different was the remains of 8-10 small huts huddled against the exterior wall. At both sites there had been recent excavation.

Caithness, like Dartmoor, is one of those archaeological landscapes which stirs the imagination. Offshore are numerous platforms pumping oil and gas from the North Sea field. Car stickers urge "Protect jobs - save Dounreay", the latter being a nearby nuclear power station nearing the end of its life. Over the bleak landscape are sites dating mostly from the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

The 'Hill o' Many Stanes' is a mile off the main road to Wick. More than 200 angular boulders 2-3 ft high are arranged in lines not quite parallel but slightly fan-shaped. It has been suggested that the 4000 year old arrangement has an astronomical function. Familiar to a New Zealand archaeologist is the miserly reserve provision which barely takes in the whole site. Immediately over the fence are ugly piles of much bigger stones heaped up by bulldozer.

Five miles up a side road from the A9 and only 10 minutes from the Hill o' Many Stanes are the Grey Cairns of Camster. These are Neolithic chambered cairns now considerably restored by the Department of the Environment. Access from the nearby road is by way of a boardwalk across the wet ground. There are two cairns, one round with a diameter of 18 m and one 30 m long. Both have constricted passageways through which the visitor may crawl to burial chambers lit by heavy perspex skylights. The chambers are wonderfully fashioned in enormous vertical slabs with smaller stones packed horizontally between. Beyond the reserve fence the open moor has been ripped up for conifer planting which will in a few years completely change the experience of this site.

Not far away are the Achavanich or Loch Stemster standing stones. More than thirty rough slab-like stones 4-5 ft high and 3-4 ft across stand in a U-shaped formation on a low wet spur. Nothing obvious distinguishes the location, so what made this place so special? Today it is the lovely lichen covered stones. A few yards away is a cairn, while at Loch Rangag half a mile away I thought I recognised the remains of a collapsed broch.

I have not told of all the sites we visited in Caithness. Far more again need exploration, as do the islands of Orkney and Shetland further north. The Scottish landscape is a marvellous setting for standing stones and other sites. We can only dream of 'next time'.

Near Inverness the Culloden battlefield is an important place of pilgrimage. Buses and cars disgorge thousands of visitors a day to walk over the open moor on which the opposing lines of 16 April 1746 are marked out by flags, and to cram the visitor centre and shop in honour of the clans. Only two miles away the visually much more exciting 4000 year old Clava Cairns (Fig. 12) attract only a handful of visitors. These stone cairns are enclosed by great slabs of standing stones up to 8 ft high, covered in lichens and altogether marvellous. Burial chambers at the heart of the cairns are now open to the sky. One stone is decorated by the so-called 'cup-marks', little shallow circular holes on the rock surface. The Clava Cairns are situated beneath scattered beeches on the valley floor of the river Nairn. It is one of my favourite sites. A similar

chambered cairn enclosed by eleven standing stones we visited at Corrimony off the Cannich-Drumnadrochit (Loch Ness) road. Again site and setting - up a little road enclosed by rowans, oaks and beeches - were perfect.

On our way south we drove through Oban with its magnificent folly on the hilltop above - a replica of the Colosseum no less - to the Kilmartin valley. At the village church are some hoary Celtic grave stones dating from 1300 to the early 18th century and carved in weathered grey schist. Out on the valley floor is a linear series of five chambered cairns dating from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, with associated cists or stone lined graves. At some cairns, notably Nether Largie North Cairn, cup and axe-head decoration is carved on stone slabs in the burial chamber.

Near the cairns is a site known as Temple Wood. A circle of thirteen large stone slabs (of an original twenty) is focussed on a cist grave in the centre. Small round boulders are heaped about the standing stones. On one upright stone are two simple pecked spirals very reminiscent of Taranaki petroglyphs. A few yards north was an older wooden circle (found by excavation) also paved with small boulders and with two stone slabs set on edge in the centre. Other nearby sites include Dunchraigaig Cairn adjacent to the A816 south to Lochgilphead and the Kilmichael Glassary stone decorated with cup and ring markings by a signposted side road. On the valley floor south of Kilmartin the road passes Dunadd, an isolated rocky hill once fortress capital of the Dark Ages kingdom of Dalriada.

Except for the last, all the Kilmartin sites date from a period 6-3000 years ago when the valley was inhabited by farmers who grew barley and wheat on the valley floor and ran sheep and cattle on the hills. Afterwards there was a build-up of peat for many centuries which almost covered some of the ancient sites before being drained and restored to productive use only last century. A question I had no time to explore is this: why was this small valley so important not just in the late Neolithic and Bronze Age but in the first millenium A.D. as well?

We crossed to Arran by the Claonaig-Lochranza ferry. Before we left New Zealand I was told by Alastair Buist of the archaeological sites I must visit on this beautiful island. We did not see any of the important chambered cairns of Arran dating from ca. 3500-2200 B.C. The sites we visited were of later Bronze Age date. At Auchengallon (Fig. 13) on the west side of the island is a Bronze Age circle ca. 10 m in diameter made up of massive slabs of sandstone and red conglomerate, which encloses a later cairn and cist.



Figure 13. Auchengallon cairn and stone circle, Isle of Arran - September 1988. Mull of Kintyre in background.



Figure 14. Machrie Moor standing stones, Isle of Arran - September 1988. Immy Prickett provides the scale.

The most important complex of remains on Arran is at Machrie Moor. A sign on the Machrie-Blackwaterfoot road points to a walking track which leads to the site. Half way along the track is the Moss Farm stone circle comprising an incomplete circle of low stones surrounding what might be a low cairn. Further up the road more stones can be seen standing in the heather and bracken to the south.

The Machrie Moor complex itself includes five stone circles of low round granite boulders, also one marked by three spectacular columns of red sandstone (Fig. 14). There were signs of recent excavation of which I learned a little from the magazine Current Archaeology (No. 109) when I got back to New Zealand. The excavations revealed a typical sequence beginning with wooden circles and ending with the stones which now make up the henges scattered over the moorland.

Museums

There are of course many museums of archaeological interest in Britain. The greatest, and the one you must visit, is the British Museum, Great Russell St, London. I will say nothing of the wondrous Egyptian, Greek and Roman, Western Asiatic and Oriental antiquities. Volumes would not do justice to the material on show nor convey the excitement we felt. Of present interest are the Prehistoric and Romano-British rooms.

Among the collections and items on show is the Mildenhall Treasure of 34 pieces of Romano-British silver of stunning quality. There is a chalk 'goddess' from Grimes Graves. The Lindow Man - 'Pete Marsh' - lies in a little glass box, deserving more, I felt, than to excite the ghoulish interest of passers-by. Of the astonishing wealth of Sutton Hoo material I especially liked the silver dishes and gold and cloisonné clasps and brooches. A surprise was the gorgeously patterned gold work including a Bronze Age cape from North Wales and a case of four lunulae (gorgets) from Ireland. No surprise but rivetting nonetheless were the Battersea and Witham Celtic shields and the wonderful rhythmic decoration on Celtic mirrors and other items. These few items are but a beginning.

In Edinburgh, the antiquities museum in Queen Street, a section of the Royal Museum of Scotland, has everything on show in upright and table cases like the late lamented Skinner Hall in the Otago Museum. In the Prehistoric and Viking Hall some of the material, including worked whale bone, bone awls and stone adzes, looked very familiar. There is a tasselled hood a millenium old, 'St Ninian's Treasure' - a 9th century Pictish silver hoard, and a case full of decorated stone balls, some incised, others looking like knobbed hand grenades. On the floor above is Roman material where I was surprised to see the quality from what was, after all, a temporary and very remote

part of the empire. On the ground floor is a room jammed with carved Pictish stones all desperate for more space. I much preferred the Suenos stone near Inverness and other examples we were to see in their original settings. In the Edinburgh museum are some of the famous 12th century Lewis chessmen, more are in the British Museum. Roman material was also on show at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, where it was much better displayed. The Hunterian also had the best coin display we saw anywhere.

Throughout England there are a number of excellent county or local museums with strong archaeological collections. The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge deals very well with the local archaeological sequence. Soon their upper gallery ethnology displays should be re-opened. Nearby in Trumpington Street is the Fitzwilliam Museum, with collections mainly in the areas of Egyptian and Greek and Roman antiquities, applied and fine arts.

Other county museums we visited which have strong local archaeology displays include the Norwich Castle Museum, Devizes Museum (Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society), Yorkshire Museum (York), Dorset County Museum (Dorchester), Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Exeter), and the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford). All have their strengths and all have surprises in their collections of local prehistoric, Roman and later archaeological material.

In York we visited the far-famed Jorvik Viking Centre which is busily coining money for the York Archaeological Trust. (I estimated a daily gross of 10,000 pounds, not including shop sales.) It is certainly an innovative, exciting and educational presentation, but I may have known and anticipated too much and came away feeling that I wanted more.

Guide books

We bought three general archaeological guide books, all excellent in their own way. Multiply prices by three for N.Z. dollars.

Peter Clayton, Guide to the Archaeological Sites of Britain, 1985 (revised edition). Batsford, London, 240 pp. 9.95 pounds. Two hundred and fifty top sites are introduced in a narrative presentation. There are 178 half tone illustrations.

James Dyer, Southern England: An Archaeological Guide, 1973. Faber and Faber, London, 380 pp, 4.50 pounds. A gazetteer of 630 sites organised by county and described in detail. Essential if you are based in the south of England. There is a brief outline of the prehistory and a good glossary.

Janet and Colin Bord, A Guide to Ancient Sites in Britain, 1979. Paladin, London, 183 pp, 4.95 pounds. Numerous photographs and excellent direction to the sites by way of little maps. The text sometimes touches fringe ideas. The cover picture of Castlerigg stone circle above Keswick in Cumbria makes me regret more than ever we did not make it to the Lake District.

There are numerous other general guides available, among them the following.

Jaquetta Hawkes, The Shell Guide to British Archaeology, 1986. Michael Joseph, London, 320 pp, 14.95 pounds. Six hundred sites are covered. Good introductory essay. Colour plates.

Richard Wainwright, A Guide to the Prehistoric Remains in Britain: Volume One South and East, 1978. Constable, London, 325 pp, 5.50 pounds. Volume 2 does not seem to have appeared. 400 sites. I thought Dyer (above) better.

James Dyer, The Penguin Guide to Prehistoric England and Wales, 1982. Penguin, London, 384 pp, 5.99 pounds. Almost 1000 sites are covered. Another good introduction. Good value.

Richard Feachem, Guide to Prehistoric Scotland, 1977 (second edition). Batsford, London, 223 pp, 6.95 pounds. Inconveniently organised by site type: early settlements, chambered tombs, henge monuments, stones and cairns, cup and ring markings, homesteads, hill forts and settlements, duns, brochs, Pictish symbol stones. Poor maps. Wonderful sites.

A.H.A. Hogg, A Guide to Hill-Forts of Britain, 1984. Paladin, London, 304 pp, 3.95 pounds. An excellent brief review of the topic followed by a gazetteer better than most.

Some maps are available focussing on aspects of history and archaeology.

Ordnance Survey, Ancient Britain: map of the major visible monuments, 1:625000. Third edition, 1982. Shows major sites of the prehistoric, Roman and later period to 1066 A.D. overprinted on a road map.

Other Ordnance Survey items include more detailed maps of Roman Britain (1:625000), Hadrian's Wall (1:31680), and Roman London (1:2500) superimposed on a modern street map - a similar map is available for York. In the "Discover Britain" series there is an excellent map of Saxon and Viking Britain with some text, detailed plans of historic towns and illustrations of important finds, etc.

There is so much archaeological literature available in Britain it is hard to choose. The guides mentioned all have their uses depending on your interests. A brief outline of the prehistory of the islands is given in a British Museum publication (one of an excellent series) with numerous illustrations of some of the memorable things on show in the museum.

I.H. Longworth, Prehistoric Britain, 1985. British Museum, London, 72 pp. 4.95 pounds.

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