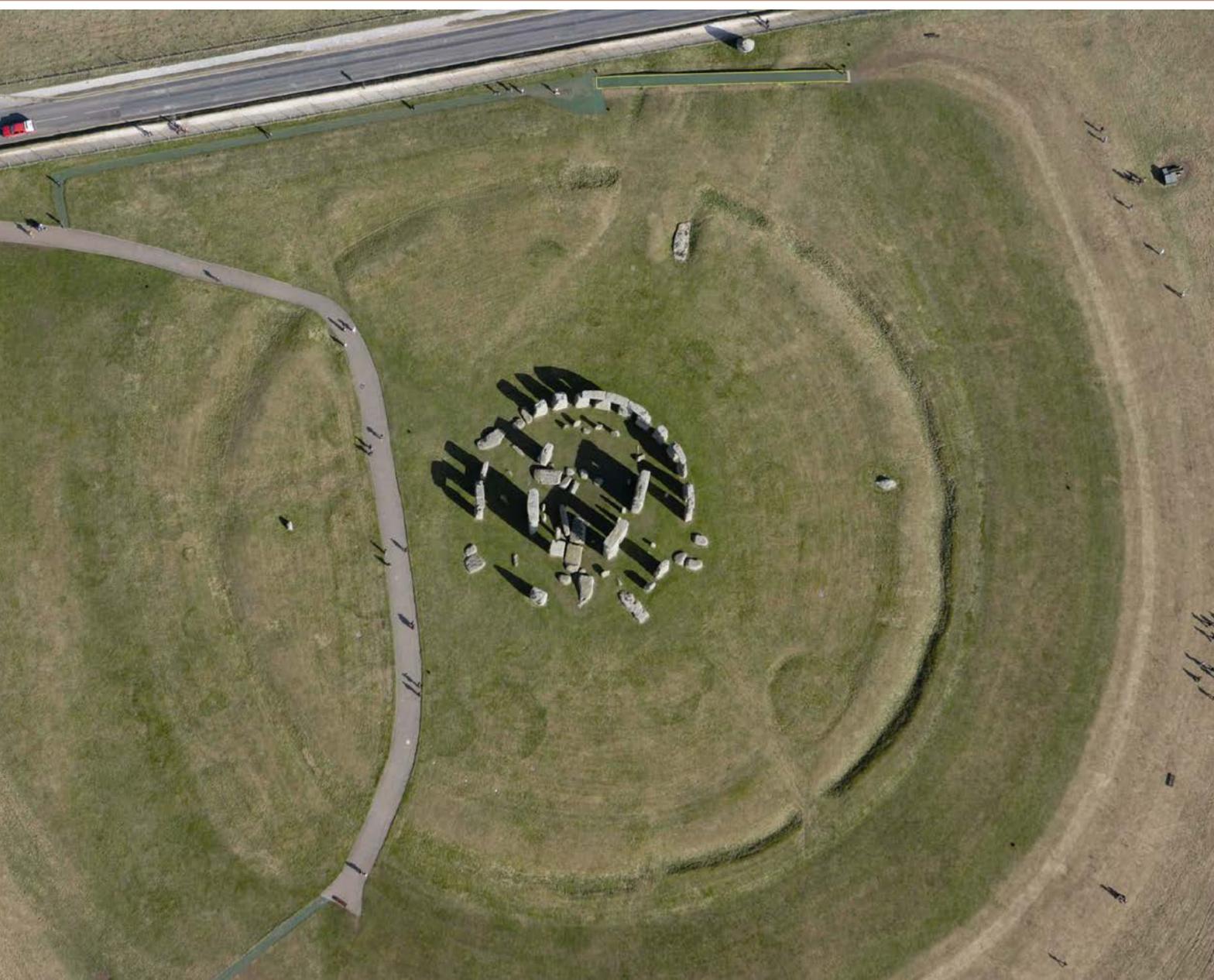


RESEARCH REPORT SERIES no. 6-2014

STONEHENGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE LANDSCAPE PROJECT 'RESTORING' STONEHENGE 1881-1939

Martyn Barber



REMOTE
SENSING

STONEHENGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE LANDSCAPE PROJECT

'RESTORING' STONEHENGE 1881-1939

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NGR: SU 122 422

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ISSN 2046-9799 (Print)

ISSN 2046-9802 (Online)

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SUMMARY

Stonehenge was transformed considerably during the 20th century, the monument itself being subjected to more intervention and alteration from 1901 than at any time since the Bronze Age. Some of the most important episodes of excavation at Stonehenge during the 20th century were driven by a desire to interfere with the monument's physical appearance, often but not always due to concerns about stability. The romantic ruin of previous generations – leaning monoliths, twisted trilithons and recumbent sarsens – was rationalised into a more upright, orderly design and secured for posterity with concrete. At the same time, the visibility of the enclosing earthworks was enhanced for the paying visitor, the enclosure ditch only partially backfilled and surplus material spread across the site to conceal old trackways. 1901 was also the year that the monument was first enclosed and an admission charge introduced, both intended as means of controlling the numbers and types of visitor. Since Stonehenge passed into State hands in 1918, catering for the increasing numbers of visitors has also continued to play an important role in the presentation and appearance of the monument and its immediate surroundings.

Viewing the recent history of Stonehenge through a narrative that sees a privately-owned and neglected 19th century ruin transformed, via essential maintenance and repair, into a unique and monumental expression of Neolithic beliefs and achievement rather overlooks the complexities of that 20th century transformation. Looking more closely at the circumstances surrounding three key episodes – the appearance in 1881 of some timber supports; the straightening and concreting of the massive Stone 56 in 1901; and the uncompleted 'repairs' of 1919-20 – helps to show not only why we have a more stable and secure monument today, but also that the Stonehenge of the 21st century is no closer to its prehistoric state than it was in 1901.

CONTRIBUTORS

This report was researched and written by Martyn Barber.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several colleagues within English Heritage have provided assistance and information, knowingly or otherwise, including Mark Bowden, David Field, Susan Greaney, Rebecca Lane and others involved in the Stonehenge WHS Landscape Project; those in the English Heritage Archive; and the librarians. Outside English Heritage, I would particularly like to thank Matthew Slocombe, Maggie Goodall, Margaret Daly and others at SPAB for allowing me access to their Stonehenge files, as well as curatorial staff at the National Archives, the British Library, and Wiltshire Museum, Devizes, have all been extremely helpful as ever, while information and pertinent discussion has also been provided by Dr Helen Wickstead (Kingston University) and Brian Edwards. I would also like to thank Tessa Machling and Gill Kentish for bringing the photograph used here as Figure 6 to my attention and allowing me to use it.

The front cover image is a detail from NMR 24182/003 1st March 2006, taken by Damian Grady, © English Heritage.

Figure 5 was prepared by Deborah Cunliffe. Figures 1, 4, 15, 22, 23 and 28 were taken by the author on the following dates: 1st August 2006 – figure 28; 14th October 2011 – figures 4, 15 & 23; 14th March 2012 – figures 1, 22. He is also the source of figures 16, 17,

19-21. Figures 2 and 18 appear courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and were originally photographed for English Heritage by Derek Kendall for inclusion in Barber 2011. Figures 7 – 14 can be found in photo album AL0913 in the English Heritage Archive, Swindon. Details of the other images can be found in their respective captions.

ARCHIVE LOCATION

English Heritage Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH

DATE OF RESEARCH

The research for this report was largely carried out during 2011 and 2012, with the bulk of the writing occurring in the autumn and winter of 2013-14.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This report arose initially from a re-assessment of aerial photographs covering the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS), undertaken as part of English Heritage's Stonehenge World Heritage Site Landscape Project. That project has focused on analytical landscape survey across the WHS, with the overarching aim of improving the understanding of the landscape setting of Stonehenge and the WHS for academic, management, presentational and educational reasons (see Bowden et al forthcoming).

Mapping of archaeological and historic landscape features from aerial photographs had been undertaken by English Heritage's Aerial Survey team to National Mapping Programme (NMP) standards in 2001-2 (Crutchley 2002). Consequently, it was decided that (what is now known as) the Aerial Investigation & Mapping team's contribution to the new project should focus particularly on landscape change within the period covered by the available photographs – for Stonehenge, the earliest known aerial views were taken in the summer of 1906 from a military reconnaissance balloon belonging to the Royal Engineers (Capper 1907; Barber 2006; 2011) – and use documentary sources to contextualize and explain the changes observable over time in these photographs.



Figure 1: part of Stonehenge's sarsen settings comprising some stones that have been reset and some that have not, camera facing northeast. On the left is a trilithon of the inner horseshoe setting, comprising Stones 51 and 52 and their lintel. Stones comprising the eastern side of the outer circle are, from right to left, 7 and 6 (the first to be supported, in 1881), 5 and 4, 3, and 2, the last partly obscured by Stone 51.

At an early stage, it was decided that this work should focus on the earlier part of the period covered by aerial photographs, with coverage becoming far more selective after the Second World War. Available resources, especially staff time, meant that any coverage of the post-war period would, due to the abundance of photographs and archival documentation, and particularly given the scale of landscape change in the WHS from the 1950s on, be superficial at best. In addition, the earlier phase is much less well-known, and it was felt that any understanding of the development of Stonehenge and its landscape would clearly benefit from a closer look at the events of those decades. In addition, it was decided that the results of this work would be best presented as two reports rather than one single, potentially unwieldy report. This report focuses on Stonehenge itself (Fig. 1) and its most immediate environs. The second report (Barber 2014) concentrates more on the wider landscape, using the history and demise of the First World War aerodrome that was Stonehenge's near-neighbour for a few years as the focus for considering longer-term landscape change around the monument. This division is, of course, artificial. Particularly for the inter-war years, i.e. after Stonehenge entered guardianship under the Office of Works, and a substantial area of land passed into the possession of the National Trust, the fates of both monument and landscape were very closely entwined.

CHAPTER 2: STONEHENGE FROM 1881 TO THE PRESENT – AN OVERVIEW

Stonehenge – both the stone settings and the surrounding earthworks – were subjected to more intervention and alteration during the 20th century than at any point since the mid-2nd millennium BC (see Darvill *et al*/2012; Marshall *et al*/2012 for the most recent dating of Stonehenge’s archaeologically-recognised phases). Early 21st century Stonehenge looks very different to its late 19th century predecessor. The changes are particularly evident when comparing the aerial views taken in 1906 from the Royal Engineers’ balloon (Fig 2; see also Capper 1907; Barber 2006; 2011) with more recent photographs (Fig 3), although some key developments had already occurred before 1906. Between 1901 and 1964, 13 of the 17 sarsens currently standing in the outer circle were either straightened or re-erected from a prone position, most of them being set in concrete. Of the 8 standing sarsens belonging to the inner horseshoe setting, 4 were straightened and 2 re-erected over the same period, all 6 again being secured below ground with concrete. In addition, 2 bluestones have also received concrete support while at least 7 others have been moved or adjusted in some way (details for all of these stone re-settings can be found in Cleal *et al*/1995).

These adjustments to the stones were accompanied by a considerable amount of excavation encompassing more than half of the area of the monument. The most obvious long-term impact of this was on the ditch defining the eastern side of the earthwork enclosure. This was backfilled during the 1920s excavations with less material than had been dug out of it in order to enhance its visibility to and impact on visitors, clarifying the ground plan of the monument for the benefit of the paying public, a consideration that also led to the newly-discovered and excavated Aubrey Holes having their locations marked on the surface. The practicalities and aesthetics of the visitor experience have also had considerable impact since the first enclosure of Stonehenge in 1901, something which has of course extended beyond the confines of the fence to encompass ideas about an appropriate setting for the monument (see Barber 2014 for more discussion of this).

This report focuses particularly on three episodes of activity at Stonehenge, and their impact on the monument. Although the original intention had been to document the changes since the first aerial photographs, explaining some of the features visible in 1906 – such as the timber props and the wire fence – required an earlier starting point. This was provided by a set of photographs taken in the summer of 1881 by an architect, John Jenkins Cole, who was at Stonehenge at the request of the monument’s then-owner, Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet). The photographs that Cole took that summer (among them Figs. 7 – 14) were presented to the Office of Works in 1918 by Cole’s son, and are now in the English Heritage Archive. However, although some of these images have appeared over the years in various Stonehenge-related publications, they had at some stage become separated from the letters that originally accompanied them. Their origin and purpose has only recently been recognised (Barber 2011).



Figure 2: Vertical view of Stonehenge taken from a Royal Engineers' military observation balloon by 2nd Lt. Philip Henry Sharpe, probably in June or July 1906, and showing Stonehenge 5 years after it had been enclosed. North is towards the top of the photograph. The barbed wire fence can be seen running along the eastern side of the track which crosses the western side of the enclosure. It was accepted in 1901 that this track was a public right of way, unlike the others visible here. The Station Stone on the west, Stone 93, lay outside the enclosed area, being protected instead by its own fence. The height of Stone 56, upright since 1901, is indicated only by the length of its shadow. Stone 22, which collapsed in 1900, can be seen lying prone and in contact with Stone 58 and the lintel 158 (see Figure 5 for a numbered plan of the stone settings). The timber props – two each against stones 30, 1 and 6, and one against Stones 29 and 7 – were put in place in the winter of 1902. The twisted appearance of Stones 6 and 7 and their lintel is clearly apparent from above. Photo by permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Cole's visit in 1881 led to the first known modern architectural intervention into the appearance and stability of Stonehenge – the use of timber props to shore up stones that some considered to be in danger of collapse. 20 years later, the tallest standing stone at Stonehenge – Stone 56 – was straightened, and its base secured with concrete, the first introduction of this material to the monument. Then in 1919-20, further straightening and

concreting occurred as part of an ambitious plan of preservation and excavation. In all three cases, it is the archaeological explorations necessitated by these interventions that has attracted attention. Despite the contemporary controversy surrounding it, the 1881 episode has provoked little subsequent comment – no disturbance of the ground occurred; nothing was learned about Stonehenge’s past. In contrast, the work to straighten Stone 56 in 1901 and its resetting in concrete has often been described and illustrated – unlike the 1881 episode, there are excellent photographs of the work taking

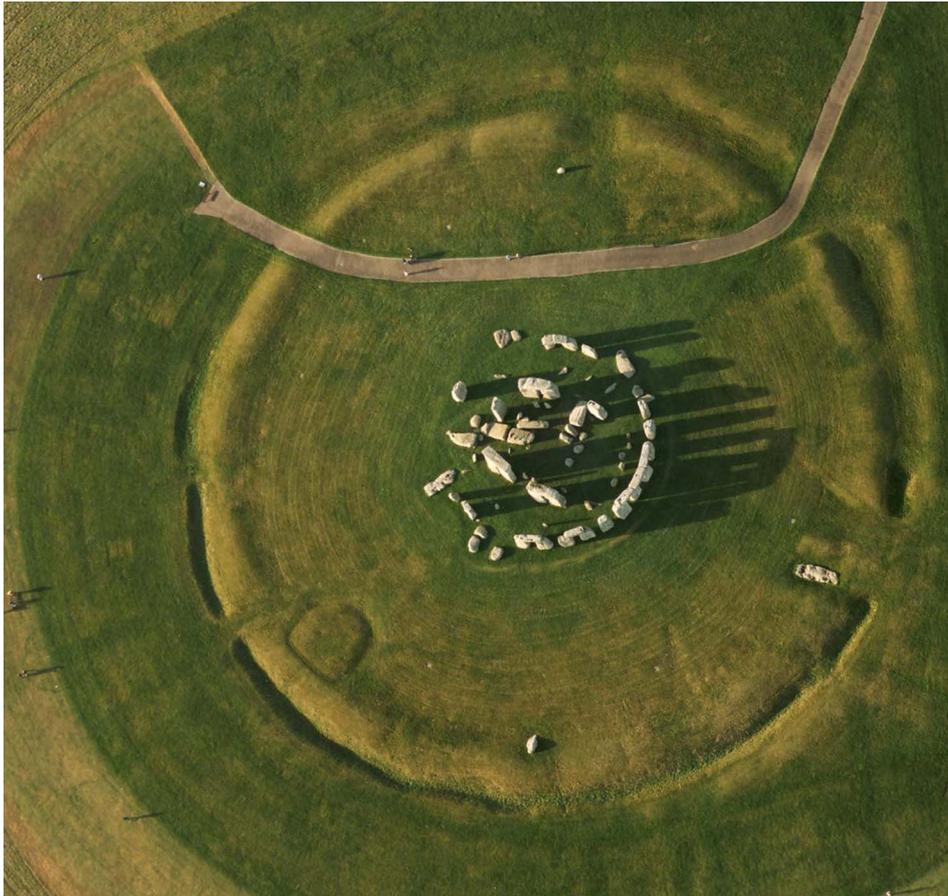


Figure 3: an extract from a more recent vertical view of Stonehenge to compare with Figure 2, this time north to right. The barbed wire is long gone, the barriers keeping people back from the stones imperceptible from this distance. A path for visitors makes partial use of the main track visible in 1906, but little visible trace remains of the others. The ditch is deeper on the eastern (bottom of photo) side as a result of Hawley’s excavations, which also left the so-called South Barrow (lower left) a more visible surface feature. As a result of the various resettings and re-erectations, the stones themselves have a more orderly appearance, emphasising the circularity of the outer ring, and the horse-shoe shape of the inner sarsen setting. Photo taken by Damian Grady, NMR 21918/04 19 December 2002, © English Heritage.

place – but mainly as background to accounts of Gowland’s excavations. The significance of an event which at a stroke altered the appearance of Stonehenge – this tall, leaning stone was a particularly striking and noteworthy feature of the monument, and is central to some of the most famous depictions of the stones, including those by Turner and Constable – is overlooked in favour of the results of the excavation necessitated by the resetting. Gowland’s 1901 investigations around the base of Stone 56 allowed for the first time some understanding of how the sarsens had been worked and erected in prehistory, as well as offering the first assessment of Stonehenge’s possible date based on modern, scientific archaeological exploration. Likewise attention on what happened two decades later has focused firmly on Colonel Hawley’s extensive excavations. The partially completed plan to re-erect and straighten various stones, and the overall impact of the work on the monument as experienced by visitors, has been viewed as very much of secondary importance compared to the results of Hawley’s trenching.

In fact, the reasons why any of these interventions occurred at all have received remarkably little scrutiny. Instead, it is generally accepted that by the end of the 19th century Stonehenge was a crumbling and neglected ruin desperately in need of remedial work. Consequently the straightening or re-erecting of stones and the use of concrete to secure them in place is regarded as essential maintenance to ensure the long-term stability of the monument. However, consideration of the historical context of each episode shows that far from being simply stages in ongoing efforts to stabilise a dangerous ruin, on each occasion there were very different reasons for intervening, with particular and seemingly contrasting philosophies or approaches involved. The appearance of Cole’s timber supports in 1881 saw Stonehenge dragged firmly into the later 19th century debate about ‘restoration’, with arguments about what was acceptable re-occurring during the subsequent episodes of work. In all three of the episodes described here, the work undertaken – despite differing greatly in nature and impact, and including proposals to re-erect fallen stones as well straighten leaning ones – was argued by those involved to be something other than restoration. Nonetheless, in each case there were contemporary complaints that what took place (a) was unnecessary, and (b) did in fact amount to restoration. Critics particularly questioned the need for stones to be brought to a perpendicular position rather than being stabilised in their leaning state (or even being left to the processes of natural decay).

That the issue of re-erecting and straightening stones, and stabilising them with concrete, remains controversial was demonstrated in 2000. In that year, historian Brian Edwards published a paper concerned mainly with the extensive 20th century reworking of Avebury and its surroundings begun in the 1930s by Alexander Keiller and continued subsequently through the efforts of the National Trust and others (Edwards 2000; Murray 1999; Wickstead & Barber forthcoming.). Edwards also mentioned, briefly, that stones at Stonehenge had, as at Avebury, been straightened and set in concrete. Subsequent and considerable media attention focused almost entirely on Stonehenge rather than Avebury, with questions being asked over the extent to which the Stonehenge that visitors experience today is, in fact, a 20th century construction.

Much of this coverage – which sporadically bursts into new life, particularly on the internet – rather overlooked the subtleties of Edwards' arguments, but there was a particular focus on the fact that the work to re-erect some fallen stones, to straighten some of the leaning ones, and to secure them in position with concrete was not acknowledged in the guide books and other information available to visitors on-site (see Fig. 4). To some, this implied some sort of deliberate cover-up (one quoted an 'English Heritage insider' as revealing that "Dark forces were at work in the 70s, when a decision was taken to drop the information about the restorations [from the guidebook]" – <http://www.beehive.thisisdorset.co.uk>, accessed 17th March 2011).

Edwards was arguing that what happened at Stonehenge in the 20th century was an important part of the monument's history: "There should be no shame about the series of restorations. That's what happened...and is a fascinating part of the Stonehenge story which should be told... We have an obligation to be honest and talk about the whole history of the site. In quite a number of cases, there is a huge difference between what historians know and what the public consciousness is about those sites" (quoted in 'Concrete Evidence', www.newscientist.com/ 9th January 2001, accessed 17th March 2011).



Figure 4: Looking eastwards across the northern half of Stonehenge, on the right is Stone 60, featuring some rather obvious concrete dating from 1959. To the left is the restored façade, comprising Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2 plus their lintels.

The fuss eventually led to an English Heritage press release (issued 11th January 2001) which sought to officially clarify matters:

“The Stonehenge that people see today is not a ‘fake’ created in the 20th century, as a number of media reports have implied. Nor has English Heritage been seeking to conceal the fact that restoration work was carried out to the monument over the last century”.

Pointing out that the ‘restoration work’ had been fully documented and widely publicised when it occurred, as well as in more recent authoritative publications, the press release went on to claim that:

“Restoration of Stonehenge was prompted by the need to secure the stability of the monument, both for its own safety and for that of the people who were visiting it in increasing numbers. Nineteenth-century paintings, including those by JMW Turner and John Constable, show a number of the stones leaning at precarious angles and this is confirmed by photographs taken from the mid 1850s on.”

A brief summary of the ‘restoration’ work undertaken since 1901 highlighted the need to deal with the ‘unstable’ nature of the stones concerned, noting that:

“Meticulous care was taken to return the stones to their exact original positions, and no new stones were brought in. Today’s Stonehenge, although considerably ruined, is the monument that was erected by prehistoric man some 3,500 years ago, not an imaginative reconstruction. Had the restoration work not been carried out, it is likely that by now Stonehenge would consist of a pile of fallen and broken stones – an ignominious end for one of the world’s greatest prehistoric monuments.”

The absence of any reference to restoration in the guide book was put down to a lack of space – *“packing the story of such a complex monument into 36 pages requires judgements to be made about what information is most important to people’s understanding of it”.* However, it was noted that *“In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the management of historic sites and the questions of whether, and how, they should be restored. The Stonehenge guidebook is due for updating this year and we will be trying to include more information about how recent generations have interacted with the monument”.*

The restorations of the 20th century concerned more than just the manipulation of some stones and the introduction to the site of concrete. It was never simply a case of stabilising a dangerous ruin. The fact that very different reasons could be offered for very similar procedures has already been noted, but in each case concerns over stability and safety were also firmly tied to other issues, including public and intellectual access, ownership (or custodianship), and the progress of legislation to protect or preserve ancient monuments. At the same time, recent responses to ‘news’ of these restorations also echo the concerns about authenticity raised during each intervention, with 21st century complaints being far more critical of the presence of concrete, for example, than was the case in the early 20th century (something that partly reflects changing attitudes to concrete over the same period: see Wickstead and Barber forthcoming). Meanwhile, suggestions that the nature and extent of 20th century restorations were

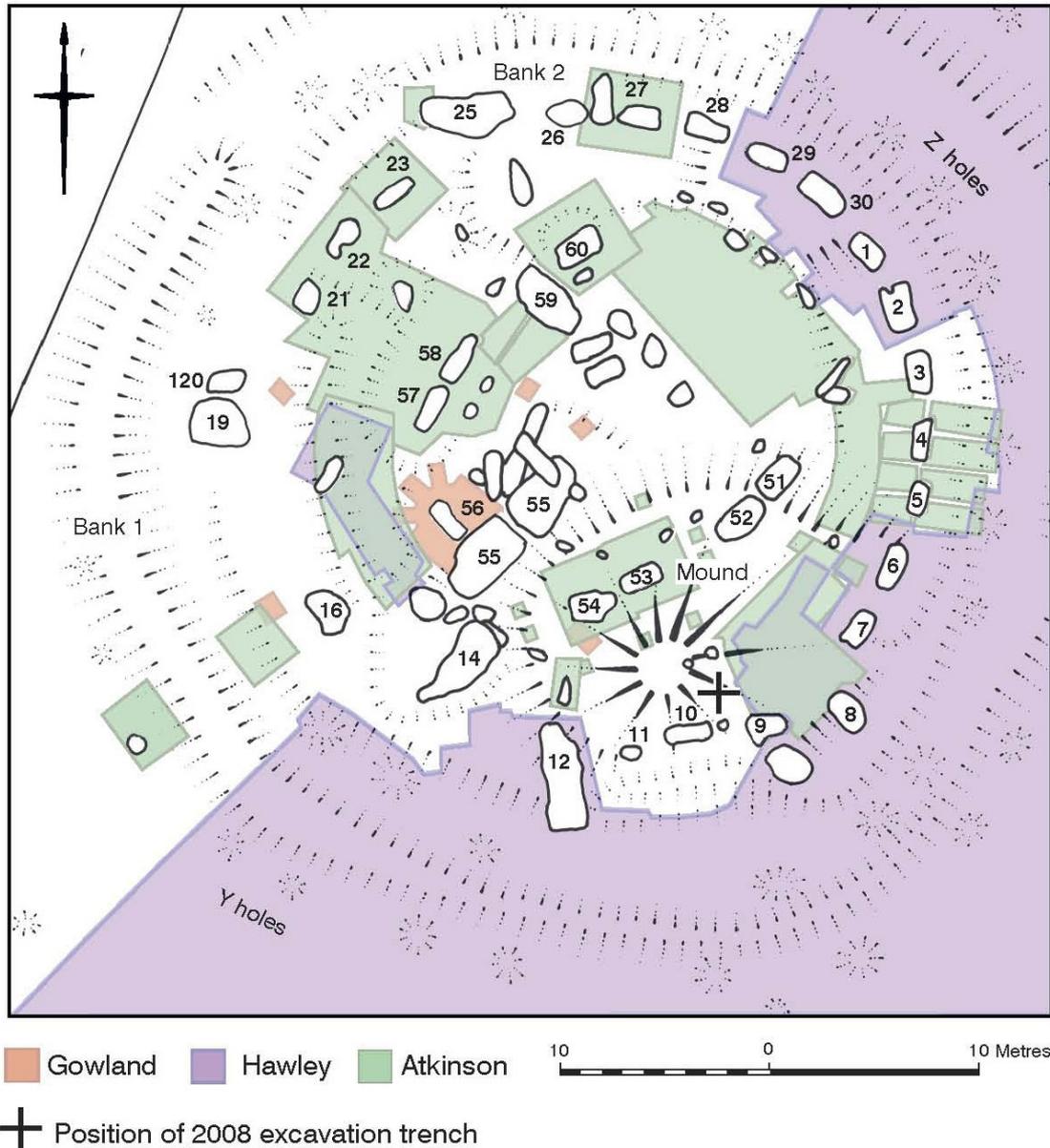


Figure 5: Plan of the central area of Stonehenge (from Field & Pearson 2010), showing the locations of 20th century excavations, with selected stones numbered according to Flinders Petrie's scheme of 1880. The stones discussed in this report are: Stone 56, set in the middle of Gowland's main trench, straightened and set in concrete in 1901; Stones 6 and 7, supported by a timber scaffold in 1881, then by timber props from 1902, and finally straightened and set in concrete 1919-20; and Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2, straightened and set in concrete 1920-21. Stones 57 and 58 are the ones that fell in 1797 – they were re-erected and set in concrete in 1958. Stone 22 fell in 1900 and was also re-erected and set in concrete in 1958. The programme of works in the 1950s and 1960s involved the straightening of several more stones, including Stone 23 which fell in 1963 and was re-erected the following year. In the early 1960s, a number of Atkinson's trenches within the circle were re-excavated down to the chalk and backfilled with clinker and gravel.

somehow concealed from the wider public raise questions about the nature of histories of archaeology, and the extent to which archaeologists have regarded contextualized histories of their own interventions as being of little relevance or importance to the history of places such as Stonehenge.

This report is divided into three main sections, each dealing with one of the episodes of work at Stonehenge already referred to. The first section focuses on Cole and Antrobus' timber scaffold of 1881, set against contemporary debates about 'restoration', and a history of interest in raising stones (rather than preventing fresh falls) over the preceding century or so. The role of organisations such as the Society of Antiquaries and the Wiltshire Archaeological Society in creating a situation in which the reluctant owner, Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet), clearly felt a need to be seen to do something, is also discussed. This episode also occurred during the period when repeated attempts were being made to pass legislation aimed at providing some measure of legal protection for ancient monuments.

The second section considers how the status of Stonehenge was changed, from a romantic ruin to an accident waiting to happen, as a result of the debate surrounding this legislation, as well as considering the wider background to the events of 1901. A collapse of stones at the end of 1900 prompted enclosure of the monument and the introduction of an admission charge for visitors. Today, the need for greater control on access, via enclosure and entrance fee, is seen as an inevitable consequence of the collapse. However, the arguments over the impact of visitors during previous decades demonstrate a far more complex situation largely arising from the efforts of the main archaeological organisations to present themselves as being best placed to decide who should be allowed access and how the site should be managed. A key development was the change in ownership in 1899, the 4th Baronet having raised the question of enclosure even before inheriting. The collapse of 1900 brought together the interests and concerns of those archaeological organisations with an owner who wished to sell.

The third section considers the work undertaken by the Office of Works and the Society of Antiquaries in the wake of Stonehenge falling into public hands. In particular, the aborted campaign of resetting sarsens is re-examined via unpublished archives, and considered against the background of contemporary concerns about the nature of the Office of Works' undertakings at Stonehenge and other sites. This included concerns about the extent to which visitors were being 'deceived' and that, to use a word that occurs in Office of Works files in the 1930s with reference to restoration work at Stonehenge, such work was tantamount to 'faking' the monument. Finally, there is brief coverage of the period down to 1964 before a concluding chapter considers the extent to which, to borrow Canon Rawnsley's words in the wake of the 1901 episode, Stonehenge has become 'disenchanted' through its tangles with the 20th century.

CHAPTER 3: THE ‘RESTORATION’ OF STONEHENGE – I: 1881

The story of Stonehenge’s ‘restoration’ – the process whereby certain stones were selected for straightening or re-erection, and the earthworks and surrounding landscape managed or reworked in order to present a setting deemed more ‘appropriate’ for the monument – begins with an episode in 1881, 20 years before the tallest stone present at Stonehenge – Stone 56 – was pushed back into a perpendicular position and its base set in concrete. This first documented intervention at Stonehenge to be more concerned with the stability of the stones than with a desire to find out something about the monument’s history and origins, was undertaken at the request of the then-owner of Stonehenge, Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet). The task was undertaken by his appointed architect, John Jenkins Cole, whose chosen methods included photographic documentation of the condition of the monument.

The reasons for Antrobus’ request and the debate that both prompted and followed Cole’s work are of considerable significance for understanding the longer-term history of conservation and restoration work at Stonehenge. They also shed light on Antrobus’ objections to Sir John Lubbock’s Ancient Monuments Bill (which finally made it onto the statute book in 1882) and the idea of Stonehenge being taken into state guardianship under the terms of that legislation. Antrobus’ opposition has generally been understood as that of a landowner who regarded the legislation as an infringement on the rights of property ownership, while his personal custodianship of the monument has been characterised as neglectful, as part of a broader historical narrative that essentially treats the monument as being in danger until it finally entered state guardianship in 1918. More recently there has been some recognition that the situation may not have been so straightforward – for example Rosemary Hill (2008, 142) described the events of 1881 as follows:

“On the advice of his architect J.J. Cole, Antrobus adopted a solution in line with the most radical conservation thinking of the day. He did what the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings would have done. He propped up some of the leaning stones with stout scaffolding that made it obvious where he had intervened. Otherwise he left it alone. ‘To restoration I am distinctly opposed,’ he wrote, ‘but this might be considered in the light of preservation.’ It might have been William Morris speaking.”

This chapter aims to provide a wider context for Cole’s work at Stonehenge by considering previous planned interventions, all concerned solely with re-erecting fallen stones; the increasing – and widely reported – insistence from archaeological organisations that intervention was necessary to prevent further collapses; the contemporary debate about ‘restoration’, which informed the various opinions about what could and could not be done to Stonehenge; and contemporary reaction, mainly as reported in the press, both to what the archaeological bodies wanted, and to what Antrobus and Cole actually did. How did an essentially anti-restoration approach come to be regarded by many as an act of restoration?

Cole's 'restoration'

John Jenkins Cole announced his intentions in a letter to *The Times* written on 16th August 1881. It was prepared in response to an article published in the newspaper that same day which had called attention to both the apparent likelihood of some stones falling, and the possibility of raising the trilithon which had collapsed in 1797 (Stones 57 and 58, plus their lintel, on the western side of the sarsen horseshoe: p39 below). Cole's letter, published on 18th August (p.4), informed the paper's readers that:

"With reference to a paragraph in The Times of this day, it will perhaps be of interest to the antiquarian societies mentioned that instructions were lately given for a careful examination of the supposed insecure part of the outer circle of Stonehenge [Stones 6 and 7 and their lintel] and for steps to be taken to avoid an accident. I propose to do so shortly, and also to ascertain the exact degree of inclination of the leaning stone [Stone 56] and to test it by photographs taken 22 years ago. It is very doubtful whether any movement has taken place within this century."



Figure 6: Photograph taken sometime between 1881 and 1901, possibly by Francis Frith. With the camera positioned south of the monument, Cole's timber support for Stones 6 & 7 and their lintel can be seen towards the extreme right. The trilithon at the centre is the one comprising Stones 53 and 54 and their lintel. The leaning Stone 56 is to their left. Photograph courtesy of Tessa Machling and Gill Kentish.

"It is useless to urge on the owner of Stonehenge (it is often forgotten that there is an owner), Sir Edmund Antrobus, that the great trilithon which fell in 1797 should be reinstated. The later baronet would not hear of it, neither will the present one. He wrote respecting the outer circle – 'To restoration I am distinctly opposed, but this might be considered in the light of preservation, not only of the monument, but of its observers.'"

Cole's careful examination of the monument occurred at some point between the writing of this letter on 16th August, and the 10th September, this latter date being the first occasion that comments on his handiwork began to appear in both the local and national press. On that day, the Salisbury Journal (p.3) reported on what it called 'the restoration of Stonehenge':

"After all that has been recently said and written upon this subject we are sorry to see that steps have already been taken, doubtless under the sanction of Sir Edmund Antrobus, towards the 'restoration' of Stonehenge. The only remaining outer trilithon on the north-eastern side of the rings has been bolstered up by means of a gallows-like wooden erection, very similar in construction to that which supported Temple Bar during the last months of its existence. This is placed transversely beneath the upper stone; and, as it is of a very substantial nature, it completely destroys the picturesque effect of that side of the stones, and probably more so than the majority of them; and we cannot conceive why it should have been chosen as a corpus vile for the 'restorers' to begin their experiments upon. The huge pillar which inclines inwards on the south-western side will, presumably, be next taken in hand, for, since the work has been commenced, it is but natural to suppose that it will be completed, and that all the stones will ere long be safely buttressed by a number of unsightly props and scaffoldings. We cannot but regret that the 'restorers' have at last been allowed to have their way, for it is now impossible to say when or where their reforming mania will end."

The story was repeated in *The Times*, *The Standard*, the *Daily News* and others, each adopting similarly critical tones towards this apparent act of 'restoration'. The first defence, or rather attempt at explanation, of what had occurred came in a letter to the *Daily News* from Wiltshire archaeologist William Cunnington, published on 13th September 1881. Cunnington insisted that:

"Your correspondent...writes under a complete misapprehension of the process which is going on at Stonehenge. Sir E. Antrobus, the owner, is about to replace in an upright position two of the stones of the outer circle, with their impost, which are now in danger of falling, to the great peril of visitors. There is no fear that anything will be done to injure the building or to mar its picturesque appearance. At the same time it is to be hoped that as much of the earth will necessarily be removed, the opportunity will not be lost to search for fragments of the old rocks, and to elicit any facts connected with the buildings."

In other words, Cole's timber scaffolding was intended as a temporary measure, aimed at securing the stones in place until work could be undertaken to return them to an upright position, with archaeological observation of any resulting disturbance of the ground. This

was confirmed by two further letters published in newspapers a week later, one from an acquaintance of Antrobus and the second from Antrobus himself. The first, which appeared in *The Standard* on 20th September, was written by T Lloyd Fowler, son of the vicar of Amesbury. He had passed one of the critical newspaper reports on to Antrobus, who had written to Fowler in reply. Fowler quoted Antrobus as follows:



Figure 7: One of Cole's 1881 photographs of Stonehenge. Cole claimed to have taken several of his photographs from specially-erected scaffolding. The angle suggests this one may have been taken from the top of Stone 30 or 1. On the left is the tall leaning monolith, Stone 56; towards the foreground on the right is Stone 60. In the centre of the photograph, beyond Stone 60, can be seen the prone trilithon, comprising Stones 57, 58 and their lintel, that collapsed outwards in 1797. In the distance are Virgo (or Fargo) Cottages and associated farm buildings, built in the late 1840s and demolished in 1918. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

"I wonder what would have been the view as to my fulfilment of the duties of property if, after having obtained an opinion from an architect of high standing, which was to the effect that the existing state of the Eastern Trilithon was dangerous to health, I had left all

alone. It is propped to prevent danger to human life. The stones can easily be restored to the perpendicular, and Stonehenge remains as it was; at any rate, but little less a ruin, if considerably less dangerous. There is no doubt the Eastern Trilithon was moving – the cross stone was springing, and it might have fallen at any moment. If I could have bound it to fall by night, with an engagement that no visitor should be present, so entire is my detestation of restoration of such a monument I think I should have been tempted to agree to it, and have left all alone; but in what Court can I enforce adherence to the engagement?"



Figure 8: Another of Cole's 1881 views of the 'picturesque ruin', looking north. In the centre is the massive trilithon comprising Stones 53 and 54. On the extreme left is Stone 56, leaning inwards, and on the extreme right can just be seen Stone 6 and the lintel it shared with its neighbour Stone 7. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

Meanwhile, Antrobus himself, in a letter reported by several newspapers, explained further (quoted here from *The Times*, 20th September 1881, p10):

"For some years now I have doubted the safety of the eastern trilithon, and, having obtained the professional opinion of an excellent architect of high standing, I find he also thinks its condition may occasion danger to visitors. Under these circumstances and under his advice the props complained of have been put up, so as to insure absolute security

until the time arrives for taking further steps. The number of visitors always present in the autumn renders it difficult to proceed, and spring will probably have to be waited for. Before anything is done due notice shall be given, so that any interested in the matter may be able to be present and witness anything that the necessary disturbance of the soil may bring to light."

Antrobus was, then, prepared to countenance some small degree of interference with the stability of the stones, but only to ensure that Stonehenge remained a safe place to visit.

The background to Cole's intervention is long and complex, involving several overlapping threads. Some of these are specific to Stonehenge – the wish to re-erect particular fallen stones; the desire (on the part of some) to restrict access to the monument; the efforts by various bodies to assert some authority over the management, presentation and interpretation of Stonehenge – while others relate to matters of broader concern at the time, the most obvious being the longstanding debate surrounding the ethics of restoration, and the ongoing efforts of Sir John Lubbock and others to pass legislation aimed at offering 'ancient monuments' some kind of protection. These can only be dealt with briefly here, but it is important to stress that the arguments over Stonehenge in 1881 reflected much wider issues than just the condition and future of that particular monument. However, before looking at those wider concerns, it may first be useful to consider the longer history of proposals to intervene in the condition and appearance of the monument.

Stonehenge 1797-1881

The desire to do something about the state of Stonehenge seems first to have been discussed in the wake of the collapse of a trilithon in January 1797 (see below, p39). During 1800, the Rev. William Coxe, Rector of Stourton, managed to raise some £50 by subscription to go towards the cost of putting the collapsed stones back up again. The owner of Stonehenge at the time, the 4th Duke of Queensbury, refused permission. Chippindale (2005, 115) described the Duke as 'notoriously mean and unpredictable', and mentioned his serious neglect of Amesbury House as evidence. However, a near-contemporary account of a subsequent request to re-erect the stones suggests that Queensbury's refusal may have been rooted more in aesthetics than meanness.

The antiquarian Thomas Stackhouse's reference to the Duke came in his account of a further effort to raise the collapsed stones. The date of this attempt is unclear, but must have occurred prior to 1810, the year the Duke died. Stackhouse described the events in his *Two Lectures on the Remains of Ancient Pagan Britain...*, published in 1833:

"In contemplating the lofty and weighty masses of Stonehenge, many people conclude that the ancient Britons possessed a knowledge of the mechanical powers, or the combination of them, superior to that of the moderns; this can only be the conclusion of those who are totally unacquainted with the present state of mechanical science in this

and the neighbouring countries... About eight years ago, a gentleman of Salisbury, one of a small association of antiquaries, of whom the learned and persevering Sir R. C. Hoare may, I believe, be considered a member, very obligingly, drove me to Stonehenge. In our way thither he informed me that these gentlemen and himself being determined to give the world a practical confutation of the error, agreed to send for a person from London to survey the spot and give an estimate of the charge for re-erecting three of the fallen stones, that is, one entire trilithon; they did so: after duly considering the matter, the person applied to, agreed to raise the uprights, and replace the top stone for £300; this, he told me, they were willing to give him, and would have done it, but it was necessary to have permission from the lord of the manor, (the late Duke of Queensbury,) on applying to him for the purpose, he declined giving his consent by saying, that he thought the whole more picturesque in its present state, and desired that, on that ground, they would excuse him” (Stackhouse 1833, 31).

The next serious proposal appears not to have been made until 1849, by which time Stonehenge and its surroundings had been in the hands of the Antrobus family for more than two decades. The Royal Archaeological Institute had chosen Salisbury as the venue for their annual summer meeting. Formed just five years earlier, in 1844, the Institute’s Central Committee was clearly intent on some high profile fieldwork to coincide with their week in Wiltshire. Some round barrows near Bulford had been made available for exploration by the landowner, but proved a disappointment, having clearly been dug into some time before. The main event, however, was Silbury Hill (Leary and Field 2010, 36-41), but the Committee had also had Stonehenge in their sites. The published report of the Annual Meeting (Anon. 1849, 299) described what happened on Wednesday 25th July, once a halt had been called to the unsatisfactory encounter with Bulford’s barrows:

“...the party hastened to Stonehenge, the grand object of their pilgrimage, where the Dean of Westminster (President of the Section of Antiquities) delivered some remarks on the various theories relating to the spot... The Dean alluded to the proposal which had been advanced to raise the fallen trilithon. Mr. Sidney Herbert made some remarks in support of the proposition. The stones, he observed, had fallen within memory; the plan involved no incongruous change; they might be erected precisely as they stood, previous to their fall in Jan., 1797, in consequence of their having been carelessly undermined. Sir John Awdry assured the assembly that Sir Edmund Antrobus had yielded his assent, and liberally offered to raise the stones at his own expense, if the proposition should meet with the approval of archaeologists on this occasion.”

The reasons why this didn't happen are as yet unclear, especially as the problems of finance and consent seem to have been dealt with (assuming, of course, that Antrobus was aware of the likely cost – the £300 of the 1820s was a far from insubstantial sum). It may be that the Institute’s experiences at Silbury Hill played a part. There, the stated aims had been

“...to discover, if possible, any objects or remains which could lead to the formation of just conclusions as to its origin, and a probably correct knowledge of the use and purpose for which it had been constructed” (Tucker 1851, 297).

In the end, tunnelling and excavation had continued for far longer than planned, at greater expense than intended, and with results that fell a long way short of ‘probably correct knowledge’.

Interest in the idea of reversing the 1797 collapse appears to have been renewed in the 1870s, as an increasingly disciplined and scientific archaeology was attempting to distinguish itself from established antiquarian approaches to the study of the past. At Stonehenge, this meant an interest in more than straightforward re-erection (or, rather, to prove that it was possible to re-erect fallen stones). There was now an insistence that modern scientific excavation was the only route to knowledge of the monument’s real age and purpose. There was also an increasing emphasis on preservation, focused around a belief that other stones may be in danger of falling. A crucial factor influencing this shift in emphasis was the debate around Sir John Lubbock’s proposed legislation to protect ancient monuments (see below, p59), although in the case of Stonehenge there were other factors – relating to physical and intellectual access, for example – underpinning this new-found concern with preservation.

In the summer of 1880, the British Archaeological Association’s annual congress gathered at Devizes for several days’ discussion of archaeological matters, including visits to places of interest in the county. The question of what should be done at Stonehenge was raised on several occasions during the week, particularly by Lord Nelson, President of the Congress, beginning with his opening address on 16th August in which he appealed for excavation, restoration and preservation:

“He did not see... why a careful tunnelling should not be conducted under the so-called altar-stone at Stonehenge, to see if any remains which might illustrate the age of Stonehenge could be found there or within the sacred circle; and secondly, he advocated the replacing of those stones which had fallen within man’s memory, or a record of which had been carefully preserved. The mechanical appliances of the present day could easily replace them. The necessity of something being done to preserve the ruin as handed down to us was becoming more and more pressing. One of the great stones was gradually leaning more heavily on a stone of the inner circle, and it might come down any day. Some means should be taken by artificial supports to prevent that catastrophe, and he could not for the life of him see why, when that was done, they might not have those stones replaced whose position was clearly known, and whose fall had been carefully recorded” (Anon. 1880, 131).

Nelson re-iterated his appeal four days later at Stonehenge itself, using one of the fallen stones as a platform from which to address the assembled crowd, and returned to the subject again the following day in his farewell address to the Congress:

“The trilithon that had fallen within man’s memory should be replaced; and the leaning stone should be made more secure; it had gone over a good deal more during the last five or ten years, and if it fell down not only would they lose it from its position, but it would infallibly be broken in the fall, and would also knock down the little stone beneath” (ibid., 175).

Discussions sparked by this gathering continued after the members of the Congress had gone home. The two most significant subsequent developments were, firstly, a visit to Stonehenge by a specially-formed Committee of the Society of Antiquaries (see below); and secondly a debate about the matter during the 1881 annual summer meeting of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, held at Bradford-on-Avon from the 8th to the 11th August. The latter meeting was reported on in detail in *The Times* (August 16th, p.4):

“During the week’s discussions the state of Stonehenge occupied prominent attention. The committee reported that, in conjunction with the secretary of the British Archaeological Association, a representation had been made to the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain, calling their immediate attention to the insecure condition of certain stones of the outer circle and their imminent danger of falling. At the same time, the question of re-erecting the great trilithon which fell in 1797, and which had so often been advocated by the archaeologists, was again pressed upon the parent societies. A committee of the Society of Antiquaries, including Sir John Lubbock, had consequently visited Stonehenge last month, and made a careful examination of the stones, the result being that the whole question was to be submitted to a general meeting at the Society of Antiquaries next November. In the course of discussion it was stated the leaning stone was at an angle of 60 degrees, and that unless some measures were immediately adopted to make it secure, its remarkable character would be destroyed”.

Antrobus’ request to Cole was in direct response to such concerns being raised by the various national archaeological institutions, and being reported in the press, and specifically in response to the visit by the Society of Antiquaries’ committee. Indeed, Cole’s letter to *The Times* explaining his plans was written in direct response to the earlier article in the same newspaper, quoted above, reporting on both the Wiltshire Archaeological Society’s meeting and the Society of Antiquaries’ committee visit.

The Society of Antiquaries’ Stonehenge Committee

The special Stonehenge Committee of the Society of Antiquaries had been established at a meeting of the Society’s Council on 17th May 1881, a meeting which had been held in response to a letter sent by Albert Hartshorne, Secretary of the Royal Archaeological Institute, on 3rd May 1881

“...in which the Council of the Institute invite the attention of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of London to a Resolution of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society on the

desirability of raising the trilithon which fell in 1797 and of readjusting the three stones in the outer circle (the last on the left hand facing the altar-stone) which now threaten to fall” (Anon 1883, 9).

The tall leaning stone, Stone 56, was not mentioned at all, which is a little curious given that its apparently precarious state, and the need to do something about it, had been raised the previous year by Flinders Petrie (he had recommended setting it in concrete: Petrie 1880).

The Society of Antiquaries' Council responded to the invitation with four resolutions of their own:

“I. That, in the opinion of the Council, it is desirable to prevent further mischief to the three stones in the outer circle – the last on the left hand facing the so-called altar-stone, which are inclined from their original position and now threaten to fall – by replacing them in their perpendicular position.

II. That, in the opinion of the Council, it is desirable to postpone their conclusion with regard to the proposed replacement of the trilithon in the position it occupied before its fall in 1797 until further informed on the subject.

III. That a Committee, consisting of H.S. Milman, Esq., Director; G. T. Clark, Esq., F.S.A., J. T. Micklethwaite, Esq., F.S.A., Sir John Lubbock, Bart, F.S.A., and the Rev. W.C. Lukis, F.S.A., with power to add to their number, be appointed to visit Stonehenge, and report on the expediency of replacing the trilithon of 1797, and on the best means of carrying out resolution.

IV. That Mr. Milman be requested to undertake to convene the above Committee, and to fix some day before the next meeting of the Council (June 21) to proceed to Stonehenge” (Anon. 1883, 9).

The Committee was, in fact, unable to meet until 7th July due to various individual commitments, and even then they had to assemble without Lubbock. Ultimately Lubbock neither contributed to the Committee's final report, nor did he submit one of his own.

When the Wiltshire Archaeological Society met at Bradford-On-Avon in August 1881, the Committee had yet to officially report – they did not do so until 24th November – although an initial response had been prepared for the Council of the Society of Antiquaries on 21st July. In the absence of anything official, the Wiltshire Archaeological Society instead informed its members that:

“...though their report has not yet been presented to the Society,...the whole question is to be submitted to a general meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in November next, with a view to such action as may then be determined on. Your Committee earnestly hope that immediate steps will then be taken both to secure such stones as are now in

danger of falling, and to raise the great trilithon which fell almost within the memory of living man, and whose original position can be exactly determined. Should such a course be pronounced advisable, it will then remain to approach the owner of Stonehenge, with the view of obtaining his sanction to carry out the work recommended in such a manner as to meet his wishes, and to obtain such help and the loan of such appliances from the dockyards or elsewhere as may be deemed most advisable” (Anon 1881, 4).

The Rev. Lukis, a member of the Society of Antiquaries’ Stonehenge Committee, was present at the Bradford-On-Avon meeting, and took the opportunity to publicly pre-empt the Committee’s recommendations, or at least his version of them:

“The attention of the Committee...had been directed to two of the leaning stones of the outer circle [6 & 7], but they did not think they were sufficiently out of the perpendicular to make their position insecure. The trilithon had fallen, and could not fall further, and might therefore be considered in a secure position, but the point to which the attention of the Committee was directed was the leaning stone, which was a remarkable feature in that monument. It was leaning at a considerable angle, 60 degrees he thought, and was evidently moving. If some effectual measure was not adopted to make it secure, it would fall and damage the building very much” (ibid.).

Antrobus and Cole were clearly well aware of the particular concerns of the various Institutes, Associations, Societies and their Committees – even if there was not direct communication, the various proceedings and resolutions were being reported in detail in the local and national press. When writing to *The Times*, Cole specifically ruled out any chance of the great trilithon being reinstated, and also dismissed concerns about Stone 56. The only intervention made by Cole concerned the other leaning stones which, of course, Lukis claimed were not ‘insecure’, although in his later report to the Society of Antiquaries he did qualify this claim.

When presented on 24th November 1881 for the consideration of the Society of Antiquaries as a whole, the report (Anon. 1883) revealed a Committee divided in their opinions, especially on the matter of the re-erection of the fallen trilithon and also on what to do about the leaning monolith. This had not been part of the original brief, but the angle of inclination and the fact that it appeared to be supported by another, smaller, stone had, as Lukis indicated, prompted concern. The report comprised a joint statement by Milman, Clark, Micklethwaite and Lukis, summarising the areas of agreement between them, followed by an individual report from each on the matters where they differed.

As far as the ‘trilithon’ in the outer circle (Stones 6 and 7 – strictly speaking not a trilithon at all but a remnant of continuous circuit of uprights and lintels) was concerned, the committee felt that while the two upright stones were leaning in opposing directions, they were not leaning *“so far as to overhang their centres of gravity, or to be at this time in a very precarious position”* (ibid., 10). It was suggested, however, that an eye be kept on the lintel. The committee proposed applying a thin band of cement at each end, connecting it to its supporting stones:



Figure 9: Cole's 1881 view of Stone 56, leaning forward and apparently resting against Bluestone 68 (there was some dispute in the late 19th century as to whether the two were actually in contact). Cole took this photograph with the intention of proving that the stone was not in danger of falling. Blame for its apparent predicament was often mistakenly placed on the Duke of Buckingham's excavations in 1620, although depictions of Stonehenge from the 16th century show that the stone was already leaning at a marked angle then. In the background, on the right, is the trilithon comprising Stones 21 and 22. 22 fell in 1900 and was re-erected and set in concrete, with lintel replaced, in 1958. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

“If [the cement] remains unbroken, no interference will be needed; but should fracture and separation show the stones to be in motion, they should be pressed by screw-jacks into a vertical position” (ibid., 10).

The collapsed trilithon was, as Lukis had noted previously, quite secure in its current position. The committee suggested that re-erection, while possible from a practical point of view, would be expensive and could hardly be considered urgent (ibid., 11).

Finally, it was argued that the tall leaning monolith, Stone 56, needed immediate attention (ibid., 11) – it seemed to be supported by one of the bluestones, although this was a matter of debate. It was disputed by Cole, for example, who felt the idea that this massive monolith could be supported by the bluestone was somewhat implausible. It was also later claimed that, in 1876, the vicar of Amesbury had been assured “that a handkerchief edgewise had often been passed between the two stones” (Letter, Rev Arthur W Phelps, *The Times* 17th September 1892, p.12). However, while the committee members felt that any further movement or collapse would damage Stone 56, the bluestone, and probably others, they were unable to agree on what steps should be taken to remedy the situation. While there was broad agreement on what to do with the other stones, for Stone 56 each committee member offered his own separate opinion (ibid., 12-15). Clark and Lukis both argued for it to be returned to an upright position, and to be secured to prevent it from leaning again, though they differed in how this should be achieved. Micklethwaite and Milman preferred to see it held in its present leaning position, though again they suggested different methods of achieving this. None agreed with Cole – that nothing at all needed to be done.

Clark, an antiquarian with a background in engineering, had noted what he called ‘an incipient crack’ on the stone, which added to the sense of urgency. He suggested using “a couple of powerful screw-jacks, or an hydraulic press” to return the stone to an upright position, and to retain it in that position using three granite posts, 2 feet square and 3 feet long, fixed in the ground along the inner face of the stone, the faces of each post being applied as close as possible to the stone (ibid., 12-13). Micklethwaite, an architect with links to SPAB, preferred to retain the stone in its leaning position, and argued for a form of support even more visible than Clark’s granite posts. He suggested constructing an arch of brick and cement to form a flying buttress, with a firm foundation in the chalk bedrock (ibid., 13). Milman, who also preferred to maintain Stone 56 at its present angle, thought the best solution was to apply ‘sufficient weight’ to the foot of the stone. The details could be left to a ‘*competent engineer*’ (ibid., 15).

Lukis, who in contrast to his earlier comments to the Wiltshire Archaeological Society was now in favour of re-erecting the 1797 trilithon, agreed with Clark that the stone needed to be returned to an upright position, but disagreed with the use of screw-jacks. He argued that it was not sufficient to simply push the stone back to the vertical, as this would not necessarily return it to its original position in the ground. Instead, he insisted,

rather vaguely, that *“the stone must be lifted and dropped into its original place, and this operation would necessitate expensive machinery”* (ibid., 14-15).

The Stonehenge Committee and ‘Restoration’

As would be expected, given the membership of the committee and the nature of their task, the individual reports showed a clear awareness of the ethics of restoration. In fact, each of the committee members justified their proposals in terms that sought to depict their preferred solution as something other than restoration. For example, Clark justified his screw-jacks and granite posts as follows:

“Objection has been taken to any kind of repair or restoration of megalithic monuments in general, which it is thought should be left in the state in which they are now found, as otherwise cromlechs will be replaced upon their supports, cists amended, and restorations effected which will quite alter the character and diminish the value of these monuments.

“This objection however scarcely seems to apply to the replacing of an inclined stone in its vertical position, and so preventing its fall and possible fracture. This, which is the extent of the above recommendations, is surely of a strictly conservative character, and it may be hoped that means will be found, either by the Government, or by private subscription, applied through the Government officers of Ordnance, to preserve Stonehenge from any other changes than those which, from the nature of things, cannot be avoided” (ibid., 13).

Micklethwaite argued that:

“...whatever is done should be such as to preserve the monument in its present condition and not in any way an attempt to ‘restore’ it to what it may once have been. A ‘restoration’ may be perfectly accurate, but the carrying out of it must necessarily destroy the evidence upon which it is based, and, further, any such work upon so important a monument as Stonehenge is likely to become a dangerous precedent, and to lead to the manipulation of other pre-historic remains, which must result in great injury to them” (ibid., 13).

His proposal – a highly visible bricks-and-mortar buttress – seemed to him the ideal solution. Its very incongruousness was the point *“in that it would proclaim the thing to be no more than a modern prop put in to prevent the ancient monument deteriorating further than it already has done”* (ibid., 13). No-one would confuse it for part of the original structure. Milman was more concise, refusing to countenance anything other than arresting the further decline of Stone 56 by the least obtrusive means possible (ibid., 15).

Lukis’ position appears to represent the opposite extreme to Milman, yet he still sought to distinguish his proposals from ‘objectionable restoration’, which he characterized as

“the giving of an entirely new character to an old building by the removal or alteration of ancient features”. At Stonehenge, by (incorrectly) ascribing the stone’s degree of inclination to ‘unscientific exploration in 1620’, he argued that re-erecting and securing it was in fact archaeology’s ‘sacred duty’ – there was a moral imperative to straighten the monolith. Re-erection of the 1797 trilithon was justified on the grounds that it had occurred relatively recently, so the exact position of the stones should be readily identifiable. Furthermore, *“its replacement would add very considerably to the interest and beauty of the monument”*. As for the possibility of setting a dangerous precedent, he was unconcerned – re-erecting stones whose original position was unknown would clearly be *‘unwise and unjustifiable’* (ibid., 14-15).

The Society of Antiquaries’ published *Proceedings* merely noted *‘considerable discussion’* following the presentation of these reports, with the balance of opinion opposed to returning any leaning stones to an upright position. However, to prevent further collapse, *“the suggestion which seemed to meet with most general acceptance was...to lay a mass of concrete around the base of the falling stone”* (ibid., 16).

John Jenkins Cole and his 1881 photographs

No written report, or indeed anything specific from Cole about his work at Stonehenge, has yet surfaced other than his original letter to *The Times*. Otherwise, all we have are his photographs, plus a few letters and newspaper articles referring to his work and, of course, the appearance of wooden scaffolding around Stones 6 and 7, this remaining in place for around 20 years.

As already noted, Cole’s letter to *The Times*, published on 18th August 1881, referred directly to the three main issues of concern among the various archaeological and antiquarian bodies – the allegedly insecure ‘trilithon’ in the outer circle, the leaning stone, and the collapsed trilithon. The idea of re-erecting the fallen stones was rejected outright, while the insecure stones were supported with scaffolding. As for the leaning stone, Cole stated his intention to establish the angle it was leaning at, and to compare it against photographs taken 22 years previously. Judging by his choice of words, he fully expected to demonstrate that no movement had occurred in those 22 years.

The photographs that he referred to would appear most likely to comprise a set taken on Cole’s behalf by a Mr. E. Fisher of Salisbury, who Cole described as *‘an architectural friend of mine’*. Cole was impressed enough by these photographs to persuade Fisher to present three of them (it is not clear how many were taken) to the Royal Institute of British Architects. Cole’s letter accompanying the photographs is dated 7th January 1859 and survives in the RIBA archives (see Barber 2011), though unfortunately the whereabouts of the photographs themselves is unknown. Cole referred in his letter to a *‘general view’*, while his intention to study the angle of inclination of Stone 56 suggests that at least one of the photographs must have featured a clear view of that stone, perhaps similar to the view that Cole himself took (Fig. 9).



Figure 10: A view by Cole, looking southwest, giving the impression that little was standing in 1881. In fact, the trilithon on the right of centre, which collapsed in 1797, comprises the only fallen stones visible in this photograph to have been subsequently re-erected. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

It is also unclear how many photographs Cole took in 1881. Ten have been identified in the English Heritage Archives, primarily through comparison with those that were subsequently published by Cole himself in 1895 in a booklet called *The People's Stonehenge*. In this booklet, Cole referred to the erection of scaffolding on the outside of the outer sarsen circle especially for the purpose of photography. This does not seem to have been the scaffolding erected to secure the outer stones. The evidence from his photographs suggests that none of those known were taken from above Stones 6 and 7.

Cole's photographs were presented to the Office of Works in 1918 by his son Richard Langton Cole, also an architect. He had sent a copy of his father's booklet to the Ancient Monuments division of the Office of Works on 2nd October 1918, shortly after the announcement that Stonehenge was being offered to the nation by Cecil Chubb (see below, p84). Cole's reason for sending the booklet was specifically to bring attention to the photographs:



Figure 11: This time Cole is looking north-westwards, across the centre of the monument, from a point just outside the south-eastern point of the outer circle. In the foreground are the (still) prone Stones 8 (right) and 9 (left); beyond them are the two trilithons of the horseshoe, comprising Stones 51 and 52 (right), and 53 and 54 (left). Between them are Bluestones 62 and 63. The leaning Stone 56 can be seen between Stones 53 and 54. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

"The illustrations...mostly from my father's photographs, are good and complete, & I have all the blocks – My object in writing is that if it should be proposed to issue an official guide these blocks might be of some use, and I should be very glad to present them to your Department. I also have some 12 x 10 negatives of Stonehenge taken by my father about 40 years ago – Some of them are very fine, & they might be worth possessing as records, or... prints could be made from them..." (Letter, R L Cole to Office of Works, 2nd October 1918: TNA AM 71786/1).

While Stone 56 features in several of the photographs, Stones 6 and 7 appear obscured at the edge of the frame on one photo only, which seems a curious omission. It may well be that more photographs were originally taken by Cole, but that his son only presented to the Office of Works those that featured in the booklet (i.e. those for which he possessed the blocks).



Figure 12: Cole's 1881 view of the Heel Stone, or as he called it in his booklet 'The People's Stonehenge', The Pointer, or The Midsummer Stone. Noting that it was not located centrally between the banks of the Avenue, he suggested that its position must have been "carefully readjusted after years of observation". A short distance to the west, adjacent to what eventually became the A344, is a milestone (London 80; Amesbury 2). English Heritage Archives AL0913.

A modern antique?

In the light of the response to Cole's intervention – characterised by Cole and Antrobus as 'preservation' and by those who opposed his actions as 'restoration' – as well as the various opinions and recommendations offered by various representative bodies, including the Society of Antiquaries' Stonehenge Committee, it is worthwhile looking at the broader contemporary debate concerning the matter of 'restoration' in later 19th century Britain. This was an issue more commonly associated with historic buildings, and particularly churches (see below, p30ff), but it is highly relevant to Stonehenge, an archaeological monument of longstanding architectural interest.

On 18th August 1881, the same day that Cole's letter appeared in *The Times*, a lengthy article appeared in the *Daily News* in response to the same recent press coverage of the various proposals for the stones. The article, which mentioned in passing the 'exemplary care' taken of Stonehenge by Sir Edmund Antrobus, began by recounting the ongoing difficulties experienced in getting Lubbock's Ancient Monuments Bill through Parliament, noting with surprise that proposals aired at the Wiltshire Archaeological Society's gathering for 'the restoration of Stonehenge' apparently had Lubbock's support:

"...if it be true – and we hope it is false – that the county association has adopted it, and that the special champion and patron of ancient monuments has nodded assent, then it is time for those who are not fond of exchanging old lamps for new to come to the rescue."

The anonymous author continued:

"We need hardly say that we do not advocate the abandonment of Stonehenge to the fate of Avebury, or even such neglect of it as might allow fresh stones to fall down. Let the inclined megaliths by all means be propped up by any sufficient and not too unsightly buttress that science and art may put their heads together to devise, and let a vigilant watch be kept to see that no others may go the same way. But we question very much whether it would be possible to replace the prostrate stones in position without disturbing the ground and endangering the rest of the circle, and whether this be so or not it is quite certain that the present charm of Stonehenge would be in a great measure impaired. As the traveller by road climbs the brow of the hill from Amesbury, or makes his way up the open down from the valley and river from the south, the very irregularity of the strange black group that stands out against the sky makes a great part of its impressiveness. The complete circle mathematically arranged, and all in perpendicular and in line, would altogether lack the imposing grimness of the present mixture of prostrate giants and giants that may yet stand square to the winds of heaven. The age of the structure, the mystery of its meaning, the generations of men who have been born and seen it and died, the long vista of the history of England that it suggests, are all suggested far more strongly by the partial ruin than they would be by the complete arrangement. If it be said that this is a mere fancy and at best an effect produced upon an individual mind, there is still more to be said. No sooner has Stonehenge been set on its legs again in the proposed fashion than it ceases to be a historical monument and becomes a mere duplicate, a thing of no value, a modern antique.

"There is here no possibility of the excuse which is often alleged for tampering with churches and other buildings, that they were built for use, and that they may be justly adapted to fresh use. There is no use in Stonehenge; it is because it is what it is – because there has passed upon it no hand of man since its unknown builders fashioned it for unknown purposes, because only the wind and the rain and the sun and other forces of nature have altered its appearance and condition – that it is worth preserving. Interference with those forces may be justifiable to prevent it from decay, but attempts to restore and repair decay which has already affected it can only rob it of half its value...

"The fact that the monument is at present in a remarkably satisfactory state makes it all the more unnecessary to tamper with it. Standing as it does on the summit of the silent downs, far from the habitations of men, and requiring something like a twenty-mile walk or drive to bring the traveller from a railway station to it and back again, it has escaped the dilapidation almost unavoidable in some cases. It is adequately guarded from mischievous name-carvers and other miscreants, and the guard is not obtrusive or

determined will-ye nill-ye to act as cicerone. In these days of cheap and easy travelling it and the unequalled series of earth and stone monuments which lie to the northward of it are accessible from London without the least difficulty by any one who has either a moderately full purse or a moderately stout pair of legs...

"...if Stonehenge is going to be restored in good earnest, we can only recommend everybody to go and see it as soon as possible. If anybody then comes home and opposes the Ancient Monuments Bill by every means in his power, his conduct will be a subject for regret rather than for wonder. For he may very well think that the friends of such things who dissemble their love by playing tricks with them just as if they were children's houses of bricks to be built up again as they tumble down, and to be just as interesting as they were before, are, after all, only enemies in disguise. A restored cathedral, if it is grievous to the antiquary, may be (though not always) a pleasant sight to the mere lover of architecture as an art. A restored cromlech is neither more nor less grotesque."

Stonehenge and 'restoration'

As far as restoration is concerned, Antrobus' (and Cole's) aims in 1881 belonged, as Rosemary Hill (2008, 142) implied, to the more extreme non-interventionist end of the spectrum, as exemplified by the ideas and writings of John Ruskin and William Morris and, indeed, the anonymous contributor to the *Daily News*. Morris and Philip Webb had launched the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) just four years earlier, in 1877, with a manifesto calling on architects and owners

"...to put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no presence of other art, and otherwise resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands...; in fine to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created in bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying" (Morris 1877).

However, as already noted Cole's efforts, which would seem a prime example of putting Morris' manifesto into action, were regarded by many as restoration, the precise opposite of what was intended. For example on 16th September 1881, *The Standard* complained that "*The heavy hand of the restorer...has at last been laid upon Stonehenge*". As with many other press articles appearing around the same time, the piece in *The Standard* seems to have been based largely on hearsay and speculation. Bemoaning the "*gallows-like wooden erection*" and using Temple Bar as a point of comparison, the anonymous author complained that the effect was to destroy "*the picturesque aspect of that side of the ruin*". Moreover it was assumed that this particular erection, far from representing the limits of what Antrobus was prepared to countenance, was merely the first of many:

"It is understood that the huge monolith which inclines inward on the south-western side will next be taken in hand, and if, as presumably is the intention of the 'restorers', the work thus inauspiciously began, is to be completed, Stonehenge...will, before long, consist of a series of stones safely buttressed, like so many other ancient erections, by props and scaffolding. Should this report prove true – though we would fain doubt it – it is evident that Sir John Lubbock's Bill for the preservation of ancient monuments has been too long delayed."



Figure 13: Cole's 1881 view looking approximately northwest at and over the northeast-facing 'façade' of the outer circle. From left to right, these comprise Stones 27, 28, 29, 30, 1, 2 and, in the bottom right corner, the top of Stone 3. 29, 30, 1 and 2 and their lintels were dealt with in 1919-21. Cole was presumably on top of Stone 4 or 5 to take this. In the distance are some of the Cursus Barrows. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

Having raised the matter of Lubbock's Bill – regarded, it seems, as an anti-restoration measure – attention turned to the matter of ownership:

"...so long has Stonehenge, standing weird-like in the midst of the solitary Plain of Salisbury, been regarded as de jure property of the nation, that one is apt to forget that de facto it has a landlord quite as much as the Cat and Bagpipes or the Blue Boar

Taverns, and that, so far as the written law of the land could restrain him, he might tomorrow break up these memorials of a bygone age into metal for the muddy road that runs hard by. We do not for a moment suppose that Sir Edmund Antrobus would dream of doing anything so heinous, or even that his present course of action, even allowing the circumstances to be correctly stated, is not dictated by the best intentions. Yet the slightest meddling with Stonehenge is rightly viewed with extreme jealousy, for the chances of doing good are infinitesimal when compared with the certainty of doing harm, that it is all but hopeless to expect anything but evil to come out of the 'restorer's' efforts."

'Evil' applied not just to the damage that restoration might do to the physical fabric and appearance of the monument – *"Stonehenge and the plain on which it is erected are...singularly rich in historical memories"*, memories on which the author then expounded at length. Restoration would efface these memories, deny the passage of time, and end with the 'recreation' of something that had never existed:

"From the confused pile of storm-worn, lichen-covered monoliths it is difficult to form any accurate idea of what it was in its entirety. Nor do the endless 'restorations' greatly help our impartial inquiries, since they are mainly useful as expressing the individual theories of their authors..."

"Amid such a diversity of opinion, it would be a crime against history to further confuse the issue by any attempt to restore this world-renowned spot. Vandalism has already done it irreparable injury. Let well-meaning ignorance not complete its ruin. No 'restoration' on paper is satisfactory; it would, therefore, be out of the question to suppose that any one in more durable form would gain the approval of antiquaries. In its present ruined condition, everyone has material for the theory which suits him best. If even partially restored, future commentators would be forced to accept that of the 'restorer,' or, as has been the case with some of the churches and other 'ancient monuments' which have suffered at his hands, be compelled to theorise from the 'facts' which his chisel and mallet have fashioned."

So how did Antrobus' and Cole's policy of minimal intervention come to be regarded as restoration? It seems more than likely that with Cole's intervention following on so soon after the widespread publicity given to the concerns of the Society of Antiquaries, the British Archaeological Association, the Wiltshire Archaeological Society and others, that the appearance of the scaffolding was presumed to herald the commencement of the sort of work that those organisations had been calling for. Cole's handiwork was clearly regarded by some at least as the first step toward the creation of a new Stonehenge, characterised more by upright than leaning or prostrate stones. In addition, Cole's letter to *The Times* in August had outlined the reasons for his survey as well as briefly pre-empting the results – that little needed to be done. There was no subsequent communication to explain the plans to prop the outer 'trilithon' until after it had caused an outcry – the large wooden gallows caught people by surprise.

The potential for confusion over what was happening at Stonehenge and why – and indeed the strong element of confusion running through the whole ‘restoration’ debate – was exemplified by the response of the Rev. W. C. Lukis to the press coverage, including the article in *The Standard*.

“...I must enter a most earnest protest against the spirit of those articles, which appear to me to have been dictated by an entire misconception of the question, and, I would add, to have been penned by those who are disposed to carry their anti-restoration conceits to an extravagant length... The writers of these articles do not seem to have made themselves acquainted with the facts of the case, and in their blind zeal for the maintenance of an idea, have decried the commendable course which Sir Edmund Antrobus is following to preserve the monument...”

“The words ‘restoration’ and ‘restorers’ are employed with inverted commas by these writers as if they conveyed sagacious warnings, and as if they had only to be used freely in order to scare the owners. The Society of Antiquaries have done a good service in protesting vigorously against the wholesale destruction of ancient and instructive archaeological features of churches, under the delusive word ‘restoration;’ but there is surely a limit beyond which it is, in my opinion, unwise to press its application, and it seems to me that an attempt is being made to do so by objectors in the question of Stonehenge. What an outcry would be made, and howl of censure would be raised against Sir E. Antrobus if his monument were left to take care of itself, and were to suffer irreparable loss by the fall of the leaning stones! Whether Sir Edmund is adopting the very best method or not to secure the stones is beside the question at the moment. My object is to defend the commendable motive which has led him to do something, and he has publicly announced that he is acting under able advice” (Lukis 1881).

Ruskin, Morris and the ‘lie’

Lukis was clearly unaware of Antrobus’ stated willingness to let stones fall if they must – the scaffolding was not to preserve the monument but to protect visitors, whom he had no desire to discourage. In fact, Antrobus’ position seems likely to have been broadly similar to that of many of the anonymous newspaper correspondents who were criticising Cole’s timber props, and as the initial press reaction, confused though it was, made clear, there was considerable support for minimal interference with the fabric and appearance of Stonehenge.

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the ‘restoration’ question of the 19th century, but a brief summary is necessary in order to place the arguments over what was (not) happening at Stonehenge, both in 1881 and on subsequent occasions, into some kind of context. The debate over the restoration of ancient buildings – particularly but not exclusively ecclesiastical in nature and medieval in origin – already had a lengthy and complex history by the mid-19th century, but entered the public arena in this country largely as a result of the publication of John Ruskin’s *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*,

which first appeared in 1849 (and was alluded to in the 1881 *Daily News* article quoted from earlier: see page 28ff). Ruskin's initial concern had been with the (mis)treatment of medieval architecture, initially as experienced by him in Venice in the mid-1840s. In Britain, the main (but by no means only) focus for concern was the countrywide restoration and rebuilding of churches undertaken mainly, but not solely, in the period from the 1850s through to the 1870s:

"Buildings that started the century as picturesque accents in the landscape ended it looking upright and four-square, as if centuries of wear and tear had never happened. Far from compromising historic interest, restoration was seen to enhance it. If anything, smart new 'old' work exhibited the marks of medieval style more clearly than withered originals, and so seemed more ancient to those who measured age by the number of characteristic medieval 'features' on display" (Miele 1996, 17).

At the risk of over-simplifying, the increasing popularity of Gothic Revival architecture had led to much 19th century church restoration being firmly rooted in an appreciation of medieval Gothic architecture, resulting in restorations that privileged the retention or replacement (with modern copies) of features of the preferred style and date, whilst removing architectural or decorative elements of subsequent periods and styles. The history of an individual building might no longer be embodied within its own fabric, which was instead a combination of original medieval features and 19th century replacements and reconstructions in the appropriate style. To Ruskin, such approaches to restoration overlooked the most important properties of the original fabric: firstly, that it was the creation of human labour, of skilled medieval craftsmen; and secondly, that it was ancient. Thus in *The Lamp of Memory* he argued that

"...it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life", and moreover that *"the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones or in its gold. Its glory is its Age"* (Ruskin 1871 [1849], 155).

The traces of age were as important, if not more so, as the traces of the original craftsmen – *"hitherto, we have been speaking of the sentiment of age only, [but] there is an actual beauty in marks of it..."* (ibid.). Consequently, to Ruskin, restoration meant *"the most total destruction a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied by a false description of the thing destroyed"* (ibid., 160). He famously insisted *"Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a lie from beginning to end"* (ibid., 162). As far as ancient buildings were concerned, *"We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us. The dead still have their right in them: that which they laboured for; the praise of achievement or the expression of religious feeling, or whatsoever else it might be which in those buildings they intended to be permanent, we have no right to obliterate"* (ibid., 162). This idea that the value and authenticity of a building resided principally in the labour and the

beliefs of those who created it, in the traces of their working, and in the marks of antiquity, did not of course originate with Ruskin, and neither did the idea that the present owner had no right to destroy those traces – he was merely a temporary custodian – but it was Ruskin who was responsible for forcefully and eloquently bringing these objections to restoration to a wide audience.

Ruskin was, of course, principally concerned with medieval architecture, but he and others recognised that the same principles applied to other and older structures as well. Ruskin tried to involve the Society of Antiquaries in the 1850s in the idea of establishing a fund that could be used to assist in the preservation of ancient structures – initially, in Ruskin's first proposal, medieval buildings but expanded by the Society's Executive Committee to cover both buildings and "*other Monuments of antiquarian interest within the United Kingdom*" (Anon. 1856). The stated aims were twofold – firstly, to create a list of ancient buildings and '*other monuments*'; and secondly, to aid their conservation – "*in the sense of preservation from the further ravages of time or negligence, without any attempt to add or restore*". Neither wholly popular among Fellows, nor over-endowed with donations, little was achieved before "*inertia descended on the Committee*" (Evans 1956, 312) or, as a contemporary put it, "*it met with no encouragement; and...the whole matter died a natural death*" (Tite 1862, 82).

In 1862, the architect George Gilbert Scott responded to Ruskin with a more practically-orientated view of how to deal with the problem. Scott's pragmatic approach largely eschewed the ethical and moral aspects of Ruskin's arguments, and was also much closer to the approach subsequently adopted by the Office of Works (see below, p102). Scott, of course, had been heavily involved in church restorations (and had offered thoughts on the matter before Ruskin), and the paper he gave to the RIBA in January 1862 included both admission of this as well as some explanation of the practical difficulties involved in adhering closely to principles laid down by Ruskin. Scott (1862, 66) identified three main processes that threatened the "*existence and authenticity of our architectural remains*":

"1. Natural decay and dilapidation, which are greatly enhanced by the destructive climate to which they are exposed, and still more by neglect.

"2. Wilful destruction and ruthless mutilation, together with alterations suggested by the passing requirements of the day, or by individual caprice.

"3. The yet more destructive inroads of over restoration" (his emphasis).

Scott divided those threatened architectural remains into four main classes:

"1. Mere antiquities – such as Stonehenge, the Cromlechs, and many of the remnants of Roman structures...

"2. Ruined buildings, whether ecclesiastical or secular, such as abbeys, castles, etc...

"3. Buildings still in use, as churches, houses, inhabited castles, etc.

"4. Fragmentary remains embodied in more modern buildings..."

For the first class, Scott believed that *"our antiquaries are sufficiently alive to their value, and exercise a wholesome vigilance in respect of them. It is not this class of ancient remains which is most in danger, though it behoves everyone who has it in his power to do his utmost for their preservation."*

At this stage, of course, the main concern among vigilant antiquarians was not the deterioration of Stonehenge, but an interest in re-erecting fallen stones. Once fears about further falls began to be voiced, Stonehenge became, as far as Scott's scheme was concerned, a 'ruined building' rather than a 'mere antiquity'. Scott had argued that the whole class of ruined buildings was

"one which demands much powerful and careful consideration, and it is one towards which the salutary vigilance of our Institute and of kindred societies might with great advance be directed. The very condition of a ruin involves liability to rapidly increasing decay, and the probability of speedy destruction... [requiring] timely works of reparation and sustentation as may arrest the hand of time without tampering with their antiquity... The proprietors of these melancholy yet glorious remains, though valuing and caring for them as picturesque ruins, frequently seem to forget their value as works of art, and to prefer risking their falling to pieces bit by bit to the trifling interference with the picturesque effect which would be incurred by a little timely reparation..." (Scott 1862, 67-8).

Ruskin's arguments in *The Lamp of Memory* were, of course, directed towards architectural rather than archaeological structures, and consequently stressed – as did both Scott and William Morris later on – the need for vigilance rather than picturesque neglect: *"Take proper care of your monuments and you will not need to restore them"* (Ruskin 1849 [1872], 162) but ultimately to accept the inevitability of the ageing process – of the passage of time:

"Watch an old building with anxious care; guard it as best you may, and at any cost, from every influence of dilapidation. Count its stones as you would jewels of a crown; set watches about it as if at the gates of a besieged city; bind it together with iron where it loosens; stay it with timber where it declines; do not care about the unsightliness of the aid; better a crutch than a lost limb; and do this tenderly, and reverently, and continually, and many a generation will still be born and pass away beneath its shadow. Its evil day must come at last; but let it come declaredly and openly, and let no dishonouring and false substitute deprive it of the funeral offices of memory" (ibid.).

In other words, restoration *"is only legitimized by reason of negligence, not on its own virtue"* (Null 1985, 34).

Scott (1862, 68) offered similar arguments, pressing for the least possible intervention when dealing with architectural ruins:

“the great objects of...reparation are, protection against the penetration of water into the walls; support to prevent downfall from the failure of foundations, abutments, or the sustaining work, whatever it may be; and, lastly (if such a thing be found to be practicable), the preservation of the architectural details by some indurating process which will arrest their decay. None of these need, if judiciously carried out, materially or permanently affect the picturesqueness of the ruin. And I need hardly say that they must be so done as in no degree at all to infringe upon the authenticity of the work” (his emphasis). Consequently, *“When any large mass of a wall threatens to fall, shores should be applied, the foundations examined, and strengthened, if necessary...but this should be done under the eye of a person who has a feeling for the work, both on its own account and as a picturesque object, so as to avoid any unsightly tampering with the old work. The only cases where such is necessary seem those in which the shattered piers or walls are insufficient for the weight they have to bear; in such cases they must be under-built, buttressed or propped, in some way...”* (Scott 1862, 69).

Fifteen years later, in his SPAB manifesto, William Morris offered a similar plea to *“to put Protection in place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no pretence of other art, and otherwise to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands...”* (Morris 1877).

Familiarity with the issues raised by Ruskin, Scott, Morris and others, and with the wider debate surrounding the idea of ‘restoration’, is apparent throughout the discussions and resolutions relating to Stonehenge in the early 1880s. This is, of course, hardly surprising given the predominantly architectural background of many of those involved. At the same time, the ideas and opinions offered highlighted the range of views that could be held by individuals apparently united in their opposition to ‘restoration’.

A frequent objection to any interference with Stonehenge was the impact it would have on its character as a picturesque ruin. A Romantic attitude to ruins, implicit (and occasionally explicit) within objections to restoration, was essentially dependent on their being allowed to continue to decay (Evans 2004, 420), the ruin being prized for the way time and nature had allowed it, via the processes of *‘natural decay and dilapidation’* (Scott 1862, 66), to seem itself to be part of nature. Slowing or stopping such decay – by propping a stone in danger of falling, for instance – was one thing. Reversing them by straightening leaning stones or re-erecting fallen ones would, in the eyes of many, *‘alter the character and diminish the value’* (above, p. 24) of the monument. At the same time, the emerging discipline of archaeology was seeking to measure the authenticity of the monument in other ways – through scientific exploration and analysis of the stones and the ground they occupied, rather than an aesthetic judgment more closely linked to the antiquarianism that archaeologists were seeking to distance themselves from. The principal

targets for intervention – the leaning Stone 56, the twisted outer stones, the collapsed trilithon – were also the elements that contributed most to its picturesque appearance. They were the stones that most underlined Stonehenge's status as a picturesque ruin of mythical antiquity.

Cole's and Antrobus' desire for a temporary propping of a 'trilithon' prior to its straightening, on grounds of safety to visitors, got no further than providing the '*unsightly crutch*' recommended by Ruskin. Meanwhile, the Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries rejected the proposals of their own Stonehenge Committee. In any case, all the while the monument remained in the hands of Sir Edmund Antrobus, there had been no real likelihood of them being acted upon anyway, although arguably Cole's intervention was to a certain extent about being seen to be doing something.

The tension between the desires of archaeology's representative bodies and the owner of Stonehenge was, of course, a significant element in the debates that surrounded both the passage of Lubbock's Ancient Monuments legislation and its subsequent enactment. What is important to recognize, however, is the fact that Antrobus, far from being a neglectful owner who placed the rights of property before the preservation of Stonehenge, was actually looking after the monument according to widely-held and supported principles, with a particular emphasis, as detailed in the next chapter, on resisting intervention and alteration of any kind, including archaeological excavation, and on the preservation of the right of free access for anyone who wished to visit.

The outcome of the debate around the restoration of Stonehenge in 1881 was, therefore, a monument that looked little different to how it had looked before, one set of timber scaffolding excepted. Twenty years later, the safety of visitors would provide the necessary crutch to allow a stone to be straightened and set in concrete, the monument to be enclosed by a barbed-wire fence, and public access further restricted by an admission charge. By then, of course, the situation had been complicated by several factors – the arguments over the passage and enactment of Lubbock's Ancient Monuments legislation; an increasingly proprietorial outlook towards Stonehenge on the part of the various archaeological and antiquarian bodies – something that took in intellectual as well as physical access; concerns over the numbers and behaviour of visitors; the collapse of another trilithon; and most significantly, a change of ownership.

CHAPTER 4: THE 'RESTORATION OF STONEHENGE – 2: 1901

On the final day of 1900, an upright and a lintel (Stones 22 and 122), part of the outer circle on the western side of the monument, fell to the ground. In all the inspections of the monument undertaken over previous decades, no-one had identified these particular stones as being among the most likely to fall. The collapse helped set in motion a series of events that led to wholesale change in the appearance, interpretation, and accessibility of Stonehenge, centred around the 'restoration' of a stone to an upright position, though not the one that had fallen.

Although those involved in the events of 1901 made little reference to those of 1881, much that happened represented a culmination of arguments that had been rumbling on throughout those twenty years – about access and interpretation, ownership and protection, for example – while the straightening of Stone 56 and the pouring of concrete around its base occurred under the supervision of an architect linked to SPAB, and who had personal connections with both Ruskin and Morris.

The 1900 collapse was argued by some to demonstrate the need to control access to the stones, and led directly to the first enclosure of the monument and the introduction of an admission charge. This satisfied the wishes of the various archaeological bodies involved, who had long wished to restrict access, and also those of the new owner, who would be able to demonstrate that a property he wished to sell could generate an income. This chapter focuses on what happened at Stonehenge in 1901, but sets the collapse of stones 22 and 122, and the subsequent straightening of Stone 56, against a wider backdrop, taking in, among other matters, the long-running arguments about the impact of visitors – and archaeologists – on the monument.

Stonehenge and visitors

(i) The cause of the 1797 collapse

Concerns about the impact of visitors and visitor numbers had been raised sporadically over the years, but those complaints became more frequent from the 1860s onwards. Initially, those grumbles focused on graffiti and the use of hammers and chisels to obtain souvenirs, and subsequently on the rodents said to be attracted by the discarded remnants of visitors' picnics. The idea that visitor damage might actually lead to the collapse of further stones only really took hold in the wake of the 1900 fall, although claims that previous collapses could in part be attributed to human as well as natural causes had been around for a while.

When a trilithon fell in 1797, initial reports blamed a change in the weather, coupled with the relatively shallow depth of the base of the stone below the surface, as revealed by its fall. In the January 1797 issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine* (Vol LXVII Part I (1), 75-6),

the misfortune was blamed on a rapid thaw following a hard frost, the collapse showing that neither of the stones had been set more than a foot and half into the ground. The following month's issue, however, noted a report in the Kentish Gazette that blamed rabbits undermining the stone, though no source or further details were given (Gentleman's Magazine Vol LXVII Part I (2), 116).

William Maton's account is probably the best known, his letter dated 30th May 1797 to Aylmer Lambert having been read at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries on 29th June 1797, before being published in the next volume of the Society's journal *Archaeologia* (Maton 1800). Maton did not specify how soon after the collapse his visit took place, but did mention that this letter was his second communication on the matter, and represented "*a more full and correct account... than that which you did me the honour to transmit [to the Society] before*" (Maton 1800, 103).

Maton wrote that "*The immediate cause of this memorable change in the state of Stonehenge must have been the sudden and rapid thaw that began the day before the stones fell, succeeding a very deep snow*", adding that the trilithon had been leaning for some time before its fall, as well as mentioning the "*inconsiderable depth*" of the stones in the ground.

Another early visitor was John Rickman. Writing more than four decades after the event, he recalled that "*When one of the large trilithons fell, in consequence of a rapid thaw, in the beginning of the year 1797, I was within forty miles of the spot, and hastened thither to inspect...*" (Rickman 1840, 411), though he offered little more detail. Someone else who made their way to the spot was William Cunnington, then in the early stages of his antiquarian career. Richard Colt Hoare, in his *Ancient Wiltshire*, later wrote that Cunnington visited Stonehenge "*soon after the fall of the great trilithon on 1797*" (Hoare 1812, 150), although he offered no explanation of the stones' collapse. Cunnington in fact seems to have been a little confused over the timing of events. In a letter to John Britton dated 1798, he wrote that the stones had fallen down "*about three years ago*" (Cunnington 1975, 10), before describing how he dug "*with a large stick under those two very large stones which fell down*", recovering sherds of what he took to be Roman pottery, plus some animal bones, in the process (ibid.).

In 1822 Stonehenge acquired its first (unofficial) custodian and guide, Henry Browne. Shortly after his arrival he produced his own guidebook, *An Illustration of Stonehenge and Abury...* The second edition, printed in 1833, offered some additional detail about the events of 1797:

"I will here take the opportunity of introducing the account which was given to me of the fall of this trilithon, by Dr. Maton, of Spring Gardens, London, when I had the pleasure of meeting that gentleman on the spot, and who, at the time of its fall, resided at Salisbury. About twenty years ago it was the habit of persons, waiting the commencement of fairs in this part of Wiltshire to take up this abode in Stonehenge for some days, as a defence against the inclemency of the weather. In the autumn preceding the fall of the trilithon,

amongst others who availed themselves of this protection were some gipsies, who, not content with a position behind this trilithon on the level ground, made an excavation in the chalk to obtain a lower position. On quitting Stonehenge, the effect produced by this proceeding, was that of causing an extraordinary accumulation of moisture behind this trilithon, in the rainy and snowy season of autumn and winter. The chalk, in this position and under these circumstances, being frozen in the winter, and thawed in the succeeding mild weather, was, in consequence, decomposed. This naturally weakened the foundation of the trilithon on its outward side, towards the west, and at length, as already stated, fell in that direction, after being observed for two or three days to be out of its perpendicular position” (Henry Browne, quoted in Long 1876, 81).

Leaving aside the fact that this account is missing from the first edition of Browne’s guidebook (Browne 1823), there are clear differences between this version and that written by Maton in 1797. First of all, of course, at the time Browne was writing, “*twenty years ago*” was a little too recent. Secondly, in 1797 Maton had claimed that the trilithon had been leaning for a long time, whereas Browne’s version states that it had only been leaning for a matter of days. A further difference is, of course, the appearance of gipsies.

When Stone 58 was lifted and the area excavated in 1958, Atkinson noted the presence of a feature marked on his excavation plan as ‘Gipsy Hole’ (Cleal et al 1995, 559). There is little published detail about this feature, but presumably the attribution to gipsies is based (a) on its proximity to Stone 58’s stonehole and (b) ultimately to Henry Browne’s version of events. However, it is unclear if the hollow could have played any part in the collapse, and equally unclear how, leaving aside Browne’s account, it could be attributed to a particular group of people. Leaving aside the question of how much shelter would have been obtainable on the outside of the stones, it is equally unclear how Maton can have known that among those gathering for the local fair or fairs that this particular spot was occupied by gipsies. In any case, Stonehenge itself was the venue of fairs – a Royal Warrant had been granted to the then owner Thomas Hayward in 1680 to hold an annual fair, originally on 25th-26th September. Meanwhile any number of shallow, illicit diggings could have occurred without record for all manner of reasons unconnected with such gatherings. We know, for instance, that at some point during the mid-18th century, self-appointed guide Gaffer Hunt had dug out a ‘cellar’ under one of the fallen uprights of the inner sarsen setting to keep his drinks cool (Chippindale 2004, 90). Cunnington’s explorations of c1802 (“*I have this summer dug in several places...*”: Cunnington 1975, 39) may have only been unusual in some written record being preserved.

Sporadic references to this possible cause of collapse continued throughout the 19th century – like the erroneous suggestions that the cause of Stone 56’s leaning was antiquarian digging in 1620, it seems to have become an accepted part of the Stonehenge story. For example, during the 1849 gathering of the Royal Archaeological Institute at Stonehenge (see above), the gathering was told that the stones had collapsed “*in consequence of their having been carelessly undermined*”: Anon 1849, 299). However, probably the most frequently voiced complaint about visitors during the 19th century was

not about digging at all, but their habit of either leaving graffiti behind or taking away stone fragments.

(ii) Hammers and Chisels

During the 1720s, William Stukeley had complained of *“the unaccountable folly of mankind in breaking pieces off with great hammers”*; a *“detestable practice”* he put down to *“the silly notion of the stones being factitious”*; or *“made by Art”* rather than being a natural stone. The existence of this ‘silly notion’ was confirmed by, among others, Benjamin Martin in his *Natural History of Stonehenge*, published in 1756, in which he sought samples in an attempt to prove Stukeley wrong on the matter. Martin reported that *“when I was obliged with a Hammer to Labour hard three Quarters of an Hour to get but one Ounce and half, I was fully convinced, their Hardness, or Fixity, by much exceeded that of common stone”* (quoted in Legg 1986, 142).

Graffiti and hammering were hardly new problems, nor were they unique to Stonehenge – in 1532, for example, Rabelais had described a dolmen near Poitiers popular with local antiquarians who, *“when they have nothing else to do, pass the time by climbing up on to the stone and banqueting there with large quantities of bottles, hams and pastries, and inscribing their names on the capstone with a knife”* (quoted in Michell 1982, 41). However, at Stonehenge, the habit of breaking off souvenirs came to wider attention in the 1860s, following a letter sent to *The Times* by someone signing himself ‘An Antiquary and Archaeologist’. Printed on 26th May 1860 (p11), the writer begged the editor to

“kindly grant me a little space...to call the attention of the public to the lamentable fact that this noble and most interesting monument of past ages, with all its historical and personal associations, is subject (like too many other deeply interesting antiquities) to the foolish, vulgar and ruthless practice of the majority of visitors to such noted places of breaking off portions of it as keepsakes... In time Stonehenge itself will be effaced and carried away”. He continued: *“when I was last there, some few years ago, an old lame man was in the practice of daily proceeding thither from Amesbury, and if he could not procure money from the riding or driving visitors by holding their horses, he would do so by offering them or the walking visitors “portions of the altar”, and other parts of this glorious relic of antiquity, which he had barbarously knocked off”*. He concluded by asking *“Will anyone suggest a remedy for such a barbarous practice?”*.

An immediate response came from Stamford Felce of St Mary’s Hospital, London, who, assuming that the old lame man was Henry Browne’s son and successor-custodian Joseph Browne, wrote to defend him, stating that he was

“convinced that his presence there prevents many of our chipping, chiselling countrymen from walking off with a stony morsel as a relic”; before concluding that Browne was *“a more thoroughly warm antiquary and archaeologist than your correspondent, for I question whether, if he found Stonehenge being carried off piecemeal, he would wait*

'some few years' before making an outcry about the matter" (*The Times*, 29th May 1860, p11).

A few days later, Joseph Browne himself wrote in to clarify things, noting that: "*I am evidently being mistaken for the above-mentioned worthy, being myself also rather lame*". Browne said that there had indeed been

"a wooden-legged man (an Amesbury labourer; unable to either read or write), who, some years ago, was, to my certain knowledge, in the habit of mutilating Stonehenge in the way described; but it was done so stealthily that neither I nor Sir Edmund Antrobus's game-keeper could ever detect him in the act, or he would have been directly forbidden the premises. However, some three years ago death put an end to his depredations, and care has been taken that he has no successor" (*The Times*, 5th June 1860, p5).

Interestingly, during a subsequent outbreak of concern about hammers and chisels in the 1880s (see below), Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet) wrote a letter to the *Salisbury Journal* (4th December 1886) which included the following anecdote:

Some forty years ago my father [Sir Edmund Antrobus, 2nd Baronet] received a communication to the effect that a shepherd was selling bits of Stonehenge, wholesale. He rode up... [and] made an examination of the monument, with the view of discovering whence the specimens had been taken. He was unable to do so, and finding the shepherd, spoke to him, telling him of the charge made. 'Lord blessee,' said the man, with a broad grin on his face, and in the broadest Wilts vernacular, 'I wouldn't hurt the old stöans. Now, when they ploughed over the barrow (pointing to a low one in the neighbourhood) they ploughed up a lot of bits, which I s'pose, they as put up the old stöans, buried there, and I always has two or three bits in my pocket, and when one they archilogical chaps says, 'Shepherd, can ee get I a bit of the old stöans,' 'Yes, sir,' says I, 'if so be as you'll please and not tell Sir Edmund,' and I gets half-a-crown and the old stöans ain't never the worse."

Antrobus' statement that this all happened 'some forty years ago' would tie in with the approximate date of the levelling of barrows west of Stonehenge in conjunction with the extension of arable agriculture around the time of the construction of Fargo or Virgo Cottages in the late 1840s. Sarsen and bluestone fragments had already been recovered from excavation by Cunnington and Colt Hoare at the beginning of the 19th century, but this mid-century levelling and ploughing revealed that at least two of the mounds "*were in a great measure formed of the chippings and fragments of the stones of Stonehenge*" (Long 1876, 64-5; Barber 2014). These were presumably the source of the shepherd's wares.

Meanwhile, Joseph Browne had taken over from his father after the latter's death in 1839, and in 1870 the (unpaid) role of custodian passed to William Judd. The following year, correspondence about Stonehenge souvenirs once more appeared in *The Times*. On 14th September 1871 (p14), a letter from 'A Vacation Rambler' recounted the following tale:

"Passing through Salisbury, on the way to Glastonbury, I availed myself of the opportunity to revisit Stonehenge. Thirty years had elapsed since I was last there; and sorry indeed was I to see not the ravages that time had made, but the demolition which had been effected by the hand of man. There were many visitors, and a constant chipping of stone broke the solitude of the place.

"I overheard the following dialogue. A mechanic who had just drained a stone jar of beer ejaculated, 'If I had known that there was no one to look after the place I would have brought a hammer and chisel.' 'So would I' said, in reply, his companion.

"My object in writing to you, Sir, is to bring the matter before the notice of the proprietor, whoever he may be, and to suggest that some means may be taken to preserve for future generations the most remarkable monument of antiquity in this island."

This brought a response from Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet) himself, printed a week later (*The Times*, 21st September 1871, p5):

"... 'A Visitor to Stonehenge' complains of the general damage done in 30 years past, and on particular damage done on the day of his visit. I believe no one of our old monuments has suffered less during the period first mentioned, and, considering the thousands who annually visit it, I think the public deserve much credit for the very little damage done. On inquiry I find that about a fortnight ago an individual of the mechanic class brought a large sledgehammer, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of a person who is usually at the stones holding horses, persisted in breaking the corners of two fallen stones. This is the only recent damage I can find, after a careful inspection. If I knew his name and place of residence, I should assuredly try what the law could do in such a case of wilful mischief; but, speaking generally, and judging from the results, I believe an appeal to the public interest in such monuments and to the good feeling so generally entertained is the best preservative. In the few cases of mischief I am bound to say the operative class are not those principally implicated... A respectable paterfamilias, who arrived in a well appointed barouche, was heard by a relative of mine asking for 'the hammer and the chisel'. On being requested to desist from the intended operation the answer was 'And who the deuce are you, Sir?' On being told the petitioner claimed to be the proprietor of the threatened institution, he declared he has always believed it to be 'public property'. In another instance, three young men, being found on top of two of the standing stones, stated that they were about to carry off a piece of what is called the Sarsen stone for a relative of one of them, who was a distinguished archaeologist. On my writing to that gentleman, deprecating a renewal of his relative's visits with such intentions, he assured me no relative of his would be guilty of such an act, adding, as a further assurance, that the act was unnecessary, as he already possessed a piece of the stone in question; he added, 'given him by a friend.'"

Antrobus concluded with a message for the 'Vacation Rambler':

"I think I can re-assure the public mind as to the question, and I may surely ask those who have taken an interest in it, when they see attempts of the sort, to offer one of those good-natured remonstrances which will carry weight with the offender, and are sure to enlist the sympathy and assistance of the great body of bystanders."

An editorial in the following day's issue (*The Times*, 22nd September 1871, p7) on the subject of tourists and tourism pointed to the wider context, while missing Antrobus' point about who he regarded the principal culprits to be at Stonehenge:

"The habit of carrying off relics and mementoes from every famous place is becoming a serious grievance with the owners of property which is historically or artistically notable. Not very much, perhaps, can be taken away from a Devonshire hill-side, nor even from the bosky banks of the Lyn; but even a waterfall is not safe from being pillaged and stripped to utter nakedness of all its ferns. We were informed the other day that it is becoming a custom with excursionists to Stonehenge to chip off pieces from its massive pillars, and Sir Edmund Antrobus has emphatically endorsed the complaint. The same disgraceful practice has been observed in several of our ancient buildings, and wherever it is detected it ought to be promptly and severely punished. It is this despicable spirit which alarms many owners of picturesque places, and leads to the exclusion or restraint of visitors; but if Tourists combined to repress every act of the kind coming under their own notice, the good effect would soon be visible, not only in the increase of respect for property, but in more generous dealing on the part of its owners."

The subject returned to the pages of *The Times* five years later (19th August 1876, p6), when someone identifying themselves as 'Druid' wrote the following:

"On the 14th inst. I visited Stonehenge, and was much surprised at the way in which that most interesting relic has been mutilated, the lower portions of the stones being much disfigured. Upon arriving I found a party of ladies and two gentlemen (?); the latter were busy with a chisel and hammer detaching portions of the ruin to keep as specimens, and regretting their inability to obtain larger pieces in consequence of their being provided with a carpenter's, instead of a geological, hammer. Surely some steps might be taken to preserve this national monument from such selfish barbarism. With what feelings of indignation would the public regard the chipping off of portions of any of our cathedrals to adorn the private collections of individuals, and yet we have many cathedrals, and could better spare portions of them than our one Stonehenge."

By this time, of course, attempts were under way to pass legislation aimed at protecting ancient monuments, something 'Druid' may have been alluding to, and which is dealt with in a little more detail below. Antrobus' concern – and another reason for resisting the idea of putting the monument into the care of the nation – continued to be the likely impact of archaeological investigation of the monument, and this applied as much to the stones as it did to the ground around them. His complaint that antiquarians and archaeologists were more at fault than the general public received support of a kind from the publication of Nevil Storey Maskelyne's (1878) pioneering paper on the petrology of

the stones at Stonehenge. While some of his samples had been collected from on, or under, the surface in and around the stones (see below, p57), Maskelyne also felt it necessary to obtain his own. It is extremely unlikely that he even sought, let alone obtained, permission to do so, which probably explains his attempts to justify his removal of twenty samples:

"...I found it indispensable for the purposes of scientific investigation to study each stone carefully on the spot, and to detach from several of them small fragments for microscopic investigation: a process that was performed with care, a small splinter being struck off by hands not entirely unskilled in the use of a hammer, generally from a part of the stone where some ruthless despoiler had previously detached, not the smallest bits of material that would serve a scientific purpose, but large masses of stone.

"If one is compelled to deplore the act of the local farmer or wall-builder, who, in any one of the past twenty centuries may in his need have broken off and carried into some useful purpose the venerable sarsen from Avebury or Stonehenge, or any of the smaller and more portable stones of the monument, to him a stone and nothing more; it is only with indignation and contempt that one can speak of the person – certainly not to be called an archaeologist – who, in a mere spirit of relic-hunting, or perhaps of wanton caprice, can break off a fragment from one of these venerable monuments of a world-forgotten society of men, and appropriate it to himself, to serve no purpose whatsoever. I trust that any to whom Stonehenge is an object of veneration, or of interest, will acquit the author of this paper of having raised a hammer in such a spirit as this against these silent witnesses of an unrecorded past. The little flakes then separated from the Stonehenge blocks will be found to have served to add something, I trust, to the more intelligent kind of interest shown in Stonehenge: and these little fragments, with sections from some of them worked for the microscope, will be placed in the Museum of Salisbury for the use of any future petrologist needing to refer to them, so as to render unnecessary any repetition of even mild iconoclasm" (Maskelyne 1878, 149-50).

(iii) The Pressure of Numbers

Although there are many references to Stonehenge becoming increasingly crowded with visitors during the course of the 19th century, reliable numbers prior to the introduction of an admission charge in 1901 are difficult to come by. A possible guide to the monument's increasing popularity with visitors comes from reported numbers on site to view the midsummer sunrise – in 1860, the Earl of Carnarvon found himself completely alone for his all-night vigil (Hutton 2009, 348), while 35 years later, in his *Stonehenge and its Earthworks*, Edgar Barclay claimed that he personally had "*witnessed over two hundred persons assembled to see the midsummer sunrise*" (Barclay 1895, xi). As for daily visitor numbers, Barclay's comment that "*Except during the inclement winter months, never a day passes without the arrival there of carriages, and often three or four parties are present at the same time*" (ibid) gives an indication of how busy the place could be by the last decade of the 19th century.

There is no disputing that Stonehenge was becoming a busier place, on certain occasions at least, but by the 1880s it was not so much the numbers of people at the site as who they were and what they were doing while they were there that was concerning antiquarians and archaeologists – and with Antrobus clearly resistant to allowing them to either restore or excavate the site, their attention turned to the question of access.

Among the first to air his views on the matter was the Rev. W. C. Lukis, in an already-cited (above, p33) article for *The Antiquary* published in the autumn of 1881. While the piece is mainly notable for Lukis' defence of Cole and Antrobus' actions despite misunderstanding their motives, Lukis insisted that there were

“...forces at work far more injurious than time and the levelling processes of nature against which no indignant protest has been raised... If these objectors [to restoration] would but pass a fortnight, as I have done this summer, at Stonehenge, when pic-nic parties are in full swing, they would witness scenes that would harrow their souls and afford them topics for many useful articles. The main object of these pleasure-seekers appears to be, at the end of a long drive, to eat, drink, and be merry, to scatter broadcast their broken bottles, to kindle fires at the feet of the stones for the purpose of boiling water, play follow-the-leader by sliding upon the large prostrate stones, chip or indent them by stealth, deposit filth and scribble Scripture texts in large characters upon the uprights with chalk. I have visited many hundreds of rude stone monuments in various countries, but have never seen one so sacrilegiously treated as this unique structure, which is unquestionably and deservedly esteemed one of the wonders of the world. Those holiday folk are neither impressed by the remarkable character of this ancient building nor respect it. There is a wanton and destructive meddling incessantly going on...”

Even more to the point was someone signing themselves as 'F.R.S.' in a letter to *The Times* published on 5th September 1885 (p10), who wished to call attention *“to what is now going on at Stonehenge”*. Prefacing his/her comments with a query about the powers of the new post of Inspector of Ancient Monuments, she/he continued:

“This priceless gem of antiquity appears to have become the resort on Sunday afternoons, not only of tourists from all parts of England, but of the neighbouring rustics. Did the latter take any intelligent interest in the Sarsen-stones and Syenites no one would be disposed to object to their presence. But judging from what was going on last Sunday afternoon, when I was on the spot, I could detect no such sentiments in the breasts of the newly enfranchised electors of Wiltshire. The adults were chiefly occupied in smoking pipes and drinking beer, which had arrived on the scene from some mysterious quarter. Their olive branches had converted one of the fallen stones into a slide, and were following one another along it in high glee. Besides this, there are numerous chalk marks on the stones and names cut in the turf, the stones being too hard for pocket-knives. I saw one man deliberately chalking all the stones, one after the other, apparently in order that in ascertaining their number he might not count any of them a second time. The turf

between the stones is covered with broken bottles, dirty papers, burnt straw, cinders and other rubbish. Numerous rabbits have excavated burrows under the recumbent stones, while the sparrows nest undisturbed in the holes of such as are still standing”.

Clearly unhappy that many of the people enjoying themselves at Stonehenge were now able to vote (the previous year’s Representation of the People Act, or Third Reform Act, had extended the right to vote already enjoyed in the Boroughs to rural areas), the anonymous writer offered a suggestion to keep these ‘rustics’ away, and to leave Stonehenge for those with a more ‘intelligent interest’ in the stones (although no real solution regarding sparrows and rabbits was presented):

“Much as such a course is to be regretted on many accounts, I fear that the time is now come when it will be expedient to protect Stonehenge from the unrestricted access of the British public. It would be very objectionable to put up any sort of railings round it. But a deep ditch might be sunk on the outer side of the ancient rampart and admission thus confined to one entrance, where a janitor might be placed to admit only those who can undertake to behave themselves properly within the enclosed area. The eaters, drinkers, smokers, and playmakers might thus be left to disport themselves on the surrounding downs, where there is ample sport for their amusement, while the inner circle would be kept clean and tidy and the monuments protected from further ill-usage.”

F.R.S. received support from ‘M’ of Salisbury, whose letter to *The Times* was published on 9th September (p4):

“I most fully agree with your correspondent as to the abuse which picnic parties at Stonehenge has now become. I was there lately with a friend who was seeing the stones for the first time, and the space within the circle was crowded with excursionists and others, eating and drinking, others dancing around the stones, and the whole place littered with papers and bottles, the scene completely doing away with the grand impression the wonderful and venerable stones ought to give. I think it is quite time that all picknicking within the stones should be forbidden. There is ample ground for that on the surrounding Plain, and then others who really care for such monuments would be able to examine the stones with some pleasure, which has now become impossible.”

The following summer, the issue achieved even greater prominence as a result of a report produced by a ‘deputation’ representing the Wiltshire Archaeological Society. The purpose of the report was to offer a detailed appraisal of the state of the monument, and in particular the stones, as it was *“undergoing daily injury at the hands of the vast numbers of people who visit and picnic within its precincts”* (*The Times*, 11th August 1886, p6). The report had been presented and discussed at the Society’s annual meeting, held in Swindon, the previous day. During the discussion, it was *“deemed inexpedient to approach the owner, Sir Edmund Antrobus, whose expressed opinion was that he was doing all that was necessary for the preservation of Stonehenge”* (ibid.). The meeting ended with a motion in which it *“was unanimously resolved to invite the co-operation of the national antiquarian societies in carrying out some measures for the preservation of*

Stonehenge” (ibid.). Any sense of *déjà vu* felt by Antrobus on reading this would have been enhanced by additional comments on the desirability of straightening and re-erecting various stones. In fact, the sole difference between this and previous statements was the explicit desire to restrict access to the monument.

The deputation’s report was published in full in *The Times* on 17th August 1886 (p4). The preamble explained that:

“In the course of last autumn and winter urgent appeals were made from time to time to the Wilts Archaeological and Natural History Society to lift up its voice with all the authority it possessed in defence of Stonehenge, which was reported to be under daily injury at the hands of an unchecked public, whereupon the society resolved to send some of its own officers to see for themselves, and report its condition. Accordingly, a deputation...visited Stonehenge on July 20 last, and carefully examined every stone in order; noting down on the spot its exact condition, with special reference to injuries of recent date...”

The deputation comprised four individuals – the Rev. A.C. Smith, H.E. Medlicott, William Cunnington and Henry Cunnington, all of whom held positions within the Society. It may be worth highlighting at this point that Henry Cunnington’s grandson later recalled that Henry’s “great delight was to drive in a brake across Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge with friends and members of his family. They would picnic there...” (Cunnington 1954, 227). The report on the condition of the individual stones seems at first glance a somewhat curious document, although very much of its time with its repeated reference to observations made and recorded “on the spot” by expert witnesses. It comprised a straightforward and simple list of the stones (using Henry Cunnington’s numbering scheme rather than Flinders Petrie’s) with a few brief words against each one, recording comments such as ‘untouched of late years’, ‘two very small chips of recent date’, ‘injured in two places’, ‘slightly scratched’, ‘not seriously damaged’, ‘in good condition’, ‘somewhat injured, but not very materially’, and so on. In addition, they added that *“scribbling with chalk all over the stones has been indulged in to a large extent, and, though such chalk marks may not be positively injurious, they are disfiguring, and should not be permitted.”*

Wildlife didn’t escape censure either: *“It should also be mentioned that rabbits have burrowed beneath several of the stones...and this would form a very serious item of danger but...steps have been taken for the banishment of that mischievous rodent, and it is sincerely hoped that, by continuous vigilance on the part of the keeper, no injury need now be apprehended from that source.”*

The report then turned to the question of what was to be done. The deputation’s thoughts focused on two areas – visitors and restoration. As far as the first of these was concerned:

“...owing to an increase in visitors, and bearing in mind the irreparable injury to the stones constantly going on at the hands of thoughtless and mischievous tourists, the time

has come when the monument should be properly protected. First, by a fence which should exclude all carriages and horses from the area; but in lieu of any unsightly railing, which would destroy the wild character of Stonehenge, a sunk fence, or ha-ha, is the barrier strongly recommended, and that too at a considerable distance beyond the trench which encircles the precincts proper. Secondly, by the appointment of a caretaker, who should be in responsible charge of the monument, with power to enforce the regulations with which he would be provided; who should admit all visitors through one entrance only near the stone known as the Friar's heel; prevent all picknicking within the precincts, and, above all, prevent injury to the stones, whether by chipping or marking, or scratching or standing on them. Whether the salary of such a caretaker should be provided by a small entrance fee, or otherwise, would be a matter of after consideration."

The deputies declared that they had no desire to see Stonehenge restored. Instead, they argued merely for securing Stone 56 in its present position rather than returning it to an upright one; straightening stones 6 and 7 (and their lintel), as well as some of the stones of the façade (29 and 1 in the more familiar numbering scheme); and, possibly, securing the Heel Stone. They also recommended re-erecting the trilithon that had fallen in 1797, *"whose exact position is undoubted"*, using whatever 'appliances' could be secured for the other works, adding that *"it would seem an ideal opportunity not to let slip, now, if ever, to re-erect the great trilithon, which, if replaced in position, would add so much to the grandeur and imposing appearance of Stonehenge and whose prostrate condition is lamented by so many"*.

An editorial in the following day's edition of *The Times* (18th August 1886, p9) weighed in further, noting that

"Stonehenge is now threatened not so much by the natural processes of decay as by the destructive agency of human wantonness and vulgarity", before adding that *"The rabbit population is incessantly undermining the stones, and promising them a premature downfall. But rabbits can be shot, trapped, or ferreted. It is the human creature which is so hard to deal with."*

While the rabbits were allegedly undermining the sarsens, it was the surface of the stones that had *"not escaped the tender mercies of this age of excursionists and bean-feasters"* who *"seem to have possessed and gratified a morbid craving to walk the length of all the stones which have fallen. The surface of these stones, with the exception of one which has escaped the excursionists' vigilance by burying itself in the earth, has been worn away like the surface of all pavement. Then, extensive chipping operations have been carried on by amateurs who found it impossible to leave the place without a memento of their visit."*

In addition to the chipping, there was still the problem of graffiti:

"there has been a good deal of promiscuous scratching and scribbling with chalk, but the principal mischief of this class arise, of course, from the desire of BROWN, JONES, and ROBINSON to hand down their names to posterity. Almost every day takes some

fragment from the ruins, or adds something to the network of scrawling with which the surface of the stone is defaced. No time ought to be lost in taking some step to prohibit further desecration. The only question is what should be done."

The anonymous writer agreed with the suggestion that not only should the monument be fenced, but that it should be enclosed by a sunken fence, or ha-ha. Reference was made to the possibly apocryphal story that the Duke of Queensbury had, in the eighteenth century, considered building a wall around Stonehenge, something which *"although it might have prevented much damage, would have been an unsightly interruption to the grand monotony of vista which makes Stonehenge profoundly impressive."* Assuming it was the same Duke, the story would appear to be at odds with his refusal to allow restoration of the collapsed trilithon because he thought the monument 'more picturesque in its present state' (see above) unless, of course, it was a sunken wall – a ha-ha – that he had in mind. *The Times* also agreed that enclosure would require a custodian *"who would exclude picknickers and prevent injuries to the stones"*.

As far as 'restoration' was concerned, again the editorial writer was in full agreement with the report concerning what was acceptable, noting that

"public opinion is sure to declare against any wholesale restoration, imparting an air of suspicious completeness to the circle. The disjecta membra of Stonehenge are in a sense its certificate of antiquity".

The article ended with a summary of the weaknesses of the 1882 Act in the face of *"the defenceless condition of Stonehenge"*, and a plea that if the owner

"proves unwilling to commit the place to public care...and is indisposed to take the burden of protection of it upon his own shoulders, Stonehenge ought to become the property of the State. To continue to allow this marvellous relic of prehistoric ages to be ruthlessly disfigured and perish inch by inch would be an eternal disgrace to this country."

However, not everyone was in agreement, with Pitt Rivers (by now Inspector of Ancient Monuments under the 1882 Ancient Monuments Act – see below) telling SPAB that he felt it *"a pity the damage done by visitors should be exaggerated. I am inclined to think that no serious injury is being done to the Monument by bits of cucumber that are left about, and although sliding down the Stones is objectionable, and scratching names particularly so; yet when the great size of the Stones is considered, a list of chips and scratches upon each stone such as has been published, appears more serious on paper than on the Stones themselves"* (Letter, Pitt Rivers to Hugh Thackeray Turner, 11th October 1889: SPAB archive).

Nonetheless, as in 1881, Sir Edmund may have acted on some of these concerns. William Judd had been guardian of the monument since 1870. The earliest surviving written instructions to him regarding his duties date from 1889 but may reflect existing guidance. In this document, Judd was asked *"to see no damage is done to the stones or the grass."*

To ascertain the names and addresses of any persons so doing and not to allow visitors to picnic inside the stones, nor light fires inside the ditch” (quoted in Chippindale 1978, 110). Unfortunately it is not clear if these represented new instructions, or were merely a reiteration of existing ones. However, a later version dated 1899 did contain something new: “Visitors are requested not to put marks or names on the Stones. No picketing or feeding of horses allowed between the Stones and the Ditch. Visitors not to leave rubbish” (Ibid.).

That Judd was carrying out these instructions was confirmed in some correspondence that appeared in *The Standard* in September 1893. This began with a letter (published 18th September 1893, p3) from someone signing themselves ‘Archaeologist’, in which the writer expressed their *“disgust...to see our most ancient relics of antiquity overrun by swarms of schoolchildren, who were scribbling on one side of the wonderful pillars, making a slide down another, endeavouring to cut their names on a third...”*. Even worse, this swarm was *“getting in the way of those who had come to investigate, and deafening them by their noise”*. ‘Archaeologist’ continued *“I far from disapprove of school treats, but what I do strongly object to is such an unsuitable place being chosen. These children were defacing and destroying one of the most marvellous remains (on account of its antiquity) now standing in our land, and causing the greatest inconvenience to all intelligent visitors. Cannot something be done to prevent this outrageous misuse of the wonderful?”*

This prompted several more letters to *The Standard*, these appearing over the next couple of days (19th September, p7; 20th September, p2). One demanded that the monument be *“placed under the protection of the Public Monuments Act [sic], and a properly authorised and paid official appointed to look after it”*, before acknowledging that Judd had *“succeeded in a measure, in that he prevents all picknicking inside the stone circle”*. However, *“when there is a large number of persons present it is almost impossible to do anything”*. Another correspondent claimed that

“The number of excursionists to the spot increases very rapidly year by year, and, though steps have been taken to prevent the stones being viciously damaged, it is a lamentable fact that they are quickly losing a deal of their charm for want of proper treatment... It would be quite a simple matter for the stones to be railed in, without hiding the view in any particular, and visitors would not then have the opportunity to sit, stand, or walk about on them, as is now the case.”

Another also demanded attention from *“those in authority”*, before pointing out that the rabbits had actually been removed, *“ferreted by the keeper on the estate”*, although he added that *“I think the earth thrown out by the rabbits should be carefully replaced, and the ground returned.”*

Hugh Harries, who gave his address as the Croydon Conservative Club, wrote to defend Judd:

"He arrives there from Shrewton early in the morning, and leaves when all the visitors have gone for the day, which cannot be very late, as no one would wish to be left on that lonely plain after dark. For my part, therefore, I cannot see how these relics can be better protected in a wild and open country, unless you pose sentry. Railings, from their situation, would be useless as a protection against anyone who had a design upon the stones, especially in the night".

In contrast, 'Tourist' complained of seeing *"children playing just within the circle of stones"*, before criticising Judd for fulfilling his duties – *"Just outside the circle people were picknicking... while the pseudo custodian remained apparently indifferent"*. Again, there was a demand for the monument to be placed *"in the hands of those who have the will and the power to render...protection effective"*.

Further correspondence followed, but this time from individuals with a closer connection to the monument than those quoted so far. First of all, the Rev. Arthur Phelps wrote from the vicarage at Amesbury to express his concerns, prompted less by the initial correspondence than by the fact that on 20th September (p. 4) *The Standard* had run an editorial which appeared to take the complaints at face value. As far as Phelps was concerned, little damage of any note had occurred in the seventeen years he had been vicar of Amesbury, while a colleague of his who had *"known Stonehenge for the last sixty years... can recall no alteration"*, with the obvious exception of Cole's timber support (letter, *The Standard*, 22nd September 1893, p.3).

Howard Cunnington confirmed this impression of little material alteration *"during the last fifty years"*, but expressed concern that recent extremely dry years might have increased the chances of a collapse, before reminding readers of the need to get *"proper protection for Stonehenge"*. His solution resembled those of a few years previously, but with some significant amendments:

"I would like to suggest that Stonehenge should have the same privileges of preservation granted to it as are given to many others of our public monuments – that a custodian be appointed, local if possible, and who, no doubt, could obtain quarters at one of the neighbouring farmhouses, and further that Stonehenge, and say twenty yards round it, should be railed in with a substantial iron railing ten feet high and with a lock gate; admission inside should be granted to any society or individual visitor who wished for a closer inspection, on payment of a small fee to the custodian. This, I think, would ensure greater security and preservation, whilst not in any way interfering with the general view of the public. Should the present condition of things remain, I feel Stonehenge will ultimately become nothing but a heap of stones fit only for road-mending" (letter, *The Standard*, 22nd September 1893, p. 2).

The correspondence came to an end with a letter from William Judd himself (*The Standard*, 25th September 1893, p. 2), who observed that during the 23 years of his custodianship, he had *"never known rabbits in any way impair the stability of the 'stones', though it is true that about ten years since a couple of rabbits did take up abode under*

one of the fallen stones, but were quickly exterminated by the keepers of Sir E. Antrobus." As for visitor damage:

"Compared with other relics, there is really very little scratching or defacing of the stones, as is apparent to any visitor. The damage done by children walking on the fallen stones is considerably less than that done by adults. Would it not be well if 'Archaeologist' and his brother scientists and visitors generally, who are so interested in Stonehenge, on such occasions as school treats, were to assist me in preventing children doing anything they consider detrimental to our oldest relic? Children have just as much right to visit there as antiquarians, though one sometimes imagines that the place was specially reserved for the latter class..."

'The Spade is the Key...': 19th century excavations at Stonehenge

Prior to 1901, almost all of the excavation that occurred at Stonehenge can best be described as unofficial, in the sense that few of the known episodes of digging seem to have occurred with the prior consent of the owner. William Cunnington's probing with a stick in 1797 has already been mentioned. He went back in the summer of 1802, when he

"dug in several places in the Area and neighbourhood of Stonehenge & particularly at the front of the Altar, where I dug to the depth of 5 feet or more & found charred Wood, Animal Bones, & Pottery..."; adding in a footnote that he had been careful not to dig too close to the stones (Chippindale 2004, 117). He returned for a further bout of digging in 1810, this time around the Slaughter Stone, noting that the hollow occupied by the stone *"was occasioned by digging often to see what was under"* (ibid., 124; he left behind a bottle of port, which was later found by Colonel Hawley). At this time, of course, Stonehenge was owned by the 4th Duke of Queensbury, who had already refused permission to make good the 1797 collapse.

The Amesbury estate was bought by Sir Edmund Antrobus (1st Baronet) in 1824, and he was succeeded after his death by his nephew, also Sir Edmund Antrobus (2nd Baronet) in 1826. This second Sir Edmund allowed a Captain Beamish to dig a hole c1839 *"in order to satisfy a society in Sweden there was no interment in the centre of Stonehenge"* (ibid., 161). Apparently Beamish dug over an area some 8 feet square to a depth of 6 feet just in front of the Altar Stone, finding little more than quantities of rabbit bones. Beamish seems to have been the last to obtain consent to dig at Stonehenge prior to Detmar Blow and William Gowland in 1901, although in 1849 this second Sir Edmund had, as noted earlier, reportedly been willing to assist financially in the proposed re-erection of the fallen trilithon.

On subsequent occasions, permission was refused (when asked for, of course). In later cases, it seems that Antrobus (2nd Baronet) was persuaded by his son and heir Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet), who eventually succeeded to the estate following his

father's death in 1870. This third Sir Edmund did offer some reasons for the various refusals during debate in the House of Commons connected with readings of Lubbock's Ancient Monuments Bill. Antrobus was, like Lubbock, a Liberal MP, representing Wilton, Wiltshire until 1877. During debate on 15th April 1874, Antrobus argued that

"As long as these objects were in the hands of private owners, they would in most cases be safer than they would if they once became public property. Some of the ancient barrows, through having been first rifled by antiquarians, had been carted away and levelled by farmers..."

Antrobus continued, with Hansard reporting him as arguing that *"it was the antiquarians who had done most mischief in England: and if the ancient monuments were placed in their hands they would do still more"*. He then referred to one relatively recent request, made to his late father, to excavate at Stonehenge:

"Stonehenge had been owned by a relative of his who was asked to give his consent to an investigation which would have involved digging to a considerable depth. He said to his relative – 'You are the custodian of the place; whatever happens, you are responsible, and will be held responsible by the public; if you allow an investigation of this kind to be made in this chalk soil you will have every stone about your ears; and what will the public say then? His relative pleaded that the application was made by great archaeologists; but he still urged – 'It is to you that the public will look,' and therefore advised him to refuse. The refusal was accordingly given, although the letter of application bore the name of 'J. Lubbock.' If the hon. member for Maidstone had carried the proposed investigation, he would have levelled Stonehenge... You could not force your way under the chalk, and the attempt to do what was proposed would have levelled the stones to the surface of the soil. He did not believe in handing everything over to antiquarians; some monuments were safer in other hands, where he hoped the House would permit them to remain..."

Lubbock responded by insisting that

"there never was any intention to make deep excavations at Stonehenge, or to do anything which would have endangered the monument. Archaeologists, however, were anxious to have determined one point, which might have thrown light on the date of Stonehenge, and, much to [Lubbock's] regret, permission to do that was refused."

The episode referred to occurred in 1869, the request to excavate having been put to Antrobus by a committee appointed by the British Association for the Advancement of Science that included among its members Lubbock, John Evans, and Colonel A.H. Lane Fox (later to become Lt General AHLF Pitt Rivers). Lane Fox outlined the plans to a meeting of the Ethnological Society of London held on 9th November 1869. At the time of that meeting, permission had been sought from Sir Edmund (2nd Baronet) but no reply received. Lane Fox explained to the meeting that the British Association was looking

“to promote a systematic examination of this monument, with the view of determining, if possible, the long-standing question of its origin and uses... To the best of my knowledge, no attempt has been made to remove the turf and examine the soil within the enclosure for these relics of the constructors which afford the only reliable evidence of the origin and uses of such structures” (Lane Fox 1870, 1).

Lane Fox explained the rationale for excavating as follows:

“Apart from the question whether or not it is a place of burial, which would at once be set at rest by examination of the ground within the enclosure, it is hardly possible to conceive that stones of such great magnitude should have been transported to this place, rough-hewn probably on the spot, and that excavations should have been made for the reception of the massive uprights, without leaving in the soil trampled beneath the feet of the constructors some traces of the implements employed during the operations, which if brought to light would suffice at least to determine the period and degree of civilization of the people who erected it” (ibid., 2).

As proof, Lane Fox displayed some worked flints found

“in the rubbish around the Trilithons... Observing that two or three bare places had been scratched in the soil apparently by animals, at the foot of the stones, I examined the loose earth carefully, and succeeded in finding the four flints... Besides the flakes, I observed numerous small splinters of flint, such as might well have resulted from the fracture of flint tools, had such been used in the process of dressing the great blocks; but upon this point I would not wish to hazard a conjecture without examining a larger quantity of soil than presented itself upon the few bare spots from which the turf had been removed at the time of my visit” (ibid.).

So what was being proposed for Stonehenge? Bearing in mind Lubbock’s claim during the Commons debate in 1874 that the committee were *“anxious to have determined one point”*, with no deep excavations planned, Lane Fox actually seems to have been proposing something quite extensive: *“the part to be examined would be the flat surface within the stone circles, which it would only be necessary to excavate as far as the natural surface of the chalk”*, although they would not *“approach anywhere near the foundations of the Trilithons”*. He promised that *“no trace of the excavations would be observable when the soil and turf would be replaced”*, before adding that *“it might also be desirable to examine the ditch of the earthwork surrounding the structure”* (ibid., 4).

Noting that a previous request to excavate, made by the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, had been rejected by the previous Sir Edmund, at least partly on the basis that such work was too important to be handled by a local society (ibid., 3), Lane Fox was keen to play up the credentials of his committee and its backers (the British Association for the Advancement of Science, characterised by Lane Fox as *“our National Parliament of Science”*), but to no avail.

The third Sir Edmund clearly wasn't averse to archaeological work occurring if necessary – as noted earlier, some sort of 'watching brief' was intended to accompany the planned straightening of Stones 6 and 7 in 1881. However, he still had to contend with a series of illicit excavations by archaeologists who did not ask permission, in addition to episodes like Maskelyne's 'sampling' of the stones. In a letter to *The Times* (21st September 1871, p5) Sir Edmund, arguing that 'mischief' at Stonehenge was primarily the fault of the 'professional' rather than the 'operative' classes, referred to an incident where one of the former *"was one evening found, in the interests of science, as he asserted, endeavouring to ascertain the depth of the foundations. He apologized in a county paper, and the matter was dropped"*. This may refer to Henry Cunnington, although Chippindale (2004, 161) dates the incident in which he was caught digging without permission, and had to apologize in the local press, to around a decade later.

Nonetheless, Henry Cunnington did indulge in further excavation without permission. For example, William Cunnington, in a paper on stone fragments from Stonehenge published in 1883, referred to several episodes between 1879 and 1881:

"In 1880 Mr H Cunnington dug up several specimens under the turf just within the vallum, and in other excavations in July of the following year he made discoveries which must not be passed by without notice... [i.e.] the discovery of the stumps of two of the stones, the existence of which had previously been unknown... Following...these discoveries, the bases of other buried stones have since been found by probing the turf with a pointed rod" (W Cunnington 1883, 141-3).

172 fragments of stone were *"found in three small holes, on July 8th 1881"*, some *"in the earth around"* the two 'stumps' (ibid., 143-4). Cunnington then explained how

"The turf was taken up at about twenty feet within the vallum, to the left of the entrance, but no specimens were discovered, and here the soil was only from four to six inches in depth. Further on in the same direction, and nearer the building, the fragments were more numerous..." (ibid., 144). He also mentioned *"another hole dug, close by, to the left"* (ibid.). In addition, he reported that in August 1879 Henry had found *"a fragment of a hatchet-shaped stone implement"* at a spot *"just under the turf, within a few yards from the main entrance at Stonehenge"* (ibid., 148). It is not clear how much more extensive this exploration was, although it is worth pointing out that in his 1878 paper on the petrology of the stones at Stonehenge, Maskelyne (1878, 149) thanked *"Mr Cunnington for the loan of several small fragments from, or picked up close to, particular stones"*. In 1895, meanwhile, Edgar Barclay wrote that *"between four and five hundred chips of the stones used in the construction of Stonehenge have been found by searching beneath the surface of the soil within the area of Stonehenge or in adjacent cart-ruts..."* (Barclay 1895, 6), but didn't say who had dug for them.

William Cunnington rounded off his summary of Henry's diggings with the suggestion that *"the spade is the key to Stonehenge"*, although obviously not just anyone should be

allowed to dig: that spade *“must be handled with the utmost care and scientific skill amid these venerated remains, now almost in ruin”* (W Cunnington 1883, 148).

Darwin and the worms

There was one more (reported) episode of excavation during the 1880s, this one far better known than any of Henry Cunnington’s holes. One day in June 1877, the sixty-eight year old Charles Darwin and his wife Emma travelled to Salisbury by train, and then continued on to Stonehenge by open carriage in order to conduct further research into the activities of earthworms. He described the work in his book *The Formation of Vegetable Mould, through the Action of Worms*, which was published in 1881, the year Darwin died. In a section entitled *‘The sinking of great stones through the action of worms’*, Darwin described how the activities of earthworms could cause large objects such as boulders to slowly sink into the ground. Stonehenge was one of the places chosen by Darwin to demonstrate this process. The others included a disused lime-kiln in Surrey which had been pulled down 35 years previously.

Emma Darwin described the approach by road as *“striking and ugly – over great cultivated pigs’ backs except the last two or three miles, when we got on the turf* (Litchfield 1915, 226). The Darwins appear not to have sought consent in advance from Antrobus – the decision to head to Stonehenge seems to have been somewhat spur of the moment (Emma wrote that *“he is bent on going, chiefly for the worms, but also he has always wished to see it”* (ibid.)). Once there, *“We loitered about and had a great deal of talk with an agreeable old soldier placed there by Sir Ed. Antrobus (owner), who was keeping guard and reading a devout book, with specs on. He was quite agreeable to any amount of digging...”* (ibid., 226-7). Given the activities of Henry Cunnington over the next few years, it would be interesting to know for certain whether Emma Darwin meant that Judd was agreeable to any amount of digging by the Darwins, or by anyone who happened to ask.

In his book, Darwin wrote that *“Close to one of [the] fallen stones, which was 17ft long, 6ft broad, and 28 ½ inches thick, a hole was dug; and here the vegetable mould was at least 9 ½ inches in thickness. At this depth a flint was found, and a little higher up on one side of the hole, a fragment of glass. The base of the stone lay about 9 ½ inches beneath the level of the surrounding ground, and its upper surface 19 inches above the ground”* (Darwin 1881, 154-5). This suggests that the Darwins (father plus son George) did not dig down to the natural chalk.

Darwin continued: *“A hole was also dug close to a second huge stone, which in falling had broken into two pieces; and this must have happened long ago, judging from the weathered aspect of the fractured ends. The base was buried to a depth of 10 inches, as was ascertained by driving an iron skewer horizontally into the ground beneath it. The vegetable mould forming the turf-covered sloping border round the stone... was 10 inches in thickness; and most of this mould must have been brought up by worms from*

beneath its base". A third hole was then dug "At a distance of 8 yards from the stone"; at which point "the mould was only 5 ½ inches in thickness (with a piece of tobacco pipe at a depth of 4 inches)". At this point, the mould "rested on broken flint and chalk" (ibid., 155).

They then turned their attention to another stone – "A straight rod was fixed horizontally (by the aid of a spirit level) across a third fallen stone, which was 7 feet 9 inches long; and the contour of the projecting parts and of the adjoining ground, which was not quite level, was ascertained... A hole was dug on the eastern side, and the base of the stone was here found to lie at a depth of 4 inches beneath the general level of the ground, and of 8 inches beneath the top of the sloping turf-covered border" (ibid., 155-6).

Emma felt that her husband and son "did not find much good about the worms, who seem to be very idle out here" (Litchfield 1915, 227), although in his book, Charles followed the discussion of his visit to the stones by concluding that "Sufficient evidence has now been given showing that small objects left on the surface of the land where worms abound soon get buried, and that large stones sink slowly downwards through the same means" (Darwin 1881, 156-7).

The Ancient Monuments Bill and its aftermath

A significant backdrop to these arguments over access, restoration and exploration at Stonehenge was provided by the repeated attempts by Sir John Lubbock to pass legislation aimed at offering some protection to 'ancient monuments'. The proposed Bill led to a change in the nature of the debate about what to do with Stonehenge. Arguments over its condition began to take precedence over requests to investigate, although arguably the main issue remained not so much the physical state of the monument as its inaccessibility to 'science'. The idea that Stonehenge needed preserving – that Sir Edmund Antrobus should relinquish ownership – was a consequence of Antrobus' refusal to accede to the demands of archaeological authority.

The story of the Bill's troubled passage during the 1870s – eight failed attempts before a compromise Bill drawn up by the then First Commissioner of Works, George Shaw-Lefevre (later Lord Eversley) was passed in 1882 – has been told elsewhere on many occasions (e.g. Chippindale 1983; Saunders 1983; Murray 1989; Sax 1990; Thurley 2013). Here it is intended to focus on the place of Stonehenge (a) within the debates surrounding the legislation and (b) with regard to efforts at implementing the Act.

Discussion of the legislation tends to focus on the concerns expressed by its opponents about its implications for the rights of property ownership. Certainly a good deal of the reported debate in Parliament and in the press focused on property rights, with Lubbock and his supporters arguing that the only right being infringed was the right to destroy. As Shaw-Lefevre stated during one such debate (Hansard: 7th March 1877), "...the object of the Bill was to enable a public authority to buy from the owner the right of destruction".

Stonehenge featured frequently in arguments over the successive Bills, partly because it was such a well-known monument whose condition was an increasingly frequent subject of attention in the press, but also because its owner, as MP for Wilton until 1877, was able to argue against the Bill in the House of Commons.

Like Lubbock, Antrobus was a liberal MP, and so argued against the proposed legislation from the same side of the house as its chief sponsor. Antrobus' objections were certainly rooted in the rights of property ownership, but this was not the whole story. As Sax (1990, 1549) pointed out, *"The Bill left untouched all ordinary uses and rights of ownership. It permitted public intervention only if an owner set out to destroy what virtually everyone agreed should be preserved. And even then it compensated for whatever economic benefit the destruction and subsequent development would have produced"*. As Edward Stanhope, MP for Mid Lincolnshire argued at the time (Hansard, 15th April 1874):

"...if an owner of an ancient monument was not going to injure it, but, on the contrary, would take every care of it, the Bill did not apply. All that the Bill called upon the Commissioners to do was to watch the monuments named in it, and only to act when the owners proposed to injure any of them. Would any hon. Gentleman say it was not within the province of Parliament to interfere with the proprietor of Stonehenge if he tried to pull it down?"

Sax further pointed out that *"By posing the issue as whether an owner had asserted a right to destroy something everyone else agreed was valuable, Lubbock introduced the concept of the responsible owner... Lubbock's goal was never to acquire full public possession and control of cultural properties. The model he had in mind was... one of responsible stewardship, both on the part of the proprietors, and, where they faltered, on the part of the government"* (Sax 1990, 1553-4).

Inclusion of Stonehenge on the schedule attached to Lubbock's Bill implied that it was not being looked after appropriately – that it was 'at risk', in modern terms – an implication that Antrobus clearly and understandably resented. As far as Antrobus was concerned, Stonehenge was not only safe in his hands, but safer than it would be under government stewardship. His successor as MP for Wilton, Sir Sidney Herbert, continued to argue this point:

"Ancient monuments suffered a great deal more from the hammer of the geologist and the spade of the antiquarian than they did from the ambition of a vandalizing public to inscribe their names on a stone or a wall, or from the neglect of proprietors. So far as he could see, there was no danger of their ancient monuments being materially interfered with..." (Hansard: 18th February 1878).

The appointment of Lt-General Pitt Rivers as the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments under the 1882 Act prompted a series of visits to the owners of all the sites listed on the 1882 schedule. There was no compulsion on landowners to hand sites in their possession

over to state care, but despite the considerable opposition that the legislation had faced in Parliament, by the end of 1884 more than half had done so. However, that was the point at which progress stalled.

One of the sites that stayed out of government hands was, of course, Stonehenge. Shaw-Lefevre later recalled that *"In 1882, when at the head of the Office of Works, after passing the Ancient Monuments Act, I directed the General Augustus Pitt Rivers, whom I had appointed Inspector under it, to communicate with Sir Edmund Antrobus, the then owner of the land on which Stonehenge stands, and to suggest to him the expediency of placing the monument under the protection of the Act. The owner declined to do this. He resented any suggestion that he was neglectful of his duty to protect the monument from injury, or that it was necessary for the Government to intervene for that purpose"* (Eversley 1910). Pitt Rivers himself recalled writing on several occasions to Antrobus requesting that he place Stonehenge in the hands of the Office of Works, but he declined each time (Pitt Rivers 1893).

Antrobus' priorities for Stonehenge were, as already noted, rather different to those of the various archaeological bodies. Not only had he made clear his opposition to restoration and excavation, he also remained insistent that the site should remain freely accessible to anyone who wished to visit. It is not clear what was in those letters that Pitt Rivers wrote, but it seems safe to presume that his views on matters differed to Antrobus. For example, in the mid-1880s Pitt Rivers drafted a letter intended for *The Times* but never sent, in which he suggested that the re-erection of fallen trilithons at Stonehenge would be a suitable means of commemorating Queen Victoria's approaching Jubilee year (draft letter, 2nd July 1887, English Heritage Archive: Pitt Rivers files). This 'commemoration' would also have included returning leaning stones to a perpendicular position, with the ground around their bases excavated and the stones themselves stabilised by a foundation of masonry and cement. It is difficult to see how, if published, this letter would have helped his negotiations with Sir Edmund.

In fact Pitt Rivers believed that the main threat to Stonehenge was the elements (or the passage of time) rather than visitors, although he was in favour of controlling the latter. His first report on the condition of Stonehenge, written in 1887, doesn't survive, but a later report written in 1893 (2nd October 1893: WORK 14/213) – following a spate of correspondence in *The Standard* – largely agreed with Antrobus that any damage caused by visitors was superficial; it was time and the weather, aided by burrowing animals, that presented the main problems:

"...it is quite certain that sooner or later, more probably sooner than later, most of the stones will fall through natural causes. It does not require to be an engineer or an archaeologist, but merely the exercise of a little common sense to see that some of the stones are in the process of slowly falling now. This fact is recognised by the useless and unsightly wooden props that are set up against two of them. It is said that the trilithons which fell in 1797, fell suddenly without any warning; the ground had been moistened by

a long thaw. The rat holes and occasional rabbit holes at the feet of the stones must help to let in the water and moisten the foundations, and it is evident that the same processes, that have caused them to incline from the perpendicular, will more than suffice to bring them down before long, now that gravitation is superadded as an element of destruction. In falling down they may break as others have done, and may probably break others.

"The only remedy in my judgment, is to have the inclining stones brought up to the perpendicular, and the foundations should then be set in concrete or masonry. This would be very expensive, but it would secure the monument to posterity. The masonry foundations would then be covered over with mould and turf, so that they would not be seen".

Again, this was hardly likely to change Antrobus' mind. *"I do not believe that...there is danger of any sort"*; he wrote in response (12th January 1894: WORK 14/213). He was also scathing about Pitt Rivers' suggestion of building a cottage within sight of the stones to be occupied by a policeman (who would replace Judd), and here at least Shaw Lefevre was in agreement with him.

Although it wasn't mentioned in his 1893 report, Pitt Rivers hadn't lost his enthusiasm for excavating at Stonehenge. In 1896, perhaps emboldened somewhat by his experiences on his own Cranborne Chase estate, he wrote to Augustus Franks of the British Museum to tell him that:

"...if I have any experience of one thing, it is in the excavation of earthworks, and it is my opinion that in two months the age of Stonehenge might be definitely fixed by an examination of the earthworks connected with it, and that in two years the excavations made would be so completely grown over with grass that no trace of the exploration would be seen" (20th April 1896: English Heritage Archives file FLO1545).

Pitt Rivers, among others, never quite seemed to fully grasp Antrobus' position. He accepted that Antrobus had

"shown his interest in the Monument by his wish to keep it entirely in his own hands, and declining to avail himself of the Ancient Monuments Act; and I have no doubt that he is anxious to do all in his power to keep it in good repair" (2nd October 1893: WORK 14/213).

However, his refusal to allow fallen stones to be re-erected, leaning stones to be straightened, and all such stones to be provided with a firm foundation, as far as Pitt Rivers was concerned, could only have one explanation:

"As for the future preservation of Stonehenge, I believe that Sir Edmund is not willing to incur the great expense of such measures as are necessary for its maintenance" (ibid.).

Another collapse

By the end of the 19th century, the situation regarding Stonehenge seemed stable. Antrobus had no wish, and saw no need, to relinquish control over the monument. He was opposed to the re-erection or straightening of any stones, and was firmly against the idea that public access should be restricted in any way – there would be no fence. Nor would archaeologists be allowed to dig up any part of the monument. This all changed drastically after his death in 1899, although the actual opportunity for change was provided by the fall of two sarsens on the last day of 1900.

The news of a further collapse at Stonehenge was broken to the outside world in a letter written on 2nd January 1901 to *The Times* (published 3rd January, p. 3) by Arthur Newall, occupant of Wilsford House, Salisbury:

“Sir, - I very much regret to report that two of the stones of the outer circle of Stonehenge fell on the last evening of the 19th century.

“One of them is a large upright Sarsen-stone and the other is the lintel, also of Sarsen, with yellow gravel and flint embedded in it.

“These are the only stones which have fallen since Charles II made excavations at the base of one to ascertain on what foundations the stones are placed, whilst staying at Hele House after the Battle of Worcester.

“It is sad that the acts of both man and of the gods should destroy this fine old sun temple.”

The reference to Charles II seems to represent a conflation of at least two separate events. Certainly while hopping from one safe house to another in the wake of the defeat at Worcester, in 1651 Charles did apparently indulge in a spot of riding on the downs on 7th September, after a night’s stay at Heale House near Woodford. It was reported that Charles, among other things, *“gave the lye to that fabulous tale that those stones cannot be told alike twice together”*. Twelve years later, safely enthroned, Charles did apparently ask the antiquarian John Aubrey to dig at Stonehenge, but Aubrey never got round to it (Chippindale 2004, 47, 71). Meanwhile, as previously noted, the collapse of the leaning Stone 56’s partner and lintel had been blamed on some digging undertaken in 1620 by the Duke of Buckingham on behalf of an earlier monarch, James I (of England; James VI of Scotland) (ibid., 47).

News of the fall prompted an editorial in *The Times* on the state of Stonehenge (4th January 1901, p7):

“... The fall was probably caused by the torrents of rain and violent winds that closed the troubled record of the year 1900. One of the uprights was brought to the ground, where it lies like so many other of the stones that formed this vast megalithic structure, and the

capstone has been broken into pieces... In our own day it requires some study and a certain effort of the imagination to call up a picture of Stonehenge as it looked before men and nature began to work havoc with it...



Figure 14: Cole's 1881 view of Stones 21 and 22 (just left of centre), looking west across the circle. Despite their appearance, no-one seems to have considered these stones as being in danger of falling. When the collapse occurred, Stone 22 (on the right) fell, its top end resting on Stone 58 and lintel 158, both of which had fallen in 1797. Stone 21 remained standing. Stone 22 was re-erected and set in concrete in 1958, and stone 21 lifted, straightened and set in concrete the same year, their lintel also being put back in place. Five years later, Stone 23 (to the right of 22, partly behind Stone 60) fell. This was blamed at the time on a long, hard frost followed by a rapid thaw, with a gale on the night of 9th/10th March 1963 delivering the final blow. It was re-erected and set in concrete in 1964. English Heritage Archives AL0913.

"The solicitude of the present age has placed Stonehenge, like other great national monuments, under the permissive protection of the law, but the law itself cannot prevent the ravages of weather and the gradual subsidence of the foundations on which these masses stand. Little, we fear, can be done to keep the remaining uprights standing. They

will fall like those that have already succumbed to their fate. It is better, perhaps, for the dignity of this venerable monument that it is in no serious danger of that restoration which is at work on so many later structures, more splendid as triumphs of art, but less stubborn in their strength. Restoration is too often something worse than ruin, which at least has a melancholy grandeur of its own, never more impressively brought home to us than among the fallen stones of Stonehenge lying at the foot of a few mighty survivors, most of them, it would seem, already bending to their long-delayed doom”.

The next day saw the first of many letters and articles that adopted a more positive outlook, viewing the collapse as presenting an opportunity for both research and restoration. Arthur Phelps, vicar of Amesbury (*The Times*, 5th January 1901, p3) observed that *“the fallen upright is scarcely damaged, and could, I think, be easily replaced”*; while the broken lintel offered the potential to deal with an issue he clearly felt was not fully resolved – there should be *“scientific investigation as to the composition of the stones – whether natural stones or concrete, as some have maintained”*.

‘Engineer’ from Blackpool advocated the use of concrete foundations (*The Times*, 7th January 1901, p9), offering a scheme of his own as *“an easy and inexpensive”* means of substituting *“an absolutely secure foundation for that now without leaving the slightest trace that anything has been done”*. Meanwhile, Horatio, 3rd Earl Nelson wrote from Trafalgar House, Downton, Wiltshire (*The Times*, 7th January 1901, p9) to suggest that *“some judicious surface draining would save the remaining trilithons from being gradually undermined by every passing shower”*. He was also worried about the fact that the railway had now reached Amesbury, offering the potential for an influx of Londoners, and recommended that the ditch encircling the stones *“be restored by deepening, so as to be a real fence to the temple”*.

Hugh Blakiston, Secretary of the recently established National Trust, reminded readers that Pitt Rivers had recommended concrete foundations some years earlier (10th January 1901, p5), while others pointed out that Flinders Petrie had suggested restoring stones to the vertical and securing them in concrete as long ago as 1880. Probably the most extreme course of proposed action came from a Mr A. L. Lewis of Highbury Hill, London:

“The whole of the soil down to the solid chalk should be dug out from the interior and carefully sifted, and replaced by concrete, which should be covered with half an inch or so of the best asphalt, such as is used in the London streets and the monument would be safe for many centuries”, he claimed, *“if left alone”*. Of course, if the digging and sifting *“were done carefully it is extremely probable that something might be found which would throw some light on the date if not the purpose of Stonehenge”* (*The Times*, 14th January 1901, p5).

The following month Flinders Petrie, at the time busy excavating in Egypt, weighed in with his own thoughts on the matter under three broad headings – art, conservation and history (*The Times*, 18th February 1901, p8). Artistically speaking, Petrie was keen to preserve *“the marvellous effect of the lonely plain and great masses of stone... The sight is*

the most impressive in England...'; in other words, no fence. A ha-ha might be acceptable, but *"a fence is needless if there is a guardian"*. The guardian could perhaps live close by, *"in a cottage hidden by earth-banks, so as not to spoil the surroundings"*. Conservation meant pushing the leaning stones back into place and securing them in concrete – *"The whole soil under a stone might be removed while the block was clamped in a timber frame"*. By history, he was referring to the opportunity this work would provide for archaeological observation and the potential for *"reaping a fine harvest of historical facts and clearing up our early civilization better than anywhere else"*.

While such advice continued to be offered, the fourth Sir Edmund, who had succeeded his father on the latter's death in 1899, was quite quickly in communication with the County Council, Wiltshire Archaeological Society, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). SPAB, through architect Detmar Blow, were the first to be consulted. The County Council was certainly in communication with Antrobus as early as 6th February in connection with the provisions of the 1900 Ancient Monuments Act, which had extended the original 1882 Act in several significant ways. The most significant in this instance was that certain powers previously only allowed to the Commissioner of Works could now also be taken on by a County Council. For example, should they wish to do so, Wiltshire County Council could now either purchase or become guardians of Stonehenge; they could either take on or assist with preservation and maintenance without becoming either owner or guardian; and should they take on either ownership or guardianship of the monument, the general public would have a right of access (Chippindale 1978, 112).

Antrobus' response was to welcome their interest, but at the same time to insist that any assistance from the Council had to be *"on the distinct understanding that it in no way affected my rights as absolute owner or interfered with my right of sale should I deem that advisable"* (ibid.). The issue was discussed by the Council at a meeting on 20th February, at which, according to a report in *The Times* (21st February 1901, p10) *"It was generally felt by members of the council that the council should hold itself in readiness to assist financially any association which took the matter to hand, but the opinion was also expressed that it was a national matter"*.

Antrobus, meanwhile, arranged a meeting on 26th March with representatives of the Society of Antiquaries, the Wiltshire Archaeological Society and SPAB *"to advise me with regard to the better preservation of the monument"*. In a report that Antrobus himself sent to *The Times* (published 3rd April 1901, p12), he listed the following resolutions as having been passed at the meeting:

"1. That this committee approves of the suggested protection of Stonehenge by a wire fence not less than 4 ft. high, following on two sides the existing roads and crossing on the west from the 331-foot level on the north road to the 332-foot level on the south road shown on the O.S. map (1-2,500), Wilts Sheet IV., 14.

"2. That the committee recommends without prejudice to any legal questions that the local authorities be requested to agree to divert the existing trackway or ridgeway from Netheravon now passing through the earth circle so as to pass from the 302-foot level on the south road shown on the O.S. map immediately west of Stonehenge.

"3. That stones 6 and 7, with their lintel, and stone 56 (according to the numbering on Mr Petrie's plan) be first examined, with a view to maintaining them in a position of safety.

"4. That, in the opinion of this committee, stone 22 should be replaced, stone 21 be made safe, and the lintel of 21 and 22 be replaced in the most safe and conservative manner. The committee also recommends the re-erection of stones 57 and 58 and their lintel 158.

"5. That the instructions to the custodians already in force be approved with a few suggested alterations.

"6. That this committee feels that it is impossible to overstate the value of the assistance which the county council, the district, and the parish council of Amesbury can give to the efforts made to preserve this unique monument.

"7. That these resolutions be sent to Sir Edmund Antrobus, with the earnest thanks of the committee, for the part he is proposing to take in the preservation of Stonehenge, and that it be left to him to communicate them to the Press."

Another meeting was held on 12th April to discuss these resolutions further. The same organisations were represented, as was Amesbury District Council. Sir Edmund Antrobus was accompanied by his wife, Lady Florence Antrobus, as well as Detmar Blow, described as his *"professional adviser and architect"*. Among the representatives of the Society of Antiquaries was William Gowland. The report of the meeting published in *The Times* (13th April 1901, p8) noted that:

"All the details of the work it is proposed to do with the view of maintaining the stones in a position of safety were fully discussed, and the representative views present unanimously approved all the suggestions made at the London conference. It was decided to proceed with the work as soon as the weather is favourable. It will be carried out under the supervision of Mr. Detmar Blow, assisted by an eminent civil engineer; and nothing in the way of restoration will be attempted. The only object the societies have in view is the preservation of this ancient memorial. The first work to be undertaken will be the raising of the huge monolith, No. 55B [Stone 56] on Mr. W. M. Flinders Petrie's plan, which overhangs the altar stone, but there are two large flaws or cracks in it, and if it were to fall it is feared that it would be broken into three parts. The experts engaged in the work will next proceed to examine the stones numbered 6 and 7 on Mr. Petrie's plan, with the view of putting them in a position to support the lintel which rests upon them. The other recommendations of the societies will be carried out in due course; and in the meantime, Sir E. Antrobus hopes to obtain permission to divert the roadway now passing

through the earth-circle which surrounds the stones, and to proceed with the erection of the wire fence as approved at the conference in London. Sir E. Antrobus explained to the representatives present that the object in asking for the road to be diverted was to make the fence round the stones in the least offensive way possible to anyone approaching the memorial. The representatives of the local authorities present expressed their approval of the diversion of the road. If the road is not diverted the wire fence will have to be erected close to the stones, which would be very unsightly, whereas, if Sir E. Antrobus's suggestion is agreed to, the fence will be erected in a position which will not in any way interfere with the natural view to which the archaeological societies are anxious to preserve”.

Obviously there are several concurrent themes to be explored here – restoration, enclosure, and the movement of the adjacent track are the key ones, but there is also the matter – alluded to by Antrobus in his initial response to the County Council – of his intermittent efforts to sell the site. These will be dealt with in turn, beginning with the plans to re-erect certain stones.

The straightening of Stone 56

Although they were the immediate cause of everything that happened at Stonehenge in 1901, the stones that fell on the last day of 1900 remained undisturbed on the ground until the 1950s. The only stone to be moved in any way in 1901 was the tall leaning monolith, Stone 56. Cole's scaffolding around Stones 6 and 7 seems to have been removed around this time as well, to be replaced eventually by the wooden props more familiar from contemporary photographs.

Antrobus's 'professional adviser and architect' Detmar Blow has largely escaped archaeological attention to date, despite his central role in the events of 1901. Closely involved with SPAB, he had known both Ruskin and Morris personally, and had already worked in Wiltshire with Philip Webb. Known to some of the key landowners in the area, at the time of the 1900 collapse he was already working for Antrobus on the latter's Amesbury Abbey home (Drury 2000, 111ff). Given his connections and experience, and the fact that he was already on the spot, he was the obvious person for Antrobus to turn to first for advice.

Blow and Philip Webb were discussing plans for Stonehenge by mid-January. Webb had been asked by the architect Hugh Thackeray Turner, SPAB's secretary at the time, to comment on the suggestions put forward by 'Engineer' in his letter to *The Times* (see above). 'Engineer' had offered a method for supporting the remaining upright stones "*without leaving any visible trace of 'restoration'...[It] would be an easy and inexpensive task to substitute an absolutely secure foundation for that now existing without leaving the slightest trace that anything had been done, and without any danger of disturbing the stones during the process*". The scheme basically involved digging a series of trenches at the foot of a stone down to its base, and filling each in turn with concrete "*or any other*

suitable material” before the next trench was dug and filled. “*By this method no considerable part of the stone is left unsupported at any time, and there is no risk of displacement during the progress of the work. The turf would then be replaced upon the concrete.*” Webb felt the proposal was good “*as far as it goes*”, but felt more underpinning would be necessary, and also argued that “*the earth over the concrete should be more than 6” deep, or the grass in dry seasons would dry up, and show in an ugly way*” (letter, Webb to Thackeray Turner, 16th January 1901: SPAB archive). He included sketches (plan and section) to illustrate his proposals, and also pointed out the need to support each stone before any work commenced “*for no-one knows how slight a support may actually be sustaining any stone at the present moment. Then the concrete should be made of broken flint and chips, with coarser gravel, sand, and the cement not more than 1 to 8 or 9 of hard material, &c.; also, so very much would depend on the intelligence as well as the experience of the foreman or clerk of works, and of his living there*” (ibid.).

Blow submitted a report to SPAB at the end of January (*Report on Stonehenge*, undated but refers within to ‘Sunday last, Jan 27th’: SPAB archive). The main points were as follows:

“in accordance with my previous letters to you on Stonehenge, I beg now to report to the Society as a member of its Committee on the present condition of Stonehenge. I do not report on its future presentation, as it has been decided by Sir Edmund Antrobus, the owner, to entrust this to a joint committee of yourselves and the Society of Antiquaries and the Wiltshire Archaeological Society.

With Sir Edmund Antrobus I have visited the stones several times lately, and since the fall of two stones on...December 31st 1900. I visited it on the early morning of Sunday last, Jan 27th, when the wind pressure was recorded as travelling at a rate of about 90 miles per hour – a greater rate than on the last day of the Century, but without rain immediately before or on the day – The importance of this you will understand in relation to the present condition of the ground, which is being well trodden down immediately round the stones with the tread of millions of feet retains the rainwater running down the stones instead of distributing it as it might otherwise do if raised. Below the turf & topsoil is a marle the same as used for the binding of stones in road making which in a more or less dry condition is hard as lime concrete, but saturated with water becomes a soft clay.

The stone which stood upright & fell on 31st December was embedded only two or three feet in the ground. This seems a slight foundation for a stone standing some 12 feet out of ground & weighing 14 to 16 tons. But two things must be borne in mind: the 1st that probably the stones vary considerably in their foundations, and the 2^d, that their erection in the formation of a ring on firm ground with lintols of such weight interlocked would resist enormous pressure, whereas the stones that have fallen are 2 of a group of 3 that stood alone.

No record exists of the cause of the first fall; the gap that has been mad[e] is a danger to the rest in the same manner as a gap in an avenue or clump of trees is to the latter. The

rest must in their turn follow unless the gap be planted up or other precautions taken against the inlet of the wind. Hence we have therefrom two important points to consider:- 1, the proper drainage of water by means of keeping the ground highest immediately round the stones, and, 2, the resistance of the wind pressure, for it would not be in harmony with the views of any of the learned Societies to propose the reformation of the ring.

With the first point must be connected the general control of the visiting public. Their number grows annually & already on some days nearly 1000 visit the place. His Majesty's Camp begun a year or so ago will be ready for the housing of troops speedily & railway communication will shortly be established. With reference to the second point, some most valuable advice has already been given by a member of this Committee, which I presume, have the fullest consideration of the special committee. It is to the effect that such stones as have insufficient foundations should be fully supported...by concrete...And with this second point for consideration, must be connected the re-erection of the two fallen stones. Their companion the 2nd upright now stands alone, and the gap for the wind has been considerably extended and now bares a large surface of that portion of the ring standing on the opposite side...

The chief work lies in the necessary and proper precautions of shoring & protecting the stones from all markings. The Society has already done two important buildings in the neighbourhood with local men who would again be at liberty.

The materials required would probably be concrete carefully mixed with local flints & cement, and which in all cases, should be kept a foot, or sufficiently below, the surface of the grass so as not to dry up in hot weather...".

In a letter sent to Thackeray Turner on 29th January (perhaps accompanying the above report), Blow stated that as far as Antrobus was concerned, there were four key points to be decided – whether to erect the recently-fallen stones; which other stones required support; how to approach the enclosure of Stonehenge in order to control visitors; and general rules and regulations for the custodian to put into practice. However, Blow added that under no circumstances would Antrobus “*approve or permit of any digging for the purposes of research*”, and neither would he allow anything to happen that might “*affect his right as absolute and sole owner of Stonehenge*” (letter, Blow to Thackeray Turner, 29th January 1901: SPAB archive).

Given his background, the amount of re-erection and straightening being considered by Blow and his SPAB colleagues may seem surprising, but Blow justified the proposals in terms of the longer-term preservation of the site itself. Without this work, further collapses were felt likely. In any case, what was being proposed was not radically different to some of the repair work Blow had been involved with elsewhere in Wiltshire, such as the rebuilding and underpinning of the tower of St Mary's Church, East Knoyle (Drury 2000, 32-6). At this early stage, it seems, work to preserve the stones that were still standing was a major priority, with re-erection of Stone 22 under consideration, but by no

means certain. Alongside this, the visiting public were clearly being held at least partly responsible for the recent collapse, something that had implications for the most controversial development at Stonehenge in 1901 – the enclosure of the site (see below, p72).



Figure 15: Stone 56 today, standing firmly upright, while the Bluestone in front remains as it did in 1901. Stone 56's partner, which lies beside it in two pieces (55a and 55b), fell at an unknown date before the later 16th century. Their lintel (Stone 156) can be seen lying on its side behind the leaning Bluestone. On the left of the photograph is the trilithon which collapsed in 1797, and was re-erected in 1958.

The Stonehenge Committee's deliberations led to a decision to begin with the straightening of Stone 56, whose stability (or otherwise) had so exercised the opinions of antiquaries, architects, archaeologists and owners over previous decades. Drury (2000, 114) described it as a preliminary exercise although if so, it was a bold choice. They could, after all, have started with the remaining upright of the 'trilithon' that had collapsed just a few months earlier. Instead, they opted for something far more controversial – a stone not only more central to the monument in terms of its location, but also central to many of the most famous representations and depictions of Stonehenge. The decision was, unsurprisingly, queried almost as soon as it was announced. Arthur Phelps, the vicar of Amesbury, for example questioned whether there was any need to straighten it; and was it really in danger of falling anyway? *"Could it not be supported under the surface, if necessary?"* After all, setting just this one stone upright would mean that *"the appearance of Stonehenge will be totally changed"* (*The Times*, 19th April 1901, p3).

Phelps' letter produced a prompt response from someone signing themselves as 'B' – it is tempting to suggest that this was Blow himself, although Bishop Browne (see below) is a more likely candidate – who wrote (*The Times*, 23rd April 1901, p3):

“To raise the great monolith to its former vertical position will undoubtedly, as the vicar of Amesbury says, alter the appearance of Stonehenge. But in its present leaning position the ruin of the monolith is only a question of time, and probably no long time. There are two grave flaws in the stone, marking it off into three parts. When it is restored to the perpendicular these flaws will matter little, on account of the inclination of the faults. But if it remains as it is the rain will get into them, the frost will increase them, and the upper third part of the stone will snap off by its own weight, to be followed in time by another third part”.

One of the attendees of the meetings called by Antrobus was G.F. Browne, Bishop of Bristol and, at the time, President of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society. He had earlier been Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge from 1887 to 1892 (he has been described as a '*genealogical weak point*' for later Disney Professors: Tilley 1989, 52). In his memoirs (which, according to one observer, revealed his '*curious mixture of acuteness, warm-heartedness and self-importance*' – Roach, quoted in DNB), published in 1915, he recalled the sudden and fortuitous discovery of these cracks, although many had commented on their presence before, including G. T. Clark 20 years earlier:

“The Committee...recommended to Sir Edmund Antrobus the making safe of one of the trilithons which was gradually twisting round to such an extent that the capstone would eventually fall, and after that, the raising of the famous 'leaning stone' to its original vertical position. We went to Amesbury, and visited Stonehenge with Sir Edmund and Lady Antrobus. They generously agreed to undertake these important tasks. When I was closely examining the leaning stone, I found that about a third of the way down from the top there was an important crevice, which in the leaning position of the stone ran vertically down into it. Any rain must fill this crevice, and if frost followed, the expansion of the ice would break off the upper third of the stone. On showing this to Lord Dillon [President of the Society of Antiquaries], he agreed that we must alter the order of the works and undertake the leaning stone first. To this Sir Edmund at once agreed... The discovery of the crevice was very fortunate, for there had been considerable opposition, on sentimental grounds, to raising the stone from its remarkably characteristic position” (Browne 1915, 211-2).

Lady Antrobus offered an account of what was to happen in an article for *Country Life* in June 1901, describing the “*unparalleled violence*” of the storm that had caused Stone 22 and its lintel to fall: “*The large upright stone is lying prostrate and uninjured, with the turf raised up round its base. The part of the stone in the ground was measured by [the architect Edward] Doran Webb, and found to be only 3ft.... The horizontal stone, unfortunately, is broken across the middle*” (Antrobus 1901a, 678-9). She then presented Blow's proposals for what was about to happen:

"The leaning stone over the altar stone...leans considerably over its centre of gravity and rests on a pillar of stone. It had two veins in it, which, if the stone were to fall, would break it into three parts. This stone will be pulled into a safe vertical position by steel ropes attached to a triple-gearred wrench placed on the mound 45 yds from the stone;...it will then be secured in this position, a base of concrete will be made in eight radiating lines...The shores will remain up till the concrete has set and then been removed."

Next, *"Some other two stones will be readjusted into a safe vertical position in a similar manner"* (i.e. stones 6 and 7), after which *"the last two fallen stones will be set up, and the broken lintel repaired with a dowel of hardest stone..."* (Antrobus 1901a, 680). This article prompted a somewhat concerned Alfred Powell, artist and architect and very much part of the SPAB-arts & crafts movement, to write to Blow, who apparently reassured him that he was *"not going to rebuild but all is to be on Anti-Scrape lines"*. Powell wrote to Thackeray Turner, telling him that this *"sounds a little difficult to understand"* (Powell to Thackeray Turner, 28th June 1901: SPAB archive). Thackeray Turner reassured Powell that the decision to straighten and secure Stone 56 was taken purely because *"it has two material flaws...and we fear that the weather which is attacking them may eventually result in bringing the stone into 3 pieces, whereas in its vertical position there would be no such danger"* (letter, Thackeray Turner to Powell, 23rd July 1901: SPAB archive).

The work was undertaken between 18th August and 25th September 1901. Detmar Blow was in overall charge of the engineering operation, with William Gowland responsible for the archaeological excavations around the base of the stone. Surprise has been expressed at the choice of Gowland – Chippindale (2004, 167) claimed that although he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and an expert on early metallurgy, *"Stonehenge seems to have been his first attempt at excavation. Perhaps that explains why his work was so good"*; while Richards (2007, 92) suggested that Gowland's interest in early metalworking and his background as a mining geologist made him *"a surprising choice"*. In fact, he had many years experience as an archaeologist – just not in Britain. He had published a detailed paper on his many surveys and explorations of Japanese dolmens and burial mounds in the Society of Antiquaries' own journal *Archaeologia* just a few years earlier (Gowland 1897), while a recent appraisal of his career is subtitled 'the father of Japanese archaeology' (Harris and Goto 2003).

The method adopted for hauling the stone upright was devised by the civil engineer John Carruthers. A cradle comprising 12-inch square timbers was bolted around the stone, with lots of packing and felt to protect it. To this cradle two one-inch steel eyebolts were attached in order *"to receive the blocks for two six-folds of 6-inch ropes"* (Blow 1902, 124). These ropes were attached to a pair of winches positioned around 50 feet away, each winch operated by four men. Gowland reported that *"The operations of raising the stone were very cautiously and slowly carried out. It was raised only two or three inches at a time, and at each interval was shored up with the larch struts... After it had been set upright in a south-west direction, its inclination to the south-east was rectified by means*

of a hydraulic jack working against the lower side of the cradle, until the sloping side of its base practically rested on its old supporting stone” (Gowland 1902, 43-4).

Gowland reported that the actual raising of the stone began on 18th September and was completed on the 25th (ibid., 44). A report in *The Times* (21st September 1901, p12) claimed that the stone was in fact in an upright position by the afternoon of 19th September, the operation witnessed by Sir Edmund and Lady Antrobus (the former can be seen in Fig. 6 of Gowland's report, the latter – accompanied by Blow – in his Fig. 2) as well as *“a large number of other persons who take an interest in the ancient monument”*. However, writing once more for *Country Life*, Lady Antrobus stated that *“The winches were worked so slowly and carefully that the stone was only raised an inch or so at a time, a hydraulic jack being used occasionally to aid the winches, the actual raising of the stone taking eight days”* (Antrobus 1901b, 486).

The *Times*' report added that *“The excavations necessary for putting in a bed of concrete on the north-west side of the stone will now be proceeded with”*. Gowland's archaeological excavations were restricted to the area immediately around Stone 56, plus six small 'holes' which were dug to take the ends of the larch poles, and two 'shallow cavities' for the reception of the winches. Photographs of the work taken by Clarissa Miles, a friend of the Antrobuses, incidentally show that Cole's timber scaffold around Stones 6 and 7 had gone by this time (e.g. TNA COPY 1/454/327). The long wooden props so familiar from the 1906 aerial views and later photographs were not put up until the following year – *The Times* reported (15th November 1902, p5) that a meeting of the Stonehenge Committee felt that in order to *“meet the dangers of the present winter”*; it was recommending *“the immediate application of wooden props to the stones about which the chief anxiety is felt”*. Interestingly, the report also stated the Committee's resolve *“that further steps must be guided by the determination to do as little as possible in order to save the monument for posterity”*.

The response to Blow's work seems to have been somewhat muted, attention being focused more on the results of Gowland's excavations and, of course, the row over the enclosure of Stonehenge (see below). The vicar of Amesbury, Arthur Phelps, did write once more to *The Times* to complain about this *‘spoiling’* of Stonehenge, pointing out that both the archaeological exploration and the addition of a concrete foundation could have been undertaken without the need to move the stone into *“a position which it had never previously occupied for five minutes”* (7th October 1901, p. 9). Phelps believed the story that the trilithon of which it had originally formed a part had collapsed in 1620 as a result of the Duke of Buckingham's diggings, whereas the earliest depictions of Stonehenge show that the stone had been leaning for some considerable time before that, but Phelps' main point – that Stone 56 would never have been standing both perpendicular and alone for anything but the briefest period of time – remains valid.

More pointed were the objections of the Sutton Veny-based writer Ella Noyes, who complained of the *“pedant bent on restoration”* who had, by straightening Stone 56,

ensured that no one could ever again experience the monument that Turner and Constable had painted: "*this heavy monster; bowed under the weight of innumerable years, was dragged up from its recumbency, bolted, concreted, and stiffened into an unnatural uprightness, and now stands rigid and awkward as an aged man stayed up into an affectation of youth. It appears out of all relation to its fellows, each of whom has a venerable stoop*" (Noyes 1913, 34-5). Lady Antrobus insisted that Stone 56 could only be made safe by hauling it into a vertical position: "*The upright position the stone is now in ensures, we hope, its safety from the effects of wind and weather for many hundred years to come*" (Antrobus 1901b, 486), whilst suggesting that ideally she would have preferred to see it secured in its leaning position "*as one loved the accustomed view of the old grey stones*" (ibid).

Presumably the other proposed adjustments and re-erections were abandoned in the wake of the arguments over enclosure. Both Blow (1902) and Gowland (1902) delivered lectures and published reports on the work, but neither mentioned the possibility of any return to Stonehenge.

Enclosing Stonehenge

It is not precisely clear who, after the 1900 collapse, first suggested the need to put a fence around Stonehenge, although as already described above, it was something that almost all the parties present at the meetings in March and April had been demanding for some time. There were dissenting voices – Sir John Lubbock, originally nominated to represent the Society of Antiquaries on this 'Stonehenge Committee' stood down because the resolutions they accepted paid insufficient attention to the public interest. After the first meeting had approved the idea of enclosing the stones and diverting the road, Lubbock wrote to Dillon

"I am much disturbed by the resolution passed this afternoon. The present right of way through Stonehenge gives the public a right of access. If however the roadway is diverted as proposed by the Committee, this right would be abandoned... I cannot therefore but feel that the proposal is very dangerous & ought to be resisted in the interests of the public. At any rate, I cannot consent to be responsible for the suggestion & must ask you to accept my resignation much as I regret to take such a course" (quoted in Owen 2013, 127).

Arguably, as far as enclosure was concerned, the most important development was not so much the collapse of some stones as the change of ownership. The fourth Sir Edmund was much more amenable to the idea, and had apparently tried to persuade his father to fence it in a few years earlier. The Bishop of Bristol's version of events (Browne 1915, 210) is worth recounting, although it is based on personal recollections (there are, for example, no dissenting voices or resignations in his account) rather than any contemporary record:



Figure 16: A postcard view of Stonehenge dating somewhere between 1902 and 1918, showing the monument as left by Antrobus and Blow, prior to the Office of Works' reparations of 1919-20. Stone 56 can be seen, right of centre, restored to its full height. This ground view also shows clearly the size of the wooden poles used to shore up the Stones of the outer circle.

"We were all agreed that it was unsafe to leave this great monument entirely open to a wondering public. It must be protected from mischief wrought by casual passers-by. Whether the mischief was wilful or merely ignorant did not matter; it must be stopped. In other words, Stonehenge must be fenced. The fence must not be unsightly; it must not impede the view of the monument; it must not be of a nature to make a large call upon the resources of the anxious owner. My Richborough experience of course suggested barbed wire. But then a circle of barbed wire run around the circle of stones would look very queer, and the suggestion emerged that a considerable area should be included within the fence, so that the barbed wire should look more like an inconspicuous estate fence, that happened to pass near Stonehenge at one point, than a Stonehenge fence. We could not escape from the fact that a roadway runs so near one side of the monument that it all but encroaches upon the containing vallum, and the proximity of the fence to the monument on that side was felt to be a serious objection. Still, we agreed to advise that a fence of barbed wire should be put round a large area of the plain, sweeping round Stonehenge at the point referred to. Our advice was subject of course to there being no right of way in any of the numerous tracks across the characteristic turf of the district. We advised that there should be a gate of entrance with a box for an attendant, and that a charge should be made to those who wished for a closer inspection than could be made from the nearest distance allowed by the wire on the side of the roadway, about thirty yards.

“The work was carried out, and of course it led to a great deal of disturbance. We were called all sorts of impolite names. Objections of all kinds were raised, not one of which, as far as I saw, had not been forestalled in our discussions.”

The Bishop’s ‘Richborough experience’ concerned the acquisition by the Church of England of Richborough Castle in Kent in the mid-1890s, shortly before the 1300th anniversary of St Augustine’s landing, located by tradition to nearby Ebbsfleet. Browne had been appointed to the board of Trustees set up to manage the site. As Browne recalled, *“We began our work by surrounding our property with barbed wire, with a gate for entrance on payment, in order to stop the reckless damage that was being done by sightseers. This naturally gave offence to the wrong-doers...”* (Browne 1915, 346-7). It also annoyed many more, including the local authorities, some of whom argued that the action was in breach of the legal restrictions then in place on the use of barbed wire. The Trustees’ solution was to maintain the fence and admission charge, but to provide free passes for people who lived in Sandwich, the nearest town to Richborough. As was to be the case at Stonehenge, it was assumed that the people most likely to cause damage were those least likely to be able to afford the price of entry.

After the collapse of the stones at Stonehenge at the end of 1900, the need to restrict right of entry had been quickly reiterated by the various bodies involved, with unfettered public access claimed to be detrimental to the condition of the monument. It was also widely felt that the arrival of large numbers of soldiers to the nearby camps on Salisbury Plain would only make the situation worse. The prevailing view was summarised in an article by ‘a correspondent’ published in *The Times* on 9th April 1901 (p11):

“The immediate future is probably as dangerous as all the past put together. Not only is that naturally true of every ancient monument of this character, but it must be borne in mind that Salisbury Plain and the Wiltshire Downs will soon cease to be the quiet, isolated places they have for centuries been. The War Office will send thousands of human beings to occupy ground which a few shepherds have held. Large numbers of visitors will be attracted from the outside. While no one will suppose that wanton harm would be done to a monument so striking and venerable as Stonehenge, unintentional harm might very easily be done. For instance, there has been in the past a great deal of thoughtless climbing on to the stones on the part of tourists. The owner of the ground cannot but feel anxious when he thinks of the influx of persons which must attend upon the developments of the War Office, and remembers the responsibility to future generations which his ownership involves...”

Echoing Blow’s suggestion that the recent collapse had removed the last defence against westerly winds, the ‘correspondent’ then described, with perhaps a hint of exaggeration, how

“...the feet of visitors passing in and out by the narrow passages between the eastern monoliths have worn the ground into hollows, in which rain water stands until it drains down to the foundations of the great masses of stone. To add to this mischief, colonies of

rats, attracted by the remains of luncheons, have burrowed about the foundations... While not desiring to create unnecessary alarm, the owner of the ground may well feel that the continuance of the existence of Stonehenge is seriously threatened by a convergence of causes of decay”.

Two familiar solutions were offered – the enclosure of the monument, and work to prevent further falls of stones – although a suggestion that Antrobus allow the people of Amesbury parish to enter for free would obviously allow continued access to the very people that the fence and admission charge were intended to exclude. As for the type of barrier, while it was apparently obvious that *“We must be prepared to face some limitations of access and some restrictions of use”*, at the same time

“No enclosure which would impede the distant or near view could be tolerable, nor any which appeared to confine the monument within a narrow space. A sunk fence of very large circumference is the first idea of a suitable enclosure. But it would be climbable at all points; it would be very costly; it would vie with the earthwork when it lost its modern air; and until that time it would look terribly white with its scarp and mound of chalk. There is only one other alternative – an unclimbable wire fence carried round a really large portion of ground. Two roads hold Stonehenge in the triangle between them. A wire fence along their sides and across the downs, 1,500 yards in total length, would do what is required in the best manner. This, it is understood, Sir Edmund Antrobus is prepared to erect at his own cost. He has sheltered himself behind the aegis of the Wiltshire Archaeological Society, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments [sic]. Those societies are not supposed to be radically modern in their ideas, and they recommend this course...”.

Barbed wire was never mentioned publicly until the fence had been erected, although *The Times*’ correspondent’s use of the phrase ‘unclimbable wire fence’ could mean little else. Antrobus actually began the process by having logs laid across the various tracks approaching the monument, these probably being in place by 28th February 1901 (Chippindale 1978, 116). The fence itself went up at the end of May (Whitsuntide, according to Lady Antrobus (1901b, 486). Despite talk of diverting the track that cut across the western side of the enclosure, that did not happen. Consequently on that side, a substantial stretch of Stonehenge’s surrounding earthworks, and one of the two Station Stones, remained outside the wire, although a separate fence was placed around the latter.

It seems clear that the idea of surrounding Stonehenge with a fence was Antrobus’s intention from the start, with Blow highlighting the need to control access in his *Report on Stonehenge* (see above) in January 1901, although Philip Webb preferred a ha-ha: *“It seems to me that if it is found necessary to put a security fence round the area of the stones, a sunk fence should be the only bearable one... Some years ago I thought of this fence, knowing the rudeness and brutality of British civilization – which w[oul]d probably make it necessary. If the fence should at any time be done, it should not take the circular*

form of the stones..." (letter, Webb to Thackeray Turner, 27th February 1901: SPAB archive). SPAB received letters objecting to the fence, and their responses suggest a somewhat less straightforward situation than the one offered by Bishop Browne and others. For instance, Thackeray Turner told one complainant that "*I represented the Society on the Committee which was formed to advise Sir Edmund Antrobus, and we were all opposed to a fence, but considered that, if one were put, barbed wire would be of the most temporary value & least offensive*". Blow confirmed to the same correspondent that barbed wire would "*meet the case better than any other expedient though everyone strongly disliked it*" (letter, Thackeray Turner to Barbara Townsend 23rd August 1901; Blow to Thackeray Turner (for Townsend) 12th August 1901: SPAB archive). Thackeray Turner added that Antrobus' willingness to "*take the matter in hand, gives it no choice but to acquiesce in the erection of the fence*". Added to the implication that enclosing Stonehenge behind a fence was non-negotiable is the fact that Thackeray Turner and Blow clearly believed it was a temporary measure. According to Blow, for example, "*The wire fencing must be considered a temporary and necessary measure... The fence has been erected to meet an urgent and temporary need...*" (Blow, quoted in undated response to Barbara Townsend, probably August 1901: SPAB archive).

The fence aroused considerable opposition, both locally and nationally. The use of barbed wire in particular was a focus of complaint. Invented in the USA as recently as 1874 as a means of controlling the movement of cattle by inflicting pain, its increasing use in the British countryside was notably unpopular with the hunting community. However, its recent deployment by both sides in the Boer War had attracted far more coverage and debate, beginning with graphic accounts of British soldiers "*hung on the wire like crows, and... riddled with bullets*" (*The Times*, 16th January 1900, p9), and continuing through its extensive use in the Blockhouse system and concentration camps (Netz 2004). Citing an influx of military personnel as a reason for surrounding Stonehenge with barbed wire could be construed as a little insensitive. Meanwhile, Lady Florence Antrobus's assurance that the fence was "*composed of lightest barbed wire of a neutral tint, and absolutely invisible at a distance*" was unlikely to win over any opponents, especially as she argued that the presence of the fence would prevent unwanted visitors from cluttering the view of the stones (Antrobus 1913, 57). The 'light wire fence', 4ft 6in high (Antrobus 1901a, 680) was, she said, "*a great improvement, as formerly Stonehenge was invariably surrounded by a cordon of ugly objects, such as carts, photographers' vans, flies, etc. Now the traveller driving over the downs sees Stonehenge standing up alone, this fence at a short distance away being absolutely invisible*" (Antrobus 1901b, 486).

In the forefront of opposition nationally was the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, whose chairman, Shaw-Lefevre, was a former First Commissioner of Works and the man primarily responsible for the successful passage of the 1882 Ancient Monuments Act. Also opposed were the National Trust, along with numerous other archaeologists and archaeological organisations. Local opposition was led by Amesbury Parish Council, the recently-established Rural District Council having declined to become involved. The

campaign, pursued both in the press and through the courts, to have the fence removed was ultimately unsuccessful.

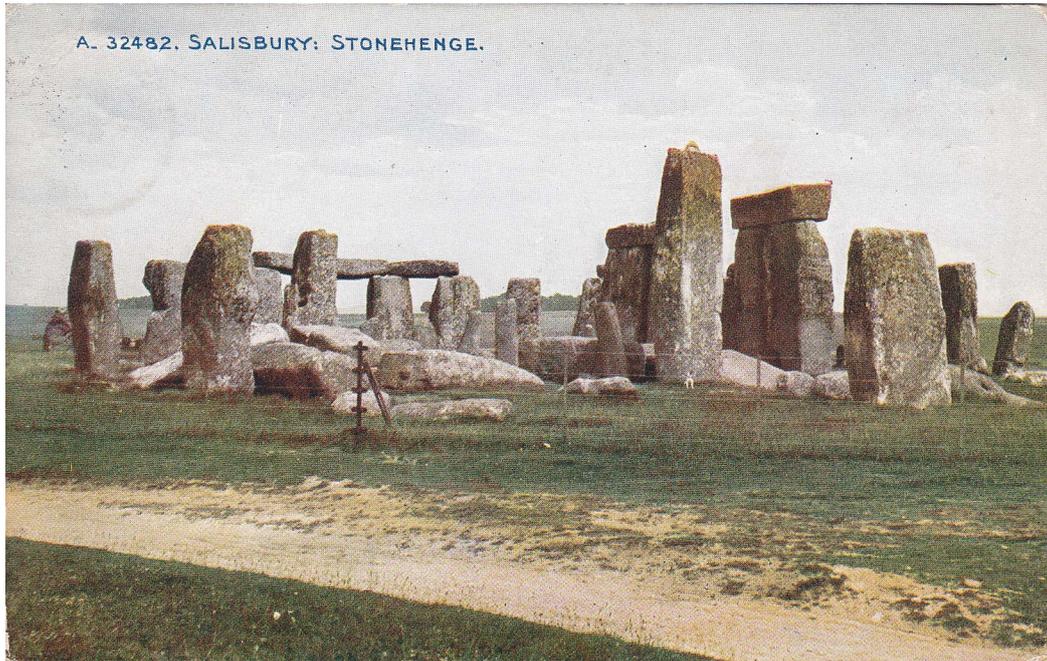


Figure 17: A postcard view taken after 1901, and posted during the First World War, showing the barbed wire fence.

The immediate impact on movement around the landscape is difficult to gauge – existing paths and tracks were certainly interrupted by the fencing, but it is not clear if people stopped using them – after all, not much of a detour was required. The principal impact was on access to Stonehenge itself, and presumably as far as the local population were concerned, repeated visits were now out of the question. In terms of visitor numbers, on 8th October it was reported (*The Times*, p10) that since the appearance of the barbed wire and the introduction of the shilling admission a little over 4 months earlier, around 3000 people had paid to get in. This would represent an average of 25 people per day during what would normally be the busiest time of year, with the added attraction in 1901 of the repair and excavation work. Of course, we have no way of knowing how many visited but stayed outside the wire, let alone how many chose not to make the journey at all.

Selling Stonehenge

Sir Edmund Antrobus (3rd Baronet) died in his eighty-first year on 1st April 1899. His estates passed to his eldest son, the fourth successive Edmund. The new owner started to make headlines, as far as Stonehenge was concerned, within just a few months. On 21st August 1899, under the heading 'Stonehenge for sale', *The Times* (p6) printed the following unsourced item:



Figure 18: Oblique aerial view as published in the Society of Antiquaries' journal Archaeologia in 1907. This is one of at least five photographs known to have been taken by 2nd Lt Sharpe from a tethered Royal Engineers balloon in the summer of 1906. The barbed wire fence can be seen running along the southern edge of the road (later the A344), past the recently-constructed custodian's hut, before turning a right angle to follow the track southwards across the monument. The fence around the Station Stone appears identical in form to the main fence. Reproduced with the permission of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

"We understand that Sir Edmund Antrobus is desirous of selling Stonehenge... Thinking it right that the nation should have the opportunity of purchasing this great relic of antiquity, the owner has offered it to the Government, with about 1,300 acres of surrounding land (subject to certain pasturage and sporting rights), for the sum of £125,000.

"The difficulty of appraising the value of a unique monument like Stonehenge is, of course, great. Sir Edmund Antrobus's advisers hold, we believe, that a price ought to be obtained which would bear comparison with the very large amounts which are given nowadays for works of art and other memorials of the past.

"If the price mentioned is found to be a fair one, the question of making Stonehenge national property, safe for all time of falling into the hands of speculators or advertisers seems to be the one that the Government ought very seriously to consider."

Further particulars were provided in a letter published in the newspaper the following day (22nd August 1899, p9), written by someone signing themselves 'Your Military Correspondent':

"In your issue today appears an announcement to the effect that Stonehenge and some 1,300 acres of surrounding land are for sale. It so happens that this historic monument lies at the centre of the southern side of a rectangle one-and-three-quarter miles deep and two miles wide, adjoining the southern boundary of the manoeuvring area on Salisbury Plain. About one-half of this rectangle is the property of the owner of Stonehenge. The rectangle would be, as I can testify from personal observation, a most valuable addition to the western portion of the manoeuvring area. I venture to suggest that the purchase of the rectangle should be made by the Government, by which means not merely is increase of facilities for training for the Army secured, but this historic relic of antiquity becomes a national possession and is safe for all time. Let action be taken at once, otherwise my friend the owner may be tempted by some American millionaire who may be inclined to bid for notoriety by transporting the relic bodily across the Atlantic and setting it up there on show."

Unsurprisingly, these announcements prompted a somewhat cynical response. One reader, William Hamnett of Hammersmith (in *The Times*, 28th August 1899, p9) described the asking price as *"so monstrous and ridiculous as to place it outside the pale of reasonable discussion"*, and suggested that Antrobus was seeking to gain advantage of the government's ongoing purchases of land for military training on Salisbury Plain, as well as ridding himself of the burden of Stonehenge, all subject of course to certain sporting and pasturage rights. The spectres of American millionaires, speculating jerry-builders and advertising hoardings received equally short shrift, each representing *"an old bogey which does duty on all such occasions"*. Another writer characterised Antrobus as *"a young aristocrat who wished to convert antiquity into racehorses"* (Le Gallienne 1900). Of course, Stonehenge wasn't sold, and as Hamnett had noted, none of the bogeymen actually existed. Meanwhile, criticisms of Antrobus were accompanied by renewed demands for the Government to take on the monument, but not at the price being asked. Interestingly, in the wake of the initial announcement that Antrobus was willing to sell, efforts were made privately to investigate the possibility of Stonehenge being bought by or for the National Trust. Percy Wyndham, who seems to have been the driving force behind this unsuccessful plan, claimed that Antrobus's late father had previously turned down an offer from the government to buy Stonehenge and environs as part of the growing military estate (letter, Wyndham to SPAB, 20th June 1899). The amount he was offered is unknown.

In the wake of the 1900 collapse, and the ensuing works and debate over enclosure, the fact that Antrobus had begun his custodianship of Stonehenge by trying to sell it initially faded from view, but the issue received renewed attention as challenges to both enclosure and an admission charge prompted renewed calls for the Government to take the monument off his hands. Apparently, Wiltshire County Council had started negotiations with Antrobus, but the Council had assumed that when Antrobus began meeting with other organisations and put the fence up, that he no longer wished to sell to them. However, in November 1901 it was reported that Antrobus was willing to recommence those negotiations (*The Times*, 21st November 1901, p10).

The asking price had changed little, it seems, although this fact was disputed in the press at the time. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, chairman of Wiltshire County Council, insisted that the £125,000 quoted actually related to “*a far larger negotiation*” (*The Times*, 6th August 1902, p8). Shaw-Lefevre insisted that this wasn’t the case, reporting that Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1899 when Sir Edmund first announced that Stonehenge was for sale

“...told me that the monument, together with a few hundred acres of down land surrounding it, had been offered to the Government in 1899 for the price named subject to the reservation of rights of pasturage and sporting over the land. As these rights constitute the only real value of the down land it followed that the £125,000 was practically for the monument. The Chancellor also said that a threat had been held out to him that if the offer was rejected the owner might be induced to sell the stones to some American millionaire who would ship them across the Atlantic. I have not his authority for repeating how he replied to this threat. I must leave it to the imagination of those who know how he dealt with cases where his indignation was aroused” (*The Times*, 29th November 1902, p16).

The negotiations between Wiltshire County Council and Antrobus dragged on slowly into 1903, one consequence of the negotiations being to delay the legal proceedings being brought by the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society against the enclosure. It seems that Sir Edmond Fitzmaurice had quickly ruled out the idea of the Council purchasing the entire block of land that Antrobus was willing to sell, concentrating instead on a smaller block comprising Stonehenge plus just 8 acres of surrounding land. The price for this was £50,000, prompting more public criticism aimed at Antrobus when word got out (Chippindale 1978, 118). Once these negotiations had ended, but prior to commencing legal proceedings, the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society made two more offers to Antrobus:

“...the one, that if he would remove the fences and place the monument under the protection of the Ancient Monuments Act, it would repay all the expenses he had incurred in raising the falling stones, and erecting the fences. The other, if he preferred to sell the monument, that it would appeal to the public for £10,000 for the purpose, and a further sum to cover the cost of the fences, and would then hand over the monument to

the Government for protection under the Act. Sir Edmund replied that he was willing to sell the monument for not less than £50,000, a sum which he considered of moderate amount in comparison for what was given for ancient Abbeys.

“The Society accepted the analogy between Stonehenge and an ancient Abbey, and pointed out that two cases had occurred in recent years where ruined Abbeys of great beauty had been purchased in the public interest, namely Kirkstall Abbey, near Leeds by the Corporation of Leeds, and Tintern Abbey, bought by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests on behalf of the Crown, and that in both cases the price had been £10,000. Sir E. Antrobus made no rejoinder to this” (Eversley 1910).

According to Chippindale (2004, 174), the American philanthropist John Jacob Astor tried to buy Stonehenge on behalf of the British Museum. Apparently the asking price was now down to a still-hefty £25,000, which Astor was unwilling to pay. Chippindale reported that problems with these negotiations included Antrobus' concern that the Museum might try and pass Stonehenge onto the government anyway, while Astor apparently resented the amount of control Antrobus wished to retain, which may mean that he still wanted to retain pasturage and sporting rights. There was indeed some communication between the Office of Works and the British Museum over this matter in 1913. Lionel Earle, then Permanent Secretary to the Office of Works, wrote to Frederic Kenyon of the British Museum asking for details of Antrobus' offer, noting in passing that Antrobus clearly has *“a strong antipathy to the Office of Works – whether general or to someone in particular we none of us know”* (Earle to Kenyon, 20th June 1913:TNA WORK 14/213). Kenyon replied the following day:

“The Trustees have never had a definite offer before them with regard to Stonehenge, but they have been asked whether, if an offer was made to them, they would, or could, entertain it. The enquiry came to us through Sir H. Read, who has been acting as intermediary between Sir E. Antrobus and the proposed purchasers, with whom the Trustees have had no direct communication. The Trustees' answer, after consultation, was that their legal powers would not entitle them to hold such a property as Stonehenge; and there the matter ended as far as they were concerned. It would of course be possible for outside parties to hope that parliament should confer on the Trustees additional powers for this purpose; and if there were no other way of acquiring Stonehenge for the nation, I think the Trustees would assent... I think it was their view (and it certainly is mine) that the... solution would be for Stonehenge to be placed under the administration of your office; and the Trustees would only accept it if they were generally agreed that that was the only way of securing a result which they, like everybody else, regard as desirable, namely the acquisition of Stonehenge for the nation.

“It would be a great pity if this result is not attained somehow; but, as you know, Sir E. Antrobus is a very touchy person and a difficult customer to handle” (Kenyon to Earle, 21st June 1913: TNA WORK 14/213).

Antrobus died less than two years later, on 11th February 1915, aged 66. His only son, who would have been the 5th Sir Edmund, had already been killed in action on 24th October 1914. The Amesbury estate passed instead to the 4th Baronet's unmarried younger brother, Sir Cosmo Gordon Antrobus, already in his mid-50s. Sir Cosmo decided to put the entire estate up for auction, dividing it up into several parcels. Thus for the first time, Stonehenge was – in terms of ownership – to be separated from its surrounding landscape.

CHAPTER 5: THE 'RESTORATION' OF STONEHENGE – 3: PEERS & HAWLEY

Antrobus' death, and the resulting auction, saw the barbed wire fence shift from merely a means of controlling access to becoming a property boundary, with the neighbouring farmland failing to sell. Stonehenge itself passed into state guardianship just three years later, while the adjacent parts of what had been the Antrobus estate – mainly land north of the A344 – remained in private hands a little longer before being purchased via a public appeal on behalf of the National Trust in the late 1920s, establishing a pattern of ownership that still remains in place today. Guardianship finally allowed the kind of intervention that the main archaeological organisations had been demanding since the later 19th century – the straightening of leaning stones, the re-erection of fallen ones, and extensive excavation. This work was never completed. The excavations, undertaken on behalf of the Society of Antiquaries, were eventually halted with around half of Stonehenge's enclosing ditch and interior left unexamined. The work on the stones was abandoned more quickly, with recognition by the Office of Works that it was a less straightforward matter than was initially assumed. This chapter focuses mainly on the latter – the planned programme of 'reparations' – and the overall impact of these 1920s interventions on the appearance of Stonehenge.

Auction and ownership: from Antrobus to the Office of Works, 1915-1918

The auction of the Amesbury Abbey Estate was held on 15th September 1915, some 6,400 acres of land, including Amesbury Abbey itself, plus Stonehenge and *"a large portion of the town of Amesbury"*; divided up into numerous lots of which Stonehenge (plus 30 acres, 3 rods and 37 perches of adjoining downland) was number 15 (see e.g. Chippindale 2004, 176; Richards 2007, 99). Several lots failed to sell. Stonehenge, however, was bought for £6,600 by Shrewton-born Cecil Chubb. Prior to the auction itself, the auctioneers, Messrs Knight, Frank, and Rutley of Hanover Square, London, found it necessary to publicly clarify various 'misconceptions' and 'rumours' dealing specifically with Stonehenge.

The announcement of the sale prompted renewed speculation that the stones might be sold to a private buyer with a view to their removal elsewhere. The auctioneers wrote to *The Times* (15th June 1915, p7) to point out that Stonehenge was protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act of 1913 – i.e. it was going nowhere. However, they added that Sir Cosmo Antrobus hoped that

"Stonehenge may be bought either by the Government or a learned society, and our instructions are that if any reasonable proposal be made for its acquisition with the intention of preserving the monument in the public interest, we are to facilitate a sale by private treaty before the auction".

No private sale materialised, and two months later the auctioneers announced that *“in no circumstances will any lot on the estate now be sold before the auction”* (*The Times*, 12th August 1915, p9). The National Trust had apparently considered the matter (*The Times*, 16th June 1915, p5), but in the end they were not even represented at the auction, something that prompted some debate after the sale. Lord Eversley later alleged that prior to the auction, Sir Cosmo had refused to entertain any offer below £10,000 (*The Times*, 1st October 1915, p11).

Eversley also claimed that the admission fee had led to a drop in visitor numbers to around a quarter of what they used to be, bringing in around £320 per year after deductions for various costs (e.g. the caretaker and the policeman). At the same time, Eversley also implied that Chubb had bought Stonehenge as an investment, something Chubb himself rejected (*The Times*, 7th October 1915, p. 9) – *“Before the sale I never discussed Stonehenge with a view to purchase with anyone, and at the time of going to the sale I did not even know any figures as the receipts. I think I said before that when I went into the sale-room, I had no intention of buying, and I certainly did not look upon it as an investment”*. In fact, Chubb decided to continue with Antrobus’ policy regarding wartime admission – a reduced charge for service personnel and all income donated to the Red Cross Society for the duration of the war.

Eversley’s chief concern (and the reason for his criticism of Chubb) remained public access, although he accepted that purchase by a body such as the National Trust during wartime might have to be at least partly funded by income from the admission charge. However, he felt a better solution was *“a very slight extension”* of the principles underlying the 1913 Act in order to allow for compulsory purchase by government in cases, such as Stonehenge, *“when the public are unnecessarily excluded”* (*The Times*, 28th December 1915, p.4).

George Engleheart responded in defence of Chubb (*The Times*, 30th December 1915, p10):

“There can be no-one who does not feel as strongly as Lord Eversley the desirability of acquiring Stonehenge for the nation. Any other Government but an English one would have seized the late opportunity of so acquiring it. But Lord Eversley asserts in his letter that the public are ‘unnecessarily excluded’ from Stonehenge. This question has been debated within recent memory, but you will perhaps allow me to point out that Salisbury Plain is now thickly populated right up to the Stones by a probably permanent army not only of disciplined soldiers, but of undisciplined camp-followers. Can Lord Eversley really believe that the most precious prehistoric monument in Europe would in such circumstances, if unfenced, be safe from injury?”

Eversley, it seemed, shared Engleheart’s concern about the kind of people now living in close proximity to Stonehenge, but felt that a simple solution was at hand, should *“some public-spirited person...purchase it and give it to the public”*, in which case *“the monument would be placed under the full protection of the Ancient Monuments Act. The effect of*

this would be that the Office of Works would be charged with the duty of protecting it from all injury; and would be bound under the terms of the Act to give access to the public, subject to reasonable restrictions, but free of charge for admission. Under these conditions it may be taken as certain that the Office of Works would not remove the fence which now surrounds the monument, unsightly and vulgarizing though it is, so long as there is danger to the stones from the camp followers of the forces on Salisbury Plain or otherwise. The public would be admitted to the enclosure free of charge during a reasonable part of each day, and a guardian would watch, as now, their action" (The Times, 3rd January 1916, p11).

Such matters were, of course, overtaken by one event in particular – Chubb's decision to hand Stonehenge (and the rest of Lot 15) to the nation in September 1918. Although the official handover took place at Stonehenge itself on 26th October 1918, the announcement of Chubb's gift was made a month earlier, with the publication in *The Times* (on 25th September 1918, p5) of a letter purportedly from Chubb to Sir Alfred Mond, First Commissioner of Works, dated 15th September 1918, and a reply from Mond to Chubb dated 18th September. Both seem to have been written for public consumption. It is unclear how long prior to the first letter that initial contact was made, and by whom, although Chubb's letter implies that it probably came from the Office of Works. The following year, Chubb was made a Baronet.

Chubb's letter to Mond, as printed in *The Times*, was as follows:

"Dear Sir; - Stonehenge is perhaps our best known and the most interesting of our national monuments, and has always appealed strongly to the British imagination. To me, who was born close to it and during my boyhood and youth visited it at all hours of the day and night, under every conceivable condition of weather – in driving tempests of hail, rain and snow, fierce thunderstorms, glorious moonlight, and beautiful sunshine, it always has had an inexpressible charm.

"I became the owner of it with a deep sense of pleasure, and had contemplated that it might remain a cherished possession of my family for years to come. It has, however, been pressed upon me that the nation would like to have it for its own and would prize it most highly. I, therefore, have decided to give up this unique possession and offer it to you, his Majesty's First Commissioner of Works, as a gift to be held for the nation.

"It brings in a revenue, and its possession would be far from an expense. If my wife and I may express a wish, though far from making it a condition of the gift, we should be glad if during the continuance of the war the income could be handed to the Red Cross Society, whose work at the present time is of such great national value. This point, however, must be entirely within your discretion."

Mond's reply suggested that all was not quite done and dusted:

"Dear Sir; - it is with great pleasure that I learn from your letter of the 15th inst. that you have so generously decided to present to the nation a historic monument of such unique importance as Stonehenge. As the remains of a long bygone civilization, it has a value and interest equalled by no other monument in the United Kingdom. I fully share your enthusiasm for this amazing record of the past, situated so gloriously on Salisbury Plain. As H.M. First Commissioner of Works, it is indeed a satisfaction to me to be able to accept on behalf of the Government and the nation your patriotic and public-spirited gift. I shall make it my duty to bring the same to the knowledge of the Prime Minister at the earliest opportunity. I will see that the necessary further steps are taken for the formal transfer of the property to the Ancient Monuments Board, who, I am sure, will guard this priceless possession with the sedulous care which it deserves.

"As regards the latter part of your letter, I am in communication with the Treasury, and hope to obtain their concurrence to your proposal, with which I fully sympathize."

By the time these letters were published, the Treasury had indeed agreed to allow the admission fees to continue going to the Red Cross, although it is not clear how long this arrangement lasted – the war, of course, ended just 16 days after the official handover ceremony.

As a footnote to the handover, one of the more curious responses came from Canon Rawnsley, co-founder of the National Trust, who suggested turning Stonehenge into *"a national memorial of the immortal dead who have laid down their lives that the Sun of Righteousness might arise with healing in His wings for the whole civilized world."* The proximity of the military training camps made it a particularly fitting choice, he felt: *"Nothing would be needed but a huge stone Celtic cross in the neighbourhood of the circle, with a simple dedication thereon of the imperishable memory of the gallant dead"* (*The Times*, 28th September 1918, p9).

Excavation and 'preservation' – 1919-1927

Stonehenge was formally handed over, with ceremony and speeches, on 26th October 1918. In his acceptance speech, Sir Alfred Mond expressed the hope *"that it would be possible to extend the important excavations which had already been made on the site... It was hoped that, under supervision, discoveries would be made on the site which would throw further light on the history of the monument"* (*The Times*, 28th October 1918, p10).

However, before any excavation could occur, some assessment of the state of the monument was necessary. The timber props were considered an unsightly and unacceptable addition to the fabric of the monument, but their very presence implied instability. At the same time, other unsupported stones clearly were not considered perpendicular enough, and there were questions over the security of some of the lintels. The Office of Works began a survey of the entire monument – both earthworks and

stones – and a ‘reparation report’ which considered stresses and angles in order to determine the stones most in danger of falling (WORK 14/485; WORK 14/2464).



Figure 19: Once the site had been handed over, the Office of Works was in a hurry to prepare sets of postcards to sell to visitors. A ranging rod and survey pegs are clearly visible in this one. A sign attached to the props holding up Stone 1 (the second stone from the right) requested visitors “not to disturb the pegs”.

The stones singled out as most needing attention were, perhaps unsurprisingly, those already propped – the twisted ‘trilithon’ comprising Stones 6 and 7 and their lintel, plus Stones 29, 30 and 1 of the façade. The report argued that the bases of all these stones should be properly secured, something best done by encasing them in concrete. It was recognised that as in 1901, excavation would be necessary. Charles Peers had already anticipated these conclusions, and took advantage of his positions as both Inspector of Ancient Monuments at the Office of Works and Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries to ensure that the necessary expertise was available to oversee both ‘reparation’ and excavation. Chippindale (2004, 179) has also suggested that the Society’s President, Sir Arthur Evans, nearing the end of a five-year term of office that had coincided substantially with the First World War, saw the Stonehenge excavations as a high-profile opportunity both to make his mark as President and to re-establish the research activities of the Society.

The proposal for the Society of Antiquaries to excavate at Stonehenge was actually made to the Office of Works by Charles Peers. In a memo dated 24th January 1919 (WORK 14/485), he wrote:

"In 1901, when the great leaning stone was set upright, the Society of Antiquaries thoroughly examined all the ground near the stone, & published complete diagrams of the evidence. This process must be continued & the Society will be prepared to continue the excavations from year to year, taking such parts of the site as may be from time to time affected by the B[oard]'s work of securing the stones, so that eventually the whole area within the ditch surrounding the Stones shall be completely examined down to the level of the undisturbed chalk.

"The results of such a work, which will cover a series of years, will be of the greatest value to the study of prehistoric Britain; indeed it is not too much to say that the excavation will be the most important work of its kind yet undertaken in the country. The Society will of course pay all the expenses of the excavation.

"I bring this matter to your notice early in the season, as it will be necessary to work out the details of a scheme, to fit in the B[oard]'s operations with those of the Society."

Sir Lionel Earle added *"This is a very important offer to the Society of Antiquaries & should certainly be agreed to."*

The Society of Antiquaries had its own Research Fund, but also issued an appeal leaflet in April 1919 in order to attract funds for their planned programme of *"exploration of the whole monument within and including the bank and ditch"* (Chippindale 2004, 179). The proposals of course, both in terms of 'reparation' and excavation', were effectively little different from the schemes Lubbock, Pitt Rivers and others had been contemplating in the late 19th century whilst trying to persuade Sir Edmund Antrobus to place the monument in state guardianship. In September 1919, with the commencement of work imminent, Peers (in his role as Inspector of Ancient Monuments) offered Sir Lionel Earle a more considered appraisal of what work was necessary, and why:

"The repair of a prehistoric monument is always a difficult matter, & generally speaking the only safe course is to do as little as possible. Stonehenge, however, differs from nearly all prehistoric monuments, since it is possible to be definitely certain of the position of many of the stones which are now displaced.

"The excavations of 1901 showed that we may expect to find the cuttings in the chalk made when the stones were being set up, & demonstrating their original position: thus in the case where a stone is leaning dangerously, & must be straightened, its replacement in its proper place is quite possible.

"Another safeguard is found in the existence of tenons on the stones which carried lintels. In the case of stone 22, which fell in 1900, its replacement in its original place can be affected without any possibility of mistake, since stone 21 next to it is standing intact, & lintel 122, formerly carried by 21 & 22 into the mortices on 122, together with such evidence as may be found of cutting in the chalk rock, make an accurate replacement certain.

“The same reasons will exist in the straightening of the leaning stones 29, 30 & 1, and 6 & 7, all of which still carry lintels.

“All these stones are in the outer circle. The great trilithon which fell in 1797 should also be reinstated if, as is most probable, the cuttings in the chalk in which its uprights were set can be found. Indeed if one of these cuttings remains, the position of the other upright is fixed by the lintel, which exists in its entirety, though broken in two by its fall. The fracture is however quite sharp & clean & the two pieces can be joined by dowels on the faces of the fracture, so that when joined no sign of the metal can be seen [A note added in the margin states: “This lintel is that from the outer circle (122) which fell in 1901; the lintel of the trilithon (158) was not broken by its fall, but has been damaged at one end by the fall of lintel 122”].

“This I consider essential: the monument should not show sign of repair. . . For example: the original position of the fallen & broken upright of the largest trilithon, whose other upright was replaced in position in 1901 by the Society of Antiquaries, is definitely known: the stone itself however has so long been broken that the edges of the fracture are worn away, & the pieces could not be fitted together without showing the metal cramps – or even if these could be hidden without producing an unnatural effect, the upper part of the stone being poised on the lower in a way which demonstrates some artificial repair.

“Therefore, much as I should like to see this stone replaced, with its lintel, & the ‘altar-stone’ thereby freed from their prostrate forms, I think it inadmissible that this should be done.

“This is, I think, the extent of repairs that should be undertaken: stones that are merely leaning, but not dangerously so, should be left as they are, & anything that could possibly be considered as ‘smartening up’ of this remarkable monument carefully avoided” (Charles Peers, memo dated 29th September 1919, WORK 14/485).

Work on site had actually begun on 12th September, under the direction of Colonel William Hawley (who had previously led excavations for the Society at Old Sarum, another Office of Works property). According to Hawley, delays were encountered *“owing to difficulties of transport and the delay in erecting two huts and the assembling of the large equipment necessary”* (Hawley 1921, 19), although the date of Peers’ explanatory memo suggests that not everything had been agreed by the 12th. In fact, the Ancient Monuments Board for England did not meet to formally recommend adoption of Peers’ proposed works until 26th November 1919 (WORK 14/485). The following day, the lintel was lifted off Stones 6 and 7, the decision to start with these stones being taken because they *“had been propped up for a long time and appeared to be most in need of attention”* (Hawley 1921, 20).

Stones 6 & 7

Hawley briefly described the process of re-setting these stones in his first interim report (Hawley 1921). The lintel, protected with felt and secured within a timber cradle, was lifted first; then the stones themselves were similarly protected in felt and timber in order to secure them in position, aided by steel ropes. With the stones held in place, the excavation of the surrounding area, including the contents of the stone holes, could begin. According to Hawley, this archaeological exploration commenced on 3rd December. Once it was completed, the stones were moved back into a vertical position.

However, before the stones could then be lowered back into the stone holes, there was considerable work to be done – the whole point of the exercise, of course, was to ensure that once upright, the stones stayed upright. According to Hawley,

“First of all it was necessary to make a firm bed to sustain the weight of the stone, as it was found that the chalk rock below them was very loose as a result of their original displacement. Whilst the stones were held on the jacks the crumbled chalk was removed and replaced by a 3ft. bed of reinforced concrete up to the original level, carefully calculated previously. Sufficient time having been given for the concrete to harden, the stones were lowered into it, and then came the most important and tedious part of all, namely to get the stones into their correct positions. The lintel was slung up and lowered upon them. So carefully had all the measurements been made that the lintel needed very little adjustment. A quantity of reinforced concrete was placed on all sides of the stones in a long and continuous trench and brought nearly to ground-level, allowing sufficient depth for turf and a bed of humus below it. When all was set firm, the lintel was again raised so that the dowels could receive leaden caps, which had been cast in plaster moulds.

“The stones were then stripped of their timber, and the grass is already green around them. They have no evidence of repair, and are so natural that visitors frequently ask to be shown the stones that have been dealt with, as they cannot find them” (Hawley 1921, 29).

In an appendix on *“the method adopted for setting leaning stones upright”*, Peers explained in more detail the manner in which timber frames, felt, steel joists, screw-jacks etc were used to secure and straighten the sarsens, and then to control their movement in order to position them precisely within the stoneholes, both in relation to each other and their shared lintel. In doing so, he hinted at some of the difficulties encountered in reconciling the need to secure the uprights in position with the archaeological evidence for their original setting:

“In judging...the original position of a stone, its present position can give no absolute guide, and an adjustment which brings the centre of gravity as nearly as possible to the line of the vertical axis, and at the same time satisfies the fitting of the mortises on the lintels to the tenons on the upright, where these exist, must be considered the best course that can be obtained” (Peers, in Hawley 1921, 38-9).



Figure 20: Another early Office of Works postcard, this one showing Stones 6 and 7 pre-straightening, with timber supports still in place.

In other words, securing the uprights in a vertical position, with a sound fit for their shared lintel via the mortises and tenons, was the primary aim. However, not only did the existing position of the stones offer insufficient guidance as to their original position, the same was true of the archaeological evidence. Peers had claimed that the excavated stoneholes – “the cuttings in the chalk made when the stones were being set up” – would show their original position. This turned out not to be the case. The matter seems to have been first raised by Arthur Heasman, presumably at Hawley’s prompting, in a memo dated 28th January 1920 (WORK 14/485), the day after Stone 7 had been moved back into a vertical position above its now-emptied stonehole (work around Stone 6 was still underway):

“In accordance with the instructions already given the holes around the stones will be filled in with reinforced concrete and after this has been placed it will of course be impossible to move the stones again. It is essential therefore that the correct positions should be obtained. It will be a difficult matter owing to the irregular surfaces and the evidence obtained in the foundations of the No. 7 stone is not sufficient to determine its original position”.

Heasman contemplated preparing “a template of the circumference of the Circle on the inner face of the stone” – in effect, a line of best fit – using Flinders Petrie’s 1880 survey. This would be marked out on the ground, and provide an approximate position for stones 6 and 7. However, he felt that it best

“to have an authoritative decision on such a matter, and I submit, therefore, that the Chief Inspector be asked to obtain the opinion of any members of the Society of Antiquaries whom he may suggest, with possibly that of Mr Flinders Petrie... Criticism of the work done at Stonehenge will almost certainly be made and the board should be protected by having the advice of Antiquarians with the special knowledge required”.

A meeting was arranged at Stonehenge on 17th February 1920 to discuss the various issues. Charles Peers, Sir Lionel Earle and Arthur Heasman represented the Office of Works; also invited were local antiquarian George Engleheart (who had apparently been voicing criticisms of the work being undertaken), Sir Charles Hercules Read from the British Museum, and Mr Saxton Noble, a director of Armstrong Whitworth & Co., who attended at the invitation of Read. Hawley and his assistant RS Newall were described as *“resident members representing the Society of Antiquaries”*. According to Heasman's report of the gathering, after a general inspection of the monument and the ongoing works, *“Mr. Peers summarised the various points connected with the work that had been carried out in connection with Nos. 6 and 7 stones, and he asked each gentleman individually whether or not he gave his assent”* (Report by Heasman, 18th February 1920, WORK 14/485).

On the first point, regarding the positioning of the stones, Peers

“pointed out that there was obviously nothing in the original excavated holes which would shew the correct positions of the stones. These holes were very large compared to the stones and were very irregular in shape. It would therefore have to be a matter of judgment as to the position in which they were finally set and that approval could be given to the positions already selected by Colonel Hawley”.

According to Heasman, those present gave unanimous approval. The next point was a related one – if it could not be ascertained from the evidence in the stoneholes as to where the stones originally stood, neither could there be any certainty as to the original height of the stones above the ground. Unanimous assent was given to Peers' suggestion that, again, *“It was a matter of judgment, and the general line which had been fixed for the model [lintels] on the tops of these stones should...be approved”*.

The use of concrete was next. By the time of the visit, the area beneath both stones had been cleared of the 'loose chalk', and beneath Stone 7, concrete reinforced with steel rods had been laid to a depth of 12 inches. The gathering again approved unanimously, Peers having pointed out in support of this use of concrete that *“it was necessary to excavate, and as soon as the excavations had been finished, all evidence had gone. It therefore did not matter materially what happened to the holes that had been made, and they could be filled with any suitable material. Concrete was obviously best and should be adopted”*.

The next issue proved a little more contentious, but not straight away, although there was a certain amount of discussion on site. It had been suggested that the leaning positions of

Stones 6 and 7, and the consequent slight displacement of the lintel, would have led to irregular weathering of the exposed sarsen. Consequently it was felt that some intervention was necessary to secure the lintel in place once the stones had been straightened: *"It was advisable to place some form of cap on top of the stone around both the mortice and tenon, which would give an even bearing"*.

On the day of the visit, suggestions made included the use of bronze, aluminium or lead. Bronze was rejected because of the possibility of stains running down the surface of the stones. Aluminium was rejected because of concerns about its durability – Noble in particular thought it would decay quite rapidly. That left lead, which was felt to be durable, easily obtainable, and readily workable. Its use was again approved unanimously. The plan was to use plaster casts of the mortices and tenons to create moulds for the casting of lead caps. Heasman noted a plan *"to use some of the old lead from Hampton Court...as it was of very good quality and rather harder than modern lead. This proposal is approved"*. Lead was certainly used to secure the lintel on top of Stones 6 and 7, but when attention moved to other stones, Peers was to reject its use (see below, p94).

Heasman returned to Stonehenge on 23rd March to inspect progress. At the time, concrete was being laid around the base of Stone 6, but Heasman was concerned that there would not be a sufficient depth of concrete to support the stone properly:

"I decided that it would be better to bring it up to general ground level instead of keeping it 6" below ground as had been previously decided. I am afraid if the concrete is kept down to the lower level it will not give a sufficient grip of the toe of the stone which, as you will remember, is very pointed. I consulted Colonel Hawley upon this and he agreed with my proposal.

"If the concrete is too high it can be chipped off at a later date, but I think you will agree that we ought to have a perfectly sound job to prevent any possibility of the stone over-turning.

"I also think that you will find that you can raise the general ground level around No. 6 stone by about 6" without affecting the appearance of the Circle, this will enable the grass to grow over the concrete" (Memo, 24th March 1920, WORK 14/485).

Peers rejected the idea – *"the surface of the concrete will be a great disfigurement: & anything in the nature of levelling of the uneven ground round the stones must be avoided. Even if we could postulate an original surface level, we should not be justified in replacing it"* (Note, 25th March 1920, WORK 14/485). It was subsequently reported that the concrete had been laid to *"about 12" below ground level, except close around the stones where it has been brought to within 6" or 3" of ground level. The turf has now been laid and completely covers the concrete bed"* (Memo, RB Unwin, 1st May 1920, WORK 14/485).

Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2

With Stones 6 and 7 and their lintel secure, attention in 1920 shifted to four stones on the north-east side of the monument – 29, 30, 1 and 2 – and the three lintels connecting them. The stones, especially 30 and 1, were leaning outwards. It was believed that they would continue to move in this direction, apparently pulling the lintels with them (see Fig. 13). Moreover, the props put in place to support them were said to be showing signs of decay. Work began on 15th June with the lowering of the lintels, and continued until mid-December. Office of Works notes and reports make it clear that at the beginning of the 1920 season, it was envisaged that *only* Stones 30 and 1 would need attention. For example, a list of planned operations and procedures drawn up by Charles Peers on 16th July makes it clear that even at this stage, a month after work had begun, only those two stones were to be cradled, “*guyed inwards*” until vertical, and adjusted laterally to ensure a good fit for the lintels (WORK 14/485).

Initially work did indeed focus solely on Stones 30 and 1, using the same procedures developed for Stones 6 and 7. Stone 30 proved to be cracked towards its base, and although there was clear evidence that the cracks may have existed prior to the stone's original erection, “*all danger was averted by fixing two steel cables crossed round the base, binding the cracked portions tightly to the stone by means of screw bolts at the ends of the cables, and these remained on the stone when it was finally buried in concrete*” (Hawley 1922, 42).

Again, getting the stones in exactly the right position once the concrete base had been established was “*a long and tedious process*”, with the further complication that this time there were four stones and three lintels involved. On 31st August an attempt was made to replace the lintel between the re-set Stone 30 and its untouched neighbour Stone 29. However, it couldn't be made to fit. Hawley (1922, 42-3) could see only one possible explanation: “*Evidently stone 29 had moved, and the only thing to be done was to treat it like the others...*”.

Because the area disturbed by the works connected with Stones 30 and 1 had come close to two of the nearby bluestones, Stones 31 and 49, there were fears that their stability might have been affected. As a precaution, they too were provided with concrete support below the turf on their northern side (Hawley 1922, 43). Then, in mid-November, with work apparently complete,

“*it was decided to give support to no. 2 stone in case the excavation of its neighbour might have weakened it... It was not necessary to move the stone, so the work was performed differently from the others. Pits were sunk to the base at the four corners of the stone, each including a face and half a side. The pits were concreted in succession and the entire concrete bed so formed joined that of the other stones, forming a long solid bed*” (Hawley 1922, 45).



Figure 21: A 1920s postcard view showing Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2 plus lintels after the Office of Works team had finished with them. Between these stones and the camera are the two Bluestones also supported with concrete.

The concrete had set by 6th December, and at this point the lintels *“were finally adjusted and the work was completed. It was in every way most satisfactory”* (Hawley 1922, 46). This time, no lead caps were used. Peers seems to have been expressing doubts about the need for them by the end of March 1920 (note by Lionel Earle in margin of report by Heasman, 18th February 1920, WORK 14/485). Heasman then drew up an outline plan for the 1920 operations that included arrangements to cover the tenons on Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2 with caps (Memo, 21st July 1920, WORK 14/485). Aware that Peers was opposed to their use, Heasman explained that:

“It cannot be said that these caps are absolutely necessary for the stability of the stones, but in my opinion, they are advisable for the following reasons:-

“(a) That they prevent wind and weather getting in the space between the inside of the lintel and the top of the stone, thus preserving the old tool marks and preventing the erosion of the tenons.

“(b) There is no possibility of the lintel bearing on small points of stone. Its weight is evenly distributed at either end over the whole surface of the tenon by means of the lead.

“(c) The lead caps are practically invisible and are not fixed or dowelled to the stone in any way. They can be removed at any future date without difficulty.”

Heasman appended a copy of Peers' objections to his memo:

"We must not have any more of these [lead caps]: those on stones 6 and 7 were I understood thought necessary by you because of the weak state of the lintel, giving it more bearing on the uprights. The same reason does not exist with the other lintels, and the result would be to obscure all the interesting details on the top of the uprights and to add modern material to the stones, a thing which I am extremely anxious to avoid" (Peers, 16th July 1920, WORK 14/485).

Peers offered what seems to have been his final word on the matter on 5th October 1920 (WORK 14/485):

"When it is realized that, after 3000 years, the tenons still preserve the original tooling, & that the tops of the upright stones cannot have lost more than the merest fraction of an inch from weathering, any such precautions as are proposed will be seen to be superfluous.

"The lead caps, moreover, ignore the original intention of the tenons, which was to keep the lintels in place, & not to support them.

"With regard to the bearing of the lintels, an acquaintance with the construction of the dolmens of this country should allay any apprehensions. The bearing of the Stonehenge lintels is infinitely better than any of the capstones of the dolmens, & anything like a perfect setting, I am sure, never existed."

Earle wrote underneath this that *"As the lead caps are not absolutely necessary for the stability of the stones, the archaeological objection to them must be decisive"*.

Work on the stones was completed on 11th December 1920, Heasman reporting that *"The plant has been dismantled and has been stored upon the site in readiness for the recommencement in the next financial year"* (memo, 11th January 1921, WORK 14/485). It is not clear when the decision to end the Office of Works programme of repairs was taken. *The Times* reported on 20th January 1921 (p8) that *"It is not proposed to deal further with any of the other trilithons or monoliths that are still standing"*, but added that it was still planned to re-erect the trilithon that fell in 1797, but *"this work has had to be postponed, probably until next year. It is not urgently required for the preservation of the monument, and the money for it cannot at present be found"*. Hawley's excavations, meanwhile, continued until September 1926.

The earthworks and other features

Hawley's archaeological work may have been undertaken at the expense of the Society of Antiquaries, but as well as being closely tied – in 1919 and 1920 at least – to the resetting of sarsens, the Office of Works kept a close eye on Hawley's progress, and continued to assist where necessary. For example, Hawley relied heavily on occasional visits from an Office of Works draughtsman for the plans of his excavations. However, the official

interest wasn't just focused on what Hawley found in his trenches, but also in how those excavations were to be backfilled. Again, Peers was heavily involved. Following the discovery early on in the excavations of what became known as the Aubrey Holes, Peers was keen that the locations of the excavated ones should be made visible on the ground for visitors. Hawley wrote to Peers on 8th April 1920 asking *"would you like each marked with a cut off post or would you like a concrete block placed over each; the top part showing on ground level"* (WORK 14/2463). In his second interim report, Hawley (1922, 48) noted that they were in fact *"filled in and the position of each is marked by a patch of white chalk on the surface corresponding with the size of the hole below"*.



Figure 22: Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2 today. Compare with Figures 19 and 21.

The search for the Aubrey Holes was apparently undertaken during Hawley's first season at the monument at the suggestion of Newall. John Aubrey's 1666 plan of Stonehenge had shown some 'cavities' or depressions, and it was decided to look for these by probing with a steel bar. A contemporary report in *The Times* (5th April 1920, p11) described the process as follows:

"There is a touch of what one might call methodical romance about the way in which these holes were discovered... Taking the old map as a clue the explorers went forth armed with a heavy steel bar, pointed at the end. With this they patiently speared the turf foot by foot, like Stony Durdles tap, tap, tapping with his hammer for the 'old 'uns' in the crypt at Cloisterham. Prod, prod, prod – nothing but hard chalk. Another prod – the bar went through and there was one of the holes. The range was soon found – an interval of six or seven paces between each – and now almost the whole circle of holes is exposed".



Figure 23: The view from the northeast today, with Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2 in the centre, and the straightened Stones 6 and 7 on the extreme left.

In fact, Hawley and Newall identified around half the circle, beginning close to the Slaughter Stone and working round clockwise to the southwest *“where we stopped, deciding to gain experience before completing the circle”* (Hawley 1921, 30), something that ultimately never happened. When additional circuits of pits – named the Y and Z holes – were discovered in 1923, their locations were not marked on the surface.

Less well known is the policy adopted for other features, and particularly the ditch which was not completely backfilled. Again, this seems to be mainly at the instigation of Peers, and conforms to more general principles in operation on Office of Works-managed sites that the ground plan should be intelligible to the visitor (see below, p103). In his final interim report, Hawley (1928, 167) wrote that

“Only about half the soil was returned to the ditch, or sufficient to allow a depth of 2ft. above the bottom. This was done to make the appearance of the ditch more distinct, for at some places it had become nearly invisible. The operation was slow, as the soil had to be rammed to prevent subsidence and to support the sides at a steep angle. The sides also had to be rammed, otherwise when turfed over all would have slid downwards.”



Figure 24: RAF oblique view of Hawley's excavations. The photo is undated, but it shows the excavation of Hawley's ditch cutting no. 22 (Cleal et al 1995, 76-79, 539), which was dug between 22nd March and 24th May 1922. The trench and spoil appear to lie within a darker rectangular patch of grass – in fact, this area is bordered by a slight fence, and the contrast seems to represent the difference between the relatively undisturbed grass growth within the fenced area, and the well-trodden route taken by visitors around the excavation. The trench actually crossed the path used by visitors to walk from the custodian's hut to the stones. When Hawley had this trench backfilled, he constructed a causeway across it on the line of the path, explaining to Peers that "the dip would be too abrupt for people to cross & would soon get trodden in" (letter, 29th August 1922, WORK 14/2463). Note also the clearly-marked locations of the excavated Aubrey holes. The horse standing between the outer circle and the horseshoe setting may well have belonged to the custodian, Frank Smith. An Office of Works memo (2nd November 1918, WORK 14/2463) noted that allowing his horse to have "the run of the grass on the site" was one of the perks of the job. English Heritage SUI242/13.

This approach to backfilling was worked out between Hawley and Peers at an early stage in the ditch excavations. On 8th April 1920 (WORK 14/2463), Hawley wrote to Peers asking:

“Would you like all the soil returned to the ditch or only a portion of it. It is nearly all silted in stuff & means nothing... If you think a portion should be removed we can cast it to fill up the old trackway as we are doing with the other spoil...”.



Figure 25: RAF vertical of Hawley's excavations taken 14th July 1924. Traces of backfilled trenches can be seen in various places, notably centre left, between the stones and the ditch, and also beyond the ditch towards the Heel Stone. Excavation in progress on the southern (right) side of the monument was aimed at exposing the numerous post-holes between the sarsen circle and the southern entrance through the earthwork. However, this excavation appears to cut across already-backfilled trenches. Note that the ditch segment close to the Slaughter Stone excavated in 1922 (see figure 24) has been backfilled according to plan, appearing considerably deeper than the rest of the ditch, and lined with turf, and the promised causeway has been carried across on the line of the path from the custodian's hut. English Heritage SUI242/20.

On 15th June 1921, Hawley wrote again to Peers on the matter (WORK 14/2463). It seems that an earlier episode of backfilling had been carried out incorrectly and needed rectifying. Concerned to make sure this didn't happen again, Hawley suggested that

“When you come down on the 9th July we could talk over the proper height for the soil when returned to the ditch, I could then get some laths & mark upon them the proper height for the rubble & that at which the turf should be...”.



Figure 26: Oblique RAF view looking southwest, taken 12th July 1928. Hawley's excavations had ended in September 1926, but clearly almost two years on some clearing up work remained to be done. To the left are the two huts provided by the Office of Works, the one on the right contained office space, living accommodation and finds storage, while the one on the left was described as a 'workshop'. Latterly one was used as a temporary site museum. The small building on the extreme left of the picture housed the site latrine. Many of the tracks blocked by Antrobus' 1901 fence remain visible on the surface, although by this time all had been levelled and returfed, and none were in use. The track that crossed the western half of the earthwork had been replaced in 1920 by another further to the west, allowing the whole of the monument to be contained within the barbed wire. This track has itself since been replaced with another even further to the west. The disturbed area left of centre, just beyond the huts, is difficult to explain – perhaps turf was being cut for use elsewhere on site? Beyond, to the southwest, are the remaining buildings of the First World War aerodrome (see Barber 2014). English Heritage SU 1242/89 CCC 11796/4519.

Hawley's published interim reports, presented annually to the Society of Antiquaries and published in the *Antiquaries Journal* (Hawley 1921-1926, 1928) and later reappraisals of his work (e.g. Cleal et al 1995) focus, not unnaturally, on the areas he excavated, although as aerial photographs taken in the 1920s demonstrate, the work also had some impact, albeit temporarily, on the wider landscape. Best known are the pits known as 'Hawley's Graves', in which unwanted artefacts from the excavations were buried (Fig 27). The

letters and archives also suggest additional activity in the landscape. For example, on 15th June 1921, Hawley wrote to Peers:

“We have constant wind here in the day but it ceases at night. Everything is much dried up & although the days are warm the nights are bitterly cold & frequent frosts occur. Last Sunday morning there was ice as thick as a penny & the potatoes have been cut 3 times when extra severe frosts have come” (WORK 14/2463).

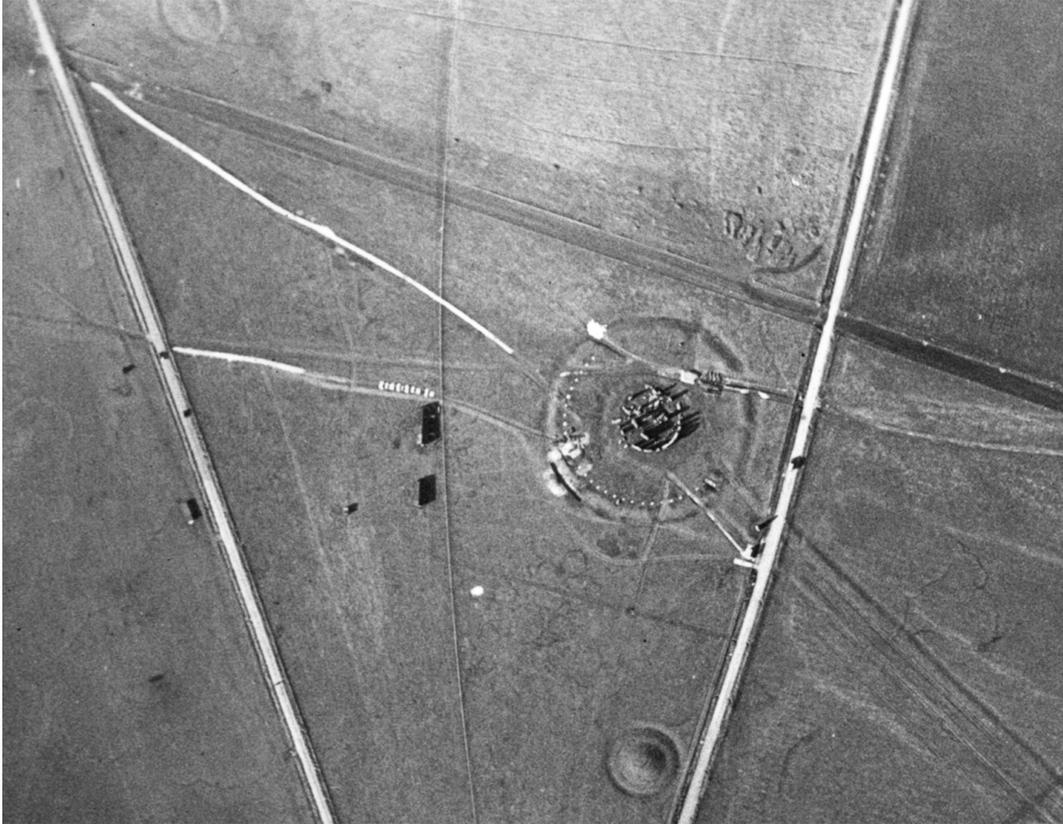


Figure 27: extract from an RAF vertical taken 10th February 1922. Excavation is underway on a segment of ditch close to the ‘South Barrow’ and at the site of the ‘South Barrow’ itself. Two of the trackways to the south of Stonehenge appear white (compare with figure 27), which presumably represents the process of levelling or infilling these features, perhaps – as Hawley implied – partly with spoil from the Stonehenge ditch excavations. A line of ten white features along the track close to the western of the two huts represents the sites of Hawley’s ‘Graves’. Just below (east of) Stonehenge, a straight dark line can be seen running south from the road (A344), before turning a near right angle to go past the two huts. Its line is obscured here by a curving crack in the original glass negative. However, this line ends just past the western hut, close to the line of the track containing the ‘graves’. It represents the course of a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pipe supplying water to the huts. There was a tap at the end of the pipe, and another inside the western hut. Geophysical survey (published in Cleal et al 1995, 498 and fig 259) shows that this pipe remains in place. English Heritage SU 1242/14 CCC 856 1/73.

'Conserve as found'? The Office of Works and the care of ancient monuments

Office of Works' policy towards the care of monuments in state guardianship developed under Charles Peers from the time of his appointment as Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments in 1910, aided by the appointment of Frank Baines as Chief Architect the following year, and the establishment of a specialist works division under Baines tasked specifically with the repair and maintenance of ancient monuments (Saunders 1983, 16). In successive 'Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector...', and in detailed instructions and guidance issued to Works staff, Peers and Baines formalised procedures that were essentially anti-restoration, but were in some key respects markedly at odds with the ideas of Ruskin, Morris and their followers.

The overarching principles as regards care and maintenance were concisely set out by the First Commissioner of Works, Lord Beauchamp, in the 1912 'Annual Report...'. It was, he wrote, essential

"to avoid, as far as possible, anything which can be considered in the nature of restoration, to do nothing which would impair the archaeological interest of the Monuments and to confine themselves rigorously to such works as may be necessary to ensure their stability, to accentuate their interest and to perpetuate their existence in the form in which they have come down to us".

Of course, a clear distinction between restoration and preservation, with a strong presumption in favour of the latter, had been central to the Office of Works' approach to the care of historic buildings and other properties belonging to the Crown since the mid-19th century (Saunders 1983; Thurley 2013, 131-2). However, this approach related almost entirely to buildings that were still in use. Peers and Baines were faced with something different – ruins, or as Peers himself put it, buildings whose *"history is ended"* (Peers, in Forsyth 1914, 135). They also had to deal with a wider range of structures, and also a change of emphasis, as stated in successive Ancient Monuments Acts, on the responsibilities of the Office of Works in respect of those structures. For example, the 1882 Act had a Schedule attached that comprised almost entirely prehistoric monuments. From 1900, the legislation allowed the Commissioners of Works to consider later monuments as well. Moreover, the manner in which 'protection' should be provided had broadened from 'maintenance' in 1882 (defined explicitly as *"the fencing, repairing, cleansing, covering in, or doing any other act or thing which may be required for the purpose of repairing any monument or protecting the same from decay or injury"*) to 'preserving, maintaining and managing', and a requirement to allow public access to any monument in the guardianship of either the Office of Works or local authorities (Evans 2004, 413). In other words, from 1900, the need to consider public access could play a role in the maintenance, preservation and management of a monument.

In fact, the public themselves became a means of protection through education. As Peers argued in his 1912 Annual Report,

“The educational value of our national monuments has too long been overlooked by the state, but it only needs demonstration to be generally appreciated. The result must be the creation of a body of educated public opinion sufficiently strong to oppose the ‘acts of vandalism’ which are still unhappily so common. The state...must set the example, but the ultimate protectors of national antiquities are the people themselves.”

That process of education took various forms (Emerick 2003, 86-7). As Beauchamp noted in the same report, the manner in which a monument is treated will itself possess an educational value. Exemplary treatment by the Office of Works would set an example to other landowners, but identification of a monument as being worthy of state intervention and guardianship highlighted its importance as a ‘national antiquity’. Education of the visitor was achieved by two principal means – the manner in which the site was presented, and the guide book. As Mortimer Wheeler (1971) explained, Peers’ approach *“ensured that the historical evidence implicit in these structures was preserved and displayed, both by clearance on the ground and by the publication of succinct guides”*.

For Stonehenge, there was no need for the Office of Works to produce its own guide. Guidebooks to Stonehenge had, of course, been appearing for more than a century, but few were ‘officially’ sold at the site. The new guidebook, written by Frank Stevens, the curator of Salisbury Museum, first appeared in 1916, not long after Chubb took over the site. After 1918, revised editions were published by HMSO on behalf of the Office of Works. Running through several editions over the next quarter century, it was not finally replaced by a state-produced guidebook until after the Second World War. A remarkably confident-sounding *“plain statement of the facts”*, rather than the *“legend of the peasant”* or the *“speculation of the savant”*, Stevens’ (1916, 8-11) target was the *“vast body of individuals who take an intelligent interest in the stones, without having the leisure or opportunity of following up the elaborate stages by which certain conclusions have been arrived at”*.

The principal concern of Peers and Baines, as far as the care of monuments now passing into the hands of the Office of Works was concerned, has been characterised as ‘repair as found’ or ‘conserve as found’, an expression that certainly seems to originate during the Peers era (Coppack 1999, 63), even if neither Peers nor Baines was responsible for coining it. However, as Coppack (1999, 63-4) noted, *“What it has never meant is the leaving of a monument as close to its state as originally found”*. Under Peers and Baines it could involve a considerable amount of intervention.

Mortimer Wheeler (1971) described how the *“stern Puritanism with which Peers stripped abbeys and castles of their ‘romantic’ but destructive weeds found compensation in the smooth lawns and clean masonry which became a sort of sign manual of our national monuments under his direction”*. At places like Whitby and Rievaulx, the aim was to clear away the clutter of later centuries and stabilise what remained of the medieval structure. Any repair or rebuilding work should be invisible, and the end result would be a

building whose ground plan, set among closely mown lawns, should be intelligible to the visitor. As Peers later argued:

“The recovery and demonstration of its plan adds enormous significance to an abandoned building, and though it can never recall it to life it can show to all and sundry what life has been. Where much still remains the task is simpler, and while, as always, the machinery of repair, even reinstatement, must remain unobtrusive, the cumulative effect of a goodly measure of its architectural beauty, and set reverently in a simple setting of grass lawns, can hardly fail of its appeal” (quoted in Emerick 2003, 113).

For Peers, a picturesque ruin stood in opposition to a stable and intelligible one. This wasn't entirely new – the destructive nature of ivy, for instance, had long been recognised – but it was more than weeds that Peers wanted to remove. The accretions and accumulated clutter of the centuries post-dating the key periods in a building's history also had to go, something that was anathema to the anti-restoration movement that developed during the later 19th century. At the same time, the SPAB-influenced idea of 'repair by building', in which for example a modern buttress might be inserted as a highly visible modern support to ancient fabric, was anathema to Peers and Baines. As far as possible, the visitor should experience nothing but the 'authentic', original fabric. SPAB and others argued that Peers' preference for 'invisible' repairs – hidden supports, the concealed use of modern material such as concrete, etc – was 'dishonest' and undermined the authenticity of the building. Peers countered that it was *“better to risk a deception by inconspicuous additions than to proclaim them by conspicuous and unsympathetic materials”* (Peers 1931, 320). Dishonesty was acceptable if it meant that the external appearance of a building appeared authentically medieval (in the case of, say, Rievaulx) or prehistoric (as with Stonehenge).

The Office of Works case was forcefully put by William Harvey in an article published in *The Builder* in 1922. Ostensibly a report on the work undertaken at Rievaulx, it also included a defence of the overall approach. Arguing that much of the criticism could be put down to *“the caprice of fashion”*, he argued that:

“...the creation of picturesque ruinous compositions...is not the object kept in view by the Historic Buildings branch, which aims at conserving the beauty and stability of the buildings in its charge without involving the removal or alteration of a single old stone or the addition of a single new one, except upon obvious constructional necessity.

“The monuments are allowed to tell their own story without the intrusion of modern architectural design, whether good or bad, affecting the question...” (Harvey 1922, 706).

Harvey insisted that architects working on such Office of Works schemes were expected to *'suppress their own personality'* when dealing with the works of previous ages, and criticised those *“who want new, 'well-designed' buttresses [added] to our ruins in place of inconspicuous scientific methods of conservation”* (ibid).

Of course, an approach that Peers, Harvey and others regarded as essentially anonymous, inconspicuous, and scientific could be highly interventionist, resulting in considerable alteration to the monument and its setting, and produced a neat and orderly manner of presentation that has been referred to as 'The Ministry Style' (Turner 2007), a style that came to characterise monuments in state guardianship – "*Driven by an impulse to create a tended and tidied ambience within which remains would stand in an ordered and disciplined manner, such policies proved far-reaching and extremely influential*" (Fergusson and Harrison 1999, 210).

The Ministry Style was essentially grounded in the idea that the scientific and educational values of a building were pre-eminent over any aesthetic considerations – or at least those that Peers et al recognised as aesthetic – and that they were inherent in the fabric of the monument (Emerick 2003, 89). For monuments no longer in use – whose history had ended – the principal reason for preserving them was as an illustration of artistic and historic development – as object lessons in the nation's history. Not only did the monument have to be allowed 'to speak for itself', by being stabilised and presented in an intelligible manner, but they were not to be able to change any more. Peers regarded the Office of Works' 'repairs' as a once-in-a-lifetime intervention. The monuments were to be frozen, maintained and henceforth preserved in perpetuity, in the state in which they emerged after the clearance and maintenance works (Fergusson & Harrison 1999, 210-11).

SPAB (and others) continued to object to the nature and extent of repairs being undertaken by the Office of Works at the growing number of sites passing into state care, with Rievaulx causing particular concern. The SPAB approach still favoured repair rather than restoration, but recognized that some intervention was necessary to stabilize: as Evans (2004, 412) put it, "*SPAB could not support the continued ruination of a ruin*". However, the Office of Works methods at Rievaulx – hidden ferro-concrete support, engineering techniques, and so on – seemed to go way beyond what was necessary to stabilise the site. SPAB argued that established departmental procedures, wider institutional practices (within a civil service context), and an inclination to turn first to engineering solutions led to approaches that were inflexible and insensitive to the needs of particular buildings (Emerick 2003, 140-1).

These and other related issues were discussed by representatives of SPAB at a meeting with Peers held on 15th November 1920 (ibid.), coinciding with the final stages of that year's work on re-setting stones at Stonehenge. It seems to have been Rievaulx that was of particular concern to SPAB, and it is not known if Stonehenge was discussed (no record of the meeting seems to exist – Emerick 2003, 141), and the two parties left the meeting agreeing to differ. As noted above, William Harvey subsequently offered a firm defence of the Office of Works methods at Rievaulx, while Peers himself was to argue the case for '*deception by inconspicuous additions*'. However, he also argued, in relation to the Office of Works approach, that

“Creative it is not, but rather re-creative, if the word will bear the meaning. The treatment must suggest itself, within the limits of the maxim that nothing should be added or taken away without absolute cause. An understanding of what has been is necessary, but imagination must be kept in bounds and not translated into material: repair and not restoration is the essence of the matter” (Peers 1931, 320).

When it came to ‘absolute cause’, Peers had already intervened at Stonehenge in the case of the lead cappings – invisible, but unnecessary (unlike, for example, the re-use of lead from Rievaulx in the repair of a window at York Minster: Fergusson & Harrison 1999, 209-10). He clearly recognised that when it came to straightening and re-setting sarsens at Stonehenge, the desire to ensure that the stones were perpendicular and that the lintels fitted meant relying on the judgment of Colonel Hawley rather than being able to point to any conclusive archaeological evidence uncovered by modern scientific excavation. This was particularly the case with Stones 29, 30, 1 and 2, where the precise re-setting of any individual stone was more dependent on the position of its neighbours than on the evidence excavated beneath them. In addition, of course, when stone 30 was ‘returned’ to its presumed original perpendicular state, the lintel it shared with stone 29 no longer fitted.

In the late 1930s, when renewed requests to re-erect fallen sarsens came the way of the Office of Works (see below, p 111), it was argued that doing so without any clear evidence of the original position of the stones concerned could be construed as ‘faking’. Whether Peers would have seen it in quite those terms is unclear, but the original proposals for the rest of the planned work – especially the re-erectments of the stones that fell in 1797 and 1900 – had assumed that clear evidence of the exact original positions of such stones would be found. Clearly, in the light of the experiences of 1919-20, that could no longer be assumed.

Precisely when and why the decision to halt work on the stones was made is uncertain. A lack of funding has generally been blamed, although the extant Office of Works archives provide no such clear reason. As late as 11th January 1921, a memo from Heasman stated that with regard to the planned engineering work on the rest of the stones, *“The plant has been dismantled and has been stored upon the site in readiness for the re-commencement in the next financial year”* (WORK 14/485). Three months later, it is simply stated that *“There is no provision in the annual estimates for continuing the work of re-setting the stones at Stonehenge”* (note by Heasman, 27th April 1921: WORK 14/485). Meanwhile, work at other sites such as Rievaulx continued.

The ha-ha (nearly) returns

Once Hawley’s work had been completed – or rather terminated – the Office of Works turned once more to the matter of enclosure. With a public appeal to buy neighbouring farmland to the north of the A344, including the former aerodrome site, underway (see Barber 2014), Sir Lionel Earle had plans drawn up to replace Antrobus’s barbed wire

fence with a ha-ha. As noted earlier, this was an idea that had been discussed on and off for some considerable time, and had never really gone away – it was mentioned by Sir Alfred Mond in his speech at Stonehenge in 1918 accepting Chubb's gift, for example.

In 1927, the public appeal offered the possibility of raising money to pay for the ha-ha. A scale plan was drawn up (in WORK 14/488) showing the ha-ha running around the entire Stonehenge triangle, with the exception of the eastern corner, close to the point where the A344 and A303 meet (the caretaker's cottage there would remain outside the enclosure). Likewise, the ha-ha ditch would not be carried across the line of the Avenue, where the caretaker's hut and turnstile were positioned.

The ha-ha as shown, in plan and section, would have been 10 feet wide at the surface, with sloping sides and narrowing to around 18 inches wide at its base, which would be about 3 feet below the surface. Its total length was estimated at being about one mile. A continuous line of spiked poles or 'standards' would be set into the ground, close to the bottom of the slope on the outer face, their points facing into the enclosed area and projecting a little above the ground surface. These would be supported by poles set along the centre of the ditch floor, and connected by six horizontal strands of barbed wire about 8 inches apart. It is not clear what the spacing would have been between these 'standards'.

An internal memo (21st July 1927: WORK 14/488) estimated the cost of digging the ditch and providing and fixing the fencing at £1500. In addition,

"The excavated material will fill a tip 50 yds x 50 yds to a depth of about 6 feet and for the above estimate it has been assumed that such a tip can be found within ½ mile of the site."

It was also suggested that this work might provide an opportunity to move the entrance into Stonehenge from its present position beside the Avenue to a point closer to the caretaker's cottage, to the east of the site *"and perhaps put in hand the scheme for motor park and lavatories near the new entrances"*. Whether this would have meant continuing the ha-ha across the Avenue is not clear.

There is no file explaining why this did not happen. No consideration – or realisation – of the damage such an undertaking might do to buried archaeological features appears in the files that are extant, so this is unlikely to have been a factor. The possibility, or otherwise, of finding somewhere to conceal 135,000 cubic feet of spoil within half a mile of Stonehenge will have been a problem. However, the most likely reason is financial – the whole scheme seems to have been reliant on the public appeal to pay for it. This appeal made extremely slow progress (see Barber 2014). The money to secure all the land was not raised until 1929, and there was little left over for extras such as a ha-ha.

The Concrete Age

Although neither excavations nor 'repairs' were carried through to their intended conclusions, the years 1919-1927 saw Stonehenge's appearance altered considerably. The whole of the monument was now contained by the barbed wire. The ditch was now markedly deeper on one side than the other; and white-coloured markers represented the locations of excavated Aubrey Holes, explained in Stevens' revised guide book (1929, 34-5) as possibly representing the original locations of Stonehenge's bluestones. The Y and Z holes, more difficult to place within Stonehenge's construction sequence, were marked only on the published plan. Also, of course, the stones that had been frustrating archaeologists since the 1870s had been straightened, and the massive timber props had gone, while the grass was no longer solely a matter for the custodian's horse to deal with.

However, the idea that careful, scientific excavation would reveal exactly where each stone had originally stood had been undermined by experience – stones were instead positioned according to Hawley's professional judgment – as had the idea that all the stones were originally perpendicular – ensuring that Stone 30 was now as upright as its partner, Stone 29, meant that their shared lintel would no longer fit unless Stone 29 was also adjusted. It seems likely that it was these experiences as much as cost that brought a premature end to the work on the stones.

Shortly after his retirement, Charles Peers' joked about his addition of a 'concrete age' into the fabric of some of the nation's 'magnificent masterpieces' (Thurley 2013, 4; Wickstead & Barber forthcoming). Opposition to the Office of Works' use of such modern materials was mainly focused on their concealed use at medieval ruins. However, using reinforced concrete to hold Stonehenge's newly-straightened stones in place appears to have aroused little contemporary comment among archaeologists or general public, likewise the straightening itself. Nonetheless, concrete was not being used to preserve Stonehenge as it was, but as Peers wanted it to be. The stones had been adjusted before they were secured.

In fact, what comment did appear in the press generally viewed the hidden concrete as a marked improvement on the timber props. The means of support was no longer visible – "The concrete is turfed over and thus nobody is a penny the worse or the wiser" – *The Times*, 5th April 1920, p11. In fact, even the original builders would be fooled – "If (they) could return to see, they would marvel at the endurance of their own handiwork. They would think they had builded better than they knew, for they could not suspect that these ancient stones have been preserved by the hand of modern man" (ibid.). The danger of "some malevolent giant coming by in the night and blowing them over with a sly puff" (ibid.) was gone. There's obviously a certain irony in something hidden from view – the concrete – being described in detail in national newspapers (and the lead cappings on Stones 6 and 7 were also noted), but what was important to Peers and the Office of Works was that no modern structural support should be visible at the site itself. Hiding

the concrete meant preserving the illusion that the visitor was experiencing something prehistoric.

CHAPTER 6: 'RESTORING' THE STONES: FAILED AND SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS 1929-1964

Hawley's departure did not mean the end of work at Stonehenge. For example, the huts provided by the Office of Works, one of which served as a temporary site museum for Hawley's finds, remained for several more years, as intermittent discussions took place about what to do with them. Generally, attention focused more on the wider landscape, and the desire to keep it as free as possible from anything that seemed visibly and inappropriately modern (Barber 2014; Wickstead and Barber forthcoming). The stones weren't left completely alone during this period, although in general any proposals to complete the work that Peers had begun were turned down by the Office of Works. That situation changed, of course, in the 1950s, when the programme of work led by Professors Atkinson and Piggott, along with JFS Stone, saw the public spectacle of re-erection once more tied to a transformation in understanding of the monument's prehistory.

In 1929, RS Newall and George Engleheart undertook some exploratory work, with the consent of the Office of Works, on Bluestone 36, a partially buried stone on the southern side of the monument, located between the Horseshoe trilithon comprising stones 53 and 54, and the prostrate Stone 12 of the outer sarsen circle (fig 28). In their brief report on the work (Engleheart and Newall 1930), they merely state that they "*examined the underside*" of the stone. According to Atkinson (1979, 52), presumably on the basis of information from Newall, they "*removed sufficient of the surrounding soil to enable the mortices on its underside to be felt (though not seen or photographed, as the permission given by the Office of Works did not extend to the lifting of the stone)*".

Eight years later, Newall wrote to the Office of Works seeking permission to "*turn this stone over and bring it around level without altering its position*" so that the mortise holes, and thus the fact that it was a lintel, would be apparent to visitors – "*the stone should be raised to ground level and...its present underside with the dowel holes should be toward the NE and...it should lie on its present SW side*" (letter from Newall, 1st May 1938, WORK 14/464). Newall added that he had Alexander Keiller's support, and that Keiller "*would provide skilled workmen to do the job and Mr Keiller and myself would do the work...*".

The idea was initially rejected, a reply to Newall including a comment from Bushe Fox that "*if the stone was raised and placed in a position you suggest so that the dowel holes showed, it would be more than probable that the public would put their feet in the holes and poke them with their sticks, as it is they are well protected and quite safe from interference*" (letter, 14th May 1938, WORK 14/464).

Newall responded by pointing out that the other Bluestone lintel known at the site, stone 150, had been lying on the ground "*with the holes upwards for as long as we have any records and has come to no harm*" (letter, 21st May 1938, WORK 14/464). By June Bushe

Fox had changed his mind. Newall was informed that the Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments now agreed to the work being carried out, with the provisos that the Office of Works should not incur any expense, and that Newall give two weeks notice before undertaking the work (memos 9th June and 20th June 1938, WORK 14/464). The Wiltshire Archaeological Society also approved the work (letter from EH Goddard to the Office of Works, 23rd July 1938). Keiller then confirmed that he and Newall would be ready as soon as that season's work at Avebury was over, adding that "*I only regret that the Stonehenge work should be confined to this minor improvement*" (letter, 12th August 1938, WORK 14/464). At this point, the correspondence in the Office of Works' files ends. Clearly the work was not undertaken. The stone was lifted during Atkinson, Piggott and Stone's work in 1954, before being returned to its partly-buried state, in which it remains (Fig 28).



Figure 28: the partly buried lintel Bluestone lintel (stone 36) with the prostrate sarsen Stone 12 lying beyond it to the south. Bottom right is a standing Bluestone (stone 37). See Cleal et al 1995 fig 108 for a similar view, but with stone 36 raised during work in the 1950s.

Around the same time as Newall's request, the Office of Works received a query about the possibility of something more substantial happening. Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times*, wrote a letter (31st July 1938: WORK 14/464) after "*visiting that ancient monument this morning with some friends of taste and intelligence*". He was, he said, "*pressed to represent to the responsible authority the desirability of setting on end again the fallen stones – or at any rate those which have fallen in recent years*" – the work being undertaken at the time at Avebury by Alexander Keiller was, of course, receiving a lot of attention in the press.

There was some discussion within the Office of Works about this, which sheds some light on the Office's attitude to the work carried out, and the work planned but not carried out, by Hawley and Peers in the 1920s:

"Stonehenge has been in its present condition for so long, and is so well-known both in this country and in the rest of the world that I feel we should be subjected to a good deal of adverse criticism if we started to rebuild it.

"This question has been thrashed out several times in the past and the conclusion arrived at has always been the same that we should be wrong in erecting the fallen stones and altering the well known appearance of Stonehenge. Also it might be very difficult to ascertain the exact positions of some of the stones and any faking of such an important monument would be unthinkable. To leave well alone is by far the best thing" (8th August 1938: WORK 14/464).

Dawson, meanwhile, suggested that the query originated with Sir Bruce Richmond, former editor of the Times Literary Supplement, who had recently retired to Netherhampton House, Salisbury. Richmond, upon being contacted, said it was actually his wife's suggestion, and that he didn't agree with her. However, the Office of Works explained their reasons for not re-erecting stones – this was essentially the same as those noted above: that it would be impossible to determine the original positions of the stones, leaving them open to the charge of faking; and that any change to the appearance of Stonehenge would lead to adverse criticism and "some not very profitable controversy". In contrast, at Avebury "*the original holes can be traced and there are a number of buried stones. Once the latter have been dug out, it seems to be impossible to do anything but set them up in their original position*" (6th September 1938: WORK 14/464).

Straightening and re-erecting did, of course, begin again in 1958. Richard Atkinson, Stuart Piggott and JFS Stone had begun work at Stonehenge in 1950, with the aim of producing a "*full and definitive*" report on the monument to be published by the Society of Antiquaries (Atkinson 1979, 198). In order to achieve this, it was felt necessary to undertake "*a limited programme of fresh excavations, designed to elucidate specific points which had been left obscure by previous workers*" (ibid.). When they started there appears to have been no intention to straighten or re-erect any further stones. Indeed, as late as 1952, the Office of Works seem to have still been opposed to any such work. That summer, Newall had written to them once more inquiring about the possibility,

based on a “*casual conversation that I heard yesterday [that] seemed to have possibilities*”, of encouraging an unnamed wealthy benefactor “*to put up the money for erecting all stones at Stonehenge that could be replaced in their original position*”. Newall asked for “*a rough idea of the cost or rather could you give me a rough idea of what was spent when the stones were erected*” (letter, 4th July 1952: WORK 14/464).

Within the Office of Works, where Newall's suggestion was described as “*rather startling...a formidably large undertaking*” (memo, 3rd October 1952: WORK 14/464), it was decided that “*even if a wealthy financier were willing to put up the money...I feel that we would be well advised to leave Stonehenge as it is, and not attempt to re-erect the fallen stones*” (note, 8th October 1952; WORK 14/464). The reply sent to Newall was actually as follows:

“I have just seen your letter of July 4th last about the erection of Stonehenge. I am sorry to say that our records are not old enough to supply the required information and I suggest you apply to Merlin, who might also from his previous experience be able to help you in connection with the re-erection” (letter, O’Neil to Newall, 7th October 1952: WORK 14/464).

‘Restoring’ the stones: 1958-1964 – a brief summary

It is not proposed to cover this period in any detail. However, although the story of the Atkinson, Piggott and Stone years is probably better known than earlier episodes, there is much concerning the aims, objectives, and undertaking of their work that remains relatively unexplored.

As noted above, the initial excavations undertaken from 1950 were purely intended to provide additional detail to allow the production of a definitive report on Stonehenge's prehistory for the Society of Antiquaries. In 1954, however, a report was produced for the Society of Antiquaries which touched on the issues of re-erecting fallen stones, and inspecting others “*with a view to preventing them from falling*” (Ancient Monuments Board 1959, 6).

Re-erection of the stones that fell in 1797 and 1900 was recommended by the Society of Antiquaries report, and approved by the Ancient Monuments Board (AMB) of the Ministry of Works, on the basis that it “*would enhance the value of the monument for the student and make it more intelligible to the ordinary visitor*”. In considering the proposal, the AMB stated that:

“In general, we endorse the conservative policy pursued by the Ministry of Works of preserving the stones in their existing positions. There is reason to believe that the state of Stonehenge is, in part, due to deliberate destruction by the Romans, and in our view this is a strong reason for leaving things as they are as it is part of its history.”

“On the other hand, however, records show that some of the stones have fallen in modern times. The trilithon made up of stones nos. 57, 58 and 158...is known to have fallen towards the end of the 18th century. Stone no. 57 has on its surface one of the mysterious carvings which have recently been observed for the first time on certain of the stones at Stonehenge, and it is important that this carving should be saved from further erosion by people walking across the fallen stone. In addition, outer circle stones nos. 22 and 122 which lie across the fallen stones of the trilithon fell as recently as December, 1899 [sic]. We have therefore recommended that the trilithon and the outer circle stones should be re-erected under the supervision of Professor Stuart Piggott, who has chiefly been concerned with the recent excavations at Stonehenge and with the proposals for re-erecting them” (AMB 1955, 6-7).

Plans to secure further stones by straightening them (and, of course, setting them in concrete) seem to have emerged subsequently. The AMB considered this as necessary to secure the long-term stability of the stones, rather than dealing with any imminent danger of collapse. In fact, the only collapse – the last such event (so far) at Stonehenge – occurred in 1963, when Stone 23 of the outer circle fell. According to the AMB, this was – as in 1797 and 1900 – primarily caused by adverse weather conditions:

“The hard and long-continued frost in the early part of the year, followed by a rapid thaw and heavy rain, caused the fall of stone 23 during a gale on the night of 9th/10th March. This was the result of the loosening of the soil and packing in which the stone was set” (AMB 1965, 3).

In 1797 and 1900, of course, additional factors were also claimed to have played a part, as noted earlier – gypsies in 1797, rodents and visitors in 1900. In 1963, the AMB only mentioned the weather, although as Chippindale (2004, 205) noted, the collapse may not have been entirely *“due to natural causes; in the only serious mishap of the restoration work it had been given a hefty blow when stone 22 moved in its cradle”* five years earlier. The re-erection of Stone 23, its base set firmly in concrete, formed part of the final season of work at the site in 1964. Among the final touches were the re-excavation and backfilling of many of Atkinson et al’s trenches with clinker and gravel, prior to the resurfacing of the central area (after removal of *“the superficial mud and soil”*) with more clinker and gravel (AMB 1964, 9; Richards 2007, 132).

The surface gravel remained in place for less than two decades. It was intended to provide a hard-wearing surface that would allow continued public access inside the stone settings. However, visitor numbers continued to rise, despite increases in admission charges aimed at deterring visitors at peak times. From March 1978, visitors were prevented from entering the area of the stone settings themselves. The gravel surface was no longer required and this central area was returned to grass.



Figure 29: Stonehenge from the north, September 2005, showing the visitor arrangements in place until recently with the now-closed A344 in the foreground and the A303 running across the top of the photograph. Bottom right is the former visitor centre, carpark and tunnel. Once the other side of the A344, visitors were steered in an anti-clockwise route around the monument, for the most part being kept outside the earthwork enclosure. The first section of path, running from the tunnel into the enclosure, past the stones and then out again, utilised the course of one of the old tracks that crossed the site – in fact, this was the one that marked the western limit of the barbed wire fence until Stonehenge passed into state hands, after which the track was moved progressively westwards. Photo by Damian Grady, NMR 24078/18 24 September 2995, © English Heritage.

As in 1919-20, contemporary criticism of what happened in the 1950s, and particularly of the re-erectings of 1958 onwards, is hard to find, although there clearly was some. It was Nigel Nicholson MP, a member of the Ancient Monuments Board advising the Minister, who provided the Minister with the opportunity to assure the House of Commons that “there is no question of faking Stonehenge but simply of re-erecting some of the original stones into the positions they were known to occupy until they fell less than 200 years ago?” (Hansard, 25 February 1958). The Minister, Hugh Molson, replied:

“We have no intention of trying to fake Stonehenge. It is believed that many of the stones were knocked down by the Romans, and it appears to us appropriate to leave them in the same position as they were put at the time by the Roman invaders. The only stones we are re-erecting are those which have fallen within quite recent times. What we are doing is in accordance with advice given by the Ancient Monuments Board” (ibid.).

Sir Godfrey Nicholson MP, however, insisted that “*a large body of archaeological opinion considers his Department is making a great mistake*”, and that the stones should be left where they were, with Molson responding that “*No body has advised me against it*” (ibid.). Sir Godfrey had queried the proposals on a previous occasion, claiming that “*there is a school of archaeological thought which is most suspicious of what the Minister is proposing*”, to which Molson replied that “*There is a profound suspicion amongst all archaeologists about what all other archaeologists say or do*” (Hansard 26 March 1957). Unfortunately, Nicholson offered no indication of who the suspicious archaeologists were.

The 25 February 1958 exchange in the House of Commons followed on from an earlier discussion about Hadrian’s Wall, sparked by criticism published in *The Observer* by Jacquetta Hawkes a few weeks previously. Hawkes was particularly concerned about repair work being undertaken along stretches of the Wall by the Ministry of Works, though with implied criticism of their general approach to such matters, contrasted with that of the National Trust. She attacked both the general aesthetic sensibility of the Ministry’s approach – “*the spirit of Subtopia*” – as well as the actual nature of their interventions – “*an Aladdinesque policy of new walls for old*” – which included the use of concealed cement to hold a rebuilt wall together. “[T]he work emerging from the hands of these excellent workmen is not Hadrian’s Wall at all. It is a copy – and one which has lost all the gifts of time. Not only moss, which can be objectionable, but the harmony and power of masonry that has settled leisurely into its landscape” (*Observer*, 9 February 1958, p7).

Molson’s response to Hawkes’ criticisms was that “*there are often two opinions on every subject, the correct and the incorrect. What is being done by my Department... is the correct line, while the line that takes the contrary view is the incorrect one*” (Hansard 25 February 1958). This simply resulted in Hawkes heading north with a photographer in tow to capture visual evidence of what was happening for a further article, in which she again highlighted the use of hidden concrete as structural support – “*There can be no question that this is a convention, and an extremely unsightly one*” – to which she felt there were both aesthetic and scientific objections (*Observer* 30 March 1958, p9).

Mortimer Wheeler, who was President of the Society of Antiquaries during the late 1950s, offered some public thoughts in his Presidential address of 1958. Thirteen years later, in his appreciation of Charles Peers for the Dictionary of National Biography, Wheeler’s account of the ‘stem puritanism’ of Peers’ approach to the preservation and display of ruins, the signs of romantic decay replaced by the “*smooth lawns and clean masonry which became a sort of sign-manual of our national monuments under his direction*” (Wheeler 1971) suggests that this was not an approach that he was completely happy with. Meanwhile, some years earlier, in the late 1930s in correspondence with Frederic Raby, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Wheeler had been highly critical of Alexander Keiller’s plans to re-erect fallen stones at Avebury:

"...every successive generation has thought itself infallible in these matters. Viollet-le-Duc thought himself infallible when he reconstructed the walls of Avignon. So did Mrs Cunnington when she re-erected that unhappy stone in the Avebury Avenue. So now do you and I and Keiller in matters such as Avebury, Maiden Castle, etc. But I am perfectly prepared to believe that in another fifty years what Keiller and I believed to be right will be regarded as outrageously wrong. This would not matter so much in the case of a monument of which there were more or less exact replicas elsewhere; it does matter very much in a monument which is essentially unique...I am at least as much against putting back the clock in the case of monuments of this kind as in the case of medieval castles and abbeys. My conviction is that our primary object should be to prevent further decay and not to reconstruct" (letter, Wheeler to Raby, 23rd February 1937: WORK 14/1508 (his emphasis)).

Wheeler pointed out to Raby that *"by virtue of the greater architectural cohesion of Stonehenge, exactitude could be more easily obtained there"*, but insisted that such work should not be attempted – it could only result in *"a twentieth-century sham"* (ibid; Wickstead & Barber forthcoming). Back in 1958, as President of a Society heavily involved in the latest round of work at Stonehenge, he trod rather more carefully. Reminding his audience of Peers' dictum that *"Conservation...is first and last a matter of taste and sound judgment in the circumstances of each particular case"*, and noting the fuss about Hadrian's Wall, he observed that

"The general policy of the Ministry, on taking over a monument, is to turn it into a battleship capable of withstanding the assaults of man and weather for an indefinite future. The principle of this is worthy enough, but its application often entails an appreciable measure of what must frankly be called rebuilding, disguise the fact as we may under the phrase 'the resetting of loose stones'. And the policy is one which may in practice easily be carried out beyond the reasonable minimum which is the Department's intent. Better, in my view, an occasional loose stone than the pervasive modernization which is sometimes the insidious alternative" (Wheeler 1958, 171, his emphasis).

Moving on to Stonehenge itself, Wheeler suggested that it was fair to accept *"that if one of the standing stones of Stonehenge fell tomorrow, the Ministry of Works would unquestionably be expected to set it up again. And that is precisely what the Ministry is doing at the present moment with two or three stones which fell a century and a half ago"* (ibid.). Proposing that re-erection of this single trilithon represented a wisely-taken middle path between those for whom restoration remained a lie and those who would see every available stone stood on end, he nonetheless argued that

"modern restoration on any considerable scale is liable to display, with the best goodwill in the world, a suspicion of regimentation, a subtle hint of just too much bubble-level and plumb-bob. The broken monument, re-erected, would lack, however intangibly, something of veracity and value" (ibid.).

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DISENCHANTMENT OF STONEHENGE?

Although many of the events described in this report represent important milestones in the recent history of Stonehenge, for the most part their context and significance has remained under-explored. Instead, attention has – inevitably – focused on the archaeological work undertaken in support of the spectacle of re-erection, the latter often characterised as both essential maintenance made necessary by the apparent neglect of previous owners and, at the same time, as simply putting things back as they were originally. Implicit in many accounts – and explicit in some – is the idea that Stonehenge was unstable until it finally passed from private ownership into the care of the State, in the guise of the Office of Works and its various successors. This is usually framed within a narrative that begins with Lubbock's efforts to obtain some kind of legal protection for ancient monuments against the uninterested and occasionally destructive ownership of private individuals.

The last three decades of the 19th century – effectively the period of the third Sir Edmund's ownership – have been characterised as a period of “disorder and decay” (Chippindale 2004, 164), with the monument “neglected and crumbling” (Richards 2013, 46). The fall of Stones 22 and 122 seemed to confirm that the fears expressed by leading archaeological organisations had been well-founded: “Something now would have to be done”, while those who protested against the fencing in of the monument, and who demanded the restoration of Antrobus' policy of free and open access, were arguing “in effect, that Stonehenge should be uncared for and unprotected, an absurd idea after the disorder and decay of the previous thirty years” (ibid.).

The focus on the apparent inaction of the third Sir Edmund is interesting, given that he seems to have done far more than any of his predecessors to preserve the monument in the condition in which he inherited it (and arguably, with the exception of Cecil Chubb's brief period of possession, he was also the last to do so). His preference for a picturesque ruin was ultimately tempered by safety concerns, but it was also combined with a firm Ruskin- and Morris-inspired anti-restoration ethos which was clearly at odds with the increasingly interventionist outlook expressed by leading archaeologists and archaeological organisations in terms of both excavation and re-erection, both ultimately rooted in a desire to demonstrate what the new science of prehistory could tell us about Stonehenge's distant past, alongside an attempt to present themselves as best-placed to protect the monument. Conflict in this period centred largely around Antrobus' unwillingness to limit access, seen as symptomatic of his neglect of Stonehenge, and detrimental to the condition of the stones in the long-term. However, as we have seen, the terms of conflict were somewhat broader than a concern with the fate of the sarsens.

The desire, frequently expressed during the third Sir Edmund's custodianship, to restrict access and to excavate, was finally fulfilled in the wake of the 1900 collapse and, of course, the change of ownership. For many, the ‘disenchantment of Stonehenge’, as it was described by Canon Rawnsley (1901), co-founder of the National Trust, began not just

with the straightening of Stone 56 as with everything else that came with it – the introduction of concrete to the monument, the use of heavy machinery, the presence of barbed wire, the appearance of a caretaker's hut and turnstile and, of course, the admission charge. Concurrent with these developments, of course, was a desire to replace the mystery and legends surrounding Stonehenge with "a plain statement of facts" provided by the "modern school of archaeologists" (Stevens 1916, I, 11).

Rawnsley was particularly angered by the barbed wire, which "with all its associations of suburban privacy and petty ownership, insults the eye and offends the heart. The cruelty of the whole thing lies in the fact that it imparts into the surroundings an alien, a disturbing, an irritating element which, quite apart from the harm to the line of vision, wounds the scene in its tenderest point, its power to impress the visitor, and that here, if anywhere, men may still be free as the wind to wander, wonder, and to praise" (Rawnsley 1901). Just occasionally, the fence did allow some to experience the stones in silence and solitude, as when naturalist WH Hudson clambered through the fence one night in the summer of 1908 while his friends, wary of the wire, remained outside (Hudson 1911, 255-6). For many, though, Stonehenge was changed forever.

In 1901 the admission charge served a dual purpose. For archaeologists it was a deterrent, a means of keeping out those deemed not to possess the appropriate "intellectual interest" in the monument. At the same time, to Antrobus (the fourth) it demonstrated the potential of generating income from a property he was looking to sell. During the First World War, the charge was converted into a means of raising funds for the Red Cross, but once the Office of Works had taken over, and the war ended, it became revenue, not just for Stonehenge but to help fund the maintenance of other guardianship properties.

Despite the fee, the numbers of visitors continued to increase, as did expressions of concern about both the quantity and quality of those visitors, concerns that weren't restricted to the days around the summer solstice. For example in 1921, George Engleheart protested to Charles Peers about 6 charabancs "crammed with Oldham mill-operatives" that he had seen at the turnstile one day (letter, 25th October 1921: WORK 14/2463). Dissatisfaction with the visitor experience has always gone hand in hand with dissatisfaction with other visitors. Since the 1920s especially, the emphasis has primarily been about improving the former while managing the latter, but the need to improve matters for visitors has never focused solely on the provision of services – it has always been as much about the presentation of the monument in an appropriate setting (see Barber 2014 for the recent history of Stonehenge's landscape setting).

As far as Stonehenge itself is concerned, since 1901 a number of stones have either been straightened or re-erected from a fallen position, and secured in their new-found upright status with concrete, transforming the monument from the romantic ruin commonly encountered in pre-twentieth century representations to something more closely resembling ideas about how it might once have looked (although unlike at Avebury, Woodhenge or the Sanctuary, no stones have been added to mark absences: see

Wickstead & Barber forthcoming). This didn't happen in secret – each episode received considerable publicity at the time, in scholarly journals as well as in the national and local press. Newsreel footage of Hawley's work on straightening Stones 6 and 7 was also shot and shown in cinemas. However, details of the work undertaken, as opposed to the light that the accompanying excavations has shed on Stonehenge's prehistory, has until recently not been drawn to the attention of visitors. This is less a question of 'dark forces' concealing wholesale rebuilding work than it is a matter of the way in which, until recently, archaeology has addressed its own history and methods, i.e. as scientific, objective, neutral and therefore ahistorical, "of secondary importance to the collection of data" (Murray 1989, 57). At Stonehenge, this has been compounded by a desire to present a visit to the monument as a journey back in time, with unnecessary modern intrusions absent from both landscape and guidebook. At the same time, of course, the absolute necessity of this work has always been stressed, although as was argued from the late 19th century onwards, there were doubts as to whether or not long-term stability required either straightening or re-erection.

Contrary to some recent claims, reference to the 20th century restoration work never completely disappeared from official guidebooks, although until the 21st century those references were always extremely brief, usually limited to a few words mentioning that certain stones had been stabilised or re-erected. What was always absent was any mention of concrete. Lady Florence Antrobus, in her guide, had included an account of the 1901 work complete with a photograph of Stone 56 in the process of being hauled upright, and a reference to the pouring of concrete. These were absent from Frank Stevens' (1916) first edition of 'Stonehenge Yesterday & Today', adopted from 1918 by the Office of Works as the official on-site guide, and remained absent from its successors until the present century. Stevens was concerned with presenting facts about the past – the means by which Stone 56 was now secured was irrelevant. Indeed, as Charles Peers observed a few years later, once a stone hole had been excavated and the archaeological deposits removed, did it really matter what went back in? Stevens mentioned the straightening of Stone 56 while explaining what had been learned from the accompanying excavations. The latter provided insight into Stonehenge's origins, the former was simply a case of putting it back where it belonged. Despite its title, Stevens' book was very much about Stonehenge as it was (or as it was presumed to be), something that also characterised those written after the Second World War by Newall and subsequently by Atkinson. The visitor was informed solely about Stonehenge's prehistory.

Reasons for the various resettings and re-erections have been many and varied, and although throughout there has been an expressed belief that each episode has made the monument more secure – less susceptible to falling further into ruin – motivation has usually extended beyond this. During the later 19th century, concern over stability emerged from wider concerns about access, ownership and authority. The likelihood of damage or collapse only became a matter for debate during the 1870s, at a time when archaeologists were being frustrated in their efforts to excavate, restore and restrict access to Stonehenge. There was little contemporary agreement over which stones, if any,

were actually in danger of collapse. Likewise, among those who demanded that something be done, there was little agreement about what should be done. Stone 56 was presumed to be in danger because of the angle at which it was leaning. The very fact that it was leaning implied the likelihood of continued movement, however imperceptible, and eventual collapse. Certainly archaeology benefited from the episode, via the results of Gowland's excavations, but should the stone have been left alone, or secured in its leaning position rather than being hauled upright? Blow and Gowland, and later, Peers and Hawley and others felt that the stones – if the short- or long-term danger of collapse was accepted – would be more secure if concreted in an upright position, something that also fitted with the idea that all the stones were, originally, perpendicular. In other words, as well as being stabilised, it was assumed that Stonehenge was being returned to something more like its original Neolithic state. Of course, as Peers was to realise, this was not the case, and by the late 1930s the feeling within the Office of Works was that this kind of work was not restoration at all, but something that left them open to charges of 'faking' – i.e. creating an entirely new monument out of what remained of a prehistoric one.

It was the Atkinson years which finally saw the re-erection of fallen stones, a century and a half after the first serious proposals. It is difficult to justify this on the grounds of stability. As was pointed out in the late 19th century, a fallen stone was unlikely to fall any further. In fact, as was made clear in 1958, resetting the stones that had fallen in 1797 and 1900 would make the monument's plan more understandable to the visitor, as well as making Stonehenge itself a more impressive spectacle. Indeed, the Minister at the time went further, responding to queries about the cost with the reassurance of "*a substantial increase in the numbers of visitors to this site, which is the most remunerative of all ancient monuments*" (*The Guardian*, 30 April 1958, p2).

The erection of Stone 57, one of the uprights that had fallen in 1797, was additionally justified on the basis that some recently-discovered rock art on its surface would be protected from the wear and tear of visitors' feet if the stone were upright (Archaeological Newsletter 6 (6), 1958, 143). It is not clear whether simpler options for protecting this patch of sarsen, now considered to represent surface dressing rather than rock art (Abbott and Anderson-Whymark 2012), were considered. Re-erection of certain stones was also justified on the basis of *when* they fell. Atkinson, for instance, argued that some of the prostrate stones at Stonehenge were evidence for one or more episodes of deliberate destruction. That evidence, he felt, pointed to the Roman period as the most likely occasion for this (Atkinson 1979, 99). As far as Atkinson and the Ministry were concerned (above, p112), this destruction should be considered part of Stonehenge's history – deliberate destruction in the Roman period represented the final phase of Atkinson's 'sequence of construction' for Stonehenge (Atkinson 1979, 101). Echoing Peers' plans of half a century earlier, the stones to be re-erected were those known to have fallen after Stonehenge's history was deemed to have ended (plus, of course, Stone 23), and ideally whose collapse could be attributed in part at least to human rather than purely natural causes. The idea that these collapses were not part of the monument's history carried with it, of course, the implication that the same applied to their re-erection.

The third Sir Edmund Antrobus had insisted that archaeologists were the most responsible for mischief at archaeological sites, and “*if the ancient monuments were placed in their hands they would do still more*” (above, p55). In his terms, then, the amount of mischief occurring at Stonehenge since it entered Guardianship in 1918 has been considerable, and although no more stones have been moved since 1964 and excavation within the area of the monument during the same period has been minimal, the appearance of Stonehenge has continued to change. Decay may have been abolished (Stout 2008, 165) but the monument and its surroundings are far from being frozen in (or out of) time, their continually changing appearance over the last half century and more tied to questions of aesthetics, appropriateness and, most of all, visitor management.

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