



Contested Landscapes: Medieval to Present Day¹

*The Cumbales, who live in the Bolivian Andes, say:
Although events occurred in the past, we live their consequences today and
must act upon them now. What has already occurred is in front of us, because
that is where it can be corrected.*

J. Rappaport 1988

Introduction

On a small, heavily populated, down-at-heel, off-shore island, with illusions about its position in the world, the past can become oppressive. Fay Weldon, in her *Letter to Laura* (1984), describes what it is like to live in a country with too much past, too little present:

Every acre of this tiny, densely populated land of ours has been observed, considered, valued, reckoned, pondered over, owned, bought, sold, hedged – and there's a dead man buried under every hedge, you know. He died of starvation, and his children too, because the common land was enclosed, hedged, taken from him . . . The past . . . is *serious*.

She is describing an English, rather than a Scottish or Welsh landscape, one in which, at least from medieval times, armed interventions were short-lived, where appropriations – and contestations – were somewhat more subtly negotiated. She gets the sense of the 'terrible beauty' to be found in many such landscapes, the tension between the pleasure gained from a worked-over, lived-in landscape and the uneasy know-

1. This chapter and Chapter 6 first appeared in *Landscape, Politics and Perspectives* (1993) which I edited.

ledge of what the working and living often involved; the way the 'historical rootedness' of the English landscape, the seeming slow evolution, has served to disguise a proprietorial palimpsest, the working out of a long history of class relations.

Not just the land, but the very word 'landscape' has often been used as though it 'belongs' to a particular class. Recently British Rail put up two Intercity posters for First Class travel. One of them began with the words: 'The only Constable you'll see at a hundred miles an hour . . .' The assumption was clear: those who matter know who Constable is, those who might be confused by a seemingly obscure reference to the forces of law and order will not get the joke and do not matter. The other poster, reproduced in Figure 18, shows a quiet landscape, monotone, almost monotonous, acceptable to those who know how (and can afford) to appreciate the understatement – and those desirous of joining their ranks. It is a view from a window. You are the observer. It is not your land but it is certainly *someone's* land. The fields are cultivated, but the cultivators and their machinery are not visible. You could perhaps view it as an 'old' landscape with the tree and the hedge standing for something stable and unchanging. Or you might view it as a 'new' landscape in which, in fact, most of the hedges have been grubbed up to make way for 'economies of scale' and agribusiness. There is perhaps, for those in the First Class, a satisfactory elision between old and new so that the changes associated with a monetarist climate are referenced on symbols of stability and the old order – the old tree – and thereby gain legitimacy.

In this chapter, working with one small (albeit heavily symbolic) corner of the English landscape, I want to explore not only the different ways in which, over a period of several hundred years, those with economic and political power and the necessary cultural capital have attempted, physically and aesthetically, to appropriate the landscape, but also how these appropriations have been contested by those engaging with the land in quite different ways. In the first chapter I suggested that people's experience of the land is based on their everyday attentiveness to the tasks in hand, the routines, their relations to each other, to their animals and crops, and to the world around them, but that that engagement is also shaped by the particularity of the historical moment. The decoupling of 'the cultural' from the political, and the individual from the larger historical structures, found in recent post-modern writings, has to be resisted (Thrift 1991; Jackson 1991). We need to retain the coupling while recognising the complexity of interactions, and eschewing any one way causality. We may also, I



Figure 18 Intercity travel poster

believe, retain the notion of hegemonic discourse. There is, in fact far less difference between Gramsci and Foucault than people seem to think, and for the purposes of this chapter it is important to stress that those with power will attempt to impose particular ways of doing and seeing which serve to disguise the labour process. However, those with power, and the strategies they invoke, are not only riven by internal factions and tensions, but are dependent upon some degree of acceptance by those 'without' power, and must perforce take on board their reactions, contestations and subversions (Harvey 1996: 44; Keesing 1994; Thompson 1974; Williams 1994). But see Chapter 6 for more on this.

Having stressed that one can only understand the contestations and appropriations of a landscape by careful historical contextualisation, it goes against the grain to attempt to sketch the history of the Stonehenge landscape over a period of several hundred years in one chapter. What follows can be no more than an outline and is piecemeal. I concentrate on the medieval (and in one of the Dialogues Ronald Hutton questions part of my interpretation), the landscapes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and, finally, in somewhat more detail, the present-day landscape.

For each period the evidence is very different. For the medieval period one can draw on both archaeological and literary evidence. But the latter is primarily derived from the work of clerics (but see p. 135 for other sources now being tapped). There are references to the commoners, but only as the (despised) 'other'. As we move on in time, the description thickens, the voices quicken, but always, even in the present, there is unevenness in the way in which different people can be heard.

Medieval Stonehenge²

You will remember (perhaps) that at the end of Chapter 2 the Anglo-Saxons had laid claim to the Celtic *Choir Gaur* and it had become Stan

2. In this medieval section, there are many allusions to Avebury, the other great stone circle that lies 30 km. to the north. Avebury is less well known than Stonehenge, though for some, like John Aubrey, it 'did as much excell *Stoneheng*, as a cathedral does a Parish church' (cited in Hunter 1975: 158). A medieval village straddled part of the Avebury circle, and the church, built sometime after 900 AD was located just beyond the bank and ditch. Because of the proximity of the church and village to the stones, there is often more detailed information about Avebury than about Stonehenge. Obviously there were differences between these medieval landscapes, but also much that was similar.

Hengc. Since the Saxons did not bother, on the whole, to rename natural features, this suggests that the site still carried meaning. Most probably the stones had been incorporated into folk culture, syncretic, changing, but possibly enduring over the millennia, or perhaps their significance had ebbed and flowed within people's consciousness (see the Dialogue with Hutton, p. 136) (Piggott (1941).

We have the renaming, and then a long silence. The next mention of Stonehenge is in the later medieval period, in the middle of the twelfth century. And now the stones express the conflict between Church and commoner.

For most of the medieval period the Stonehenge downlands were marginal land, probably used for common grazing. To the east, the open fields belonging to the villages of Amesbury Countess in the north, and Amesbury West in the south straggled the valley bottom and lower hill-slopes of the river Avon. The stones lay on the edge of the familiar world; beyond lay the 'wilderness' (Anglo-Saxon *Wylder ness*, nest or lair of a wild beast) (Stilgoe 1982: 10). For the medieval commoner, the landscape, both familiar and unfamiliar, was imbued with magic – half-pagan, half-Christian. The stones in their liminal setting were revered and believed to have curative and procreative powers. In the villages, houses had to be protected from witches. Sometimes a carved rowen post would be set to one side of the hearth. Sometimes the post, carved with St Andrew crosses, was set in place by the local priest who, rarely a man of letters, trod a fine line between the old and the new religion (Stilgoe 1982). The higher echelons of the Church could protest. As early as the eighth century, King Canute exclaimed that:

It is heathen practice if one worships idols, namely if one worships heathen gods and the sun, or the moon, fire or flood, wells or stones or any kind of forest tree, or if one practices witchcraft (cited in Burl 1979: 36).

But, as Le Goff makes clear, the Church authorities, faced with the power of passive resistance, negotiated, trimmed, and adapted their doctrines (Gurevich 1988: 5; Le Goff 1980: 160–88). The commoner did likewise.

In many ways the positions of Church and commoner were not so far apart. For both, 'the material world was scarcely more than a sort of mask, behind which took place all the really important things . . . Nature . . . in the infinite detail of its illusory manifestations . . . was conceived above all as the work of hidden wills' (Bloch 1962: 83). Both

imbued the landscape with magic, and there was no dearth of 'magical' Christian sites and relics. The problem was simply how to interpret the magic. Where the Church saw the hand of God, the commoners, in their fearful encounter with the wilderness, confused Satan with Pan, and continued to relate hoary tales of the wild hunt when, '... on moonless nights, and especially Walpurgis-nacht (May Day eve), Satan and his hounds coursed through the forest, pursuing with a terrible roaring and baying all the wild creatures and any humans unlucky enough to stumble in their way' (Stilgoe 1982: 8).

The Church, heir to the Graeco-Roman tradition, was more prone to define good and evil, true and false, black and white magic. The old religion – which was part old, part new – was more equivocal, more ambiguous: forces were good *and* bad, natural forces were to be propitiated and thereby rendered beneficial (Le Goff 1980: 159–88).

The Church, embedded in the hierarchical relations of a feudal society, preached of a 'natural order' homologous to feudalism; the pyramidal social relations were reiterated in the hierarchy of heavenly relations and in material representations. Demarcations – social, material, ritual – were to a large extent played out within a single body of space rather than, as later on, between distinctive, class-differentiated, spaces. The inside of a church, of a manor, even a poor man's house, was physically 'open', but socially and mentally heavily demarcated (Johnson 1993). In this world of interdependencies, the commoners, the worshippers of stones, were represented as 'the other' – their labour necessary, their visage hideous. They also acted as a foil for the qualities of wealthy men and saints, as 'fodder' for the redemption of the upper classes (Le Goff 1980: 95). There is little that is positive about the commoners in the writings of the clerics, and much that is passed over in silence. Our sense of their world is filtered through the contortions, concessions, and suppressions of the Church.

The Church physically 'appropriated' the stones. Amesbury, close to Stonehenge, housed a religious order,³ and 'the presence of a religious house nearby may have been influential in bringing about the destruction of parts of the monument' (Cleal et al. 1995: 343). At Avebury the Anglo-Saxon church was built alongside the great bank and ditch (but see p. 139). The stones and mounds were also 'intellectually' appropriated and adulterated. They became a malignant part of a Christian iconography, the work of the Devil – Devil's Den, Devil's

3. There is some suggestion of an early minster church, superseded by an abbey in 979 AD, and in turn replaced by a priory of nuns in 1177 (Cleal et al. 1995: 343).

Quoit, Devil's Chair. The great cone of Silbury Hill, near Avebury, became the place where the Devil had dropped a spadeful of earth. The Heel Stone at Stonehenge compounded a diabolical and Arthurian etymology. It bore, supposedly, the impression of a holy father's heel. The heel had been struck by a stone thrown by the Devil angered by Merlin, King Arthur's magician, magicking the stones into place (Burl 1979: 36).

The medieval Church vacillated between attempting to appropriate the stones, and destroying them. One of the earliest accounts of Stonehenge, c.1136, by the Welsh cleric Geoffrey of Monmouth, embedded in his *History of the Kings of Britain*, combines 'pure legend and a sense of the marvellous that is sometimes still completely pagan' (Bloch 1962: 100).

In Monmouth's account, Aeneas, arriving from Troy, conquered the giants that inhabited 'Albion'. Later, a Celtic King, Emrys (Ambrosius), brother to Ythr (Uther Pendragon, father of Arthur), intent on establishing a memorial to kinsmen killed at Amesbury by Saxon treachery, enlisted Merlin's help in transporting the great stones from Ireland and erecting them at Stonehenge (Figure 19). According to Monmouth,

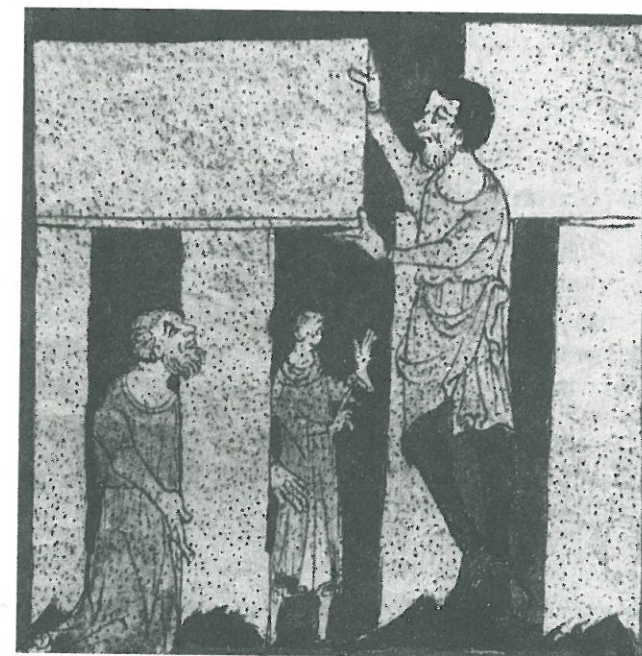


Figure 19 Merlin hefting the stones into place (Egerton 3028 fl40v; kind permission of the British Library)

these stones had originally been brought by giants from Africa to Ireland.⁴ In a matter-of-fact way, he cites Merlin's description of the magical power of the stones:

Whenever they felt ill, baths [w]ould be prepared at the foot of the stones; for they used to pour water over them and to run this water into baths in which their sick were cured. What is more, they mixed the water with herbal concoctions and so healed their wounds. There is not a single stone among them which hasn't some medicinal virtue (Geoffrey of Monmouth 1966: 196).

In later medieval times such benign empowering of the stones was forbidden and the Church moved to obliterate their magic.⁵ At Avebury, in the early fourteenth century, the Church authorities made the local inhabitants destroy the stones. Nevertheless, the destruction was done with caution. The stones were not broken up; instead the villagers dug large holes and tumbled the stones into them, 'handled with reverence, covered without hurt to the sarsen, doing God's work without upsetting the Devil' (Burl 1979: 37). Compare this with the late seventeenth century, when the local farmers broke up the stones, partly for purely utilitarian reasons, partly, as we shall see, as part of the Protestant backlash against paganism and popery. Now they were broken with fire and water, and were incorporated into local buildings (Figure 20).

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Ucko *et al.* (1991: 163) suggest that by the end of the seventeenth century the commoners no longer worshipped the stones, and broke them with impunity. But perhaps this is too simple a reading. There remains a tension, right through the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century, between the stones seen as something utilitarian, a

4. Piggott (1941), much impressed by this part of Monmouth's saga, suggests that it indicates that Monmouth was heir to the Welsh bardic tradition that, in faint outline, resonated with millennia-old traditions recounting the movement of the bluestones from Wales to Wessex.

5. In a contemporary setting, Herzfeld comments on the need to destroy the past. In Crete, during the militantly nationalist regime of 1967–74, 'one official had even wanted to demolish the proud minaret at the mosque of *gazi* Huseyin Pasa... As long as it stood, he reasoned, the Turks could use this monument to make territorial claims on Crete. History had to be remodeled to make the present safe' (Herzfeld 1991: 57).



Figure 20 Breaking up the stones at Avebury
(Gough Maps 231, fol. 5r; kind permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford)

source of building material, an encumbrance to be got rid of by farmers 'chiefly out of covetousness of the little *area* of ground each stood on' (Stukeley, cited in Ucko *et al.* 1991: 249), and the stones invested, however vestigially, with supernatural power. The Nonconformist preacher, harnessing all the populist rhetoric at his disposal to force a disassociation between 'pagan' ritual and festival and true Christian piety, not only succeeded in repudiating the 'emotional calendar of the poor', but also drove a wedge between the teachings of the Church and everyday life, between 'polite' and 'plebeian' culture. In attempting to destroy the 'bonds of idolatry and superstition – the wayside shrines, the gaudy church, the local miracle and cults' (Thompson 1974), he undermined traditional remedies against the devil and his agencies, and made witchcraft and pagan practices appear both more powerful and more menacing (Hill 1982). Added to which, by the end of the seventeenth century, with the acceleration of the enclosure movement, many a member of a church congregation had been cut loose not only

from the land, but also – a negative freedom – from traditional forms of obligation and service (Thompson 1974). There was, thus, not only a degree of political anarchy, but also a considerable residue of superstition. Indeed it was not unknown, in the late seventeenth century, for preachers to attempt to 'tame' their congregations by threats of 'petrification' for those who danced on the Sabbath, and several stone circles were attributed to just such divine intervention (Grinsell 1976). *Fools Bolt*, an anonymous diatribe also from the late seventeenth century, both threatens, and remains threatened by the power of the stones at Stonehenge:

These forlorne Pillers of Stone are left to be our remembrancers, dissuading us from looking back in our hearts upon anything of Idolatry, and persuading us . . . so to . . . deride, it in it's ugly Coullers, that none of us . . . may returne, with Doggs, to such Vomit, or Sows to wallowing in such mire' (cited in Legg 1986: 4).⁶

There are many mentions of the magical properties of the stones in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Aubrey, in the 1660s, notes, in the context of Stonehenge, that 'it is generally averred . . . that pieces of powder of these stones, putt into their wells, doe drive away the toades . . .' (cited in Olivier 1951: 157); while the Rev. James Brome noted in 1707: 'if the stones be rubbed, or scraped, and water thrown upon the scrapings, they will (some say) heal any green wound or old sore' (shades of Geoffrey of Monmouth nearly 400 years earlier) (cited in Burl 1987: 220).

In the 1740s Stukeley records that people chipped off bits of bluestone because they were thought to have medicinal properties. And when John Wood, also in 1740, attempted to survey the stones and a violent storm blew up, the locals reckoned he had raised the devil (Burl 1987: 182).

In the longer term, the old ways, the old superstitions, the last vestiges of a 'deification of nature' were undermined by what Marx called 'the great civilizing influence of capital' (quoted in K. Thomas 1983: 23). The change in people's attitudes towards the natural world occurred

6. Various guesses at the authorship had been made: J. Gibbons perhaps (Piggott 1985: 86), or Robert Gay, a Parliamentary rector (Legg 1986). Whoever he was, the author was exceedingly scornful of Inigo Jones – 'Out-I-goe Jones' – and of his Romano-British origin for Stonehenge.

in piecemeal fashion, depending upon who they were and where – economically, politically, socially – they were located. An illiterate peasantry (slowly being commodified into farm-hands) abandoned more slowly the notion of 'a natural world redolent with human analogy and symbolic meaning, and sensitive to man's behaviour' (Thomas 1983: 89). It was the literate classes that embraced the concept of nature as something detached, 'to be viewed and studied by the observer from the outside, as if by peering through a window . . . a separate realm, offering no omens or signs, without human meaning and significance' (Thomas 1983: 89). And – more sinisterly – as something 'to be put to the question' (Bacon), racked for its secrets and treasures (Gold 1984).

The more pronounced attempts by the Church, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to impose Christian teachings and Christian marriage upon the vestigial paganism and easier-going sexual mores of the countryside, were only part of the greater intervention in the lives of ordinary people by both Church and State. Having followed through the contestation between Church and commoner, I have now to backtrack in order to discuss the way in which the State interceded, and to consider the importance of Stonehenge in the context of an emerging national, and then regional, sense of identity.

Already in the fifteenth century, the Church had begun to lose its exclusive hold on the past – history was no longer a matter of ecclesiastical precedent. 'Time' ceased to be the gift of God and became 'the property of man' (Le Goff 1980: 51), and 'Time's arrow' began to replace the repetitive cycles – the endless chain of cause and effect – of earlier history. Instead, historical precedents and 'genealogies' became part of the process of internal pacification and nation-state consolidation.

As early as the fourteenth century, Stonehenge begins to be drawn into a nationalist diatribe. Langtoft tells the story of 'the Wander Wit of Wiltshire', who:

rambling to Rome to gaze at Antiquities, and there skewing himself into the company of Antiquarians, they entreated him to illustrate unto them that famous monument in the contry called Stonage. His answer was that he had never seen, scarce ever heard of it, whereupon they kicked him out of doors and bad him goe home and see Stoneage. And I wish that all such Episcopal cocks as slight these admired stones and scrape for barley cornes of vanity out of foreigne dunghills, might be handled, or rather footed, as he was (cited in Olivier 1951: 156).

Under the Tudors, historical and archaeological precedents were used to formalise custom and tradition into instruments of government and a defined code of law (Piggott 1985). And at a time when the Act of Union (1536) extended the English law of the land to Wales and menacingly set out the need 'utterly to extirpe all and singular the senister usages and customes differinge from [the Realme of Englande]' (cited in Jones 1990), the myth was created that the inhabitants of England and Wales were one people with a common ancestry and shared history (Jones 1990; Piggott 1985: 16). Henry VIII, intent on breaking with Rome and siezing the Church lands, employed Leland to ride around the country, mapping, collating, and 'spying'. And Leland, professing himself 'totally enflammed with a love to see thoroughly all partes of your opulente and ample realme . . . thereby to expose . . . the craftily coloured doctrine rout of Roman bishops', rode around the land:

By the space of these vi yeares paste that there is almost nother cape nor bay, haven, creke, or peere, river or confluence of rivers, breches, washes, lakes, mere, fenny water, montaynes, valleis, mores, hethes, forestes, woodes, cities, burges, castelles, principal manor places, but I have seen them (cited in Chamberlin 1986: 69).

Inter alia, he mapped and described Stonehenge, appending, without comment, Geoffrey of Monmouth's explanation.

Compilations, categorisations and a comprehensive mapping of Britain became increasingly important during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Refinements in surveying and mapping were part of a changing technology of power, integral to the development of mercantile capital, and the opening up of the New World. These new techniques allowed the redefinition of property: 'It created geometrical, divisible, and hence saleable space by making parcels of property out of lands that had previously been defined according to rights of custom and demarcated by landmarks and topographic features' (Olwig 1996).

Control of knowledge, of resources, and of nature. By the late seventeenth century, as the 'county naturalists picked their way through all the legends of prognosticatory springs, portentous birds and similar marvels', popular and learned views of nature significantly separated out (Thomas 1983: 78). James I demanded that Stonehenge be made to give up its secret and ordered his court architect, Inigo Jones, to map and explain it. Giants and Merlin were no longer considered sufficient. Inigo Jones, steeped in Italianate landscapes, claimed Stone-

henge for the Romans. It was, he said, as he manipulated his plans, built c. AD 79 by British chieftains subject to Rome and was based on Vitruvian geometry. The king encouraged the Duke of Buckingham to dig the monument, causing – as, a little later, Aubrey laconically noted – the 'falling downe, or recumbancy of the great stone' (cartoon 3).

With the influx of capital into the countryside, with 'new' families competing with and marrying into the older aristocracy, and with both the old and new aristocracy hastening to enclose open field and common land in order to 'improve' their fortunes, the mapping and description of land-use, natural curiosities, and the genealogies of local families, helped both to create and legitimate the new class and property relations.



"... So to make up for the disappointment we had to let him have a home computer."

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More and more, chorographers [created] books where country gentlemen [could] find their manors, monuments, and pedigrees copiously set forth. In just a few decades chorography thus progressed from being an adjunct to the chronicle of kings to become a topographically ordered set of real-estate and family chronicles (Helgerson 1986).

Aubrey, the 'discoverer' in 1666 of Avebury (the commoners had, of course, been there a while!) and of the Aubrey holes at Stonehenge, was the first to propose that Stonehenge was not Roman or Danish but rather Celtic and (probably) associated with the Druid religion. He was also not reluctant to admit that he was recording with the explicit intent that the knowledge be made available to those who might find economic advantage (McVicar 1984). Walter Charleton, three years earlier, was in favour of a Danish origin and proposed it as '*a court royal*, or place for the *Election* and *Inauguration* of Kings', and, in the same vein, dedicated it to Charles II (Ucko *et al.* 1991: 15). And John Smith of Boscombe, in the later eighteenth century, noting that Stonehenge was built 'to show the steady, uniform and orderly motions of the heavenly bodies', dedicated it to the Duke of Queensbury at nearby Amesbury House, 'as a symbol of your Grace's steady, uniform and orderly conduct through life' (Olivier 1951: 36). Based in large measure on the formidable treatise on *Brittania* by Camden (first published in 1586, republished 1695 in an enlarged edition), antiquarians increasingly focused on regional, rather than national, coverage.

The economic advantages reaped by the antiquarians' patrons were real enough. The commoners were physically evicted as part of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century enclosure movement. They were also evicted aesthetically. In 1726, the Duke of Queensbury, owner of Amesbury House near to Stonehenge, enclosed the open fields of West Amesbury and Amesbury Countess to the east of Stonehenge, and laid great parts of the estate down to park. He realigned the Amesbury-Market Lavington road, landscaped the Iron Age camp and built a 'Druidical' grotto. In passing, he 'preserved' Stonehenge from a plague of rabbit warrens planted by his predecessor.

The antiquarian, William Stukeley, though a churchman and a friend of the gentry, occasionally hints at a darker local experience of landscape enclosure. Writing, in 1740, of his survey of the Stonehenge area, he says, 'this . . . will . . . preserve the memory of it hereafter, when the traces of this mighty work are obliterated by the plough . . . that instrument gaining ground too much, upon the ancient and innocent

pastoritial (sic) life . . . and by destructive inclosures beggars and depopulates the country' (Royal Commission 1979: iv). It is, of course, the technology that Stukeley blames, rather than the changing social relations.

Stukeley, apart from his threnody about enclosure, was an Establishment man. In his writings on Stonehenge and Avebury there is a tension between his desire to record in meticulous 'scientific' detail and his need to validate his theological interpretation. There has been a tendency to periodicise Stukeley's life, separating out an earlier 'scientific' fieldwork phase from a later 'druidic' phase, and lamenting his lapse into romantic fabulation (Piggott 1985: 15). More recent work suggests that, from the beginning, the two went hand-in-hand (Ucko *et al.* 1991: 53), and now that we all admit to the subjectivity that imbues our practice, we can more readily accept the contradictions in Stukeley's work. So, on the one hand, in the early 1720s, he meticulously maps the cultural landscape of his forebears, engaging Stonehenge as part of a larger landscape. On the other, having read (and rather under-acknowledged) Aubrey, he promulgates a Druidic origin and, more, attempts to place the Druids in a direct line from Moses and Abraham – finding in the Druidic religion the lineaments of the Christian Trinity. Avebury becomes 'a landscaped model of the Trinity' in which the great circle represents 'the ineffable deity, the avenues . . . his son . . . in the form of a serpent'. Stonehenge, he believes, is a temple erected in 460 bc by Egyptian 'refugees', aided by Wessex Druids (Piggott 1985). While he held these notions from the 1720s and had 'revised' some of his plans accordingly, they were given added urgency in the 1730s and 1740s. Having moved from being a medical man to taking holy orders, perhaps in part because his hopes of patronage were disappointed, he found that Tolund and the Deists were also promoting Stonehenge as a Druidical temple. Their intention was to relativise all religion and to suggest that 'Christianity was as old as the Creation'. In the face of this heretical intervention, Stukeley altered the title of his book from the original 'History of the Ancient Celts' to 'Patriarchal Christianity: or A Chronological History of the Origin and Progress of True Religion and Idolatry'.⁷

Stukeley appropriated the Druids in the service of the Church of England. Others, particularly the Welsh nationalists in the aftermath

7. The first entry to the Index of the volume, published in 1740, runs: They were of the patriarchal religion Page 1, 2, 17 Which was the same as Christianity 2, 54

of the French Revolution, rediscovered them as early patriots, Celtic leaders of the opposition to the Romans, symbols of resistance and liberty (Jones 1990). In both Thomas's poem 'Liberty' and in Collins's 'Ode to Liberty' (1747) the Druids figure as the apostles of freedom (Piggott 1985).

Cleric, antiquarian, landed gentry, Welsh nationalist – the number of voices increases. Each appropriates Stonehenge in their own fashion, each creates a particular past. Some voices remain muted. The voice of the labourer, or of women of any class, most often come down to us at second-hand. Other people talk about them, or do not talk about them. Silences are important. And often the bitterness seeps through. The radical claim to the land that the Diggers and Levellers fought for in the seventeenth century was superseded, in the eighteenth century, by frustration and anger of the wholesale appropriation and enclosure of the land, as expressed, for example, in the writings of the poet-labourer John Clare (Chapter 1, p. 31).

In contemporary Britain, even with all the media available, it is still not easy to hear all the voices that contest the Stonehenge landscape. Moreover, while the stones remained 'open' right through to the beginning of this century and people could come to them with their different understandings, they are now 'closed' and Stonehenge has become a museum which attempts to 'sell', not always successfully, a particular sort of experience, a particular interpretation of the past. People with alternative views have to fight for the right of entry and the right to express their views.

Contemporary Landscapes

A Site for 'the Nation'

The first impulse to 'protect' Stonehenge emerged from late nineteenth-century radical protests at the effect of industrialisation on people and places alike. On the one hand, 'romantic' socialists like John Ruskin, appalled by the destruction wrought by the Industrial Revolution, proposed in 1854 that an inventory of 'buildings of interest' threatened by demolition be drawn up. On the other hand, the fierce intercession by working-class socialists demanding access to the countryside for the urban working class led to the creation of the Youth Hostelling Association and the Ramblers Association (Bommes & Wright 1982). In the late 1870s, John Lubbock attempted to introduce a National Monuments Preservation Bill. Three times the bill was furiously opposed

by conservative members of the House of Commons who recognised that public amenity might come to override the rights of private ownership (Murray 1989).⁸ There was, for example, a fine intercession by Francis Hervey, a Tory M.P.: 'Are the absurd relics of our barbarian predecessors,' he clearly roared, 'who found time hanging heavily on their hands, and set about piling up great barrows and rings of stones, to be preserved at the cost of the infringement of property rights?' (Bommes & Wright 1982). Tennyson once wrote a poem in which father and son are trotting across their estate. The sound of the hooves merge with the father's opening credo – 'Property, property, property'.

Eventually, following the precedent set by the Commons Preservation Society in the 1880s, a wonderful British blurring of the distinction between 'private' and 'public' ownership was concocted and the politicians were won over. The National Trust (founded in 1895) holds the properties and land *privately* in the national and *public* interest.

In 1894 Sir Edmund Antrobus, owner of Stonehenge, refused to allow the Ancient Monuments Commission to fence Stonehenge. He still saw it as an important public space. If they tried to fence the stones, he said, 'an indignant public might act as the London public did in regards to the railings of Hyde Park, when the claim to hold meetings was interfered with' (Legg 1986: 162). His son, however, offered Stonehenge to the nation, at the excessively high price of £125,000 and with the proviso that he retain hunting and grazing rights. When this offer was turned down, he threatened to sell it to the Americans. In 1901, with the approval of the Society of Antiquaries, he erected a barbed wire fence around the monument on the specious grounds that the new military camp on Salisbury Plain might result in damage. He put in two custodians and charged an entrance fee of a shilling a head (the equivalent of £5 today – obviously beyond the means of most people). Flinders Petrie and Lord Eversley (founder of the Commons Protection Society) took Antrobus to court, but as Eversley remarked,

the judge appeared to regard with equanimity the exclusion from the monument of the great bulk of the public. He was evidently under the impression that the vulgar populace had, by their destructive propensities, disqualified themselves as visitors to a place of antiquarian interest (cited in Legg 1986: 166).

8. The political implications of celebrating a Celtic past at a time when the English were putting down the Irish was not lost on the House of Commons (Murray 1989).

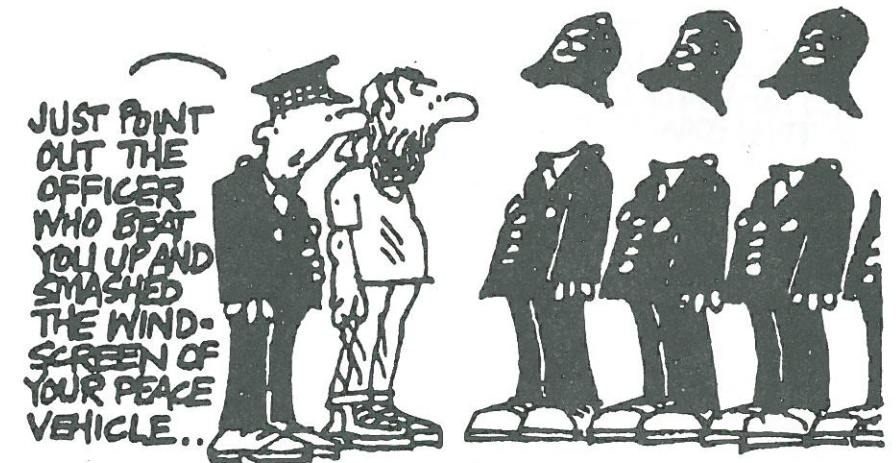
Eversley surmised that the judge was much influenced by a line from Horace which, freely translated, runs: 'I hate the profane crowd and I exclude them.' Ninety years later things have not changed that much.

In 1915 Stonehenge was put up for auction, and a Mr Chubb (perhaps ironically of the lock-and-key family) bought it for his wife after she remarked over breakfast that 'she would like to own it'. Mr Chubb paid £6,600. In 1918 he gave Stonehenge to the nation, with the express wish that access should remain free. Unfortunately he added the proviso 'unless the Ministry of Works deemed otherwise' (Legg 1986). The Establishment 'deemed otherwise', and Stonehenge became a museum. Fenced in, available only to those who pay, it is no longer part of a living landscape (Lowenthal 1979, but see Dialogue with Ucko, p. 140).

Protecting the Site 'for the Nation'

Jacquetta Hawkes's archaeological writings are no longer in vogue, but one terse statement has been cited and re-cited: 'Every age', she said, 'has the Stonehenge it deserves – or desires' (Hawkes 1967: 174). At the time, she was reacting to the commercial development of the Stonehenge visitors' centre. Her comment was apposite then, and remains so now. Only, now, the Stonehenge that we have has not only become a tacky tourist trap, but also, once a year, at the approach of the Summer Solstice, becomes a gulag. The arc lights go up, the razor wire unrolls, and police and security men patrol with their dogs. For a brief moment the physical force that sustains the power of the ruling classes visibly flexes its muscles. In 1985 five hundred 'travellers' (a label that covers a great assortment of people who move around the countryside in old vans and buses) or 'free festivalers' were arrested and two hundred vehicles were impounded. In 1988 there was a repeat performance. In the last few years there has been an eerie silence: no one, except the police and selected journalists (and a few brave free festivalers crawling through the long grass), is there to watch the sun rise.

There is no doubt that the confrontational politics of the Thatcher years have thrown into high relief some of the conflicts that underwrite British society. It was not fortuitous that Wapping (the printers' strike), Orgreave (the miners' strike), and the Battle of the Beanfield at Stonehenge occurred within a year of each other. The same tactics, involving the deployment of non-local unidentifiable police, were used in each encounter. The same language defined and excommunicated 'the other'. For Mrs Thatcher the miners were 'the enemy within'.



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Assistant Chief Constable Clement admitted that he 'would not be the slightest bit troubled if ... [the pickets] were trampled by horses'. As for the travellers, Douglas Hurd labelled them 'medieval brigands'; Mrs Thatcher brayed '[I will do] anything I can to make life difficult for such things as hippy convoys'; Sir John Cope, Tory MP, trumpeted 'we need a paramilitary police force'; and Robert Key, local Tory MP, gave away part of the reason for this anger and disquiet, 'two hundred nomads are squatting illegally on private land ... there may be a sensible case for the use of troops.'

Media coverage reflected, and continues to reflect, similar prejudices. The *News of the World* headline read 'Sex-mad junkie outlaws make the Hell's Angels look like little Noddy' (Rosenberger 1991). In a post-Thatcher, less confrontational mode, damages against the police have been awarded to both travellers and miners.⁹ There have been vaguely

9. The 'Battle of the Beanfield' took place in June 1985. Six years later, in June 1991, £23,000 was awarded to 24 plaintiffs for 'assault, damage to their vehicles and property, and for not being given the reasons for their arrest'. However, the judge managed to find the police not guilty of unlawful arrest and they therefore did not have to pay the costs of the trial. So the plaintiffs' awards were swallowed up in legal costs. The miners' confrontation with the police (or vice-versa) at Orgreave in Yorkshire occurred in June 1984. In July 1985 the case against the 95 pickets was dropped. In June 1991 39 (former) miners shared £425,000 out-of-court compensation from the South Yorkshire police for assault, wrongful arrest, malicious prosecution and false imprisonment (*Guardian*, 20 June 1991).

SO HERE'S THE PLAN - WE ARRANGE
FOOTBALL MATCHES AT STONEHENGE
AND ROUND UP THE SOCCER HOOLIGANS
AT THE SAME TIME



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conciliatory moves that never, however, materialise into anything solid. They muffle, rather than resolve, the underlying tensions.

The travellers, as an unpropertied, anarchic minority, enrage the Establishment. In particular, they enrage when they lay claim to Stonehenge. I shall return to them, but I want first to consider who attempts to call the tune. In an era of flexible capitalism, who are the power-brokers at Stonehenge? what are the economics of an imagined past? who writes the scripts? and who buys the product?

Who 'Owns' Stonehenge?

Who – officially – owns Stonehenge? English Heritage 'owns' the site 'for the nation'.¹⁰ The National Trust 'owns' 1,500 acres around Stonehenge, also 'for the nation'. *Sotto voce*, the Ministry of Defence 'owns' vast stretches of Salisbury plain, presumably for the defence of the nation.¹¹ The new visitors' centre was scheduled to be built on the edge of their terrain, but this encroachment has been seen off (but see p. 183).

10. More accurately, the land on which Stonehenge stands is owned by the Department of the Environment, but its management is entrusted to English Heritage, a quango established by Act of Parliament in 1983 (Golding 1989).

11. Between 1897 and 1902 the War Office negotiated the purchase of 43,000 acres to the North of Stonehenge. Subsequent purchases have brought it up to 91,000 acres (36,400 ha) (Cleal et al. 1995: 346).

English Heritage and the National Trust act in the interests of the – heterogeneous and tensioned – Establishment. Through the 1970s, eighties and into the early nineties the radicalism that once informed attempts to protect and open up the countryside evaporated. Radicalism was replaced by populist rhetoric – doing *battle* for *our* heritage, maintaining *communal values* (apolitical, organic, stable, and deeply unequal), promoting *traditional* skills. A rhetoric that only thinly disguises both old and new class interests.¹²

The Stonehenge 'Honey-pot'

Contrary to a conservation rhetoric that emphasises a 'green' small business economy and the encouragement of specialised skills, the reality of preservation, conservation and public access is very 'big' business. In a climate of industrial uncertainty and in the computerised age of flexible capitalism, investment in industry and property becomes more problematic. And the tourist market, which requires less investment in fixed facilities, looks increasingly attractive.¹³ Although the £15 million (and rising) ear-marked for the new Stonehenge visitors' centre seems a substantial amount, the returns will undoubtedly be equally substantial (p. 181).¹⁴

In 1983 government responsibility for the preservation of ancient monuments and for scientific research was handed over to English Heritage – a quango, autonomous but State-funded. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu (author of *How to Live in a Stately Home and Make Money*) took the chair and one of the stated aims became the heavy promotion of tourism (Hewison 1987: ch.4).

12. Jacobs (1994a; 1994b; 1996: 41, 43, 102) discusses this rhetoric in the context of the 'SAVE Britain's Heritage' campaign mounted in the mid-1970s in the face of threats by the then Labour government to impose a Wealth Tax detrimental to the propertied classes. The Victoria and Albert Museum put on an exhibition on the threat to country houses which seeded this campaign.

13. Although the figures are somewhat out of date, Lumley (1988) estimated the cost of creating a job in manufacturing at £32,000, in mechanical engineering at £300,000, and in tourism at £4000.

14. The takings from the Yorvik (Viking) shop at York were, per square foot, and prior to recession, more than every Marks and Spencers in the land except the Oxford Street branch (Baker 1988). The number of museums increased by over 50 per cent during the 1970s and 80s. Roughly one museum opened every three weeks and by the late 1980s there were over 2000 museums in Great Britain (Hewison 1987: ch.1). With the recession, some have proved short-lived.

Present-ing the Past

Stonehenge now has to make money. It also has to be preserved, conserved and presented. The visitors' centre – as everyone freely acknowledges – is a botched attempt to provide tourist facilities, keep people away from the archaeologically sensitive central part of the monument, and present information about the place and the landscape. It has been rightly berated for its neo-brutalist architecture, inadequate parking, and for its facile 'macho' historical presentation.

Until very recently, the tunnel that went under the road took one back through time via an Astronaut, Henry VIII, the Roman Empire, Egypt and the Pharaohs – not a woman in sight – to Stonehenge and the Beginning of Civilisation. The time-tunnel debouched onto the green sward surrounding the stones. There were (again until recently – they have now been moved to the car-park) three dioramas. The first depicts a sort of rural arcadia, a pastoral scene with early Stonehenge – the bank and ditch – just visible in the background (Figure 21a). In the second, a man stands poised between rural arcadia and civilisation (Figure 21b). In the third a chief – modelled on Kirk Douglas – brandishes his insignia of power as he talks to his male cronies (Figure 22). In the background the labour force beavers away. The emphasis is on power and on technology – building, construction, planning, control.

It is a very particular sort of history. One that goes hand in hand with the more general conservative version (vision?) of the past offered by English Heritage:

The National Heritage is remarkably broad and rich... it is simultaneously a representation of the development of aesthetic expression and a testimony to the role played by the nation in world history (The First Annual Report of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, cited in Hewison 1987).

See p. 180 for similar, more recent sentiments.

Apart from acting as the custodians and entrepreneurs of prehistoric monuments, English Heritage and the National Trust have focused on the landmarks of those with power and wealth, inscribed in an aesthetic that bypasses, as it has done for centuries, the labour that created the wealth. More recently the net has been cast wider, but, despite acquiring Victorian back-to-backs or derelict mills or mines, the presentation remains sanitised and romanticised, emphasizing local colour rather than

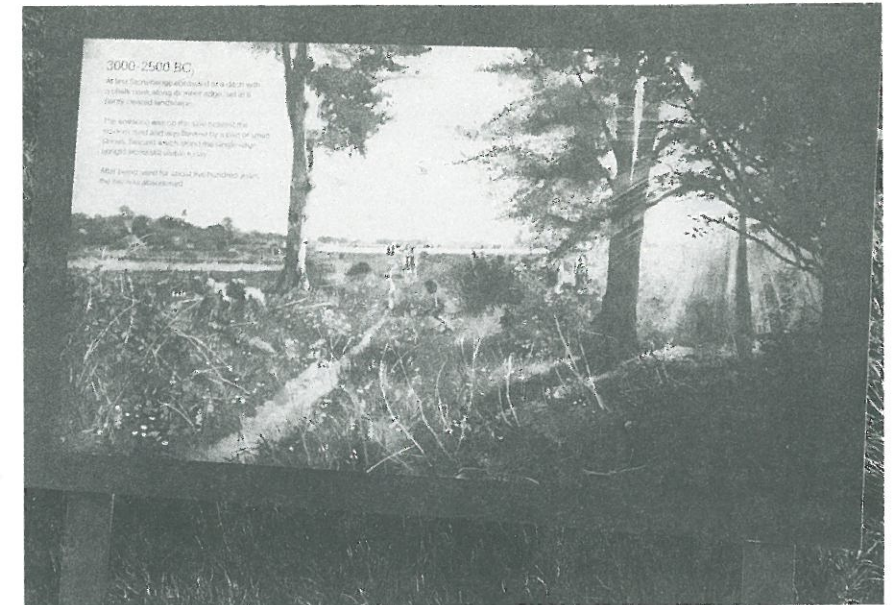


Figure 21a English Heritage reconstruction of the first phase at Stonehenge (photo: B. Bender)

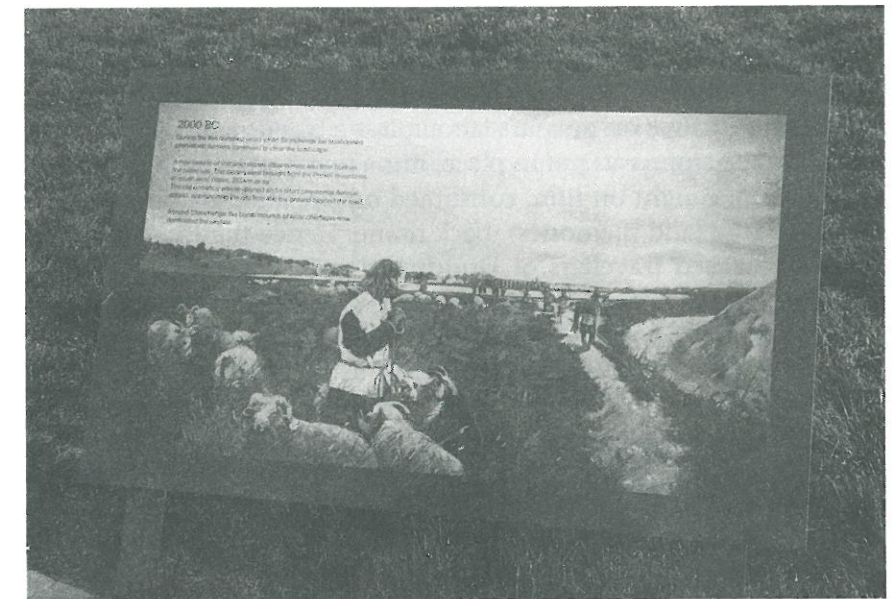


Figure 21b Reconstruction of phase 2 at Stonehenge (photo: B. Bender)

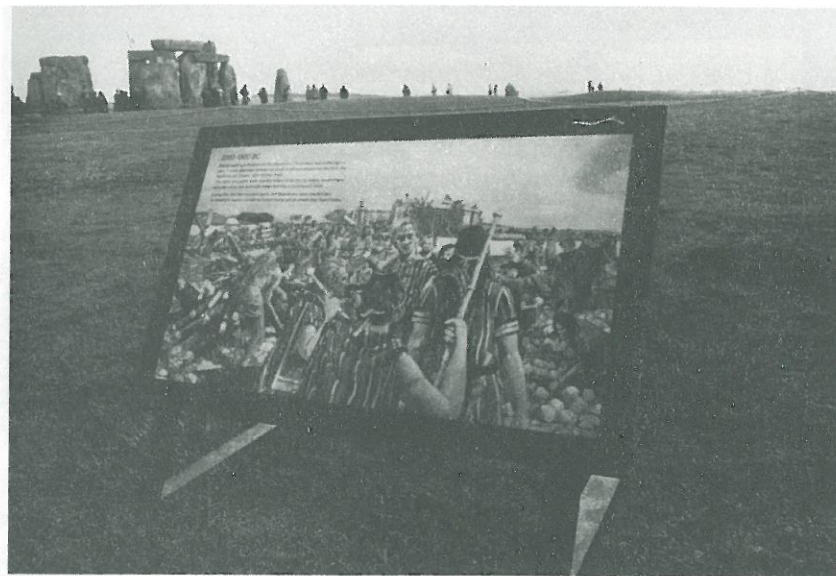


Figure 22 Reconstruction of phase 3 at Stonehenge
(photo B. Bender)

the socio-economic conditions that generate both wealth and poverty, people's pain or their resistance.

Stonehenge is 'explained' in terms of roots, and of 'our' and 'deep' national past. It tells the story of those empowered to make decisions and to make claims on people's labour. It is a top-down past that ends when the last stone was put in place. It is a museum exhibit, a place to be looked at, caught on film, consumed on site and, via photographs and souvenirs (and memories), back home. Hence the incongruity of the marginalised travellers or Druids laying claim to the place and perceiving it as a 'living' space, a meeting-place, a ritual centre.

Stonehenge becomes 'our' national icon, exemplar of past glories, part of our national identity, part of our justification for remaining – against the odds – in the top league of world players. And yet, at the same time, and whilst being vigorously reworked as a commercial proposition, it exemplifies 'England's green and pleasant land', bulwark against the forces of modernity.

And the Role of the Archaeologists

The conservation and marketing lobby depend for their information and explanation of the past on the academic establishment – in the

case of Stonehenge, the archaeologists. Archaeologists justify their monopoly on information in terms of the scientific rigour of their discipline. They have the artefacts, the dating materials and methods, that permit the rigorous reconstruction of the past. In reality the archaeological excavations at Stonehenge throughout this century have been piecemeal, often slipshod, and, until recently, unpublished, and archaeologists still understand relatively little about the social and political conditions and the cultural perceptions of the people who built and used Stonehenge.¹⁵ Nonetheless, as the 'official' interpreters, archaeologists, by and large, repudiate the 'alternative' theories of the New Agers, and side with the conservationists in limiting access to the stones and preventing celebrations on the grounds of potential damage. Only one academic book – edited by Chippindale – has been published that presents the attitudes and aspirations of a wider range of people, and even then there is no attempt to suggest possible compromises (Chippindale et al. 1990). When the police dug a trench 15 feet long and 6 feet wide across the entrance to the Free Festival field the archaeologists failed to protest, just as they have never protested at the despoliation of the landscape to the north of Stonehenge by the Ministry of Defence firing ranges and tank runs.

Archaeologists attempt to eschew politics. One of the archaeologists on the Commission that repudiated the Free Festival, washed his hands of the predictable confrontation that would occur. 'It is most important,' he said, 'to draw the distinction between the defensible decisions as such and their executive consequences, largely in the hands of others' (Fowler 1990). To the travellers the archaeologists are the 'unconscious

15. Ascherson (1988) remarked on two current renditions of the transition from Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. The first draws a contrast between those whose power derives from communal ritual expressed in collective architectural enterprises, and a new breed of thrusting individuals whose richly equipped single inhumations show a contempt both for traditional aristocratic ritual and for collective values. In the alternative reading, the Old Neolithic establishment were 'conservatives laden with gold and divine knowledge, scheming to defend their influence against local rebels and sceptics – who, in turn, chafed to get rid of the old frauds and run things in a modern way with Beaker pottery and metal tools'. Yet another version turns Stonehenge into an 'astronomical laboratory' – Fred Hoyle, Astronomer Royal, even suggested that the astronomers were, perhaps, a genetically distinct group (Chippindale 1983: 264). As Hilary, Wes and Paul (p. 90) point out, present-day social configurations often seem to weigh rather heavily in our interpretations of the past.



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apologists for industrial civilisation', and the looters of graves (Thompson cited in Chippindale 1983: 248).¹⁶

Who Gets to Go?

For whom is the site preserved and the explanations offered? Mainly for the tourists who pay their money and are then corralled through the barriers and along the pathways roped off from the centre. Only those with academic credentials, or those in the advertising industry with enough money to pay for privileged access (Figure 23), cross the ropes and, under strict supervision, enter the stones. Those who do not have money, or are unwilling to pay, are kept out. By force, if necessary (Figure 24).

16. Sir Edmond Antrobus (who protested against the fencing of Stonehenge) grumbled in the House of Commons in 1874 that 'some of the ancient barrows, through having been first rifled by antiquarians, have been carted away and levelled by farmers. For himself, he believed it was the antiquarians who had done the most mischief in England' (cited in Murray 1989: 63). He wasn't far wrong: in the first decade of the nineteenth century William Cunnington and Sir Richard Colt Hoare 'ravaged' over three hundred barrows (Richards 1991: 33).



Figure 23 Consuming the stones

Bona fide tourists are the ones who have, since 1901, paid their entrance fee. In the 1920s there were 20,000 paying visitors; in 1955 184,000; in 1977 815,000; in 1982 530,000; in 1994 672,000. On a hot Summer's day in the peak year of 1977, 7000 people arrived in the course of a day and there were two thousand visitors in one hour. Nearly three-quarters come from overseas, and of those nearly half are from the United States. Only 18 per cent of the visitors thought Stonehenge was good value for money! (Golding 1989).

Tourism at Stonehenge as elsewhere, is an expression of the easefulness of long-distance communication and travel. 'Why', as Jencks put it, 'if one can afford to live in different ages and cultures, restrict oneself to the present, the local? Eclecticism is the natural evolution of a culture with choice' (cited in Harvey 1989: 87).

For many people 'sightseeing', as Bourdieu (1984) pointed out, is a form of symbolic capital: putting the emphasis on knowing where to go and what to see disguises both the surplus wealth required and the way in which symbolic capital translates into 'real' capital, increasing the 'value' of those who possess it. But 'sight-seeing' – connecting up with the past (multiple fragmented pasts), creating memories, reminiscing – is also part of the way in which people construct a sense of identity. And different sorts of tourists construct different sorts of identity (Urry 1990), and for some the significance of their experiences may well be 'deeper and be more complex than conventional studies and surveys of leisure and tourism . . . imply' (Clark et al. 1994). Those



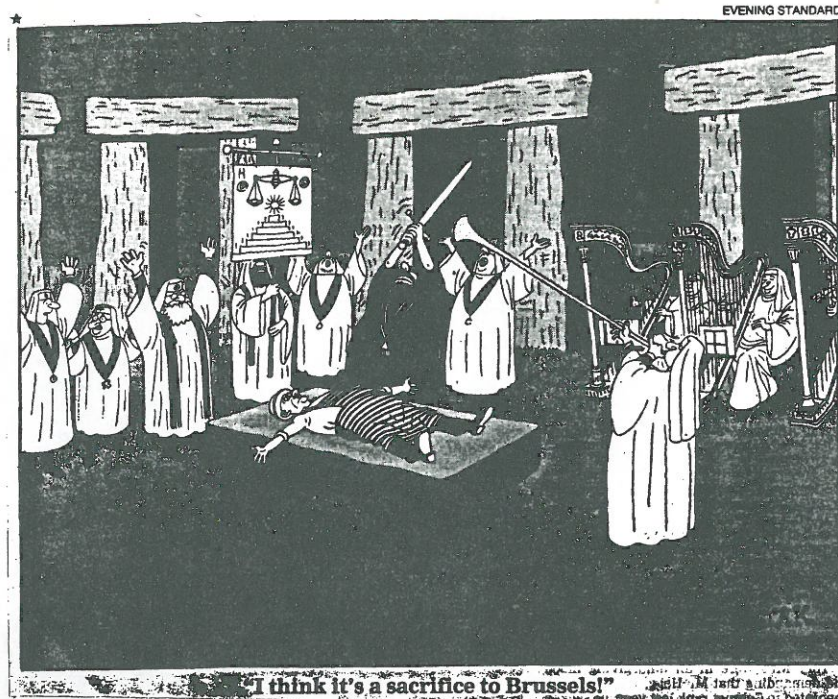
Figure 24 'Protecting' the stones
(photo Alan Lodge)



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who come by car, bicycle or on foot distinguish themselves from the 'mass' tourists who arrive by tour-bus with a 'dwell-time' of twenty-five minutes (more than half of which, it has been ascertained, is taken up with buying souvenirs, food and going to the toilets). They may prefer to see themselves as 'travellers' (hippy or high-class). Those who come by bus will have equally diverse agendas, and diverse perceptions of what they are doing and seeing. It is a mistake to assume that people are the passive recipients or dupes of the heritage industry. Just as Hall (1980) and others have shown with popular culture, so with heritage, people mould and reconstruct their experiences. As Warren (1993) puts it, 'Speaking the language of fantasy, [tourists] can remain sublimely outside conventional structures of logic and always just beyond the reach of the dominant hegemonic forces'. People's understandings of the places they visit are wound around with memories, resonances, and unpredictable connections. Reality, Lacan once suggested, is merely a prop on which we lean our dreams (as cited in Crang 1994). And in the 'epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed' (Foucault 1986: 22), the 'views' of the 'foot-loose' traveller/tourist will be impressionistic and comparative, and resonate curiously and variably with the heritage packaging of a deep-rooted and stable past.¹⁷

17. Urry suggests that with the increasing flows of capital and people across national borders, people may lose a sense of a coherent national culture. They by-pass the national to create a sense of local identity, whilst at the same time garnering a more global sense of the past through fragmented t.v. presentations and tourist forays (Urry, workshop, National Trust Centenary Conference, Manchester 1995).



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And Who Doesn't

So many different interest groups, so many different understandings of the Stonehenge landscapes. Finally we have the 'alternative' landscapes of both the eccentric but respectable Druids – people who often hold down perfectly good jobs but reject orthodox religion – and the travellers and free festivalers, who are often more sweeping in their rejection of Establishment orthodoxies.

The Druids take their cue from Stukeley. The ancient Order of Druids was founded in 1781, as part of the Romantic movement, happy to pick up where Stukeley had left off. A splinter group, the United Order of Druids, was founded in 1833. The Druids worship at the Summer Solstice but they only started coming to Stonehenge in 1905. Up to the 1970s the Druids were tolerated by the Establishment. They were 'exotic', and quite good for the tourist trade (Figure 25).

The unacceptable 'wierdos' are the New Age travellers and myriad other groupings (hippies, punks, bikers, musicians, clowns, jugglers, peace activists, Hell's Angels, Quakers, Hare Krishna devotees) who held their Free Festival in the field next to Stonehenge for a decade, from



Figure 25 Druidic celebration at Stonehenge
(photo Alan Lodge)

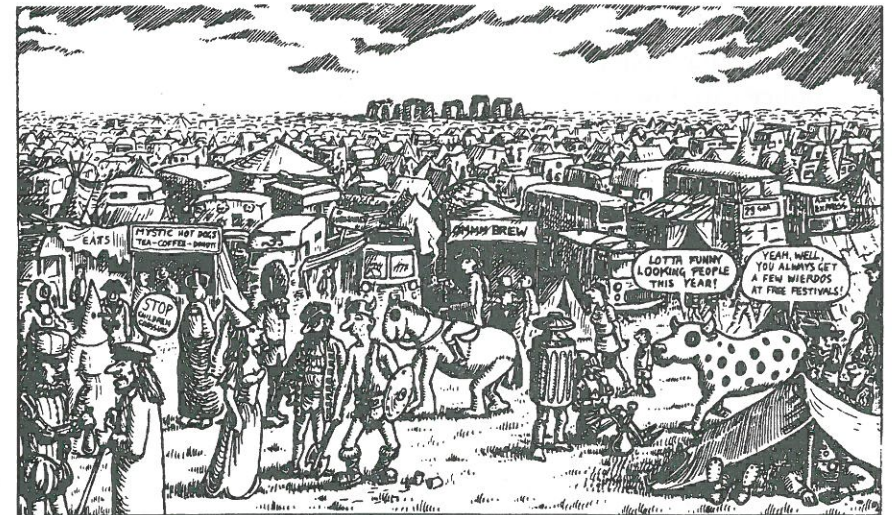
the mid-1970s, culminating in the 1984 Festival which attracted over 50,000 people (Rosenberger 1991) (Figure 26). For many of them, Stonehenge is (was) an important meeting-place, a place for spiritual and other sorts of celebrations, weddings, exchanges, part of a seasonal circuit of summer festivals, winter park-ups on commons or derelict urban sites. Many of them, like the Druids, believe that there are psychic forces at Stonehenge – energy fields, leylines – or that it is a temple for the worship of the sun and the moon, for the renewal of seasons.¹⁸ One free festivaler said:

It's the main part of the earth energy system . . . It's like a *chakra* on the earth's energy. You've got your acupuncture – the system of the human body with all the meridians and all the burial mounds marking them. Then you've got the *chakras* of the human body which are the bigger ones like Old Jerusalem, Mecca, Egypt, Easter Island and Stonehenge . . . (Willie X: pers. comm.)

For several years the authorities remained tolerant. After 1978 the stones were roped off, and standpipes, temporary lavatories and rubbish collection points were installed in the Festival field (Golding 1989). There was very little vandalism, and there was considerable self-policing. But by the early 1980s government and media had turned against the travellers' self-named Peace Convoy, fearing them as anarchists and connecting them with the politically unpopular Peace Camps at Greenham Common, Molesworth, and elsewhere.¹⁹ Despite the 1968 Caravan Sites Act which requires local authorities to provide sites for travellers, such places became fewer and fewer. In 1985 the National Trust and English Heritage took out an injunction and the police moved against them (Chippindale 1986). There were violent showdowns in 1985 and 1988.

18. On the other hand, the messages are not always so spiritual. In 1989 four great letters were graffitied onto the stone: L – I – V – E. They have been cleaned off, of course, but no doubt they will still be visible under X-ray. Were they a proclamation about the life-force, or a political credo, or – as rumoured – the unfinished logo of a certain football team?

19. V.S. Naipaul in *The Enigma of Arrival*, was not enthused by the travellers: 'not gypsies . . . but young city people, some of them criminals, who moved about Wiltshire and Somerset, in old cars and vans and caravans, looking for festivals, communities, camp sites . . . As a deterrent Mr Phillips had the round building wound about with barbed wire' (Naipaul 1987: 270).



FESTIVAL EYE SUMMER 1989

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Figure 26 Free Festival at Stonehenge
(photo Alan Lodge)

The police have spent over £5 million policing Stonehenge. The government have passed a Public Order Act and a Criminal Justice Act. The police can now arrest two or more people 'unlawfully proceeding in a given direction', and can create 'exclusion zones' to prevent confrontation. The antagonism towards the traveller is not surprising. At the end of the day England's landscape is a proprietorial palimpsest. The travellers own no land or houses, and pay no direct taxes.



"When two or more are gathered together you're in breach of the Public Order Act".



Conclusion

What I have tried to do is to chart, and to begin to explain, a multitude of voices and landscapes through time, mobilising different histories, differentially empowered, fragmented, but explicable within the historical particularity of British social and economic relations, and a larger global economy. Marxist theory is not in fashion, but, as Harvey notes, re-negotiated it still resonates to our condition: 'What Marx depicts . . . are social processes at work under capitalism conducive to individualism, alienation, ephemerality, innovation, creative destruction, speculative development – a shifting experience of space and time, as well as a crisis-ridden dynamic of social change' (Harvey 1989: 111). Does that not begin to engage with the confrontations – emotive, intellectual, and physical – that surround contemporary Stonehenge? Marx's 'social processes' were of course focused along class lines. They must be widened and cross-cut by gender, age, ethnicity and so on (Deutsche 1991; Gilroy 1987; Massey 1991). And, too, the power of rhetoric, and the lived materiality of our existence – of which the time-tunnel, tarmac pathways and the ropes are only small indicators – must be recognised and included as integral to these social processes.

If this chapter is, towards the end, somewhat polemic, that is because it was, in part, spawned in anger at the efforts of English Heritage and parts of the Establishment to promote a socially empty view of the past in line with modern conservative sensibilities. I hope that it begins to justify the study of landscape, not as an aesthetic, not as grist for the First Class Intercity poster, but as something political, dynamic, and contested.



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