

# Concluding Remarks and Recollections

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WE HAVE PARTICIPATED TODAY in a remarkable tribute to Grahame Clark's significant pioneering role in economic, social, and intellectual archaeology. His own opinion on the British archaeology of his formative years during the 1930s was that though it 'was long on fact it was miserably short on thought and narrow in perspective' (Clark 1989, 52). His energetic efforts to transform the state of archaeology were recognized by many honours during his lifetime, including two Festschriften. Appropriately, the first of these was offered by the Prehistoric Society in 1971, while some 38 former pupils produced essays in his praise in 1976. The breadth of today's papers again recognizes his pioneering global achievements, and Grahame would have appreciated this occasion when his colleagues gathered to honour him.

Yet in his typically blunt manner, Grahame also may have queried the slate of chosen speakers. Readers of his 1989 account of *Prehistory at Cambridge and Beyond* could reasonably infer that in his opinion no real archaeology was practised beyond the imperium of the Cambridge Disneyland. So today's organizers may have had to do some explaining as to why six of today's chorus of 15 evidently have no direct Cambridge association! Upon reflection, however, he would have approved their selection, as demonstrating Cambridge intellectual influences on scholars in the regions of Beyond.

Clark's profound influence in so many areas has been illuminated—virtual father of the Mesolithic and of economic prehistory, innovator in methodology and data interpretation, synthesizer of world prehistory, a prophet of Unesco cultural ideas before that body existed, and in later years, champion of individual human artistic creativity in all ages and societies.

My brief was to offer some concluding observations upon the day's presentations. Unfamiliarity with this wealth of varied data and interpretation made me opt for a personal approach, for Grahame Clark has been a major influence upon my career across almost half a century. Indeed the Clark's, Grahame and Desmond, both advised me

extensively on microlithic artefacts in 1959, after I excavated geometric microliths in South Australia.

My debt to Grahame Clark is profound, as it was also for the late Charles McBurney, who described himself in Clark's *Festschrift* as 'your oldest pupil' (though Desmond Clark might claim the same privilege). In this personal vein, three anecdotes involving Grahame reveal something of his forthright, self-centred, and essentially British imperial world view. Yet, as I go on to signify, he combined these often irritating features with traits which rendered his character more complex and easier to appreciate.

Upon my arrival as a Clare undergraduate, in 1951, I was instructed to report to Clark in Downing Street to discuss supervision arrangements. I proudly carried a copy of my 50,000 word First Class Honours Melbourne Master's History thesis, a library-based evaluation of the archaeological evidence for the economy of late Iron Age and Roman Britain. As 'The Belgae and British Economic History' criticized assumptions and explanations of current eminent persons, I looked forward to meeting my hero. For I had chosen Cambridge largely because of the deep intellectual stimulation provided from reading the spate of Clark's articles on economic prehistory. I was left in no doubt that it was pointless for him to look at such superficial work undertaken far overseas; and he never did.

Two years later I made my farewells to the, by then, Disney Professor. He mortified me by remarking that, although I was awarded only a II.1 degree, this was adequate enough because I was only returning to Australia. A decade on, Grahame accepted my report on excavations at Kenniff Cave, Queensland, for the *PPS*. Noting that my series of C14 dates showed stratigraphic disagreement between those produced by the National Physical Laboratory and the ANU Laboratory on the one hand, and Tokyo's Gakashuin Laboratory on the other, he proposed deleting the Japanese chronology as likely to be the result of inferior science. He eventually accepted my demand to publish, warts and all.

Despite such negative rebuffs, my relations with Grahame remained positive. Before I left Cambridge, he had already found me a position in New Zealand, unsolicited by myself. To his somewhat pained surprise I declined the offer, so Jack Golson was designated Cambridge begetter of Antipodean archaeology.

It was Grahame who invited me to attempt a synthesis of Australian prehistory, under the title 'The Stone Age of Australia'. Published in *PPS* 1961, that transfer of the European 'Age' mode to Australia would have been an unlikely title acceptable to either of us even a decade later. For by 1964, when Grahame first visited Australia, we both had experienced 'living archaeology'. Grahame's 1965 volume of *PPS* included my lengthy Kenniff report. Given the dearth of Australian publication sources in those times, this largesse was deeply appreciated. Today, when Australian and Pacific archaeology features frequently in *Antiquity*, such comment may seem unnecessary. It was different over three decades ago, and Grahame Clark was the first British archaeologist to recognize this overseas need. Near the end of his life, he cited Australian discoveries as the most dramatic global illustration of the role of radiocarbon and the physics of prehistory (Clark 1994, 124).

Clark discovered New Zealand and Australian prehistory during his 1964 tour, possi-

bly the first of several journeys of discovery in which he encountered the past of other continents. His subsequent writing testifies to the influence of these worlds beyond Europe. It was evident to all involved in arranging an Australian itinerary for this austere scholar, always fascinated by and fixated upon the evidence in the latest fresh encounter, that Grahame was not a solitary visitor. It is appropriate here to pay tribute to his longtime intellectual partner, Mollie Clark, whose role sustained his scholarly career. Mollie combined throughout secretarial and public relations duties watchful of Grahame's needs as a loving and thoughtful minder. Grahame's dedication of his innovative and insightful book, *Archaeology and Society* (1939)—'to my wife'—was indeed a meaningful one; and Grahame was fully aware of his combined debt and good fortune.

Charles McBurney (Sieveking *et al.* 1976, xii) remarked of his 1935 experiences as a student in Downing Street, that from Clark, then commencing his lectureship, 'we began to hear . . . of new and exciting developments quite outside the scope of the classic textbooks of the day'. I felt a comparable sense of immediacy and excitement listening to both Clark and McBurney from 1951. Classes in Grahame's office were unusually cramped, because the Star Carr finds lay everywhere. Students had best be interested in that site, for Grahame thought and spoke of little else. But what a privilege to sit amongst the finds of one of the greatest prehistoric excavations of this century! When I returned briefly in 1961, Grahame's current fixation was with Neolithic bows. Significantly, in the 1970s his concerns lay with issues beyond Britain. Yet, at the mundane level of personal transport, hazards remained constant features in Grahame's changing intellectual world. Whereas in 1951 we students sped to a Roman site at Cardington at alarming speed in Grahame's Mercedes, a quarter of a century later, as Grahame's guests at Aldeburgh, Jean and I experienced perilous yachting adventures with him at the helm.

My compatriot, Gordon Childe, has been examined in numerous books and articles, chiefly appreciative, correctly crediting him with a significance in the front rank of twentieth-century archaeology; some rank his importance above all others. I venture the prediction that, as time perspectives lengthen, Clark's multipurpose role will be judged pivotal in prehistoric studies, ahead of Childe's cultural synthesis.

Childe was a hero of a left-wing intellectual generation which anticipated the triumph of the common people and universal justice. Contemporaneously, many students found Clark's freely expressed political opinions to be nationalistic, stridently and unfashionably right-wing. I suggest that such emotions influence judgements upon the relative merits of these outstanding scholars, so that changes in Clark's thinking over time have not been sufficiently credited. Even during Childe's lifetime two mutual relationships merit thought. First of all, it was Clark whom Childe chose to be his literary executor. Back in 1946, also, when Childe and Benjamin Farrington edited the Past and Present series for Cobbett Press, Clark wrote *From Savagery to Civilisation* for that leftist series. Even the title was borrowed from Lewis Henry Morgan, a luminary in the pantheon of Marxism.

Politics aside, Grahame Clark's intellectual journey merits the same detailed attention as Childe received. I note, for example, that when Lewis Binford and associates pioneered

the American New Archaeology, they approvingly cited Clark and Childe for their emphasis upon process. In that challenging 1968 Binfordian text *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, authors cited *Star Carr* (Clark, 1954), *Prehistoric Europe: the Economic Basis* (Clark, 1952), and five of Clark's articles stretching back to 1948. Most other British archaeologists were listed only for their claimed logical or theoretical errors. At the same time, Grahame Clark made his case clearly, but without the jargon which was the badge of the New Archaeology. As I observed in 1975 (Mulvaney 1975, 13) his *Star Carr* makes sense today, even though he never referred in those terms to locational analysis, processual archaeology, systems analysis, or even models or paradigms!

Any future assessment of Clark's contribution should include his developing internationalist philosophy. Despite his political conservatism, he anticipated objectives of the future United Nations in his forthright assertion that, in 1943, 'to the peoples of the world generally, the peoples who willy nilly must in future cooperate and build or fall out and destroy, I venture to think that Palaeolithic man has more meaning than the Greeks' (Clark 1943, 118).

Such iconoclasm probably was dismissed at the time as outrageous by a Eurocentric profession, yet his 1959 Presidential Address to the Prehistoric Society cannot be taken so lightly. He drew attention to the reality that almost one-fifth of the Society lived overseas, and he urged a more inclusive approach to publication policy. (By that date he had already solicited my Australian survey for *PPS*.) It is important to emphasize Clark's editorial role in encouraging young researchers and soliciting contributions. A full bibliography of his publications and editorial activities is overdue.

Clark continued with sentiments which have resonance in today's divided world. His Presidential Address (Clark 1959, 13) recognized that 'men nurtured in their own distinctive and parochial manners, beliefs, art conventions, and histories, and situated at the most diverse levels of economic and cultural development . . . cannot long survive without a common sentiment and allegiance more positive than the fear of mutual destruction'.

It was to those peoples without conventional written history that he turned his attention, urging the recovery of 'the common past of humanity'. Since that lecture, and partly through Clark's encouragement and publication space, the emerging nations of the Pacific region, including Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu have found their insular cultural identities, chronologies, and cultural interconnections as a basis for their individual nationhood, largely through the research of prehistorians.

Grahame's latest writings voiced his concern with the reverse situation which has arisen following the uncovering and definition of the past of such unique cultures. Those individual components of humanity he feared, are today in danger of losing their cultural uniqueness and identity. He used the term 'homogenization'.

Grahame Clark's intellectual journey and priorities from flints, through economic prehistory and distribution maps to the human mind, merit detailed evaluation. Never one to concern himself with political correctness, he sturdily asserted his philosophy in 1979 (Clark 1979, 20): 'If our common aim is to enhance our lives our guiding light must surely

be quality rather than quantity, hierarchy rather than equality, and diversity rather than homogeneity. By the same token, we should not be afraid to count archaeology as a human study.'

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These personal reflections attempt to assess Clark's academic role and influence by adopting a 'warts and all' approach. The importance of visits to New Zealand and Australia in redirecting Clark's intellectual interests is emphasized.