Reign of the Beast

The Atheist World of W. D. Saull and his Museum of Evolution

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Cover illustration: A spoof of the "Devil's Chaplain", the Rev. Robert Taylor (left, on the podium). His patron, the atheist Richard Carlile, is seen on the right, landing a punch. The wine merchant W. D. Saull funded both men and grounded his evolutionary talks in their dissident sciences. Such pastiches reinforced the prejudices of pious readers, by depicting the moral rot caused by irreligion. The wall posters on the left advertize contraception manuals and licentious memoirs, and a lecture by "Miss Sharples", Carlile's common-law "wife". Taylor's character is being impugned by portraying the mayhem caused by his infidel oratory. Beyond the brawling and debauchery, thieves are shown in the audience (bottom right) and a dagger-wielding agitator (centre). In reality, Taylor's congregations were respectable and attentive.
Etching, in the author's possession, entitled "The Triumph of Free Discussion" (the motto of Carlile's Fleet Street shop selling subversive prints). The caption reads, "A Sketch taken in the Westminster Cock Pit on Wednesday the 24th. of September 1834. Subject A Lecture by the Revd R. Taylor, A.B.M.R.C.S. 'On the importance of Character'."
Cover design by Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

23. Reforming Scientific Society

> Mr. Saull then alluded generally to the interest he had always taken in progress, religious, social, political, and scientific. He was a member of many learned societies, and he continued his connection with them in order to embrace every legitimate opportunity of advancing the principles he had at heart. He was now advanced in years, but his interest in the 'good old cause' was undiminished...
>
> Saull's talk reported in 1854, the year before his death.[1]

With the collapse of Owenism, and given his growing interest in our ancestral 'aborigines', Saull could now be found increasingly inside the antiquarian societies. The reforming of the old, corrupt Antiquaries (see below), and the rise of the Numismatic and Archaeological Societies, testified to the proliferation of artefacts as London was excavated to create the imperial city. Still more did it reflect the bourgeois influx in an industrializing age. Noisy reformers were joining, representing new trading and Dissenting interests, men who formed a liberal group of wealthy specialists. These new fellows were not "professionals", examined and accredited, certified as "experts", to be employed for their knowledge. They had yet to be split into 'professional' and 'amateur' status. But they were dedicated careerists. Even so, for them it was still a side line, and they were gainfully employed elsewhere, those who were not leisured "gentlemen": Saull was a wine merchant, Roach Smith a chemist, Edward Spencer a solicitor, and so on. The clergy's role was declining, although the Society of Antiquaries remained the vicars' club of choice.

The Owenite congresses having ceased, Saull effectively switched to the annual British Archaeological Association jamborees. He could be found at the Winchester Archaeological Congress in August 1845

1 *Reasoner* 16 (5 Feb. 1854) Supplement, 97–98.

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talking on the development of the Saxon walls of Southampton.[2] As he slid across, his stock rose. At the third Association Congress in Gloucester (1846), he was one of the Secretaries. Here he exhibited Roman tiles, stamped with marks of the sixth and ninth legions,[3] and he elaborated on remarks made in *Notitia* about early British villages on the moors near Sealing, in Yorkshire. That intellectual weekly, the *Literary Gazette*, which gave over huge space to learned society meetings, and now faithfully reported the Archaeological Association's congresses, positively purred over Saull. The Sealing speech sent the *Gazette* back to his *Notitia*, which "displays the zeal and research by which the writer has made himself so competent to handle this difficult inquiry". Saull was an "entertaining guide" to the "dark and distant questions involved in the gradual development of rude and savage men, primarily through Roman intercourse, into the beings of high intellect and refined civilization with which our island is now peopled." The rehabilitation must have been sweet.[4]

The talks give us a flavour of what must have been in the lower gallery of Saull's emporium: artefacts straddling the "Ancient British" and Roman divide, which, given its Owenite ambiance of progression and perfection, could be expected to be displayed to maximum effect. Again, at the November 1846 meeting of the Archaeological Association, Saull exhibited a late Roman urn, coin, and comb, all found in Godmanchester, while he also described the earlier earthworks in the area.[5] By 1847, he was fully engaged with these societies. In this, one of his most productive antiquarian years, he: (1) discussed in depth the Roman roads at Dunstable, and the ancient British and Roman

2 *JBAA* 1 (Jan. 1846): 361; *John Bull*, 9 Aug. 1845; *Atlas*, 9 Aug. 1845, 502. The subject matter, not reported in these, *was* relayed in French journals: *Cahiers D'Instructions* (1846): 55; *Revue Archaeologique* (1845): 387. The *Revue Britannique* 5th ser., tome 27 (1845), 454, spoke of the "professor's" rich London museum.

3 *JBAA* 2 (Oct. 1846): 281.

4 *Literary Gazette* 1547 (Sept. 1846): 792; also 1539 (July 1846): 648, on the remains of an ancient British village on the moor near Sealing, Yorkshire; *GM* 26 (Oct. 1846): 407–12; *JBAA* 2 (Jan. 1847): 389–90. Saull discussed Scottish vitrified forts at this meeting. He dated them a little before the Roman period and suggested the locals used wood and kelp to 'vitrify' the walls, melting the material between the stones to fuse them together: *Literary Gazette* 1539 (July 1846): 649. On vitrified forts featuring in debates over Celtic pyrotechnical knowledge and the moral elevation of their designers: Ksiazkiewicz 2015.

5 *JBAA* 2 (Jan. 1847): 360; *Literary Gazette* 1560 (Dec. 1846): 1053.

settlements found alongside them;[6] (2) defended his progressionist thesis by disputing that barrows were sepulchral rather than hut-based living spaces;[7] and (3) talked on Roman mill-stones, important because corn-grinding was an innovation introduced into conquered Britain.[8]

When it came to the creaking Society of Antiquaries, Saull adopted a familiar ideological stance. Its meaning would have been obvious to anyone who knew him: the anti-clerical campaigner who attacked traditional mythologies encased in custom and law. Every socialist knew that there was no greater disrupter than geology—that deep-time disturber of revered chronologies. Ancient saurians and ruined worlds were dragging Victorians out of their parochial time frame. For some it was liberating, others cried in despair. Those "dreadful Hammers!", Ruskin wrote in 1851, "I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses".[9] Saull believed that primeval archaeology now had the same devastating potential. When a speaker at the Society in 1847 argued "the necessity of collecting local legends" in order to preserve the "mythology of our forefathers at a very remote period of their history", Saull protested and "wished more attention were paid to facts, which he considered were of greater importance than traditions."[10] Saull was promoting the object of secular Finsbury among the crusty Antiquaries.

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6 *GM* 27 (Oct. 1847): 406; *Literary Gazette* 1571 (Feb. 1847): 174. In April he also announced the discovery, on the site of Roman Olenacum in Old Carlisle, of an altar stone inscribed to the goddess Bellona (the first such found in Britain) by the prefect of the local cavalry: *JBAA* 3 (Apr. 1847): 42; *Times*, 12 Apr. 1847; *GM* 27 (Oct. 1847): 594; *Literary Gazette* 1578 (Apr. 1847): 301. Roman roads and the British settlements alongside them were now stock subjects for Saull: when Archaeological Association members visited St Albans (the Roman Verulamium) in the autumn, he gave a talk on the London to St Albans Roman road (*Literary Gazette* 1602 [Oct. 1847]: 707).

7 On this point discussion now turned on a "primeval monument" with fifty stone-sided 'residences' at Ashbury, Berkshire, called "Wayland Smith's Cave", largely thought to have been a burial site, but which Saull stated (against opposition) was for the living, not the dead: *Literary Gazette* 1572 (Mar. 1847): 196; 1573 (Mar. 1847): 217, 221; *GM* 27 (Oct. 1847): 407; *Critic* 5 (Apr. 1847): 296. He was responding to the Numismatic Society founder John Yonge Akerman (*Archaeologia* 32 [1847]: 312–14), who thought the monument sepulchral. Akerman was a respected numismatist with a radical history to rival Saull's, having started out as Cobbett's secretary and Thomas Wakley's assistant (Sprigge 1897, 229).

8 *Literary Gazette* 1587 (June 1847): 447.

9 Quoted by D. R. Dean 1981, 123.

10 *Literary Gazette* 1573 (Mar. 1847): 217.

All of this explains why the museum threw "light upon the domestic habits and manners of the Romans".[11] Saull, at the growing heart of a modern empire, was looking at cultural imperialism in a positive light, as a helping hand of Owenite outreach. He was detailing the mechanism whereby a similar hand had been extended to benighted Britons in the dim past. Although, needless to say, to the travel guides the downstairs exhibits often looked a jumble. For example, John Timbs in his *Curiosities of London*:

> The *Antiquities*, principally excavated in the metropolis, consist of early British vases, Roman lamps and urns, amphorae, and dishes, tiles, bricks, and pavements, and fragments of Samian ware; also, a few Egyptian antiquities; and a cabinet of Greek, Roman, and early British coins ... Every article bears a descriptive label; and the localisation of the antiquities, some of which were dug up almost on the spot, renders these relics so many medals of our metropolitan civilisation.[12]

It seems that a mere fraction of Saull's Roman ware passed to the British Museum in the shambolic situation after his death: only a couple of fragments of bowl and part of a mortarium with its spout were worthy of note.[13] These surviving artefacts are therefore of little help in understanding the wealth of his exhibits. Also, some items exhibited by Saull at the societies—a sculptured thirteenth-century female head, or remnants of a Roman lamp found in Bishopsgate[14]—evidently belonged to provincial collectors, so we do not know whether they actually featured in Aldersgate Street.

The museum was evidently rich in coins, presumably dated sequentially through the Roman occupation. But while Saull diligently took part in the management of the Numismatic Society—as scrutineer from the late 1830s, auditor from the early 1840s, and Council member in 1844 and 1851–55—he did little else beyond chair meetings and exhibit

11 A. Booth 1839, 15.
12 Timbs 1855, 542.
13 Walters 1908, 324, 372, 435. The British Museum also purchased a seventeenth-century earthenware vessel, called Metropolitan slip-decorated ware—a coarse quality, red-clay vessel with the inscription "feare g[od]"—found in Princes Street (Hobson 1903, 109).
14 *PSA* 1 (1849): 222; *JBAA* 9 (Apr. 1853): 75.

the odd coin.[15] It is easy to imagine that his primeval-to-pastoral theory simply found no scope for play here. But the crossover between coin collecting and political propagandism was visible in 1847. When a well-wisher donated some *ancient* coins to the *Reasoner*'s thousand-shilling fund (a float to keep the serial solvent), Saull put them to good use. He added others from his own collection so that "a little historical series may be made up". The set was to be sold, and the "purchaser afforded the means of using them in the study of ancient history," with the profits ploughed back into Holyoake's flagship journal.[16]

A Learned Joke

Of all the learned bodies, it was the ancient Society of Antiquaries that attracted Saull's reformist attention. Founded in 1707, it remained unreformed by the 1840s and was widely derided for its dilettantism. Saull was in some ways typical of the new influx: trading, lower middle-class, self-educated, using its forum for social leverage.[17] Complaints about the "apathy and inactivity" of officials dogged the Society. A coalition of earthier reformers screamed about a "negligent" Council and its disregard for the conservation of finds in an age exploding with railway and sewerage diggings. As civic institutions reformed and democratized, it remained a rotten borough run by a Tory clique. An embarrassed *Literary Gazette* in 1846 called it "a laughing-stock".[18]

A storm tide of reform was sweeping over intellectual society. At the courtly Zoological Society, grubby and disenfranchised working zoologists were demanding a greater electoral role. Noble trustees at the British Museum were ignominiously subjected to a Select Committee probing their competence. And even the Royal Society was starting to move from an absolute to constitutional monarchy.[19]

15 Significantly, a silver medal of the executed king, Charles I, displayed while his fellow activist Dr John Lee was in the Chair: *Proceedings of the Numismatic Society* (1851–52): 20; *Numismatic Chronicle* 15 (Apr. 1852): 104–05.

16 *UR*, 15 Sept. 1847, 83.

17 DeCoursey 1997, 137, 158. There remained a residual prejudice against the "trade" taint. Roach Smith's own fellowship was resisted on this count (Hobley 1975, 329; Hingley 2007, 175).

18 *Literary Gazette* 1527 (Apr. 1846): 381.

19 Macleod 1983; McQuat 2001, 12; Desmond 1985a, 1989, 145–51.

These structural reforms reflected the wider political changes. In the 1830s, Parliament extended the franchise and granted rights to non-Anglicans, and municipal seats in the industrial regions were increasingly snatched by candidates (often Unitarians) with Dissenting backing. At the same time, London's learned bodies were invaded by Dissenting, mercantile, and professional groups making their own liberal demands. Medical reformers often led the way or, rather, the lobby representing the new class of General Practitioners. These GPs were educated in back-street anatomy schools and tended the poorer communities; for this they were derided by the hospital consultants as a "low-born, cell-bred, selfish, servile crew".[20] Just as Cobbett's *Political Register* had blasted "Old Corruption"—the traditional privileges of the aristocratic elite—so its medical mirror, Thomas Wakley's *Lancet*, led the GPs to attack the College of Surgeons' "self-perpetuating, tyrannical council".[21] The GP's campaign for rank-and-file rights partly paid off in 1843 when the College of Surgeons was rechartered. Councillors were no longer to hold seats for life or be self-electing. A new body of 300 Fellows, including some GP leaders, now had had the power to vote councillors on and off. Something similar occurred at the College of Physicians. Here, an oligarchic Council controlled London's lucrative hospital posts. The *Lancet* excoriated the College for its commitment to "the bigoted, Tory-engendering, law-established Church"—because it only admitted Fellows who had Oxford or Cambridge degrees, that is, wealthy Anglicans.[22] Under pressure, the Physicians too started reforming in the 1840s, finally admitting Dissenters to the Fellowship. Ultimately, the "medical aristocracy" had compromised just enough to defuse the situation—as Parliament had done. But there had been no concession to an "England revolutionized", or the universal suffrage demanded by the "democratic brawlers." With the Conservative Prime Minister Robert Peel in power in the 1840s, "moderate, practical" reforms had met the minimum liberal needs.[23]

20 A play on Pope's line: *Medico-Chirurgical Review* 17 (1 Oct. 1832): 574.
21 *Lancet*, 25 Sept. 1830, 4. On the reforms: Waddington 1984, ch. 3; Desmond 1989, chs. 4, 6; Underhill 1993.
22 *Lancet*, 19 May 1832, 219; J. F. Clarke 1874, 7; G. N. Clark 1964–72, 2: 702–12.
23 *London Medical Gazette* 29 (15 Oct. 1841): 117–20.

This was more or less the template for learned London. Squire-run societies were purged of their worst practices. By the time Saull's reformers were agitating against the bad management at the Society of Antiquaries, its unaccountability, corruption, and disdain for research, the Royal Society's own *ancien régime* attitudes were already changing. The Royal Society, that one-time "club for peers and dilettantes",[24] made its own compromises in 1847. In 1848, the President, the Marquess of Northampton, ten years in place, resigned, as did the Secretary (P. M. Roget, later of *Thesaurus* fame, twenty-one years in office and a time-server hated by the radicals). But with the Society still swamped by unproductive peers,[25] bad feelings continued to exist, as shown by *Punch*'s joke advert for a successor:

> Wanted, a nobleman who will undertake to dispense once a month, upon rather a liberal scale, tea, lemonade, and biscuits, for a large assembly. The company is select, and he will be allowed to mix with some of the greatest men in England.—Sealed tenders ... to be sent in to the Royal Society, marked "President." No scientific or literary man need apply.[26]

However, the fight to usurp control from aloof patricians, whose allegiances were to the land and the old order, and to steer policy towards more meritocratic and scientific ends, gained strength. The leaders, charged with Toryism, cronyism, and bad management, were constitutionally restrained. Rule by patronage was watered down as a more scientifically-qualified Council was formed. Committees were set up to vet papers for publication and recommend candidates for medals. Now a seat on the Council was to be the reward for active researchers and publishers. The result, in Roy MacLeod's words, was that "loyalties to Crown and Church were replaced by new contractual allegiances", and the Society would emerge with a new "image of philosophical integrity, public utility, open competition, and efficient administration".[27]

The campaign to get specialists into office at the aristocratically top-heavy Zoological Society were more chaotic. This is not surprising given that Sir Humphry Davy in the 1820s had originally envisaged

24 Berman 1975, 35.
25 Moxham and Fyfe 2022, 260, 272, point out that the noblemen had published nothing, while most had only a passing interest in science and joined out of duty.
26 *Punch* 14 (18 Mar. 1848), 111.
27 MacLeod 1983, 57–58.

the Zoological Gardens as a nobleman's game park. Here, ornamental fowl and exotic imports were to be bred to tempt a gentleman's palate. It appealed to the hunting-and-fishing squires, who were unrivalled in game management—they eagerly stocked the new zoo with llamas, kangaroos, and emus from their estates. The Gardens were set in the delightful promenading Regent's Park, putting it some distance, both in geography and ideology, from the Society's museum in Leicester Square. This was the largest zoology museum in England, with 460 feet of space, housing hundreds of mammals, thousands of birds, and tens of thousands of insects. Here the zoologists would study imperial imports, dissect the exotic cadavers, hold scientific meetings, and start a publishing programme. Lectures in the museum could be radical, including some on the way species changed, a science that was abhorrent to the noble managers. These zoologists, with their merchant, military, and East India Company contacts, had very different priorities. They criticized Council autocracy and its "raree"-show superficiality. This pro-science lobby got the gentry's game-breeding farm in Kingston closed down. The museum men argued that imports should be of scientific value. They wanted snails and snakes and the oddities of the moment, like the duck-billed platypus, not the tasty, or the plumed beauties that the fowling gentry had in mind.[28] But while these Fellows found their voice, they were never allowed to introduce a fiercer democracy. Even after a decade of demands only one concession was made to the reformers: the Vice-Presidents became electable. But the President, Treasurer, and Secretary placed themselves above the democratic fray. They still steered events, backing a Tory clique which got the fiercer critics voted off the Council in the turbulent 1835 elections. Back-bench grumblings persisted through 1836 when officials were caught giving Lord Stanley the zoo's ostriches as a gift. But a resolution by frustrated reformers about the Council's "irresponsible powers" was pointless.[29] By now Peelite Tories were firmly in control and the disappointed radicals started dropping out.

Amid this reforming ferment, that convivial gentleman's club, the Society of Antiquaries, top heavy with title and adornment, was itself hit by waves of dissent. The active members here, too, ran motions of

28 Desmond 1985a, 223–50; Åkerberg 2001, 84–89; Wheeler 1997.
29 Desmond 1985a, 200–11.

no confidence in the complacent and often absent management. The society had fallen "into a state of inefficiency and decline", according to the irate members' resolution in 1846. That was a polite way of putting it: the *Literary Gazette*, echoing the complaints of Roach Smith, Saull, and the medical practitioner Thomas Pettigrew, called it laughable. The *Gazette* listed the litany of managerial abuses, including the officers' use of funds for their own ends. Useless and absent officials told of a time-serving decrepitude. A decline in fellowships and finances said the same. It was a textbook gerontocracy: the treasurer had been in place twenty-five years. The grave Earl of Aberdeen had been President since 1812, and had long lost his interest in "Ancient rubbish". By 1846, he had absented himself from the previous sixty-six meetings. His absenteeism was understandable, given that he had held a Cabinet seat in every Tory administration since Wellington's government of 1828. Like so many aristocrats, he had assumed this figurehead position in the Society as part of his public "duty". He was still the Foreign Secretary in 1846 when he was finally, ignominiously, forced to resign his Antiquaries chair in the face of the clamour for an "efficient president", one who would see the post as an honour and attend its affairs.[30]

The incoming Vice Presidents included Samuel Wilberforce, the new Lord Bishop of Oxford. Though an energetic diocesan reformer and a paternalist who hated the evils of industrial society, he was a High Tory, and opposed to liberalism in all its forms, whether in church or science. He was just acquiring the soubriquet "Soapy Sam", a nickname the Darwinians would later hang on him with a vengeance. Another incoming Vice President was Sir Robert Inglis, a staunch, old fashioned High Tory who had a traditional view of the way society should be ordered, from the top down. He passionately defended Anglican privileges, resulting in Wakley slating him as a "sleek, oily, capon-lined man of God".[31] The hatred was mutual. The diehard Inglis led a rearguard action against Dissenting demands: he had resisted Parliamentary Reform, Catholic emancipation, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Church reform, and the Dissenters' call for the civil registration of marriages (until then a Church monopoly), denouncing it as the greatest attempt

30 *Literary Gazette* 1527 (Apr. 1846): 381; *PSA* 1 (1849): 129; "Ancient": Hingley 2007, 179.
31 *Lancet*, 27 Feb. 1841, 803.

to "to secularize the sacraments" since the Civil War.[32] Such patricians running the Antiquaries were hardly seen as improvements.

Inglis came with a reactionary track record. He had already fought to resist a leadership role for expertise at the British Museum. Here the Trustees were noblemen led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who felt that wealth and rank qualified them to hold the nation's heritage in trust. Museums, for them, were to display ornaments and store treasures, not necessarily advance knowledge.[33] Titled officers could solicit patronage, being on 'hail fellow, well met' terms with government ministers, in a way impossible for the menial 'expert'. Just as at the Antiquaries, breeding was seen as a better qualification than researching. Against this closed world of hereditary privilege and Church sinecures, reformist groups of specialists, academics, medical radicals, and Dissenting teachers with their industrial backers were arguing for expertise on the Board, claiming that it was in the national interest. They were offering a counter-vision of a mobile, competitive, scientific society. In the 1835 Select Committee hearings on the British Museum, they argued that their lordships had neither the inclination nor competence to promote such goals.[34] But Inglis, representing the Trustees, refused to admit scientific "commoners". Such experts would be accountable to the new professional classes. They would bow, not to rank and wealth, but to talent and competition, and hold a meritocratic brief inimical to the hereditary principle. Inglis defended the track record of the Anglican Trustees, and their competence to run the national institution. He recognized that paid specialists with a meritocratic agenda posed a direct threat to Church-and-Crown authority. One fossilist (with a museum rivalling Saull's), J. S. Bowerbank, had the temerity to suggest that the British Museum should hire paid collectors, experts in evaluation, who could barter for exhibits. Such a "trading" taint was obnoxious to their lordships, who claimed it would degrade the museum.[35] The upshot

32 *Hansard* 1836, 32: 162; 1836, 34: 491; Hilton 2006, 382, 390, 431–32.
33 Gunther 1980, 75; Desmond 1989, 145.
34 *Hansard* 1836, 31: 308–12; *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum*, 1835, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 22, 27, 29, 30–31.
35 *Report from the Select Committee on British Museum*, 1836, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, vi–vii, 73, 78–79, 118, 130–33; Gunther 1978, 84–85, 94–99; Desmond 1989, 145–51.

was that the landed interest quashed all idea of a 'specialist' board and left the stewardship safely in ennobled hands.

Inglis's taking a leading role at the Society of Antiquaries did not bode well for the reformers. Talk of the "great Rebellion", as Inglis slated the Civil War during the hearings, explains another radical exasperation. Among traditionalists, remembrance of the Civil War's most horrifying atrocity was still observed. In the loyalist calendar, 30 January was marked in black as the anniversary of Charles I's beheading. In bygone years, Tories would indulge their "superstitious veneration" by draping their rooms in black and fasting.[36] An anniversary sermon would be preached in Westminster Abbey, where the attendance waxed and waned according to the reactionary or reformist clamour of the age.[37] Fasting to expiate the country's sin was intended to keep alive a "sense of national guilt". It also initially served to vilify radicalism by pointing to its murderous consequences, but, increasingly, the regicide was being interpreted not as a political act but one of aberration in order to obscure its real cause.[38] At the royalist Antiquaries, the "Anniversary of the Martyrdom" was marked yearly by a ban on meetings. But bans, fasts, and prayers on 30 January remained a trigger for political opposition.

When the Tories suspended the Antiquaries on 30 January 1845, in observance of "the Fast of the death of King Charles I",[39] the radicals reacted angrily. Had not the republican Saull once reminded the reigning monarch of Charles's fate, outraging the *Times*?[40] To Saull, it was not martyrdom, it was royally deserved. He was far from averse to anniversary celebrations; ironically Tom Paine's birthday was a day earlier, 29 January, and Saull happily celebrated that, just as he did the French Revolution.[41] But he baulked at these loyalist observances. Another angry at this cancellation was Dr John Lee. He was a well-to-do 'advanced liberal', whose "weaknesses were very harmless", said the *Gentleman's Magazine* dismissively: teetotalism, women's suffrage,

36 Lord John Russell 1853, 3–4.
37 Emsley 2014, 54.
38 Vallance 2016.
39 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* 1 (1849): 70, 75–76.
40 *TS*, 25 Dec. 1834, 2; 26 Dec. 1834, 2; 1 Jan. 1835, 4; *MC*, 25 Dec. 1834; *Times*, 25 Dec. 1834, 2; 26 Dec. 1834, 2.
41 *UR*, 27 Jan. 1847, 18; *Reasoner* 2 (3 Feb. 1847): 60; *NS*, 6 Feb. 1847. As Epstein (1994, 152) says, radical anniversaries were counter-statements to these loyalist observances.

anti-smoking. Like Saull's, his principled stands were written off as eccentricities to reduce their import. Indeed, Lee's tea-drinking "Peace, Temperance, and Universal Brotherhood Festivals" on his grounds had all the hallmarks of Owenite festivals and were equally put down to his "peculiar views". Lee sat with Saull in every society—Astronomical, Geological, Archaeological, Chronological, and Numismatic—and now worked with him in the Antiquaries. He was another museum owner and fossilist, one whose catalogues survive, four volumes of them, covering the gamut, from Eastern antiquities to stuffed animals. (From these we get a glimpse of Saull's place in the exchange network. At least fourteen of Saull's fossils, duplicates possibly—from *Iguanodon* vertebrae to pecten shells, shale ferns to sponges—turn up in Lee's collection.[42]) It was Lee who introduced the Antiquaries motion that no 30 January suspension should take place again. There was nothing in the bye-laws to warrant it. The motion was backed by Saull but to what avail in a royalist stronghold is not known.[43]

The patrician council had run the Society of Antiquaries as their fiefdom. The managers were a self-electing "clique". Worst, for some reformers, was the Director, Albert Way. He was Wilberforce's friend—their families were close and they had been educated together.[44] Way upheld the gentlemanly proprieties and had himself just married into the peerage, wedding Lord Stanley of Alderney's daughter. While Way would be a future archaeologist of note, he was, in Pettigrew's words, resistant to change and so "unpopular among the active members" that it was "desirable to get rid of him".[45] But caution is needed in taking Pettigrew's statements at face value. He could only have been a fair-weather friend for republicans Saull and Lee, because Pettigrew juggled the need for royal patronage with that of sound management.

42 Delair 1985. *GM* ns 1 (Apr. 1866): 592–93; "peculiar": *JBAA* 23 (1867): 301. Lee was the leading light and first President of the new Numismatic Society, a breakaway from the Antiquaries for specialist ends. On exchange networks and the redistribution of specimens (in another context), see Cornish and Driver 2020; and Heumann, MacKinney, and Buschmann 2022 on the changing concept of "duplicates".

43 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* 1 (1849): 75–76.

44 As a Cambridge student, Way had befriended Charles Darwin and introduced him to the beetle collecting fad: Burkhardt et al. 1: 58–59, 91; Ashwell 1880–83, 1: 4–6.

45 *Literary Gazette* 1578 (Apr. 1847): 301; also 1572 (Mar. 1847): 196; 1527 (Apr. 1846): 381–82.

He had been surgeon to the Duke of Sussex (the King's brother) and the bibliographer of His Royal Highness's library at Kensington Palace. Pettigrew had also been the Duke's campaign manager for the Royal Society Presidency in 1830 (in opposition to the doyen of physics, John Herschel, part of the "prouder aristocracy of science"[46]), which gained Pettigrew enemies. But he believed that royal "rank would place [the Duke] beyond the operation of any jealousies."[47] Having no problem with royal office, Pettigrew proved himself very unlike Saull. A prickly nature and personal animosities (Pettigrew clearly hated Way) added cross-currents to this politicking. Fair weather ally or not, Pettigrew's relentless debunking in his new book *On Superstitions* (1844) would have been applauded by Saull.[48] Its onslaught on miraculous medical cures, whether from talismans or by tapping the divine through saintly shrine, sat comfortably with Saull's attack on superstition.

Anyway, Pettigrew slated Albert Way as dictatorial, and as contemptuous of those with real "archaeological learning", as shown in Way's mocking of Roach Smith as "this *Liver-puddle Roach*!"[49] Way diplomatically resigned in 1846. The Antiquaries membership continued to plummet, the quality of the papers dropped so as to become a "discredit" to the society, and publications began to run late. Any respect for it was draining away. Not mincing its words, the *Literary Gazette* in 1847 called it "so long a useless (and even worse than useless) body". It did, however, add that it "appears to be on the eve of a revolution for the better".[50] Reforms were expected.

But the Antiquaries were not to be rushed into a "revolution". They did start limiting terms and rotating officers (something demanded but not yet achieved at the Royal Society[51]), so that incumbents could no longer

46 Babbage 1832, 381.
47 Pettigrew 1840, 26–27.
48 Pettigrew 1844. As would Pettigrew's exposure of the "horrible" treatment in workhouses of waifs and strays, whom he found malnourished and "rickety", and he publicly complained to Lord John Russell about it (Rosenblatt 1918, 49). A surviving letter shows that Saull was discussing Roman roads with Pettigrew: W. D. Saull to T. J. Pettigrew, 9 Aug. 1852, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
49 *Literary Gazette* 1527 (Apr. 1846): 381.
50 *Literary Gazette* 1578 (Apr. 1847): 301.
51 MacLeod 1983, 72. Reformers had demanded a triennial Presidency at the Royal Society, as radicals had demanded triennial parliaments in the country to increase responsiveness.

become entrenched for a quarter of a century. Yet, many noblemen still thought themselves qualified for posts by a pedigree that itself stretched back to the Middle Ages. In 1847, Pettigrew and Saull managed to carry a vote (by a sliver) to send back the new President Lord Mahon's list of nominees for election "for re-consideration", requesting he add those "most active" in the field to the list. But ancestry still bested activity in a Councillor's qualifications.[52]

These minimal compromises, as at the other societies, stopped well short of radical demands. In 1852, Pettigrew, Lee, Saull, and Roach Smith were *still* complaining about the "bad management", meaning the failure to save the antiquities thrown up by London's reconstruction boom and the railway excavations, many of which were destroyed. The middle-class press supported the reformers, echoing grumbles about the Society still being "very ill-managed".[53] And, while the Royal Society in 1847 had (under duress) restricted the number of yearly fellowship entrants and made their admission tougher, to increase exclusivity and raise its scientific prestige, the Antiquaries in 1852 took the opposite tack. To battle the draining membership, the Council halved admission fees. Reformers by now could see the Royal's stock rising again, and argued that the Antiquaries' laxity would tarnish "the character and respectability" of the society. It would open the floodgates rather than restrict the body to dedicated specialists.[54] Pettigrew, Lee, and Saull tried to stall the move but were outvoted. One might have imagined that the radical Saull, who earlier campaigned to have institutions opened up, would have favoured fee reductions. But no, more and more the antiquarian specialist, the Owenite too was now placing meritocracy over democracy.

A Corner of England Revolutionized

> In the mapping of progress, images of "archaic" time ... were systematically evoked to identify what was historically new about industrial modernity.

52 *PSA* 1 (1849): 189. They also started a museum, belatedly.

53 *London Weekly Paper and Organ of the Middle Classes*, 5 June 1852, 59. *Conserving* these antiquities was the *sine qua non* of the breakaway British Archaeological Association: *JBAA* 1 (1846), ii.

54 *PSA* 2 (1853): 258. There followed a spike in fellowship figures in 1852–55, before numbers fell again. MacLeod 1983, 72–74.

> The middle class Victorian fixation, with origins, with genesis narratives, with archaeology, skulls, skeletons and fossils—the imperial bric-a-brac of the archaic—was replete with the fetishistic compulsion to collect and exhibit that shaped the *musee imaginaire* of middle class empiricism. The museum—as the modern fetish-house of the archaic—became the exemplary institution for embodying the Victorian narrative of progress.[55]

Saull never totally deserted the Society of Antiquaries. He would continue to talk there on his favourite themes: the progression from British to Roman settlements in Dunstable, the ancient track-ways which became Roman roads; and on ancient Cornish hill-forts betraying the presence of Mediterranean tin traders. And he acted as a conduit for visitors, for instance, introducing the Middle East explorer Major Charles Ker Macdonald's exhibits from Arabia, Palestine, and Egypt, and later passing on translations of runic inscriptions found on a sculptured slab in St Paul's Churchyard.[56]

But his real home now was a new organization, a splinter society forged partly in response to the Antiquaries' intransigence. This was the British Archaeological Association, founded in 1844 by Roach Smith and others with a sympathetic Saull in tow. Its research and preservation agenda made it congenial to the museum owner. Meetings here were more lively, many of them held in Pettigrew's house. Expertise was to be valued and rewarded, even if Antiquaries stalwarts pooh-poohed the upstart Association with its 'specialists' as a fad, a product of "mere fashion".[57] But what totally appealed to Saull was its revolutionary governance. Even the constitutional monarch had been deposed and a democracy established. The President, Vice-Presidents, and the officers were all subject to *annual* election, and every guinea-subscribing 'Associate' had a vote by ballot.[58] If not England revolutionized, then certainly this corner of archaeology had been. It was everything the Tory press feared: "annual elections, annual canvassings, annual ballotings,

55 McClintock 1995, 40.

56 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* 1 (1849): 177, 235; 2 (1853): 91–92, 285, 289; *GM* 39 (Feb. 1853): 186–87. On this runic inscription see also *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 5 (1853): 351–54. He did present his *Essay on the Connexion Between Astronomical and Geological Phenomena* to the Society in 1853, and the same year he invited members to join him in examining the Castle of Berkhampstead: *PSA* 3 (1856): 42, 99. It showed that ties did remain with the Society.

57 *London Weekly Paper And Organ of the Middle Classes*, 5 June 1852, 59.

58 *JBAA* 2 (1847): 110.

and universal suffrage"—a "monstrous scheme for the right government of a peaceable and scientific profession"![59] Saull was right at home.

The preservation agenda was a priority for Saull and Roach Smith. Of all the influx into the societies, it was seemingly these hands-on men of trade who valued Britain's material heritage most. They were the ones at the forefront of London's salvage archaeology.[60] Preservation was a time-consuming and occasionally soul-destroying job. The odds were often against the survival of fragile objects, given the state of preservational techniques. For instance, by the time Roach Smith and Saull were alerted to an ancient galley raised from the bed of the River Itchen and had applied to the Mayor of Southampton to conserve it, the boat had already crumbled away, leaving nothing but a keel and few timbers.[61] With the Antiquaries uninterested in preservation, and no civic help, and given "the apathy of the government", in contrast to France's mission to preserve "national antiquities", it was often Saull and Roach Smith who had to set up voluntary funding schemes to help protect monuments.[62]

At the fortnightly British Archaeological Association meetings Saull could be seen discussing familiar themes: the City's Roman wall, ancient barrows, and the state of River Thames when aboriginals fished its banks.[63] It was the same at its yearly Congresses, where his talks tracked the social stages through the archaeological strata. At Worcester (1848), he discussed a Roman camp at Malvern; at Manchester (1850), his talk was slated to be on Celtic Cornish antiquities and war chariots (which he doubted that ancient Britons used); and, at Newark (1852), he spoke on the Roman road from Winchester to Old Sarum, and the ancient Celtic earth-works next to it.[64] All were fitted neatly into his over-arching picture of civilizational progression, signals of the stages of "archaic" time to point up London's commercial modernity.

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59 As the *London Medical Gazette* (29 [15 Oct. 1841]: 119) said of similar institutional demands in the medical colleges.

60 Levine 1986, 13; Hobley 1975.

61 *JBAA* 4 (1849): 382–83.

62 C. R. Smith 1854, 3: Appendix "Antiquarian Excavations on the Site of the Roman Station at Lymne, in Kent".

63 *Literary Gazette* 1622 (Feb. 1848): 138; 1631 (Apr. 1848): 281; *JBAA* 9 (1854): 75.

64 *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 24 Aug. 1848; *Literary Gazette* 1754 (Aug. 1850): 639; 1758 (Sept. 1850): 710; *GM* 33 (Apr. 1850): 415; 38 (Oct. 1852): 404; *Morning Post*, 26 Aug. 1850, 1; *Times*, 23 Aug. 1852, 8; *JBAA* 8 (1853): 263.

Ancient and Modern Aborigines

Saull's historic phases of social development, pinned to archaeological sites rather than archaic superstitions, might have been expected to appeal to the new Ethnological Society of London. Particularly so, because its founder, the Quaker physician philanthropist and driving force behind the Aborigines' Protection Society, Thomas Hodgkin, had argued specifically in an inaugural address for a study of tumuli.

Hodgkin's Christian understanding of tumuli was very different from Saull's. Hodgkin envisaged a traditional biblical timeframe, which made these earth works the earliest visible remains of Britain's Adamic line. For him, all human types were descended from Adam and Eve, or, more recently, from Noah's descendants.[65] This, as Hodgkin argued, put the onus on ethnologists to focus on the adaptations of these descendants to their local regions—that is, to take, like Saull, an environmental approach to divergence and difference.[66] The two men, despite their religious disparity, were converging in practice. For Hodgkin, the tumuli's creators could not have been very distinct from "present families". Again, like Saull, he saw Britain's "barbarous inhabitants" as similar to today's "uncivilised races". And, as part of his programme to prove the biblical unity of mankind, he suggested that archaeology should look more like ethnology: it should specialize by following the gradations back, say, from Romanized Britons to uncivilized Celts.[67] This was a biblical mirror to Saull's programme, with its rise from "rude" aborigine to civilized Romano-Briton.

In truth, Saull joined the Ethnological Society late, possibly because he had no sympathy with the Christianizing aspect of Quaker philanthropy. But he did round up his aboriginal work here with a paper on 15 March 1848, "Observations on the Aboriginal Tribes of Britain".[68] And yet, despite seeming an obvious placing, the paper was actually ill-suited.

The Ethnologicals were an outgrowth in 1843 of the evangelical Aborigines' Protection Society. This had sought to protect native

65 Kenny 2007, 370; Driver 2001, 45.
66 Stocking 1971, 373.
67 Hodgkin 1848, 36–39.
68 *Morning Post*, 13 Mar. 1848, 6.

peoples under Victoria's care, and with protection went a desire to promote "the advancement of uncivilised tribes", which meant saving by Christianizing and civilizing.[69] Even the growing racial warrior, Robert Knox saw it as a case of the wolf taking care of the sheep.[70] A prim evangelicalism and high moral tone invited *Punch*'s cynical claim in 1844 that for these society types "distance is essential to love". Unlike Saull, who had spent his life campaigning in courts and dives for jailed dissidents, the poor, and workhouse indigents, "They have no taste for the destitution of the alley ... but how they glow ... at the misery somewhere in Africa".[71] The offshoot Ethnological Society stood even more distant. It had a harder-edged scientific approach and a smaller share of humanitarianism. As society's xenophobia grew, there was less interest in civilizing savages and more in separating them into ranks. From the Christian heights of Victorian London, the Ethnologicals would use imperial collation from military, merchant, and missionary sources to point up "the distinguishing characteristics" of the human varieties.[72]

Predictably, these well-to-do fellows showed no sympathy for investigating their own ignominious 'aboriginal' roots. And Hodgkin himself had no truck with the idea of "Autochthoni", or aboriginals created in the regions where they are found, truly 'indigenous' peoples, because, to him, they were all Noah's descendants. So Saull's defining his "'Aborigines' [as the] first inhabitants of this or indeed of any other country"[73] might have looked *prima facie* anti-Adamic, even without knowing his monkey-ancestry motive or Bible-exploding timeframe.

Not that it mattered, for the Ethnologicals carried out none of Hodgkin's 'archaeological' plan. They spent their time distinguishing modern ethnic groups, while looking for common linguistic features to trace language separation back to the Tower of Babel. And, by placing emphasis on "national characteristics and cultural groupings", they only

69 Driver 2001, 76; Stocking 1971, 369–72; Laidlaw 2007, 138–41; Brantlinger 2003, 3, 35–36, 71; Rainger 1980, 709–10; Kass and Kass 1988, 268–69.
70 Knox's "Lectures on the Races of Men" in *Medical Times*, 8 July 1848, 147.
71 *Punch* 6 (18 May 1844), 240.
72 Kass and Kass 1988, 394–95; Stocking 1987, 243; Rainger 1980, 710–13; Lorimer 1978, 134ff.
73 Saull 1845, 1; Hodgkin 1848, 30; Kass and Kass 1988, 268, 395.

served to strengthen the growing racial awareness of the age.[74] In reality, the *Journal of the Ethnological Society* published no historical papers in its early years. Saull's aboriginal piece in 1848 was itself excluded from the *Journal*, because it was archaeological in fact and historical in scope. And that was irrespective of any ideological stigma, for his aborigine work was driven by an 'evolutionary' and materialist heuristic rather than a Christian Adamic one.

Those who pushed the human story further back received an equally muted reception. The Abbeville antiquarian Boucher de Perthes's discoveries of worked flint, bone knives, and arrows near fossils of mammoths and rhinos led him to propose that ancient humans had lived alongside these extinct giants, indeed that they were butchering them. But when he said as much in the first volume of his *Antiquités Celtiques et Antédiluviennes* (1847), it was dismissed by French geologists as fanciful. It has often been stated that his work made as little impression in Britain.[75] However, he did send his book to Saull's British Archaeological Association in 1849, along with some flint weapons, and their journal reviewed it favourably.[76] They pointed out that these knives and arrow heads were identical to ones found in Celtic tumuli, adding weight to his story. Some geologists at least were also receptive, Mantell particularly, and if he was, undoubtedly Saull was too.[77] It may be significant that Boucher de Perthes was shortly to visit Saull's museum to look over his own Celtic axes.[78]

Given the apathy among the Ethnologicals, Saull had to privately print his rejected sixteen-page aboriginal paper in 1848.[79] It took his bold scheme to its definitive point. Saull now presented a developmental sequence of housing and tooling broken into five theoretical periods, all

74 Kenny 2007, 370; Lorimer 1978, 135; Rainger 1980, 703.
75 Stocking 1987, 71; Gamble and Moutsiou 2011, 46; Grayson 1983, 122–31, 172; J. Evans 1949.
76 *JBAA* 5 (1850): 166, 171–72.
77 Mantell 1850. Saull provided John Evans a testimonial for the Society of Antiquaries (MacGregor 2008, 36), from which we might assume that Evans also visited the museum and saw its fossils and flints. Evans went on to study tool use among early humans, contemporaries of the extinct megafauna. His arms-trade links and understanding of gun-flint knapping lead him to become the first, experimental, stone-tool flint knapper (Bulstrode 2016).
78 He visited on 18 September 1851: Perthes 1864.
79 Saull 1848.

pre-Roman. The first was typified by the nomadic or "rude" 'huts' found on the Yorkshire moors and near Whitby and Dunstable. It comprised simple dwellings which were mere depressions in the earth, eight feet round or oblong, with turfed lips which presumably supported branches for walls, and a gap for a door. Evidence of charring inside showed where fires had been. The next, or more "improved" phase, saw uncut stone edges to the depressions and nearby tumuli for interment. Flint knives and hatchets made an appearance. The great stone cromlechs were of this sort, constructed for shelter, not as temples by the Druids. The third period, illustrated by the tumuli of Yorkshire and Wiltshire, was characterized by a new missile technology, arrow heads and spear points, while advances in "civilization" were evident in cist entombing of the dead in foetal positions in barrows, or by cremation, with the burnt human remains placed in unbaked clay urns. Later came the fourth, "pastoral" or settled stage, when wild cattle were corralled in hilltop forts, often of many acres, locally called "Caesar's camps", especially on the Downs of the South East. Finer utensils were now used, including sewing pins carved from antlers; and boar or deer skulls were sometimes placed with the dead.[80] The last period was marked by the arrival of the "Teutons" (the Teutonic, or, as it was already being called in Denmark, the "Iron Age").[81] It began some centuries before the Roman conquest, and, in Saull's, view signalled trade with the more advanced Gauls and Belgae from the Continent. From them, Britons adopted armour and tin and copper coins, sometimes showing crude horse images. Larger hill camps were developed, often near the coast, at Folkestone, Winchester, and Dorchester, where the tumuli contained great ornamented urns as well as cooking utensils and personal adornments.

Saull's diffusionist progression, which saw more advanced tribes sweep in by turn to raise the national stock, moved broadly from Celt to Teuton. This was also the standard progressive sequence portrayed by racial phrenologists. But their transition was conceived differently. For phrenologists, largely fixed mental characters limited the capabilities of the 'lower' races. The Celtic savage, being far beneath the Teuton in capability, was destined to stagnate or die because of his organic

80 While the phases were not necessarily criticised by archaeologists, the sites attributed to them sometimes later were, for example, Walford 1883, 2: 494.

81 Rowley-Conwy 2007; Stocking 1987, 72–73.

inferiority.[82] By contrast, Saull saw each invasion offer new scope for improvement to the indigenous tribes. It altered the cultural landscape and encouraged growth. He never doubted the disparity, just as there was between the unschooled wage-slaves and Classics-educated gentry of his own day. But he seems to have envisaged the incursions in a singularly Owenite way, in de-militarized, educational terms. It was more "rational" to see foreigners arriving to trade or mine tin; "in time" they would have "engaged and instructed some of the native inhabitants to assist them", thus passing on esoteric lore and skills and raising them to the same level.[83] Such were also the benefits of the Roman invasion. Saull then completed the sequence in 1851, at the Ipswich meeting of the BAAS, by looking to the final phase, the arrival of the Saxons.[84]

Saull had turned Davy's dream into an archaeological scheme, substantiated by site evidence. But it would be a generation before Darwin's neighbour, the banker and anthropologist Sir John Lubbock, and his father-in-law, the Grenadier Guard and weapons expert Augustus Lane Fox, made this sort of "artefact-based 'philosophy of progress'" acceptable—slotting tools and settlements into chronological sequence—with 'stone age' aboriginal Tasmanians being considered the surviving relicts of the oldest period.[85]

However flat Saull's paper fell among the Ethnologicals,[86] the hinterland was another matter. The *Cornwall Royal Gazette* quoted sections with provincial pride, those concerning the first Mediterranean

82 Combe 1839, 269–91. On the role of the "Teuton" in growing racial typology, see Horsman 1976, 398–405.

83 *Cornwall Royal Gazette*, 14 July 1848.

84 *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 3 (1854): 51. He also read a paper at the Ethnological Society on 17 March 1852 on Saxon ethnology (*Morning Post*, 15 Mar. 1852, 5), which was refereed by Hodgkin (information courtesy of Mrs Beverley Emery at the Royal Archaeological Institute). Saull was on the Ethnological's Council from 1850 until his death, but this was the only paper he submitted during this time. Saull would also argue his chronological sequence of pre-Roman culture at the 1854 BAAS meeting in Liverpool, when discussing Celtic worked flints (*Athenaeum*, 1406 (7 Oct. 1854): 1211: I thank Mick Cooper for first alerting me to this source). By this time (1853–54), Saull was on the Committee of the BAAS's newly established Ethnology and Geography section (*Daily News*, 9 Sept. 1853, 5); *GM* 42 (Dec. 1854): 602; *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* 4 (1856): 138.

85 Gamble and Moutsiou 2011, 201; Barton 2022.

86 It was widely ignored even in friendly circles. *The Reasoner* 5 (14 June 1848): 44, merely noted its title.

tin and lead miners in the region, traders who had pushed Cornwall ahead of the rest of the country.[87] But the moral of a "superior race of people" pulling the natives up had still greater impact further afield—at the farthest transportable reaches of empire.

Reports of Saull's "interesting" talk were picked up by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Australia was a dumping ground for penal rejects: mostly poor workers, some convicted of trivial offences. Interest was inevitable here, as the colonists and ticket-of-leave men encroached on the local 'aborigines'. Widely considered "blood–thirsty savages", these indigenous peoples were anything but, said the explorer and magistrate in Murray District, Edward Eyre. He had lived among them for years, and found them only "shy, alarmed, and suspicious" on first contact. While even Eyre talked of the "many brutalising habits that pollute [the aboriginal's] character", the natives still had, in his Anglo-centric view, "an aptness for acquiring instruction" and "the capacity for appreciating the rational enjoyments of life."

This potential squared with Saull's understanding of his aboriginal Britons. To Eyre they were the "poor untutored children of impulse" who needed a hand up. In the racial ranking images of the day, these "children" were placed at the base of the human scale, a "little above the ... brute creation", in Eyre's words.[88] The nomadic Australian was perceived from on high as a throwback, a relict from the infancy of human existence, and the survivor of Saull's first civilizational stage. That aboriginals should have persisted here was not thought so strange by those in the northern hemisphere. Here the Anglo-Saxon was believed to have shot ahead in terms of art, science, and manners, a view reinforced by a faith in the northern superiority of all life-forms.[89]

Jaws of 'marsupials' had been exhumed from Jurassic rocks in Oxford, and had been matched to the newly-discovered Australian numbat.[90] In Britain these ancient marsupials had been replaced by 'higher' placentals.

87 *Cornwall Royal Gazette*, 14 July 1848.

88 Eyre 1845, 2: 148, 155–56. This 'childhood' image would become entrenched at the Anthropological Society of London (founded 1863), where C. S. Wake stacked the races by analogy with human growth stages, "infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood"—Australians on the bottom, their development arrested at an infantile stage, up to the 'adult' Europeans (*Journal of the Anthropological Society* 6 (1868) 168; Lorimer 1978, 148).

89 Nelson 1978, 299; Desmond 1982, 103.

90 Desmond 1989, 314.

In the same way, the stone-wielding 'savage' of Saull's phase 1 had been raised in grade by the Celts, Teutons, Romans, and Saxons to become modern mercantile man. Just as there was a contemporary emigration south to Australia (whose population trebled in the 1850s), so in Jurassic times the marsupial colonists had arrived at the palaeontological penal-colony, where they were cut off and stagnated. The same had happened to Saull's stone-using peoples. Waves of progress in the mother country had obliterated this primeval state, but the original primitives making it to the Antipodean backwaters had retained their "rude" condition.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, the only daily in Australia, was intrigued enough by Saull's speech on Britain's own aboriginal origin to run an 1100-word précis. It exemplified the five stages of civilization, and listed the towns in the mother country where the barrow or tumuli evidence was found.[91] Saull, never a prophet in his own land, was having to look to the penal colonies to gain a hearing.

Skulls

Aboriginal relics, British and imperial, were now finding their place in the museum's lower room. This 'mankind gallery' was filling up, and with the exhibits bearing descriptive labels, and most coming from under Londoners' feet, they were seen as so many relics on the way-stage of "our metropolitan civilisation".[92] Just as provincial and colonial museums privileged local finds, each curator having to "cut his coat according to his cloth",[93] so did Saull, with his metropolitan display running from London Clay crocodiles to an aboriginal skull from Cheapside. Ethnological specimens now merged with antiquities, and, as always, without Saull's voice, it was difficult for many to see the order. The Chartist *Northern Star* got behind the scenes and showed a different side from the genteel tourist guides. It painted a ramshackle picture of typical imperial booty—including a severed head, noted without a hint of surprise or horror, as if to confirm the chasm separating 'it' from

91 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Oct. 1848, p. 3.
92 Timbs 1855, 542. That the museum was now well known is indicated by *Sharpe's London Magazine of Entertainment and Instruction* 6 (Jan. 1855): 267.
93 Sheets-Pyenson 1988, 122.

'us'—the lot emphasizing the archaicness of foreign cultures, in time and space.[94] Saull's lower gallery displayed

> two and three pointed spears, made from fish bones, as used by the natives of the South Seas, New Zealand, &c., with a number of rude weapons, dresses, &c., said to be used and worn by the natives of the said clime. Here also may be seen the head of an Indian chief, tattoed, with the hair in its natural state, in an excellent state of preservation; also an Indian canoe and paddles, brought over by the late Captain Cook. Here are also a number of Roman Coins, Skulls, &c, found in the centre of this Great Metropolis, also pieces of fine Roman pavement, found in London, under Allhallows Church during its repairs, as lately as 1843.[95]

But these were never really of interest to Feargus O'Connor's "pestilent publication"[96], as we will see in the next chapter.

The Cheapside skull, found amid the remains of primitive hut-dwellings, with its 'savage' features showing a low moral character, provided Saull's baseline for the rise of mercantile man.[97] His archaic sequence, which would allow the London visitor to re-assess his historical place and future prospects, was now complete: the "connected" fossil series on one floor pointed up to the human archaeological stages on the other. In the racist phrenological parlance of the age, the ancient Londoners were equated with tattooed Maoris and Caribs, the stunted "children" of the living world. This completed the empirical series to show museum visitors how life had risen over unbiblical aeons.

Saull had begun this programme with his simian-hypothesis lectures to the Owenites. With radical euphoria during the Reform Bill optimism, he had promised better things to come, "human perfectibility, and the splendid prospects which are now opening to posterity".[98] His "synoptic series of phases of mental progress" had now established "the principle of the gradual but slow advances of mankind in intellect", thus proving that man was a "progressive being", whatever the current "impediments."[99] Belief in nature's perfectibility remained strong among the dispossessed in Saull's audience. Street poets caught the

94 McClintock 1995, 40.
95 *NS*, 31 Oct. 1846, 3.
96 *The Age*, 28 Aug. 1842, 4.
97 *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 46 (Feb. 1836): 270.
98 *Crisis* 3 (5 Oct. 1833): 36.
99 Saull 1845, 61.

optimistic Owenite flavour. Saull's hands-on arena inspired secular poems, glorying in a future predicated on the past, and revelling in this direct contact with evolutionary reality:

> Ye that would drink at learning's purest springs,
> Forget your books awhile, and study things;—
> See nature's volumes round you fair outspread,
> Cull'd from her library, too little read;—
> Each line from human pen may err or cheat,
> In her's alone, there cannot be deceit;
> The records of weak man, her youngest born,
> Which he calls truth divine, she laughs to scorn;—
> And points in triumph to each pictured page,
> Replete with monuments of countless age,
> That o'er this quick revolving earth had roll'd,
> Ere ought had come to light of human mould;
> Time was, she seems to say, when thou were not;
> Time will be,—when thy name shall be forgot.
> Though loftier minds, shall surely hold thy place,
> Brightening the features of a nobler race!—
> My bosom deathless,—teeming as tis vast,—
> Shews each new birth more glorious than the last.

These verses were penned in Aldersgate Street museum by an unknown bard, fired by the story Saull told of the fossils. They were equally inspiring at the graveside, as Saull recited them in his funeral eulogy of his old blasphemy partner Gale Jones.[100]

The museum's reach now extended far beyond radical poets. Students, tourists, and the learned elite joined the workers, making it one of the most visited private museums in the capital. With the acclaim, Saull's stock rose. Ten days after the last Owenite Congress ended in chaos, Saull left the old immoral world to join the new learned world.

At a grand meeting of all the scientific clans, gathered under the Lord Mayor's aegis in July 1846, Saull took his place. This once-in-a-lifetime congregation at the Egyptian Hall proclaimed not only the growing importance of science, engineering, and literature but of London as their hub. It shrieked of the city's world status. Here were the new men of literature, science, and art, a veritable Burke's Peerage of the intellectual nobility, cheered by the populace as they entered the

100 *NMW* 8 (12 Sept. 1840): 175; Saull 1838a.

hall. In strolled celebrity leaders of the learned societies and university professors, mingling with the great engineers, architects, military men and manufacturers, sculptors and artists, physicians and explorers, and a hundred others, everyone a 'somebody', with the press scrambling to name them all.

Never, said the *Standard*, had so many "individuals of high literary and scientific attainments" assembled under one roof. The *recherché* banquet was London's act of cultural self-assertion, and no one knew why it had not been done before. Real nobility be damned; here was Saull among the "prouder aristocracy" of intellect, as Charles Babbage had it.[101] Spotted by the hacks, Saull was name-checked as the "Proprietor of the Geological Museum in the City".[102] It left no doubt that the museum had raised his social profile in a way that wine wholesaling never could.

101 Babbage 1832, 381. Babbage was himself there.
102 *Standard*, 11 July 1846.