The anthropology of deep history

Clive Gamble University of Southampton

The history of anthropology reveals a discipline driven by fission and fusion. In this article I use the framework of deep history as an example of what might be achieved if anthropology resolved to travel the road of fusion rather than continue with atomization. I will illustrate the pathway by examining the fusion of interdisciplinary endeavour that is encapsulated in the concept of a social brain. By placing social life at the heart of the historical process we find common ground for all the fields of anthropology, and beyond to other disciplines. Here anthropologists have the opportunity to set the agenda. The social brain works in deep as well as shallow history. It unites experimental and historical science. And it marks a return to those core principles which Lubbock and the founders of our Institute established.

The number of those who feel an interest in our science is rapidly increasing; not only the philosophic interest, but the practical political importance of the questions with which we deal, is becoming more and more widely recognised.

Lubbock 1872: 381 (First Presidential Address to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland)

Compromise and fragmentation

Anthropology is a discipline forged from compromise. In order to combine its varied data – biological, linguistic, social, and material – to produce an understanding of what it is to be human, its practitioners have devised ways to accommodate alternatives. This approach has allowed us to incorporate the diverse opinions from the many fields which make up the discipline. But that compromise is only worth the effort if a holistic anthropology is both achievable and worthwhile. Outside judgements are not encouraging on this point. In December 2012 the journal Science reported that businesses in the USA ranked anthropology as the worst major for both employment prospects and starting pay (Gibbons 2012). A similar view was voiced by a special adviser to the British Secretary of State for Education’ with the claim that ‘a large amount of “social science” work (in economics, anthropology, sociology, literary theory, and so on) [is] of questionable value both from an intellectual perspective and from the perspective of the student’s job prospects’ (Cummings 2013: 78). While we can question the league tables

* Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute, 20 September 2013, marking the centenary of the death of our first President, Sir John Lubbock, Lord Avebury.
of *Forbes* and *Kiplinger* magazines and dismiss the departing thoughts of special advisers, they have thrown their mud and the perception sticks to our subject: why achieve something that is worth so little? We know that to be far from the case. We constantly demonstrate our impact in ways that would satisfy the ‘practical political importance’ of Sir John Lubbock’s first Presidential Address to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1872: for example, our Royal Anthropological Institute’s highly successful conference ‘Anthropology in the World’ held in 2012. But the powerful messages we heard there still need to reach policy-makers and opinion-shapers.

But should we be surprised? Ever since the founding of our Institute we have been measured against applied science and found wanting.

There is a practical quality of the English mind which prevents the people from ever taking a lively interest in ideas and studies, the present usefulness of which is doubtful ... I believe that it is to this cause, as much as to any other, that anthropology in England has not received that full measure of support from the public (A.H.L. Pitt-Rivers 1882: 508).

In this respect it does not help our cause that the four-field model of archaeology, biological, cultural, and linguistic anthropology resembles an overgrown battlefield. For many years, ruptures, misunderstandings, and profound theoretical differences have divided the subdisciplines in the US (Segal & Yanagisako 2005). In the UK the small nunataks of combined archaeology and anthropology degrees that used to stick out above the ice caps of disciplinary indifference are now largely covered over. The sense of compromise at the heart of all anthropological inquiry – that other perspectives have validity for learning about human variety – is under attack. The result is fragmentation.

An example of this self-imposed fracturing comes from disciplinary alignments in the current Research Excellence Framework, REF2014: a government-led assessment exercise which involves all academic departments in the UK. Reputation and income depend on the outcome. In 2008 the equivalent exercise was organized by individual subject panels. The latest iteration, which delivered its verdicts in 2014, required mergers to reduce bureaucracy. But rather than come together, two of the four fields went their separate ways. Archaeology readily combined with geography and environmental studies while anthropology linked up with development studies as a joint panel. The sense of lasting fragmentation hangs in the air.

There is nothing new here. Fragmentation has been prevalent throughout my academic career despite regular efforts, launched in the spirit of compromise, to bring the fields of anthropology together again (Buchli & Lucas 2001; Garrow & Yarrow 2010b; Shankland 2012; Spriggs 1977). Several unifying themes have been put forward: Gosden’s bodily identities, material culture, globalization, ethnicity, and postcolonialism (Gosden 1999); Alberti’s exploration of ontological issues (Alberti, Fowles, Holbraad, Marshall & Witmore, 2011; Alberti, Jones & Pollard 2013); Feuchtwang and Rowlands’ use of Mauss’s concept of civilization, historicities, and temporalities (Feuchtwang & Rowlands 2010); and several calls for an anthropology of ‘who’s past is it?’ (e.g. Hamilakis 2007; Herzfeld 2012). None the less, as Garrow and Yarrow (2010a: 2) observe, a disciplinary asymmetry in favour of social anthropology still pervades discussions around these themes. And as Gosden remarked, in his examination of the changing relationship between the three fields of anthropology and the one of archaeology: ‘[W]hen I started this book, I thought it was a hopeless task, but now I know I
was being optimistic’ (1999: 3). The task that defeated him was including biological anthropology and linguistics into his synthesis of diversity.

One way to move these debates on is to see the field of anthropology as an unfinished project, a continual work in progress of our extended mind (Gell 1998: chap. 9). The project I explore in this article is an anthropology of deep history. My case study is the British Academy Centenary Project, which illustrates common ground for a twenty-first-century discipline with a focus on the history of our social brains (Dunbar, Gamble & Gowlett 2010; 2014; Gamble, Gowlett & Dunbar 2011; 2014; Gowlett, Gamble & Dunbar 2012). But first some background.

**Charting the discipline**

In his Presidential Address of 1876 General Pitt–Rivers displayed his conviction in the evolutionary process, and his love of military metaphors, by informing Fellows that ‘the stern law of the survival of the fittest’ had made reconciliation between their Anthropological Institute and the rival Anthropological Society unnecessary, as the latter was now extinct: ‘Some of its members have joined our ranks, and others, I hope, will follow, not in a body, but in the ordinary course of admission as Fellows, and will, I doubt not, become useful members of our Society’ (A.H.L. Pitt-Rivers 1876: 487).

With this schism resolved it was time to define what anthropologists did. It was Pitt-Rivers also who, with customary clarity, first described in 1882 the four fields of anthropology as Physical Anthropology, Ethnology, Culture, and Archaeology (Hicks 2013: Figure 1). His map of the discipline formalized the organization of the Institute’s business as set out by earlier Presidents, and in particular George Busk (1875). These four fields predated by thirty years their ‘official’ birthday, which is attributed to a paper read by Boas (1904) in St Louis, and ever afterwards the British have been written out of this aspect of anthropological history.

How is this interest in the history of anthropology as fission-fusion reflected more widely? One way to track the development is through the on-line resource of the Google NGRAM viewer. A spin-off from open-access publishing, the NGRAM viewer allows broad trends in the usage of words and phrases to be charted. The NGRAM sample is huge: 5 million digitized books, representing 500 billion words, published between AD 1500 and 2000. Apparently the English lexicon grew from 600,000 words in 1950 to over 1 million by 2000 (Michel et al. 2011). The graphs present the frequency usage of the search terms on an annual basis. I will refer to this usage as ‘popularity’.

What can such a large database tell us about the fractured history of anthropology? We can start by looking at what we call ourselves using the search words ‘antiquary’, ‘archaeologist’, ‘anthropologist’, and ‘ethnologist’ (Fig. 1). ‘Antiquary’ has a long and, by NRGAM standards, popular history. The other three all begin in the 1840s and among them ‘archaeologist’ dominates for a long period. ‘Antiquary’, ‘archaeologist’, and ‘anthropologist’ converge during the First World War. Indeed the period between 1914 and 1936 emerges as the formative time in terms of what we call ourselves today. This is the moment when ‘anthropologist’ supplanted the older term ‘antiquary’ and when ‘anthropologist’ finally eclipsed ‘ethnologist’. A pivotal year in the changing asymmetry between ethnology and a burgeoning social anthropology was 1923. In setting out the methods of ethnology and social anthropology, Radcliffe-Brown (1958 [1923]) drew a distinction between conjectural history (ethnology) and social science (social anthropology). History was dumped as a concern of social anthropology (Feuchtwang & Rowlands 2010: 118), and this included archaeology.

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It is during the Second World War that ‘anthropologist’ becomes the more popular description. However, ‘anthropologist’ suffers a significant dip in the Reagan and Thatcher eras of the 1980s until it recovers under Clinton and Blair. By contrast the popularity of ‘archaeologist’ has remained steady since 1950. But all three components of a broader anthropology have not achieved the earlier popularity of the now lapsed name ‘antiquary’; a popularity that peaked in 1815 immediately after the Battle of Waterloo. This relationship between military campaigns, major wars, the rise and fall of empires, and the consequent popularity of the different components of anthropology needs more dedicated research than NGRAM can provide. None the less the trend since 1936 towards disciplinary fragmentation is at least suggestive, as instanced by the current configuration of REF panels and the current low scores in the business-driven league tables of Kiplinger and Forbes. I suggest that it is high time that we revisited the spirit of compromise to redress this sorry situation. If we remain fragmented, we invite decline. We need a sense of reinvention and renewal. In short we must regain the compromise that produced our discipline in the first place.

What’s in a name?
Names are important; in 2013 the French government’s proposal to change the title of its anthropological bachelor degrees from license en ethnologie-anthropologie to sciences sociales received an angry backlash. Names are also compromises, as George Stocking (1971: 383) reminded us in our centenary year, with the formation in 1871 of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (we became Royal in 1908). Here the issue was over the direction and definition of anthropology, subjects which have occupied us ever since. During some turbulent years, anthropology as a science went through a tortured dialectic of thesis-antithesis and synthesis. This started with the Ethnological Society of London, which sought to do good for indigenous peoples. Then the antithesis of the Anthropological Society of London, with its racist agenda. The process ended with the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland as synthesis (Stocking 1971: 384).

Our first President in 1871, Sir John Lubbock, later Lord Avebury, was also a compromise. One alternative, Thomas Huxley, would have antagonized too many of James Hunt’s supporters in the Anthropological Society of London. However,
Lubbock loathed the term ‘anthropology’ because of its association with Hunt’s society and whose triangular logo incorporated a Lower Palaeolithic handaxe, a skull, and a brain to symbolize the evolutionary journey to racial superiority. But Lubbock and his colleagues were stuck with anthropology because of the £700 debt they had inherited from the Anthropological Institute’s predecessor (Stocking 1971: 369).

Lubbock was, however, the perfect compromise. The importance of these learned societies and their contested names lay, for many, in promoting Darwinian evolution as a science. As a neighbour of and boyhood apprentice to Darwin, Lubbock was a true believer (Owen 2013). His certificate for election to the Royal Society in 1858, at the age of 24, was signed by Darwin, Huxley, and many other leading scientists. He would be one of Darwin’s pall-bearers in Westminster Abbey in 1882. Besides an interest in insects and natural history, he wrote *Pre-historic times as illustrated by ancient remains and the manners and customs of modern savages* (1865) and *The origin of civilisation and the primitive condition of man: mental and social condition of savages* (1870). Both books went into many editions. Lubbock’s melding of the past and the present, in ways that we would advise against today, provided an evolutionary account of deep human history. To do this he drew on many fields of inquiry when they were a single, unfenced pasture.

Lubbock popularized rather than coined the term ‘Pre-history’. But in his *Pre-historic times* he did propose the terms ‘Palaeolithic’ and ‘Neolithic’ as a framework for human cultural evolution. After a shaky start, as NGRAM reveals, the Neolithic became the more popular of his two terms, an ascendancy that has continued. This reflects the dominant narrative, encapsulated in Childe’s (1935) Neolithic revolution, that our social and cultural origins begin with farming rather than the much older anatomical changes to bipedalism or the brain. Both terms show a fall in overall popularity during the two world wars. Then from the 1970s with the advent of a more anthropologically based archaeology (Binford 1962) the Neolithic has seen a dramatic decline as process rather than periodization took over.

Lubbock’s words can also be extended to examine the popularity he enjoys compared to his contemporaries. The year 1865 saw the publication of E.B. Tylor’s *Researches into the early history of mankind and the development of civilization*. Tylor became President of the Anthropological Institute in 1879 and was a major figure in the development of anthropology at Oxford. Lubbock’s (1834-1913) and Tylor’s (1832-1917) lives closely overlapped. Their NGRAMs show the impact of their books on the popularity of their names, with Lubbock the archaeologist well ahead of Tylor the anthropologist. Both received a major boost in 1871 with the publication of Darwin’s *The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex*, in which Lubbock is the most cited author. All three books helped promote the science of anthropology (Fig. 2). But here NGRAMs as a measure of scientific popularity need some qualification. Lubbock became MP for Maidstone in 1870, and the next year his Private Member’s Bill was passed to become the Bank Holiday Act. These holidays were popularly known for a short time as Saint Lubbock’s Days (Owen 2013) and must rank as one of anthropology’s greatest social achievements. Death brings Lubbock’s and Tylor’s two popularity curves together. This occurs as archaeologist overtook antiquary, while two decades later we see the rise of anthropologist (Fig. 1). And by then a new tradition had been forged: one based on splitting anthropology along the fracture plane of history.
The end for ‘Pre-history’

While it may seem uncharitable a hundred years after his death to criticize a major achievement of a past President, I feel the time is right to do so. My target is the way Lubbock carved the continuum of history at its joints, first through his popularization of ‘Pre-history’ and second through its periodization into Old and New Stone Ages.

The time has come to consign these terms to some dusty storeroom. In particular, ‘Pre-history’ has served its nineteenth-century purpose. It drew attention to the historical opportunities of a human past before written records. However, the anthropological cost of extending history backwards into remote time was high, and many of the descriptions of modern peoples as living fossils continue to alienate.

But there are stronger reasons for abandoning ‘Pre-history’ than scientific opinions which have long passed their sell-by date. As historian Daniel Smail and anthropologist Andrew Shryock have pointed out, the ‘pre’ of ‘Pre-history’ indicates a past which is subservient to the demands of modernity; a concept that NGram shows takes off a hundred years ago, with an exponential rise in only the last thirty years (Smail & Shryock 2013:Fig. 1). The point about the ‘pre’ is that it presupposes conditions in the present which are not yet possible in the past (Smail & Shryock 2013: 711). The ‘pre’ is not a historical era but rather ‘the domain of tradition, nature, stasis, childhood, rawness, simplicity, enchantment and superstition’ (Smail & Shryock 2013: 713). This establishes a rhythm to historical narratives where every period being studied must, by definition, have a ‘pre’ that meets these conditions. The objection to ‘Pre-history’ is therefore ontological. The ‘pre’ implies that what is important in history is modernity. As a result the role of ‘Pre-history’ is to provide an origin-point for that condition. We can see this by the way archaeologists approach the tipping-points in their narrative of modernity. For example, 50,000 years ago, modern humans left Africa (the act of dispersal indicating their modernity), but for the previous 150,000 years those who looked like us, shared our genes, but stayed in Africa are seen as premodern; ingeniously camouflaged as anatomically modern humans until they declared themselves through global travel (Gamble 2013a). A second inflection-point contrasts agriculture with a pre-agricultural world, the Neolithic with the Palaeolithic, the farmer with the hunter, and so on, until an origin for the present is reached (Gamble 2007).

As a result, modernity, or the achievement of modern, is the hidden grand narrative in works such as Gordon Childe’s Man makes himself (1936), Grahame Clark’s vision of World prehistory in new perspective (1961), and Colin Renfrew’s Prehistory: making of the human mind (2007).
Deep history and an anthropological history

My reason for rejecting 'Pre-history' as a useful anthropological term is that it divides the historical continuum. As a result a seamless approach to the past is lost and fragmentation wins. So what should replace it? Big or global histories might be one alternative, although these always seem to lead to modernity (Christian 2004; McNeill & McNeill 2003). The problem is that not everything in history is 'big' in the same way that not all societies are 'large'. The past should be more than some originsland for the present (Gamble 2007). Big histories can be told through small objects in any period, as recent interest in a European family and its Japanese netsuke carvings has shown (de Waal 2010). A hundred objects chosen from a collection of 8 million at the British Museum can successfully chart a history of the world (MacGregor 2010). By taking a biographical turn towards the study of objects, the physical stuff of social life, both of these approaches strike me as an anthropological history; a history based on association and relations (Gosden & Marshall 1999; Hoskins 1998). The historical patina for these objects stems from the relationships they engendered and the emotions they evoked. The netsuke show this as they travelled from Paris to Vienna and then to Hong Kong in the luggage of the wealthy Ephrussi family. In the same way the Akan drum (object 86 in MacGregor’s A history of the world in 100 objects [2010]) crossed the Atlantic twice. As it was passed from hand to hand it acquired the fingerprints of history. In the process it entwined unnamed slaves, plantation owners, collectors, and national institutions such as the British Museum, its latest stop on a long journey.

These two examples of a history told through things stand on the solid foundations of anthropological and archaeological inquiry where investigations include notions of entanglement (Hodder 2012; Thomas 1991), the emotional resonance of things (Miller 2008), art as agency (Gell 1998) and art as history not art history (Bolton, Thomas, Bonshek, Adams & Burt 2013; Brunt et al. 2012), non-verbal communication through mundane things (Lemonnier 2012), and things as solid metaphors (Chapman & Gaydarska 2007; Gamble 2007; Tilley 1999). The academic framework underpins the 30 million-plus visits to the British Museum’s A history of the world in 100 objects website.

With such profusion it could be argued that just calling everything history is sufficient. No 'pré's' or nods in the direction of modernity, just history. This is tempting but at the same time problematic. The difficulty arises from issues of scale rather than the sources available to create historical narratives; the sterile distinction that is often drawn between object- and text-centred history. The value of prehistory in the last fifty years has been its insistence on the long term, and, as Geoff Bailey (2007) argues, the time-perspectivism this brings to questions about the past, and in particular a scalar dimension; those moments-to-millennia that archaeologists John Robb and Timothy Pauketat (2013) discuss. As a result the scale issues that archaeologists encounter with objects in prehistory (Alberti 2013) resonate with the scale shifts in the material metaphors which surround anthropological concepts of hospitality (Candea & da Col 2012a: §14). Both disciplines are concerned with the nested geographical spaces about which and within which history is explored and written. So, while the view that ‘everything is history’ is attractive and means we can put the carving knife away, we still need to recognize the structure in our data and the methodological challenges this raises. This is not history as we know it; a point made by Feuchtwang and Rowlands (2010: 121) in their discussion of the concept of civilization as defined by Mauss and Durkheim as ‘the spread of collective representations and practices, which are the social aspects of...
the materials of civilisation’, and where many temporalities and several historicities confound a strictly linear understanding.

Neither is this approach prehistory as we know it. As a result I favour deep history as the concept to replace prehistory; a term inspired by geologists and their investigation of the notion of deep time (Rudwick 2005). However, we no longer have to follow geologists closely, as Lubbock once did. We can remodel deep history in an anthropological way to stress the relational as well as the rational character of human history. My archaeological interests are, I feel, better represented in such a deep history than in the framework offered by prehistory. Furthermore, deep history does not prevent me as a ‘former’ prehistorian from recognizing a shallow history with different scales of resolution and inquiry nuanced by literacy.

In Shryock and Smail’s words we need a ‘revamped historical imagination that sees deep and shallow history as analytical contexts that can endlessly reshape each other once they are allowed to speak to each other’ (2011: 20). Such a relational perspective depends on a fundamentally anthropological way of thinking about the past; one that bundles up the agency of people, place, and materials in order to echo-locate the shallow history of the modern world in the narrative currents of deep history.

**Human imagination and the social brain**

What is still needed, however, is a focus for the narrative. Smail (2008) argues for the brain as the subject of deep history and around which multifarious hominin and human niches have been constructed. This is an approach which argues not for our uniqueness but rather, as Maurice Bloch remarked at ‘The Sapient Mind’ conference in 2007, that the defining capacity of human beings is to live in the imagination. The impact of this ability has been varied and scalar. At diverse scales it has shaped philosophy and evolutionary science (Golden 2001), the mathematical understanding of time (Murtagh 2011), and the application of anthropological imagination to the evidence of the British Iron Age (Sillitoe 2012).

We are a highly imaginative species, and the evolution of our imagination is coded in many ways: materially, linguistically, geographically, and socially (Shryock et al. 2011). We voyage to the fantastical worlds of Pandora and Lilliput; we subscribe to elaborate myths and metaphors by gazing on the relics of saints and ancestors; we wrap ourselves not only physically in cultural symbols but also in a belief about the superiority of the English cricket team. We are, as Wendy James (2003) puts it, a ceremonial animal, steeped in variety and invention. This imagination is only possible because our cognition is distributed (Hutchins 1995) and no longer something that happens only inside the rational theatres of our minds (Dunbar et al. 2010). In addition, our identities do not stop at the skin but are constituted by relationships with others, places, and stuff (Gamble 2010; LiPuma 1998). As social beings we are relational as well as rational, and where our lineage mantra is: as we relate, so we create. By which I mean that innovation in areas such as technology, the use of landscapes, and the exploration of concepts is socially driven. The alternative, that ideas gestate in our heads to meet external adaptive needs, adds little to understanding hominin deep history, where our task is to ‘model an evolutionary mechanism that could have given rise to characteristics that are distinctively human, and that enabled the development of larger social networks, without recourse to a representational currency’ (Barrett 2012: 12). As hominins related to others and to things, they were open to the possibilities of creating new forms, new relationships. Moreover, this has been a long-term process of co-evolution. We have been
implicated with stuff for at least 2.5 million years, as the stone tools from Gona in Ethiopia show (Semaw et al. 1997). This occurs in the context of 7 million years of brain growth.

Brains/bodies and the stuff of material life are the constants over those 2.5 million years. They can be studied for themselves. But they are also the proxies for a deep history of social life. Over this huge time-span social life was enacted on a daily basis, and yet, with a few notable exceptions, evokes little interest among social anthropologists (Barnard 2010; 2011; Layton & O’Hara 2010) and not much more among archaeologists (Gamble 1999). We also assume from the evidence of bigger brains and better technology over this time period that social life was changing too, becoming bigger and better in its own way.

These assumptions were examined through the British Academy’s Centenary Project, ‘From Lucy to Language: The Archaeology of the Social Brain’, which I directed with John Gowlett and Robin Dunbar. The project brought together psychology and archaeology, an experimental and a historical science. It was further guided by sociologist Garry Runciman and social anthropologist Wendy James. It collaborated with biological anthropologists and historical linguists. As a result the project embraced all the fields of anthropology as well as disciplines beyond.

What underpins the concept of the social brain is the correlation between the size of primate brains and the size of their social communities (Gamble et al. 2014). The strength of this relationship makes it possible to predict community sizes by measuring fossil hominin crania and the brains they contained. From this measure Homo sapiens had, by the end of the evolutionary journey, communities of about 150, a figure known as Dunbar’s Number. By contrast, 4 million years earlier, Ardipithecus, with a brain four times smaller, had a predicted community size of 53, about the size of a chimpanzee community.

The central hypothesis of the project was very simple: that it was our social lives which drove the encephalization of the hominin brain. The increase in brain size, and in particular the frontal areas of the neocortex, is related to the need for recognizing, monitoring, and remembering the social partners in the larger communities within which large-brained hominins lived. The evolutionary pressures for encephalization came from organizing and monitoring an increasingly complicated social life. The benefit from belonging to larger communities came from defence against predators. The cost of encephalization should not, however, be underestimated. It required shrinking another expensive tissue, the gut, which in turn required novel technologies such as cooking and an increase in diet quality (Aiello & Dunbar 1993; Aiello & Wheeler 1995; Wrangham 2009).

**Historical disjuncture**

However, there is more to social life than just the numbers of others in a community. Moreover, it is apparent from the archaeology that the impressive encephalization that occurred between 1.5 and 0.5 million years ago was not met by any marked advance in technology or other advanced cultural stuff such as art and ornament, as many might have expected. Yet it was during this time when communities had passed the 100 level that Leslie Aiello and Robin Dunbar (1993) argued that the mechanism of fingertip grooming would no longer be practicable owing to pressure on the time-budgets of these hominins. They suggested that a form of language solved this time problem. As a
result, grooming more people with the voice supplemented the primate and small-brained hominin pattern of grooming fewer with fingertips.

This poses a historical disconnect requiring an explanation. Here is language, one of the key prerequisites of modernity, occurring half a million years ago but without apparently kick-starting any of the other modern traits into life. These would include more complicated technologies and an inkling of an evolving imagination through the appearance of signs and symbols. But this does not happen.

**The attentive hominin**

One solution to this disconnect is to return to the basics of social life and the hominin mantra: as we relate, so we create. The two resources available to every hominin chanting this mantra over at least the last 2.5 million years are the senses of the body and the materials of the environment. This is the core around which social life in all its imaginative variety is built. From these two resources are fashioned an interlinked range of emotions and social forms. The latter includes ceremonies as well as technologies. The resources of emotions and materials are drawn on to create social bonds that bind.

There is one further capacity that needs to be added and that is the hominin ability to pay attention. Chimpanzees have brains the size of *Ardipithecus*. Moreover, they make organic tools and pound nuts with stone hammers (Gowlett 2000; Kortlandt 1986; McGrew 1992). They are highly emotional and socially complex in the sense used by Shirley Strum and Bruno Latour, and where the primate social actor has difficulty negotiating one factor at a time and is constantly faced with the interference of others facing similar challenges (Strum & Latour 1987: 790). By comparison, hominins and humans lead complicated social lives made up of a sequence of simple operations (Gamble 1999: 41-2; Strum & Latour 1987: 791).

However, one thing nonhuman primates do not excel at is concentration. Outside of grooming and an encounter with a favourite food, their attention span is limited. Humans, by contrast, have much better powers of concentration, which is manifest in social contexts as different as infatuated star-crossed lovers, students listening to lectures, and artisans absorbed in making things. I refer to this as the ‘Acheulean gaze’ (Gamble 2010): the ability to concentrate intently for at least fifteen to twenty minutes in order to make a hand-held bifacially worked stone tool. These Acheulean bifaces come in many shapes, sizes, and degrees of finishing. They are a long-lived tradition first appearing 1.7 million years ago in Africa and ending about 300,000 years ago (Gamble 2013a). They are at the heart of the disconnect between expanding brains and static stuff. In addition, a preliminary study using experimental data by archaeologist Robert Hosfield (pers. comm., 2013) indicates that the more symmetrical and finely finished these artefacts become, the more time, and hence attention, they require in their manufacture. It seems likely that the ability to concentrate was a social skill selected among hominins living in communities larger than those of either chimpanzees or other primates and then transferred to the manufacture of technology. These sequences fit Strum and Latour’s (1987: 791) characterization of human society as complicated rather than complex; made up of a succession of simple operations such as stone-knapping in order to integrate and stabilize relations among larger communities.

**Ramping up the emotion 1: the sensory and material core**

One insight of the social brain pioneered by Dunbar has been to link community size inferred from brain size to the capacity for mentalizing; that ability which is not
When this is approached as a Theory of Mind (I have a belief about your belief), we can ascribe different orders of intention to various hominins (Table 1).

Where this becomes relevant to the disconnect between large-brained hominins and their stuff is if we consider the emotions which underpin the bonds of social life. Three levels exist (Damasio 2000). First there are the mood emotions, those feelings about places as either safe or scary. Then there are the primary emotions such as fear, anger, and happiness that we share with many other animals. These are survival emotions and are supported by the pain/reward systems of the body and the release of endorphins in the brain. And finally there are the social emotions which only exist because of an advanced theory of mind that recognizes another’s perspective: guilt, shame, pride, and compassion, to name a few (Turner 2000). These social emotions operate at a distance when social partners are separated but remain attentive to one another. They are the small voice of conscience that constrains actions. The important point is that the sensory basis for these social emotions remains the same. The pain/reward systems of the brain continue to operate, as is the case with the feeling of shame. What has changed is the amplification of a common survival emotion such as fear into a social emotion such as guilt which then has a bearing on behaviour. The disconnect between encephalization and a lack of corresponding change in cultural stuff can then be explained by the amplification of the sensory part of the social core in preference to materials (Gowlett et al. 2012: Figure 1). It would therefore be wrong to conclude that very little was happening for a million years.

**Table 1.** Levels of intentionality and the emotional range of ancestral hominins as suggested by the social brain model (Damasio 2000; Gamble et al. 2014: Table 5.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of intentionality</th>
<th>Achieved by</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Only a few modern humans</td>
<td>Complex symbolism</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Modern humans with language as we know it</td>
<td>Myth and storytelling of increasing complexity and involving real and imaginary worlds and their cast of characters</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>H. heidelbergensis</em> and Neanderthals</td>
<td>Shared religious beliefs involving several people and ancestral beings</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All large-brained hominins (&gt;900 cc)</td>
<td>You have a belief about her belief which is not my belief</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5-year-old children, all small-brained hominins (400-900 cc) and probably great apes (Theory of Mind)</td>
<td>I have a belief about your belief</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monkeys and lesser apes and some mammals such as elephants and dolphins</td>
<td>Self-aware as judged by recognizing yourself in a mirror; a belief about something</td>
<td>Mood: X, Primary: X, Social: X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: cc = cubic centimetres, the measure of brain size in fossil hominins.*
just because stone tools like handaxes appear to stand still. During this time hominins were still attending to one another and social bonds were being created and affirmed on a daily basis. Instead we have argued (Gamble et al. 2011; 2014; Gowlett et al. 2012) that it was during this slow movement in the symphony of hominin evolution that the basis of social life was amplified through emotion rather than through stuff, and this occurred in response to larger community sizes.

The other, and interlinked, aspect of the core is materials. Music-making provides an example of emotional amplification and one that, unlike happiness or compassion, can leave a material trace. The body is the oldest source for music and does not require instruments (Bannan 2012). Indeed it has long been suggested that music in the form of singing formed a precursor to language (Darwin 1872). Rather, the question is what is amplified by musical instruments, such as flutes, the first evidence for which is currently 40,000 years old from the Geissenklösterle Cave in southern Germany (Conard, Malina & Münzel 2009)? In an anthropological history this would focus on the social gathering and the Durkheimian effervescence it produces and where dance, singing, and music-making heighten the sense of community (Gamble 2012). Amplifying such ceremonies further with instruments such as drums, flutes, rattles, and stringed instruments adds to their affect. The routines imposed by instruments and dance steps further point to the use of the material part of the social core to make society complicated rather than complex in Strum and Latour’s (1987) scheme.

Ramping up the emotion 2: hospitality and kinshipping

My final example of an anthropological deep history concerns hospitality. I have argued elsewhere that the study of deep history depends on offering the hand of hospitality to strange and unfamiliar objects (Gamble 2013b: 67). Only in this way could handaxes cease to be stones and become proxies for remote times and ancestors, as they did in 1859 (Gamble & Kruszynski 2009). It is perhaps no coincidence that two Enlightenment projects, Kant’s universal hospitality (Kant 1970 [1795]) and growing antiquarian interest in stones as ancient tools (Frere 1800), are contemporaneous.

Hospitality is the underlying principle for social life (Dikeç 2002; Dikeç, Clark & Barnett 2009; Still 2011). As Candea and da Col (2012a: S1) speculate, Mauss could have chosen it over the gift as his foundational anthropological concept. In terms of providing a unifying theme for anthropology this is not the substance- and materialities-free hospitality of Julian Pitt-Rivers (1968) and Derrida (1997). Instead it is the hospitality described by Ortner (1978), where it forms an arena for enacting social dramas. When it occurs in a material context, such as a house, hospitality coerces rather than elicits co-operative responses (Candea & da Col 2012a: S9). And a material approach to hospitality opens the door for archaeologists and historians to join the discussion. However, having given us this vision of what a more inclusive alternative present of anthropology might have looked like, Candea and da Col (2012b) invite only social anthropologists to participate in the current debate on strangers, guests, and ambiguous encounters.

The reason for this closed door is ontological. As we saw with emotion, the perception is that hospitality is difficult to investigate in an anthropological deep history where we rely on objects as proxies. A further term is needed to probe the evolution of the hospitable hominin imagination. That term is kinshipping: moving through time and space by means of relationship and exchange (Gamble 2013a; Shryock et al. 2011: 31). When we are kinshipping we are making new and remaking old relationships.
according to the hominin mantra: as we relate, so we create. We do this through the mediation of devices such as abstract categories, absent third parties, and objects. Kinshipping is what we do effortlessly while giving and receiving hospitality. What kinshipping boils down to is the exploration of new spaces.

In Social anthropology and human origins (2011) Alan Barnard elegantly argues for a related concept, universal kinship, as applied to hunters and gatherers. This is the situation where since everyone is classified as kin, nobody is kin in the sense we apply to non-hunting and gathering societies. Even so there exist opportunities for kinship by choice, an example of which is the hxaro system of the Kalahari (Barnard 2011: 81), what I would call an example of kinshipping.

Barnard regards universal kinship as a core development in our deep history and one not confined to Homo sapiens. At issue here is the basis of the social contract that revisits Peter Kropotkin’s Mutual aid: a factor of evolution (1902). Kropotkin put the counter-argument to Social Darwinists such as Spencer and Lubbock, members of the influential Victorian think-tank the X-Club (Owen 2008), and General Pitt-Rivers, who shared their views if not their fine dining. Kropotkin argued that society is founded on co-operation rather than competition. He also argued that society comes first and kinship was a later development. Barnard disagrees with this ordering, attributing primacy in human social evolution to the co-operative charter enshrined in universal kinship.

I agree with Kropotkin’s and Barnard’s emphasis on co-operation since this is one expression of the hospitality that underpins kinshipping. I also agree with the sequence of social change proposed by Barnard and which is fundamental for an anthropology of deep history. From my perspective, formal kinship, rather than the ability of kinshipping, is an amplified social form. It comes later in the story, as Barnard argues. As a result, while large-brained hominins in the last million years had kinshipping, they did not have the formal rules of kinship that are seen, for example, in Allen’s (2008) tetradic system; a good example of complicated rather than complex society, and a proscription on the rules of hospitality.

Hospitality as an underpinning principle of social life must therefore have an ancestry that extends into deep history. Formal kinship systems that we know from the shallow history of social anthropology were an amplification of the hospitality/kinshipping principle; a classic example of as we relate, so we create. However, they were not confined to shallow history or an ethnographic present. Instead, this amplified form of kinship appears to be related to an explosion in human dispersal. I have suggested elsewhere (Gamble 2008) that it was the formal ties of kinship that made social separation tenable and enabled dispersal beyond the traditional Old World homelands of our lineage; a point subsequently supported experimentally by psychologists on the social brain project (Gamble et al. 2014: 46-7; Roberts 2010).

Consequently my tipping-point for deep history is not farming, Lubbock’s Neolithic, but the circumstances by which a single species emerged as a global species. This was achieved in the last 50,000 years, well before the modern period (Gamble 2013a). In my view this was only possible with a reconceptualization of the way relationships were experienced. Instead of the free flow of universal kinship there was the experience of containment, of being part of an institution such as formal kinship with its social boundaries. People were now wrapped and bounded in ways not previously seen (Gamble 2007). It is therefore unsurprising that coincident with global dispersal we see a rise in artefacts which also contain: boats, houses, and clothes; imaginative expressions of going beyond yet staying in touch.
Conclusion
I agree with Barnard when he writes that ‘most of social anthropology has been stuck in a synchronic quagmire’ (2011: 147). In this article I have considered the issue of fragmentation that dogs our discipline and proposed that history can help us out of Barnard’s swamp. What we need are projects that invite participation from anthropological, archaeological, and historical inquiry. Mauss’s concept of civilization provides one example (Feuchtwang & Rowlands 2010: 134). I have outlined another through the history of the social brain; a study which cannot be undertaken without the participation of all the fields of anthropology and more besides. We urgently need fusion rather than fission, and deep history provides that opportunity. However, to seize it we will have to compromise and consider the contribution that all branches of anthropology can make. I have concentrated on social anthropology because biological anthropologists and archaeologists are already working together. But few of their perspectives are social. In the first Presidential Address to our Institute, Lubbock described the methods ‘by which we are endeavouring, through the study of the present, to reconstruct the past’ (1872: 389). Those days of reconstruction and the vocabulary they employed are over. Instead Lubbock’s sentiments can be reversed: without a study of the past there can be no understanding of the present. It is time to make a similar compromise to those which led to the founding of the Anthropological Institute in 1871 and rebuild a unified discipline. And to do that, anthropologists of all persuasions need to explore their historical imaginations and the power of things.

NOTES
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1 Despite the title, the responsibility for higher education lies not with the Education Secretary but with the Business Secretary in the Ministry of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).
2 The author of this private opinion piece graduated from Oxford with a First in ancient and modern history:
4 http://www.petitionpublique.fr/?pi=ETHNOLOG#.

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L’antropologie de l’histoire profonde

Résumé

L’histoire de l’anthropologie dévoile une discipline dont les moteurs sont la fission autant que la fusion. Dans le présent article, j’utilise le cadre de l’histoire profonde comme exemple des résultats que l’on pourrait obtenir si l’anthropologie décidait de suivre la voie de la fusion au lieu de continuer à s’atomiser. J’illustre ce chemin en examinant la fusion interdisciplinaire qui a donné naissance au concept du cerveau social. En mettant la vie sociale au centre du processus historique, nous arrivons à un terrain partagé par tous les domaines de l’anthropologie et, au-delà, par d’autres disciplines. Sur ce terrain commun, les
anthropologues ont la possibilité de fixer l’ordre du jour. Le cerveau social fonctionne dans l’histoire profonde aussi bien que dans l’histoire superficielle. Il fait le lien entre science expérimentale et science historique. Et il marque le retour aux principes fondamentaux établis par Lubbock et les fondateurs de notre Institut.

Clive Gamble studies the evolution of hominin society. His recent projects include the British Academy’s Centenary Project ‘From Lucy to Language: The Archaeology of the Social Brain’ (2004-11), which brought together archaeologists and psychologists to study when hominin brains became human minds. He was President of the Royal Anthropological Institute 2011-14.

Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton, Southampton SO17 1BF, UK. Clive.Gamble@soton.ac.uk