

OBITUARY NOTICES

HAROLD ST. GEORGE GRAY, 1872 — 1963

H. St. George Gray, Secretary of the Society and Curator of the Museum from 1901 to 1949 died on 28th February, 1963.

His great services to the Society and to archaeology in general were acknowledged by his election as President of the Society in 1951, and as Vice-President and Member of the Council for life from 1952 onwards. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1949, an Honorary M.A. of Bristol University in 1939, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1928. He was also a Fellow of the Museums Association and an honorary life member of the Prehistoric Society.

We append below appreciations of Mr. Gray's life and work, written by two members of the Society who knew him well over a long period—Dr. C. A. Raleigh Radford and Mrs. C. W. H. Rawlins.

Harold St. George Gray was born in 1872 at Lichfield where his father was connected with the Cathedral. His acquaintance with archaeology began in 1888, when he was appointed as one of General Pitt Rivers's assistants. He remained in this position for some ten years becoming finally the General's chief assistant. During this period Gray took part in the excavations, directing the work on the Roman building at Iwerne, and helped in the preparation and editing of the detailed reports on the work in Cranborne Chase. At a time when no formal training in British archaeology was available this probably formed the best preparation for one who was destined to devote his life to the study and investigation of the antiquities of Somerset and, indeed, of many other parts of the country.

In 1901 after a short period as Assistant Curator in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, Gray was appointed Secretary of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society and Curator of the County Museum, then owned and managed by the Society. He held these posts for 48 years till his retirement in 1949. This period was marked by a steady and persistent investigation of the antiquities of Somerset, carried out by means of a series of well planned and well executed excavations. The first, recorded in our *Proceedings* for 1902, is an account of the Glastonbury Lake Village, discovered ten years earlier by Dr. A. Bulleid. From this beginning down to his retirement and for several years beyond, there were few years when Gray did not spend a period in the field, recording the

results in our *Proceedings* and in other Journals. It would be tedious to list all the sites examined in the course of these campaigns. The Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows at Murtry Hill and Battlegore, the great Iron Age fortifications of Ham Hill and Cadbury Castle, the Iron Age and early Roman site of Kingsdown Camp and the 12th century defences of Castle Neroche are an indication of the extent and range of his work. Shortage of time and money compelled Gray to carry out many of these excavations on a scale insufficient to unravel all the problems presented by a complex site, but at a time when the period of many of the monuments examined was a matter of active controversy it was useful to have the age of a series of sites covering the whole county investigated and determined. On some of the sites operations were spread over a longer period, notably at Ham Hill to which Gray returned on many occasions. Reports on the excavations were published year by year. It is our loss that the fuller survey of the archaeology of Somerset, which many of us hoped to see, was never undertaken. The multifarious duties of office and the postponement of his retirement by reason of the second world war left no leisure for such a task.

But it is above all by his work on the Lake Villages of Glastonbury and Meare that Gray will be remembered. Both were excavated in collaboration with Bulleid, who had discovered the first named in 1892 and had begun work on the site. Gray joined him in 1901 on his arrival in Somerset and their joint work continued over a long period until ill-health caused Bulleid to retire from the field. Gray, aided by his devoted wife, continued the work at Meare until his last years. The whole of the Glastonbury Village was excavated, together with a major part of the settlement at Meare. The remaining part of Meare, acquired with funds raised by Gray, has been sterilized for a long period so that future archaeologists, working with improved techniques may be able to check the results already obtained. The results of the excavations on these sites have been published in a series of detailed and well illustrated volumes, which owe much to the fine draughtmanship of Gray. Their contents throw great light on the pre-Roman Iron Age of Somerset and of Southern England, though it has become increasingly evident that the villages and their culture are in no way typical of the age. Their value as an illustration of the richness and variety of the types in use on the eve of the Roman Conquest remains unchallenged.

Gray's archaeological investigations were not confined to Somerset. Among other activities he excavated in the great ditched circles at Arbor Low in Derbyshire and Avebury in Wiltshire and in the Striple Sones on Bodmin Moor, surveying and recording the other stone circles of East Cornwall. For many years he was a member of the Earthworks Committee of the Congress of Archaeological Societies and in conjunction with the late V. N. Tapp he excavated the 'Danish' camp at Warham in Norfolk.

Gray was most widely known as an archaeologist and it is right that his work in this field should receive precedence. But the greater part of his time was devoted to the organization of our Society and Museum. Recent expansion and rearrangement have radically changed the Museum as he knew it. His mark remains in the rich and systematic collections of archaeological material from the county gathered together during his curatorship and to a large extent provided by his excavations. Nor were his interests confined to archaeology. The list of acquisitions reported year by year spread over every department of the Museum's activities and the work entailed was for long periods carried out single handed. It is more difficult to speak of his work as Secretary of our Society. It is 15 years since his retirement and 15 years is a long time in the history of a body such as ours. A new generation of members has grown up to whom Gray is no more than a name or a legend. Those whose memories reach back beyond 1949 will not forget the enthusiasm and skill with which he organized meetings and excursions and his ready accessibility in Taunton Castle. My own memory goes back nearly 50 years. We were seated at tea in the garden of the Elizabethan manor in which my father then lived. A small active figure appeared striding down the field path. An invitation to join us was given and accepted. He departed within the hour by the same route to catch his return train to Taunton. My father had been enrolled as a member and permission given to bring the Society to see the house. As it happened that was my introduction to the Society. A schoolboy not yet 15, I was forced in the absence of my father through illness, to read his notes to the learned body, whose approach I awaited with trepidation. From that day I enjoyed Gray's friendship until his death. Till 1962 he continued to act as Secretary of the Glastonbury Excavation Committee; it was in that capacity that I last saw him, still serving the body with which he had been associated since its foundation in 1908.

On his retirement Gray went to live at Martock in the interesting medieval Treasurer's House dating from the 14th century, which he had acquired some years previously. Here he and his wife were always delighted to receive their friends. He was married in 1899; Mrs. Gray was throughout his principal helper in all his activities, including his excavations. The sympathy of the Society and of all their friends will be extended to her in her bereavement.

C. A. RALEGH RADFORD.

It is thirty-six years since the writer first took part in one of the Somerset Archaeological Society's expeditions and Mr. Gray had then been the Society's secretary for twenty-five years. A quarter of a century is a long time for anyone to pursue that strenuous profession, and it may well be that in remaining secretary of the same society for forty-eight years Mr. Gray had established a record. Chairmen and honorary secretaries came and went, but Mr. Gray remained in Taunton Castle at the centre of affairs. Coming to Somerset as a young man, he gradually acquired a remarkable knowledge of the county, its archaeology, architecture and natural history. Shrewd and kindly, experience of generations of members gave him an equally wide knowledge of its twentieth century inhabitants.

The organisation of excursions was an important part of his work. For this purpose the county was divided into areas, to be visited in rotation, if circumstances permitted, over a period of some twenty years. Those well-filled three day expeditions were something of a test of the stamina of the participants, but even septuagenarian members seemed to enjoy them without ill effects. Changing tastes have now led to a different pattern in our excursions, but no one who had followed a complete series of those based on local centres could have failed to possess a considerable knowledge of the principal churches, houses and ancient monuments of Somerset. Looking back through what is admittedly the golden haze of youthful memory, those expeditions seem almost always to have taken place in perfect summer weather, and to have been directed by Mr. Gray with unflinching enthusiasm and efficiency. One recalls with affection the piercing blasts of the whistle with which Mr. Gray collected his flock and enforced punctuality, and one sees him addressing the Society under blue skies and a hot July sun, on the steep slopes of

the pre-historic monuments of Somerset, Cadbury Castle and Ham Hill and Maesbury, or further afield, under the great stones of Avebury or on the ramparts of Maiden Castle. Looking back into the pre-1914 *Proceedings* one wonders how punctuality could have been maintained when members drove "some in carriages and some in motor cars", as in 1910, through the narrow and often unmetalled lanes around Yeovil. A group photograph of that meeting shows Mr. Gray sitting in the front row. Can there be more than one survivor now of that happy Edwardian party?

As a secretary and editor Mr. Gray's standards were high and he did not approve of waste. Stamps could be saved by substituting postcards for letters, and time by exact calculations. "If your train leaves Taunton at 5 p.m.", he once told a new member, "you need not leave the Castle till 4.50. You can walk to the station in 10 minutes".

Outside the precincts of the Castle, his friends have many other happy memories of Mr. Gray. Of him spending his holidays on the excavation of pre-historic sites, particularly at his beloved Lake Village, hidden in the peat under the wide green fields of Meare; arriving briskly at committees, small, neat and indomitable until nearly the end of his long life; appropriately finding for his retirement one of the oldest houses in Somerset. Here at Martock, in the Treasurer's House, and in sight of Ham Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Gray, with an energy, which must have been envied by friends of half their age, proceeded to carry out a work of improvement and restoration which they delighted to show to numerous visitors. "At eighty", Mr. Gray was heard to say, "one should be able to look forward to doing another ten years of good work". His wish was granted.

One of the penalties of great age is to outlive one's contemporaries. Mr. Gray retained his interest in 'the Society', as he always succinctly called it, and his ability to make friends with those younger than himself. So many of his best friends in the county have indeed preceded him, that it falls to those of the next generation to pay tribute to him, to recall how he devoted the best part of his life to the Society and to remind the members of to-day how great a debt their Society owes him.

S. W. RAWLINS.

Mr. Gray contributed many papers, not only to these *Proceedings*, but also to the journals of a number of national and county societies, as well as to various periodicals and newspapers. So long is the list that it would not be possible to record all his writings within the space available. Over one hundred of Mr. Gray's papers will be found in the five bound volumes, which he presented to the Taunton Borough Library. At the end of Vol. 5 of this set is a bibliography of Mr. Gray's short papers compiled by the author himself.

Mr. Gray's most considerable publications were the quarto volumes in which (in collaboration with the late Arthur Bulleid, F.S.A.) he recorded their excavations at the Glastonbury and Meare Lake Villages.

LAURENCE IVAN HORNIMAN, Q.C., M.A., 1893-1963

Ivan Horniman, who died in March, 1963, at the age of 70, was educated at Rugby and Exeter College, Oxford. He served in the first world war with the Royal Fusiliers and the Middlesex Regiment, reaching the rank of Captain. He was called to the Bar in 1918 and became a King's Counsel in 1947.

He joined the Society in 1952 when he was living at Coat House, Martock. He was elected a member of the Council in 1955 and served as chairman of the Library Committee. As a member of the Museum Committee he was able to draw on his wide experience with the Horniman Museum in London for the benefit of the Society. His advice was of the greatest value to the Council during the difficult period of reorganization in the 1950's.

He resigned from the Council in 1960 on account of ill health.

HERBERT WILLIAM KILLE, 1886-1962

Herbert Kille, who died in December, 1962, at the age of 76, was born at the Church School House at Washford, where his father was at the time headmaster. Mr. Kille senior later joined the editorial staff of the *West Somerset Free Press* and his son, on leaving school, followed in his father's footsteps by becoming an apprentice reporter on the same paper. After a few years with a trade paper publishing firm in Walsall and London, Kille joined the London Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance early in the first world war. Later, when

serving with the Tank Corps in France, he was captured by the Germans and spent about eight months as a prisoner-of-war.

After the war Kille returned to West Somerset and rejoined the staff of the *Free Press*. He became the paper's chief reporter in 1950, as his father had been thirty years earlier. He retired from active reporting in 1957 after over fifty years in his profession, but he still continued to write "Notes by the Way" for the paper. He was editor of the *Somerset Countryman* for three years after it first began to be published in 1932, but he had to give up this post owing to pressure of other work.

Kille joined the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1920, becoming a life member about twelve years ago. When the West Somerset Branch was formed in 1938, Kille was elected to the committee. In 1947 he became Hon. Secretary of the Branch, a post which he still held at the time of his death. During his fifteen years as Secretary he never spared himself. He was a splendid organizer, and the lectures and excursions, which he arranged, were always very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. He had an unrivalled knowledge of the history, topography and folk-lore of West Somerset, and this knowledge he was always ready to share with his fellow-members. His loss has been a most grievous one for the members of the West Somerset Branch.

Though he pursued his historical interests and his work for the Branch with so much enthusiasm, Herbert Kille did not by any means neglect other aspects of local affairs. He served on a large number of committees in Minehead and district and was active in every good cause that came along.

To Mrs. Kille and to all the family, as well as to the members of the West Somerset Branch, we extend our sincerest sympathy in their great loss.