

OBITUARY NOTICES

IAN IMRIE JEFFRIES

Ian Jeffries joined the Society in 1958 as soon as he came into the district, though his home was at Clayhidon just over the border in Devonshire. His death on 27th November 1969 at the age of 61, just as he had taken up his appointment as Secretary of the Society, came as a great shock to members and to his many friends in England and overseas.

He was a man of unique character and ability who devoted himself to the service of others in his village and its church and particularly in his work for this Society. His great gifts of kindly understanding and sympathetic but immediate and cheerful help to all whose interests or studies brought them to the Society's library will long be remembered. He loved books and worked regularly and voluntarily for at least two days a week in the library, devoting himself especially to the rearranging and listing of the Society's collections of illustrations and drawings. His greatest service, however, was as Honorary Editor of the *Proceedings*, an office which he was persuaded to accept in 1959 and in which he served with rare discernment until his death. His meticulous care and wholehearted concern soon made itself felt in the high quality of the volumes issued under his editorship. His keen interest in language, his detailed checking of authors' references, his long periods of discussion with the printers over technical details of production, his willingness to meet, even to visit, contributors to discuss problems of presentation or plans and illustrations, all gave him distinction as an editor. He helped greatly in the discussions and carried the changeover in format from octavo to quarto with all the work it involved with printers and contributors, never sparing himself, though by this time he was beginning to suffer from the illness which eventually caused his death. In addition to all this work he regularly joined in the Society's excavations and set a fine example as a sturdy and energetic 'digger' who really enjoyed the toil but claimed no special knowledge of archaeology. He was an active and keen naturalist and did a great deal of work with the Natural History section as a Committee member, as leader of field meetings and latterly as Recorder of Fungi. He was also one of the Ornithological section's representatives on the Council.

As a young man he had missed the opportunity of a university education, for which he was so eminently suited, through the early death of his father. He joined the Malayan Customs Service in 1928 where he served until the end of 1941, when he joined the fighting forces. In retirement he studied for an external degree of London University and gained a second in English in 1964, a considerable achievement for a man of over 55 years.

His friends and colleagues in the Malayan Customs Service have written of his work there and mention how after the outbreak of war he served with the Volunteer Force and became a prisoner of war on the fall of Singapore. "On the Siam Railway he was a shining example for others. His unselfishness and tenacity were such powerful forces for us. His companionship and his capacity for hard work lightened many a day. In addition he gave us an interest in birds, to many a new delight, and something of his own fortitude in tough going."

Those who were privileged to have his friendship can feel now how much they owe to his quiet, cheerful and inspiring companionship. His own quite exceptional modesty makes it difficult to do justice to his outstanding gifts of character and intellect. He would have discounted all of them.

His death is a great loss to this Society and we extend our sincere sympathy to his widow who shared so many of his interests.

MRS. ST. GEORGE GRAY (née Florence Young) 1875-1970

With the death of Mrs. Gray on June 5th 1970, at the age of 95, a last link with a bygone era of the Society and its castle has been severed. When St. George Gray, accompanied by his young wife, took up his appointment as Secretary of the Society in the year 1901 there were still a few 1849 foundation members on the membership list. In those early days part of the castle was residential; the present Adam library, partitioned into three, formed the Grays' bedrooms, and below were their living rooms and kitchen. In Volume 48 of *Proceedings* an account is given of the 1902 annual general meeting held at Glastonbury, which Mrs. Gray helped to organise. It reads as follows: "On Wednesday morning a party of one hundred and fifty Ladies and Gentlemen left the George Hotel in a long string of brakes and carriages for excursions in the neighbourhood, including Meare, Wedmore and Mark."

During nearly half a century of dedicated service to the Society Mrs. Gray was the right hand of her husband in all his activities. She raised money for his excavations, drove him in her car to all the many sites that he explored, watched over his finds, supervised the washing of potsherds, and roped in volunteers. She also had a rare gift for spotting talent amongst young people, many of whom in due course became archaeologists in their own right. In the museum she did invaluable work, restoring exhibits, and the museum owes much to Mrs. Gray for the range and excellent state of preservation of its collections. Her untiring work, which included copying out the minutes of the Council into the minute book, left her husband free to concentrate on his writing, and when staff was short during two world wars she helped to see the Society successfully through two very difficult periods in its history.

In 1961 when she was 86 she chauffeured her husband to the Castle Neroche excavations. After his death in 1963, though severely crippled by arthritis, she continued to take an active interest in all that was going on, visiting the Meare Lake Village excavations in 1966, and in 1968 the South Cadbury excavations when she was 93 years old. In 1964 Mrs. Gray put up a sum of £500 towards the cost of publishing Volume 3 of *The Meare Lake Village* with the generous proviso that after the expenses of publication had been met all the sales proceeds of the volume should go to the Society. At the time of writing the Society has already benefited by an amount of over £600, which has been added to the St. George Gray Excavation Fund. She has also made the Society residuary legatee in her will and from this source the Society will benefit considerably. Mrs. Gray was born and brought up in Dorset, and from this rural background she had an intimate knowledge of the West Country and a great love of gardening and wild flowers and trees and all country things.

Mrs. Gray was a person of strong character, and she could be a formidable and implacable protagonist when she felt that the interests of the Society were being threatened.

The Society was her life, and to her the Society owes a lasting debt.

C.A.C.

MRS. J. B. CLARK, F.S.A.

Evelyn Valentine Clark, née Pechey, came to Somerset from Tonbridge, Kent, in 1923 when she married John Bright Clark. Her husband succeeded his father as Managing Director of C. & J. Clark's celebrated shoe factory at Street, with its important additional works elsewhere. He died in March 1937 leaving his widow to maintain their beautiful home at Overleigh House, where she made the flower garden a work of art and where, though handicapped by illness in her last few years, she lived until her death on April 26th 1970.

In her younger days she played the violin, and was active in the production of amateur theatricals. On coming to Somerset she took up and continued the tradition of public service so notable in her husband's family, giving much time to work for the Women's Institutes (she was a County Lecturer), and to supporting other organizations.

Mrs. J. B. Clark, the name by which she liked to be known, joined the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1928 and took a leading part in its work and affairs. The Society has indeed benefited from her generosity to an outstanding degree on many occasions, though she would not have wished them to be particularized, and she was for long a member of the Council. Her services to us were officially recognised in 1956, when she was elected President, remaining in office for two years. In consequence, she gave two presidential addresses, "Cornish Fogous", in 1956, and "Somerset Piscinas", (Clark, 1958) in 1957; and in the latter year she was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

To visit a church with a congenial companion and analyse its architectural history was an unending delight to her, and to this she could bring to bear a fund of specialized knowledge. But she was, in addition, a practical archaeologist. For many years she took part in the excavation of the Meare Lake Village, directed by Mr. St. George Gray; finding, among much else, the first human skull to be discovered there. She also collaborated in excavating late Iron Age sites in Cornwall and in publishing accounts of them (Clark, 1953, 1957). Indeed she was largely responsible for awakening interest in the remarkable fogous of that county; her book on the subject is well known (Clark, 1961). In addition, she wrote a child's Guide to Old Buildings (Clark, 1952), as well as the life of the Somerset author, Walter Raymond. But an account of her detailed excavation of the fogou at Boleigh, near St. Buryan, remains to be published.

English literature had always been an outstanding interest to Mrs. Clark, especially novels from the period of Jane Austen to that of Hardy. Indeed towards the end of her life she had planned to write a book on Emily Bronte but illness prevented her from completing it.

Those who knew her will remember in particular her zest for life. Never did she interfere in the affairs of others, but she would give understanding help and encouragement to those who sought it of her and deserved it, and this Society owes much to her interest in it.

E.B.F.

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