

## OBITUARY

**Norman Quinnell FSA, 1925–2008**

After the second world war, in which he served from 1943 as a navigator in the RAF, Norman Quinnell joined the Ordnance Survey as a surveyor. He transferred to the Archaeology Branch in 1951 soon after it was resurrected after the war and worked in archaeological surveying all his life. The Archaeology Branch provides the basic data which puts archaeology on maps – Norman Quinnell probably saw more sites than any one else in southern Britain, at any time, ever. He was promoted to Grade III – a surveyor in charge of a regional section – in 1966. One of the reasons that his field work was outstanding was that he was happy to stay and work five days a week in the field for most of his working life, rejecting the possibility of promotion at Southampton which would have taken him away from immediate contact with the archaeology. He transferred to the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in 1983, having been awarded the Imperial Service Medal and elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in the same year. He retired at the end of 1989 when, unusually for someone working in a basic role, he was the subject of a festschrift (*From Cornwall to Caithness*, BAR Brit Ser 209). The letters NVQ appearing on thousands of Ordnance Survey record cards have become synonymous with quality. He was a great teacher and inspirer – knowledge was to be enjoyed, shared, passed on, but, most importantly, got right. Of the

eight staff who worked under him in his section six were subsequently promoted to Grade III.

He lived in Somerset for a good chunk of his working life, at Portishead, Nether Stowey and at West Huntspill. He had a great affection for the flat lands of the Somerset Levels – his house at Huntspill on the edge of the Levels had a superb view of Brent Knoll from the back window. He was a longstanding member of SANHS going back to 1966. He tended not to write articles himself, rather doubting his competence. This is more than made up for by the frequency with which he is acknowledged in the work of others, especially in Leslie Grinsell's work on barrows particularly those in Somerset. His main work in Somerset took place in 1964–7 with emphasis on the Quantocks and Exmoor, but he returned to Somerset in the 1980s to work for the RCHME on its survey of lithic monuments on Exmoor – the small stone settings virtually unique to the area. His survey (Quinnell & Dunn *Lithic Monuments in the Exmoor National Park* 1992) remains unpublished but Riley and Wilson-North's *The Field Archaeology of Exmoor* drew heavily on his work, with acknowledgement, not just about the settings but about all sorts of other monuments previously not known. He will be remembered for his enthusiasm and commitment, for his vast knowledge of field archaeology, and for his gentle but steadfast determination that any work should be done well.

PETER ELLIS