



F. G. SIMPSON  
from a portrait by ALPHAEUS P. COLE, 1949.

*facing p. 359.*

## In Memoriam

Our Past President Mr FRANK GERALD SIMPSON, C.B.E., M.A., Hon. F.S.A.Scot., who died on 14 May 1955 after a long illness, will be remembered far beyond the limits of this Society as the vindicator of Hadrian's responsibility for the Stone Wall, the pioneer and perfecter of scientific study of its structures and their history, and the founder of a school of archæology which has in many respects transformed and reinvigorated the study of Roman Britain and of Roman frontier policy.

He was born on 31 October 1882, the son of Edward Simpson of Boston Spa, Yorkshire, and was educated at Rydal School; from there he went in 1899 to serve his apprenticeship with Hawthorn, Leslie and Company on Tyneside, proposing to make his career in marine engineering, and during the six years that he spent with that firm he acquired the skill as a draftsman, and the habit of meticulous accuracy, which were to characterise all his archæological work. His first introduction to the Wall came about quite by chance. His sisters came to visit him in Newcastle, and told him that they wanted above all to see something of the Wall; rather reluctantly (as he used to admit later) he complied with their pressing request and took them to Housesteads, where they were all duly soaked to the skin by a heavy July rainstorm. But the damage was done—as his colleagues would have put it—for within a few months he decided to abandon marine engineering (in which they foresaw a brilliant future for him) and to devote himself to the Wall and its elucidation. On 25 January 1905 he joined the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, and he soon came under the influence of J. P. Gibson, the chemist and photographer of Hexham who was one of its vice-presidents, already widely known as the excavator of Mucklebank turret and of Greatchesters fort; and after the Pilgrimage of 1906, in which both of them took part (Simpson making the whole journey on foot), they went into archæological partnership. Gibson was of course the senior partner, bringing long experience both of digging and of photography, and a clear vision of the need for a renewed assault on problems which Haverfield had gradually come to despair of solving; but it is no secret that Simpson provided the bulk of the funds and assumed responsibility for the greater part of the supervision of the programme of work which started

at the small fort on the Haltwhistle Burn in April 1907. Their report on that excavation (AA3 v 213-285) was read to the Newcastle Society on 25 November 1908, a month after his twenty-sixth birthday; it marked a new standard of excellence in its plans and sections, its meticulous publication of the small finds, its objective analysis of the site and its problems, and the high quality of its photographs: it is sufficient testimony to Simpson's work as a photographer that Gibson was content to contribute only six out of the 16 views reproduced. Three months earlier they had read a paper on inscriptions from Greatchesters and Cockmount Hill (AA3 v 158-169), but that was not the first occasion on which Simpson addressed the Newcastle Society, for at its May meeting the partners had given verbal reports on the work accomplished at Haltwhistle Burn and elsewhere, and Gibson's observations (as reported in PSAN3 iii 218 f.) included a generous tribute to his colleague's part: "superintending, digging, and making his own plans, and living on the spot during the summer and autumn of one of the wettest seasons [1907] of recent times".

In 1909 the partners transferred their operations into Cumberland, in the first instance to investigate the possibility of pre-Hadrianic occupation at Nether Denton, some figured samian of early style from that site having attracted their notice in the Chesters Museum. One problem led to another, and the upshot was a series of investigations ultimately published in two monumental reports in our *Transactions* (CW2 xi 390-461 and xiii 297-397), copiously illustrated with plans and sections and colotype plates presented by Simpson himself. He had given the Newcastle Society, in October 1911, a summary account of their work in the Poltross Burn-Appletree sector (PSAN3 v 129-133), and it is well worth reading as a succinct and revealing statement of the way in which the study of the Wall had been revolutionised. Simpson had become a member of this Society at the spring meeting held in Tullie House on 15 April 1909, when another new member was R. G. Collingwood, then an undergraduate at University College, Oxford; the two men became firm friends, and for many years Collingwood acted as interpreter of Simpson's work to the world at large, putting his pen and his influence in academic circles freely at the disposal of a man in whom he recognised the qualities of genius and of real humility. Simpson was a willing and eloquent lecturer, incomparable in his powers of verbal exposition; but he was diffident to a degree when it came to publication. Robert Browning's Grammarian had no clearer vision of perfection—in striving for which, Simpson too often (as his friends and pupils thought) preferred to attack

fresh problems arising out of those already solved, before attempting to write the definitive account of his researches, some of which for that reason have consequently not yet been published in detail (though it is good to know that they are to be edited and published before long). But in collaboration—with Gibson or later with Dr R. C. Shaw or, for so many fruitful years, with Professor Richmond, in field archæology and excavation, or with W. G. and R. G. Collingwood as editors and as joint planners of research—he was responsible for initiating and directing a long series of further excavations, all marked by the sureness of touch and the economy of effort which the world at large has come to think of as R. G. Collingwood's approach, but which Collingwood himself always regarded as the most striking features of Simpson's work in archæology.

The first series of excavations on the Wall came to an end just before the beginning of the first World War in 1914, during which his skill as a draftsman was put to good account in the aircraft industry. In 1914, too, came his marriage to Sarah Mayhew, daughter of the Rev. John Mayhew Wamsley, to whose constant interest and support his later work owed so much. It was at that period that he became particularly interested in the chain of Roman signal-stations along the Yorkshire coast, to which a paper in the newly established *Journal of Roman Studies* had been devoted (JRS ii 215-232), and those who are qualified to express an opinion have claimed that his excavation of the complicated Scarborough site, with one such station overlaid by a Dark Age cemetery and a medieval chapel, and itself overlying a pre-Roman settlement, was one of the greatest triumphs archæological excavation has ever achieved. Circumstances combined to defer full publication of the results—in part his serious illness in 1923, in part the difficulty in preparing the specialists' reports on the skeletal and other remains—and a final report has yet to be published, but the main results are given in some detail in Rowntree's *History of Scarborough* (1931), thanks to his generosity in putting them freely at the disposal of the contributors to that work: and the important yields of pottery and of coins were included in their surveys of the material from the Yorkshire signal-stations by Mr M. R. Hull and Sir Edmund Craster in the *Archæological Journal* (lxxxix, 1933, 220-253).

In 1924 came his return to the Wall and its problems, with the establishment (mainly on his initiative) first of the Durham University Excavation Committee and then of the North of England Excavation Committee, for both of which he was to undertake work of the greatest importance; in the same year.

the University of Durham conferred on him the honorary degree of Master of Arts, in recognition of his contributions to Roman archæology. In 1923 he had been elected an honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and in 1949 he received an even higher tribute, the award of the C.B.E. "for services to Archæology"; in the same year, a number of his friends presented him with his portrait in oils, painted by Alphaeus P. Cole, as a more personal tribute of affection and esteem. It was reproduced as the frontispiece to the *Centenary Pilgrimage Handbook* (July 1949) and is given with this memoir also: the artist has recaptured in it much of the alertness and even impishness of Simpson at his best, with Horsley's *Britannia Romana* open on the table before him and a Castor vase at his side, to testify to his leadership in the scientific study of Roman pottery as well as of frontier works; one can almost hear him producing some devastatingly apt rejoinder to a colleague's speculation—"But surely, if you had read your Horsley . . ." Horsley, indeed, was his model and his constant inspiration, not least because he too had scientific as well as archæological interests; and it was in great measure due to Simpson that the bicentenary of Horsley's death in 1732 was commemorated so worthily, though with characteristic modesty he was content that the public tributes should be paid by other men.

The Durham University Committee inaugurated its investigations in 1925 at Greatchesters; in 1926 Simpson was ill, and it was not until the next season that work was resumed, now in conjunction with this Society, at Birdoswald and westwards along the Wall; the reasons for the move to a fresh site were set forth in the report which he contributed to our *Transactions* (CW2 xxviii 377-388) and need not be repeated here. But it is worth while to turn to that report, to see how his generalship and vision were able to achieve results of the highest interest and importance in spite of every handicap that the weather, in a season even wetter than that of 1907, could produce. The interior of Birdoswald fort might be turned into a good imitation of a boating-lake, but that made it possible to switch over to a series of small-scale operations (equally instructive to students—as the present writer found) over a stretch of four or five Wall miles, the prelude to the work of a revived Cumberland Excavation Committee in the period 1930-37, once the original Birdoswald programme had been brought to a successful conclusion in 1929 (CW2 xxx 169 ff., with Simpson's summing-up, pp. 202-205). Meanwhile, he had been equally busy in Northumberland, directing much of the North of England Committee's investigation of the line of the Wall, from Wallsend

westwards almost to North Tyne, in connection with the preparation of the Roman chapter for the *Northumberland County History*, xiii, and then with the county council's programme of road-widening and levelling along the Military Road; other writers were entrusted with the bulk of the reporting on these investigations, but Simpson's own report on the work done west of Heddon-on-the-Wall in 1930 (AA4 viii 305-325) is of no less importance, for the study of the Wall as a whole, than the two published in CW2 xi and xiii, to which reference has already been made.

Nothing has been said yet about the Vallum, to the special problems of which J. P. Gibson first drew Simpson's attention, his first field-work on it taking place as early as the Haltwhistle Burn period. The initial exposition of his conclusions on this subject was given during the Pilgrimage of 1920, when he and R. G. Collingwood were two of the chief guides, and they were ultimately developed into the important paper, written jointly with Dr R. C. Shaw, on "The purpose and date of the Vallum and its crossings" (CW2 xxii 353-433). Later research, in which Simpson himself took a leading part, was ultimately to produce a different and in many ways simpler interpretation, which has won general acceptance; but that paper stands as the record of first-rate field archæology carried through to its logical conclusion in a printed report, itself the springboard from which further progress could best be made. Its publication soon brought him, with Collingwood as the intermediary, into touch with Professor Fabricius, whose visit to the Wall in 1928 convinced him that Simpson's methods were not only sound but deserving of application to the Roman frontier in Germany (cf. CW2 xxix 336 ff. and PSAN4 iii 280-286); with that aim in view, he sent his assistant in the *Limeskommission*, Dr Kurt Stade (now professor of Roman archæology in the University of Münster) to take part in the Birdoswald excavations of 1929, and thereafter Fabricius kept in the most close and friendly touch with the further progress of research on Hadrian's Wall.

Simpson was elected to our Council in 1920, and promoted Vice-President in 1924. He served as President for the year 1947-48, in spite of the ill-health which increasingly limited his participation in further research, and almost to the last he retained a close interest in the Society's work, particularly on Roman sites. He even carried out a small excavation in Carlisle as recently as 1953 (CW2 liii 233 f.), but his physical strength was already failing, and he was not able to bring the investigation to its logical conclusion. It had been undertaken as part

of his services as honorary adviser on archæology to the corporation of Carlisle, an appointment which gave him particular pleasure, and he devoted to it exemplary attention in what he regarded as a labour of love. In that, and in his lecturing up and down the country, there was a missionary fervour which could not fail to make a deep impression on his hearers; and where the preservation or the exploration of the Wall were concerned, he was prepared to ignore or brush aside all personal considerations, so passionately was he devoted to the cause to which he himself had given so much. One of his deepest interests in recent years was in the Clayton Memorial Museum at Chesters, of which he was a trustee, and he played a helpful part in the negotiations which led to the Ancient Monuments Department assuming custody, first of the Roman bridge-abutment on the east bank of North Tyne, and then of the fort, bath-house and museum.

As first Director of the Durham University Excavation Committee he had no teaching duties except in the field, where from the first he welcomed the opportunity afforded for training university students in excavation: but he was invited to give an annual lecture in each division of the university, to report on the past season's results. It was characteristic of his vision, and of his complete disregard for self, that it was he who urged on the university the creation of a full-time teaching post, ultimately given to the writer of this memoir in January 1931; a year previously he had arranged for the direction of the D.U.E.C.'s work to be handed over to the lecturer-designate, in order that there might be the closest co-ordination between academic teaching and the work of the training excavations.

In excavation, Simpson established standards of planning and of execution which have yet to be matched outside the sphere of the school which he himself founded. It was due primarily to his tenacity and singleness of purpose that it accomplished so much—and to his real humility that the importance of it, or indeed the significance of his own personal contribution to it, are so little recognised outside the immediate specialist field. We in this Society will remember him with gratitude and affection, and we offer our deepest sympathy to Mrs Simpson and to her daughters, one of whom has already made a name for herself in the field of Roman archæology. He was buried at Nether Denton, within the Roman fort which he himself had identified and investigated; the Society was represented at the funeral by Miss K. S. Hodgson, Past President, by our honorary member Mr Thomas Hepple (who had been foreman on so many of his excavations) and by many other members. It is good to know

that he was laid to rest so close to the scene of excavations to which he devoted such brilliant qualities, bringing to our Society the enduring fame which he never sought for himself. E.B.

Mr Harold Duff, F.S.A., writes: "By the death of Mr HERBERT VALENTINE our Society has lost one of its oldest and most enthusiastic members. He was born in 1865, the eldest son of the late C. J. Valentine, some time M.P. for Workington; and he died at his home at Seaton Cote on 15 April 1955, in his ninetieth year. He joined the Society in 1922 and was elected a member of Council five years later; he was a member of the Society's committee for prehistoric studies from its foundation in 1933, and in 1939 he became one of our Vice-Presidents.

"His outstanding characteristic was his intense love of the countryside, which found full scope in the delightful river, mountain and moorland scenery of the Derwent, Cocker, Marron and Lostrigg. With one or two friends, he spent most of his spare time camping, tramping, observing, recording and photographing—he was an outstanding photographer—; nothing of interest in the natural history or the antiquarian lore of beck, moor and fell escaped his keen observation, and his studies of bird life were particularly happy. All this lore is delightfully expressed in his books: *The Derwent from Source to Mouth*, *Old Workington* and *Round About my Home*. He was equally enthusiastic in dealing with the remains of antiquity in the area which he made peculiarly his own; the mere enumeration of the titles of his contributions to our *Transactions* reveals the wide range of his interests. In collaboration with his friend J. R. Mason (who died in 1927—see CW2 xxvii 242) he wrote the following: "The British village site at Lanthwaite Green and other earthworks in West Cumberland" (CW2 xxiv 117-122); "Studfold Gate circle and the parallel trenches at Dean" (xxv 268-271); "Harrington cross-head" and "The Greengill earthwork" (xxv 369-373); and "Find of pre-Norman stones at St Michael's church, Workington" (xxviii 59-62). He also contributed "Ancient pottery in Whinfell parish" (xxxv 37-41); "Axe-hammer from Branthwaite" and "Tumulus, Low Prior Scales" (xlvii 238-239); and "A Roman quern from Totter Gill" (xlviii 217-218). In addition, he recorded the discovery of an *aureus* of Nero at Siddick, not far from Burrow Walls (CW2 xxvi 547), and the discovery of a Roman coastal signal-tower near Mawbray (xxxv 282). This last-named discovery prompted a lively interest in the Roman structures along the Cumberland coast, the Mawbray tower being

the first to be recorded in our *Transactions* since Joseph Robinson's discoveries in 1880. He was kept informed of Mr Bellhouse's recent discoveries at Bank Mill and Dub Mill Point, and was keenly interested in them, recalling vividly his discussions of possible tower-sites with the late R. G. Collingwood; he would have been even more interested in Mr Bellhouse's excavation at Burrow Walls, only a short distance from his home, the completion of which coincided with his death (cf. Art. III, above).

"By profession he was an analytical chemist, serving for many years on the staff of the Workington Iron and Steel Company, of which he was later a director; and he was well known for his philanthropic work in his native town. He was a man of great personal charm—a lover of the beautiful, simple in his tastes, of rare intelligence, richly stored with all the varied lore of his own countryside. His loss will be deeply felt in the Workington area, and particularly by those of our members who had the privilege of knowing him."

Mr J. Melville contributes the following: "Mr WILSON BUTLER, M.A., LL.M., died at his home, Glebelands, Broughton-in-Furness, on 25 August 1955, at the age of 86. He joined our Society in July 1898, and at the time of his death was our longest-serving member. He was educated at Lancaster Grammar School, Campion Hall and Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he read law, and gained his Blue for athletics. He served his articles as a solicitor with Messrs Waugh and Musgrave of Cockermouth, qualifying in 1891, and was then taken into partnership by his father, Thomas Butler, at Broughton. He contributed the following papers to our *Transactions*: "The customs and tenant-right tenures of the northern counties, with particulars of those in the district of Furness in the county of Lancaster" (CW2 xxvi 318-336); "Town fields of Broughton and Subberthwaite-in-Furness" (xxix 293-302); and "Three proclamations of ancient fairs: Ravenglass, Dalton and Broughton-in-Furness" (xxxiv 101-106). In addition, he frequently supplied information for papers by other members, fully earning W. G. Collingwood's rating of him as a man whose knowledge of local history and usages was considerable (CW2 xxix 252); it was in this way in particular that he endeared himself to a wide circle of friends—though many people might think him stern and slightly dictatorial, he always received an enquirer courteously, even generously, and he was invariably able and glad to supply the information required. In his younger days he was a great athlete, being especially interested in fell-walking, and his keen

interest in Lakeland life and customs is shown by such papers as "The Herdwick sheep" and "The great deed of Borrowdale", which he contributed to the *Journal* of the Fell and Rock-climbing Club of the English Lake District, of which he was a foundation member. For some considerable time he suffered severely from arthritis, and was confined to his room; but in spite of such a physical handicap, and the death of his wife and lifelong companion, he remained wonderfully cheerful. He was especially pleased whenever a fellow-student came to see him, calling for information on local history, and his alert mind allowed him to take an active part in a quiet discussion up to within a few months of his death. He will be greatly missed by the active members of the Society in Furness and south Cumberland."

Mr JAMES HERBERT VINCE, M.A., who died on 22 August 1955 at the age of 90, had been a member of our Society since 1923. He never contributed to *Transactions*, but he joined in the exploration of a cairn on Thwaites Fell (CW2 xxix 252), and it will be recalled that he presented to the Ruskin Museum, Coniston, a finely worked specimen of a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead found in his garden at Esp Hall, Ulpha (CW2 xxii 273); at one time, too, he served as the Society's correspondent for the Millom district to the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. An obituary notice in the *Times* records his part in establishing the tradition of the Greek play at Bradfield, where most of his active life as a schoolmaster was spent: "he was a fine teacher, helping boys to share something of his own relish for force and beauty of style, whether in prose or verse". He will be remembered for his translations of Demosthenes in the Loeb series, and as a lover of the countryside in which the years of his retirement were spent. Our member Lady Amos writes: "He had such a wide love of all literature, and such a humorous touch with it. I tried to go in twice a week of recent years . . . and I never knew whether I should find him reading Homer or doing the *Times* crossword. He loved to read the *Odyssey* aloud, and I would-sit with Butcher and Lang on my knee and listen to him rolling it out. All his neighbours loved the old man, and the valley will miss him . . . He was educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham, where his father was a Baptist minister, and at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was a keen rowing man; he taught for a time at Oundle, before he went to Bradfield." The Hon. Marjorie Cross, F.S.A., adds that his literary gifts displayed themselves locally in readings from Dickens, and that he once published a charming sonnet,

in *Country Life*, on the course of the Duddon, cast in the form of the different movements of a sonata. As long as his health permitted, he was a frequent attender of the Society's excursions.

Canon ROBERT DUNN ELLWOOD, M.A., who died on 7 June 1955, aged 79, was a son of the Rev. Thomas Ellwood, vicar of Torver for more than fifty years. The father, who was a member of our Society in his day, contributed half a dozen valuable articles to the Old Series of *Transactions*, and edited *Anderson's Cumberland Ballads and Songs* (Ulverston, 1904); the son became a member in 1917, and wrote short articles on Millom parish church (CW2 xviii 106-109) and on Nether Denton church (xlii 149-152): he was also a foundation member of the Lakeland Dialect Society. After taking his degree at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was ordained in the diocese of Carlisle in 1898 and spent most of his life in it, holding the livings of Torver, Millom, St Mary (Carlisle) and Walton; he was also rural dean of Carlisle, and later of Brampton. From 1928 to 1944 he was chaplain to the Border Regiment, and from 1935 an honorary canon of Carlisle; he was also served on a very large number of diocesan committees. Those who knew him will remember him with affection as a priest of the old-fashioned type: a man with a deep spiritual life, a scholar, kindly and courteous to all, with a delightful sense of humour. Though he was always interested in the antiquities of our district, his life was too full to allow him the leisure to follow this interest up by further writing of his own. C.M.L.B.

The death of Mr WILLIAM VALENTINE WADE, M.A., F.S.A., at the early age of 44, is a sad blow to Romano-British studies, and in particular to the University of Leeds and to the Roman Antiquities Committee of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, which he served with great devotion and success, playing a large part in the revival of active field-work in Yorkshire after the war, and in the university building up a vigorous school of archæology; many of our members will remember with pleasure the lucid address which he gave to us when we visited the Roman fort at Bainbridge in Wensleydale (CW2 liv 284 f.), where for several years past he had run a very successful training course for his Leeds pupils and others, at the same time adding substantially to our knowledge of the history of the site. He was a more than competent numismatist, specialising in the coinage of Carausius, and was always ready to help in the identification of coin-finds—for example, from the excavations at Lów Borrow Bridge and Burrow (CW2 li and liv); he

was a patient and careful excavator, too modest to aim at large-scale work, and his enthusiasm and sincerity made him an inspiring teacher and a delightful colleague. He joined our Society in 1949, and followed its activities with keen interest, though his professional commitments did not allow him to attend its meetings; his only contribution to our *Transactions* was a note on "Roman candlesticks" (CW2 lii 187 f.), but he had been looking forward to making a study of the Roman coin-hoards in our area. The Society's deepest sympathy is offered to Mrs Wade and to her four young children. E.B.

We also record, with regret, the deaths of the following members of the Society, whose dates of joining it are added in parentheses:—

Mr W. G. C. DONALD, Raughton Head (1934).

Canon W. W. FARRER, Ambleside (1940).

Dr A. C. B. McMURTRIE, Carleton (1949).