

OBITUARY

R. W. P. COCKERTON, LL.B., F.S.A., 1904–1980

With the death of Richard Cockerton Derbyshire has lost one of its most distinguished figures who in a long career in public life reached positions of distinction in a variety of spheres. He was a partner in the family firm of solicitors in Bakewell from 1927 and indeed he died at the offices of his firm, but he also reached prominence in local politics, at both county and district level, in the church, in the scouting movement and, of course, in the world of archaeology.

This Society was one of the major beneficiaries of his endeavours. He was a member for 45 years and served as an officer of the Society from 1934 when he was first elected to Council. He became Deputy Chairman of the Society in 1943 and Chairman in 1961. On his retirement from that position in 1966 he was elected as Vice President, a position he retained until his death. He was largely instrumental in carrying through the formation of sections in the Society in 1954.

For someone so deeply involved in professional and public life, Cockerton produced an extraordinary amount of published work, all of it involving original research, and in the archaeological world he will doubtless be associated first and foremost with his work on ancient roads and with Roman studies. The Portway was his particular interest and his articles in *Derbyshire Countryside* in the 1930s remained the standard authority on that road, although he had recently revised his thoughts on the subject. In the field of Roman studies, he initiated Stanley's excavations at Ball Cross Camp, Bakewell, in 1938, the excavations by Richmond at Brough in 1939 and, more recently, the excavations of Edward the Elder's fort at Castle Hill, Bakewell. With J. P. Heathcote, he organised a series of annual excavation camps between 1945 and 1955 at Brough for boys from Chesterfield School, in order to elucidate the numerous Roman roads impinging on the fort. Up to the time of his death he was actively engaged in research on the Roman altar from Brough which he regarded as the best discovery of his archaeological life, and which is now set up prominently in Weston Park Museum, Sheffield. His seven contributions to the *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society* between 1953 and 1962 were all on Roman subjects.

Although by nature and experience conservative and a believer in tradition, in all his activities he was always able to work in harmony with more progressive persons who sometimes held differing views from his own. He fully realised his own limitations as an amateur in archaeology but frequently took some delight in disproving what he considered errors in the opinions of professionals. He was helped throughout his career by his legal training and his steadfast application to his religious principles.

J. P. HEATHCOTE, D. V. FOWKES