IN MEMORIAM

Professor Geoffrey Haward Martin, CBE, MA, DPhil, FSA, FRHistS
1928-2007

Geoffrey Martin, who died at Summerhill Nursing Home, Kendal, on 20 December 2007 at the age of 79, was one of the most distinguished scholars and historians of his generation, who on his retirement as Keeper of Public Records went on to give notable service to this Society.

Son of Ernest Leslie Martin and Mary Hilda (née Haward) of Colchester, Essex, Geoffrey was born on 27 September 1928 and educated at Colchester Royal Grammar School, where his characteristic inquisitorial mind soon became evident and bore fruit with his first work, *The History of Colchester Royal Grammar School*, published in 1947 as that year’s edition of the school magazine, *The Colcestrian*. Though not attracted by sporting activities, he did cycle a great deal around the counties of Essex and Suffolk, mainly looking at churches and historic buildings. He always remained attached to his East Anglian roots long after he had adopted the Lake District as his family home, where in later life he took up fell walking with enthusiasm. He went on up to Merton College, Oxford in 1947 to read history, his predilection for the medieval period being reinforced by his specialising in Richard II and John of Gaunt. But after graduating in 1950 the doctoral research upon which he embarked was the history of Ipswich in the medieval period (under the supervision of K. B. Macfarlane of Magdalen College, an historian of great influence on many medievalists). This was a formative choice since it not only sparked a lifelong interest in the study of towns, to which he made an important contribution, but also stimulated an appetite for and appreciation of archives.

After continuing his research at the University of Manchester on ‘The Borough and the Merchant Community of Ipswich 1317-1422’ (submitted for his D.Phil in 1955), he took up the post of lecturer in economic history at the University of Leicester in 1952. This was to remain his academic home for the next 30 years, becoming Reader in 1966 and Professor of History in 1973, also Public Orator 1971-1974 and later Pro-Vice-Chancellor 1979-1982. It was also where he began his married life with Janet, daughter of Douglas Hamer, Reader in English at Sheffield University. The historical community at Leicester, which included such well known figures as Jack Simmons, H. P. R. Finberg and, more briefly, W. G. Hoskins, was obviously a very congenial one, while the administrative aspect of university life provided useful experience for what was to come. While at Leicester he established a rewarding link with academic colleagues in Canada, being invited to be Visiting Professor at Carleton University, Ottawa in 1958-1959 and again in 1967-1968, and after his retirement, Distinguished Visiting Professor of History at the University of Toronto, where there was a strong school of medieval studies.
Geoffrey’s first full-length publication was in fact the history of his hometown, *The Story of Colchester from Roman times to the present day* (1959), but apart from *A Calendar of Ipswich Recognizance Rolls, 1294-1327* (1970), it was some years before his research work bore fruit in the shape of a masterly contextual essay on ‘The Government of Ipswich from its origins to c.1550’, which appeared as the introduction to the full catalogue of the *Ipswich Borough Archives 1255-1835* edited by David Allen (2000). This volume appeared in the Suffolk Record Society General Series, a body which he had co-founded in 1958 with his colleague and lifelong friend, Norman Scarffe, and to which he devoted his editorial expertise for many years, remaining as a Vice-President until his death. Editions of the *Royal Charters of Grantham 1463-1688* (1963) and *Portsmouth Royal Charters 1194-1974* (1995) followed, though perhaps his most considerable achievement was the publication (with Sylvia McIntyre) of *A Bibliography of British and Irish Municipal History* (1972), compiled from 6,000 card entries before the advent of computers. This was designed to supplement rather than supersede Charles Gross’s pioneering *Bibliography* of 1897, which had been reissued in 1966 with a preface by Geoffrey. Sadly, the intended second volume on the post-1897 work on individual towns never materialised.

Nor was his interest in towns merely archival as *The Town: A Visual History* (1961) showed, further elaborated in his paper ‘The Town as Palimpsest’ published in *The Study of Urban History* (1966), which displayed the wide-ranging nature of his historical understanding. Always it was underpinned by the premise that while the historian’s primary concern must be with the text, that has a context which encompasses the whole range of human activity and ‘the marks that man leaves behind him’. His intense curiosity for all manner of such things and the consequent formidable grasp of the attendant detail never left him and was immediately evident to all who encountered him.

His work on towns had already brought him to Kendal and an examination of the corporation’s records then still held in the Town Hall, following in the footsteps of H. C. Maxwell-Lyte in 1885 (and not for the only time as it turned out). A footnote in his paper ‘Street-Lamps for Kendal’ in the *Journal of Transport History* (1965) does indicate his intention to include the Kendal Fell Trust papers in a general list of the borough’s pre-1835 records. It was some years later before he returned to Kendal to make a serious contribution on the subject of the medieval towns of Westmorland when he gave the Curwen Archives Trust lecture in 1985. Subsequently he was invited to give the inaugural lecture to the newly formed Friends of Cumbria Archives at Newton Rigg, near Penrith, in 1991; this was a typically erudite address that laced serious points about record keeping with wit and humour and, as usual, delivered without notes.

Geoffrey’s career entered an entirely new phase with his appointment as Keeper of Public Records in May 1982, an event equally novel for the PRO [now TNA], whose previous Keepers and Deputy Keepers (to 1958) had normally been appointed from within the Civil Service. With the exception, perhaps, of Bodley’s Librarian, it was the big job that he relished the opportunity of making a mark on, though knowing that he would only have six years available before obligatory retirement at 60. As an academic
historian, he was not naturally well attuned to the innate bureaucratic procedures and demands of the Civil Service, but his achievements were substantial nevertheless. He took up the post in the wake of a critical report from Sir Duncan Wilson, chairman of the Committee on Public Records, which criticised the arrangements for selection and access to modern public records. Geoffrey was well able to hold his own whether in the forum of civil servants, politicians, or fellow academics, and he was notably successful in restoring the PRO’s good name in the academic world by the end of his term.

Most notable on the national stage was his masterminding of the 900th anniversary celebrations of Domesday Book, England’s oldest public record, in 1986, involving a special service in Westminster Abbey (where he actually addressed the congregation from the pulpit) and a particularly successful exhibition in Chancery Lane that attracted over 130,000 visitors in six months. He was certainly much more at home revelling in the amazing quality of the national archives for which his naturally curious historical mind was well suited to explain to a wider audience rather than coping with such incidents as the unpleasant bug in the air conditioning system on the Kew site of the PRO. He was also very active on the international archive scene as a member of the executive committee of the International Council on Archives (1984-1988), often representing the PRO overseas and leading the first official delegation to China in 1985; he was also the first chairman of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists in 1984. He took a particular interest in the British Records Association, being chairman of its council (1982-1991) and remaining an active vice-president thereafter. He was also a vice-president of the Royal Historical Society (1984-1988). His work at the PRO was recognised with a CBE in 1986.

On retirement from the PRO in 1988, Geoffrey resumed his academic research life free from the burden of administrative duties and pursued a number of projects and interests with vigour and enthusiasm. Wimbledon and Oxford, together with his family home at Finsthwaite, were to be his principal bases for his life in retirement. He was especially pleased to be appointed to a research chair at the University of Essex in 1990 (where he taught an inspiring course on World War II) and a senior research fellowship at his old college the same year, which resulted in the publication (with Roger Highfield) of A History of Merton College, Oxford in 1997. From the Merton archives, nothing, perhaps, better illustrates his ability to bring an apparently mundane record to life than his wonderfully sympathetic account of ‘Road Travel in the Middle Ages: Some Journeys by the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, Oxford, 1315-1470’ in the Journal of Transport History (1976). The major fruit of these years, however, was his exemplary edition and translation of Knighton’s Chronicle, 1337-1396 (Oxford Medieval Texts, 1996), a mammoth undertaking born of a close association with the text of over 40 years, rendered all the more appropriate for Henry Knighton’s own native connection with Leicester.

The other landmark was the publication of the facsimile edition of Domesday Book. When still Keeper, he had taken the historic decision to unbind the original Domesday manuscripts and invite Alecto Historical Editions to undertake the highest quality colour reproduction possible. Each double page was photographed to actual size and
then printed using a continuous-tone lithographic process to such effect that Geoffrey declared it an ‘indecently exact facsimile’. It was produced in a limited Millennium Edition of 450 perfect facsimiles, a County Edition and a Library Edition as well as a Digital Domesday on CD-ROM under his general editorship. Finally he was responsible (with Ann Williams) for Domesday Book: A Complete Translation, which was published in paperback for a wider audience by Penguin in 2003.

In the same year that he left the PRO he began an active association with this Society, being elected a vice-president in 1988 and, later, taking up the chairmanship of the Editorial Committee (1996-1999). With his experience in this field, he made an immediate impact and, together with Pat Ball as the new General Editor, he ensured an impressively high scholarly standard of publications in the Extra and Record Series. His examination of the projected volume on The Medieval Fortified Buildings of Cumbria was particularly memorable. He had already given a lecture to the Society on its early history at the AGM in 1990, but his only contribution to the Transactions was a characteristically elegant introduction to ‘A Retrospective’ in the final volume of the New Series (2000). After some deliberation he accepted Council’s invitation to be nominated for the presidency in 1999 and went on to enjoy steering the Society into the new millennium. In his first year he had the task of representing it during the Twelfth Pilgrimage of Hadrian’s Wall, an antiquarian tradition that much appealed to him for the way in which it brought scholars and archaeologists together from far and wide in the spirit of enquiry and reassessment. His handling of Council was notable for its light but sure touch, delicate or controversial matters being defused by the most devastating shafts of humour that suspended debate amid helpless mirth. He brought great wisdom and experience to bear at other times.

However, within weeks of vacating the presidential chair in April 2002, Geoffrey fell victim to an illness that severely restricted his activities for the remainder of his life. This meant that he was confined to the family home at Finsthwaite for most of the time, leaving Janet with an unexpected great burden of care, to which she responded heroically. Although he managed to fulfil some lecture engagements, he was forced to give up his flat in Wimbledon and release a large section of his library, but nevertheless Church View Cottage was crammed with books, not least with the arrival of the 60 volumes of the new Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, of which he had been a research associate since 1997 and to which he submitted a total of 51 biographies. The project afforded him an outlet to combine the immensely diverse range of his knowledge over an equally wide range of periods (from medieval monks and chroniclers of the 12th century via antiquaries of the 18th and archivists of the 19th to contemporary historians and colleagues) with his ability to capture the significance of past lives in concise and unfailingly elegant prose. It also provided one of the best examples of the serendipity in which he took such delight. His mind remained as sharp and curious as ever, though denied much of the intellectual stimulation it needed as he became more physically confined, but he was fortunate in the devotion of Janet and of Sophie, his daughter, at home and of his three sons, Christopher, Patrick and Matthew, with their families, to whom we extend our sympathies.

Richard Hall
IN MEMORIAM

John Duncan Marshall
BSc (Econ.), PhD (London), FRHistS.
1919-2008

John Marshall, who died on 20 May 2008, will be particularly remembered for his work as a regional historian, both for his original contributions to a field of study he himself helped to create, and for the many ways he found to instil those important insights and values in others.

John was born in Ilkeston on 2 April 1919 and attended Nottingham High School, where he read widely, explored the local area by bicycle, and played cricket. After a short period as a junior reporter on the *Derby Evening Telegraph*, terminating in a row with an assistant editor, he acted for a while as a debt collector. His first-hand observation of poverty at a time of a national depression made a deep and lasting impression on him. He became a member of the Independent Labour Party and, at the outbreak of World War II, was a pacifist. His consequential work in forestry took him to the Lake District, where he was to make his home, and to friendships in the Barrow-in-Furness communist party.

In 1941, however, he joined the Royal Signals, and his service there took him through much of Europe, including a year in Berlin. Like many other ex-servicemen, he took the opportunity when war ended to read for a degree, in his case for an external London award while based at the then Nottingham University College. Though his main subject was economics, it also included a good deal of economic history with J. D. Chambers. Returning to Barrow, he decided to write its history, while working as a fitter’s mate in the shipyard, and this study became both an external London doctoral thesis and the core of his groundbreaking work, *Furness and the Industrial Revolution: An Economic History of Furness 1711-1897*, published in 1958. By this time he had married Audrey Pullinger, and they were to have three children; Celia (born 1950), Alison (born 1953), and Edward (born 1963). Some short-term teaching posts took him finally to Bolton Training College, where teachers for technical colleges were trained, and in 1966 he was appointed as assistant lecturer in north-west regional history at the still new University of Lancaster, becoming reader in 1969.

John’s 14-year period at Lancaster, prior to his early retirement in 1980 as reader emeritus, was action packed. Besides an extensive teaching programme and a constant output of books, chapters, articles and book reviews, he began almost at once to work with colleagues on a Regional Studies Panel. This became the Centre for North West Regional Studies in 1973, with John as founding director. Early work included the development of Elizabeth Roberts’ oral history of Barrow and Lancaster, a commissioned history of Lancashire County Council from its inception to the breakup of the historical county in the local government reorganisation of 1974, an annual...
archaeology conference that thrives to this day, collaboration with the University of Liverpool Extension Studies Department on postgraduate local history courses, and an extensive publishing programme that included the *Regional Bulletin* and a series of occasional papers with Oliver Westall as series editor. Historical demography, vernacular architecture, the industrial archaeology of the East Lancashire textile industry, and close studies of contemporary problems in regional rural communities, all followed under the aegis of the centre.

He also became a key member of the CWAAS, having joined in 1965, and published a number of papers in *Transactions*, culminating in a contribution for the ‘Retrospective’ in 2000. He was at different periods an elected and an *ex officio* member of the Council and was vice-president from 1983 to 1999. In 1969 a new committee for industrial archaeology was set up by the Society and John was appointed its chairman, retaining that post until 2003. He also initially acted as joint secretary for that committee with Michael Davies-Shiel: subsequently Anne Hillman took on this role, and both shared many field trips with John. He served on the Research Committee (1990-2000), as a member of the Parish Registers Section (1980-1990) and of the Editorial Committee (1987-2000). With Angus Winchester and others, he took an active part in the planning and preparation of a report by the Society’s Local History Working Party. This led to the formation of the Cumbria Local History Federation, which promotes and encourages active interest in and knowledge of local history studies in Cumbria, including the exchange of information. In 2000 he became the first Honorary Fellow of the Society for his many outstanding services.

In 1976 John married, secondly, Frances Harland. Together they established the Cumbria Poetry Centre at Charlotte Mason College, Ambleside, both themselves writing poetry and encouraging others to write and publish. Another venture was as a leading participant of a group that in 1978 established CORAL (Conference of Teachers of Regional and Local History in Tertiary Education), and he was a member of the editorial board for its journal.

Despite increasing ill-health, including progressive loss of sight, and the difficult period after the death of Frances in 1992, John remained involved and committed after his formal retirement to his customary wide range of activities, both in the field, in work with local societies, and in continuing publications. A complete list to 1998 is contained in E. Royle (ed.), *Issues of Regional Identity: In Honour of John Marshall* (Manchester UP). His periodic volcanic outbursts, particularly on paper, were famed: equally his generosity as mentor and guide to young and adult learners was sustained and brought with it the benefits of his own long experience in regional history. An example of his ability to draw out the potential of adult learners and local societies is documented in an article he wrote about the Mourholme Society for *The Local Historian* of May 2001. His published work, particularly on aspects of industrial archaeology, is an outstanding resource for the future; equally, the many people whom he personally encouraged and whose life he touched have in turn led by example in fostering high standards of scholarship and research, and in enabling others to understand and share in the field of regional history.

Marion McClintock
IN MEMORIAM

James Cherry
BSc (London), FSA
1920-2008

James (Jim) Cherry, whose death was recently announced, will be particularly remembered for his outstanding contributions to the study of prehistory, based on extensive and meticulous fieldwork, and for his deep and long-standing commitment to the Society.

Jim was born in Blackburn and went to school there. He took an external degree in chemistry after World War II from the University of London and, after a short spell in industry, joined the UK Atomic Energy Authority (later BNFL). He remained a lifelong advocate of the benefits of nuclear energy. His post necessitated a move in 1950 to Seascale for him and his wife Joyce, whom he had married in 1944, and after a time he became increasingly involved in archaeology. He began by identifying all the known flint sites in the Drigg sand dunes, and then in 1961, encouraged by Clare Fell, whom he greatly admired, he undertook extensive fieldwalking in the Seascale area for prehistoric remains, especially flints. He and Clare obtained permission to search the gravel beds in the Eskmeals Gun Range, and the early Neolithic finds from there were written up for the Transactions, with pollen analysis contributed by Winifred Penington (Tutin). He subsequently worked on the limestone uplands in the east of Cumbria and the fringes of Yorkshire, invariably in collaboration with the professional archaeologists working there.

Sometimes writing by himself, and sometimes with Joyce or his son Peter, Jim contributed forty-nine papers and notes to the Transactions. These were mainly on prehistory, but some were on industrial archaeology, including a final article on the Seascale gasworks in the 2007 volume: his interests in this field were catholic, and included medieval artefacts. With Peter, he published Prehistoric Habitation Sites on the Limestone Uplands of Eastern Cumbria (Research Series, Vol. II, 1987), in a volume dedicated to Clare Fell, and he and Peter also contributed a joint chapter on Yorkshire flint in prehistoric Cumbria to Studies in Prehistory (Extra Series, Vol. XXXIII, 2007). Some of his papers also appeared in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society.

Jim joined the CWAAS in 1959, and became a member of the South-West Regional Group, which he strongly supported and later chaired. He was a member of the Council for three periods between 1965 and 1981. He was a member of the Committee for Industrial Archaeology from 1969 to 1983, secretary of the Committee for Prehistoric Studies from 1970 to 1973, and a member of the successor body, the Fieldwork and Excavation Committee, until 1988. He was strongly supportive of Joyce during her period as General Secretary (1974-84), and was elected President of the Society for the period 1987-90.
Jim was one of the Society’s most dedicated and loyal members, regularly attending virtually every event in the Society’s calendar. He and Joyce spent a considerable amount of time working on the composite indexing of the Transactions. Joyce produced the index to the Old Series in 1981 and together they compiled the index to the New Series (years 1960-1989), published in 1990. They were still engaged in the project at the time of his death. He was a committed advocate of the Society and all that it represented, and during his period as President the membership increased, a school prizes project was launched, and with his encouragement the Newsletter developed into the important means of communication it has become for the Society’s recording work.

After thirty years at Seascale, he and Joyce moved to Kendal, thus facilitating his work on the limestone uplands. In 1999 they moved again to Lichfield, to be near their daughter Barbara. In spite of the distance involved, however, he continued to attend Society events when he could, especially the annual dinner. His dedication to the work of the independent archaeologist alongside the professional, his warm sense of humour, tinged with mischief, and his enthusiasm for the Society that he served so long, will be much missed. He is survived by his wife and both his children.

Marion McClintock