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Obituary

SIR IAN ARCHIBALD RICHMOND

Others have traced Ian Richmond's career and appraised his achievements in the field of Roman studies at large,¹ but it is fitting that in these *Proceedings* tribute should be paid more particularly to his distinguished services to Scottish archaeology.

From 1935, when he took up residence in Newcastle, he spent part of nearly every year in Scotland, seeking by skilful selective excavation the answers to problems which the researches of Macdonald, James Curle and others had brought sharply into focus, and also grappling with the many new problems created by the spate of air photograph discoveries that followed Crawford's highly successful reconnaissance flight in 1939. The main task was to clarify the history of Roman Scotland by determining the precise number and duration of the various occupational periods, and in this he achieved significant advances in knowledge. Thus at Fendoch and Inchtuthil he established that the Flavian (Agricolan) period ended shortly after A.D. 87; while his re-examination of the Newstead defences demonstrated that the Flavian II period terminated about A.D. 100, and was not prolonged until late in Trajan's reign, as some had supposed. At Newstead, too, he showed (as he himself had predicted twenty years before) that there were only two (not three) Antonine periods, the second of which followed closely upon the first. Although he did not excavate on the Antonine Wall, he took a lively interest in the progress of research on that barrier, and contributed to these *Proceedings* an important paper on the civil settlements attached to the Wall forts. In the south-west he sought, and obtained, the dating evidence required to fit the newly discovered forts of Carzield, Dalswinton and Glenlochar into the historical framework of the Roman occupation of that region, while elsewhere he solved the riddles of the Cleaven Dyke and the practice siege-works on Woden Law. In a wider context, however, his most significant work in Scotland was undoubtedly the reconstitution of the detailed plans of the auxiliary fort at Fendoch and the legionary fortress at Inchtuthil from the slots and post-holes of the vanished timbers. No one understood Roman timber-work as well as he did, and nothing like either of these investigations had been attempted previously in any Roman province. His preference for operating on a small scale, and for keeping every aspect of an excavation under his personal supervision, needs no defence, since the results speak for themselves. But it deserves to be recorded that in spite of the suddenness of his death he left only two of his Scottish excavations unpublished. The report on one of these is now in the press, while the Inchtuthil excavation was concluded only a few weeks before he died.

His writings were masterpieces of exposition, in which history, archaeology and topography were felicitously blended, while his authority and lucidity of expression made him an ideal lecturer. Rhind lecturer in 1933, and Dalrymple lecturer in 1938 and 1956, he was eagerly sought after by local societies in all parts of Scotland, and he rarely failed to respond to an invitation. Likewise, as a counsellor he was much in demand. He was a valued member of the Royal Commission from 1944 until his death, contributing a masterly survey of the Roman period to the *Roxburghshire Inventory*, and he served this Society for many years as expert adviser and chairman

¹ See especially the memoir by E. B. Birley in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, LII, 283ff.

of the Excavation Committee. His encyclopaedic knowledge and his generosity were alike reflected in the daunting size of his correspondence, for he never failed to reply to a serious enquiry or to lend his support to a worth-while enterprise. To his friends, however, and they were legion, his immense scholarship was of less significance than his warm and sympathetic personality, his consideration for others, and his delightful sense of humour. He was, in short, a man whom it was a privilege to know.

Kenneth Steer

WILLIAM DOUGLAS SIMPSON

Dr William Douglas Simpson died in 1968 aged 72. He was a Fellow of our Society for 50 years. He was born in Aberdeen, was a prizeman at the University there, and on its staff all his working life. In his first years he was a Lecturer in History, but the ambitions of a Chair were not for him, and early in his career he settled for academic administrative work which was free from the worries of preferment, and from which he could pursue his abiding interest in Scottish history and archaeology. He did this with outstanding success and was widely honoured for it. He received an Hon. LL.D. from his University where he became Librarian, Clerk of the General Council, and Registrar. He was Chairman of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, a Member of the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland, and other national bodies, and President of the Scottish Historical Association. He was a Rhind and Dalrymple lecturer and author of many books and papers on all periods and aspects of Scottish antiquities, but especially castles, and for his work on Norwegian medieval architecture and antiquities he was made Commander of the Royal Order of St Olaf, a distinction which gave him particular pleasure and one from which we may derive some satisfaction.

He was no less honoured with the gratitude, respect and devotion of an immense audience, of all kinds of people, learned and not so learned, throughout Scotland and in England too, who had heard him lecture in his inimitable brisk and lively way: he began at the beginning, went on until he came to the end, then stopped. Year after year his Extra-mural classes in Aberdeen University, always on a different subject, prehistoric, Celtic, medieval, topographical, were sensationally successful, with overflowing lecture halls and applicants regularly turned away. With utmost generosity and enthusiasm he continued these classes right up to the end, even when uncertain health required some diminution of his activity. And with undiminished success, for he had the born teacher's essential gift of imparting enthusiasm and love of his subject. His regard for Extra-mural teaching, in the opinion of some a most trivial occupation, was typical of the amplitude of his concern for our antiquities, which he freely shared in other similar ways, by indefatigable lecturing and guide-lecturing to all manner of societies.

Sir Malcolm Sargent said he would conduct any music to whoever wanted to listen and was loved for that. Douglas Simpson would talk to anyone who wanted to hear about Scottish antiquities, and especially castles, about which he was our greatest exponent, and he was loved for that. Our debt to him for his castles' studies is immense, and unlikely ever to be surpassed.

Stewart Cruden

ROBERT KERR

On the death of Mr Robert Kerr the Society lost one of its most faithful Fellows, a member of Council continuously for 33 years, first as Honorary Curator of Coins, then, when the Society ceased to have direct responsibility for the Museum, as an Expert Adviser until that office too was dropped in 1966. His published reports in the *Proceedings*, and at greater length in numismatic journals, on finds of medieval and later coins in Scotland from 1937 onwards, following in Sir George Macdonald's footsteps, were only a small part of the invaluable painstaking work which he did for the Museum's coin, token and medal collections in selection, arrangement and cataloguing, particularly after he retired from the Royal Scottish Museum in 1954. His main contributions to the *Proceedings* were those on communion tokens, characteristically in collaboration, but his identification of ethnographical 'strays' from all over Scotland was a frequent service to baffled archaeologists. His range of knowledge and activity was indeed wide,¹ and his help and wise advice are missed by all with whom he worked so willingly.

R. B. K. Stevenson

¹ cf. *Scottish Studies*, xi (1967), 251.