

## OBITUARY: MR. J. P. HEATHCOTE M.A., F.S.A.

By JOHN BARTLETT

Percy Heathcote of Birchover died in May 1981, aged 76. For more than 50 years he was associated with the Society, as Council member, as Chairman of the Prehistoric Section when it was first formed and, latterly, as a Vice-President. In his early days he played a prominent part in organising the Society's excursions and he lectured widely on prehistoric and archaeological themes for the Sheffield and Nottingham Extramural departments, and for the W.E.A. Indeed, it is said that he once claimed to have spoken on these subjects at one time or other in every village in Derbyshire. Certainly he was in great demand and did a very great deal to popularize archaeology in the days before the modern vogue for the subject had arisen.

For his living he taught history over many years in Chesterfield, first at Tapton House and then at the Grammar School. But undoubtedly his first interest and great love was the study of the prehistory of the Peak District, especially of those parts of the district adjacent to his native Birchover. With his father, Joseph Clee Heathcote, who also served on the Society's Council, Percy excavated, between 1926 and the war years, some thirty sites on Stanton Moor, nearly all of which proved to be burial mounds of the Early to Middle Bronze Ages. These excavations set an excellent standard for the time when they were done, easily surpassing in thoroughness and skill the work of earlier local excavators. It was the Heathcotes jointly, father and son, who demonstrated the character of the bronze age burials on Stanton Moor, the great number of surviving tumuli, the stone settings and other features to be found under the mounds, and the almost exclusive preponderance of Food Vessel and Cinerary Urn pottery. It is to Percy



Plate 1 Mr. J. P. Heathcote in the Heathcote Museum, Birchover. Portrait of his father Mr. J. C. Heathcote in the background. (Sheffield City Museums)

Heathcote alone that we owe the meticulous recording and careful writing up of the results of these important excavations in the series of articles that appeared in the Society's Journal between 1931 and 1940. Joseph Clee Heathcote may have provided the principal impetus for the field work and kept the great enterprise going, but it was John Percy who made the discoveries significant by publishing them. Few amateur archaeologists can ever have explored a limited area so thoroughly or have done more to make their home territory known on the maps of prehistoric Britain.

This was by no means all of Percy's contribution. A small collection of antiquities had been started at Birchover by his grandfather. As a result of the excavations on Stanton and on the nearby Harthill Moor the collection was vastly enlarged and became the Heathcote Museum. This was housed originally in the stables behind his father's house, but on Percy's retirement from teaching and return to Birchover it was moved into the Old Post Office where it could be better displayed. Though never open on a regular basis to the public it was always open to parties and to students, and many were the visitors who came from all over the country and from abroad to see it. Here, during the years of his retirement, Percy acted as unpaid custodian, counsellor and guide. Lucky indeed were those who, having seen the collection, were taken on a further tour around the sites and monuments on the Moor above! His gentle disposition and unfailing modesty must often have been imposed upon but, despite failing health in his latter years, his enthusiasm and willingness to help and to share his unique stores of knowledge never failed. His loss will be deeply felt by members of this Society particularly and by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Percy Heathcote was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1948. Between 1942 and 1966 he was the chief correspondent for Derbyshire for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments and he was active not only in the listing and scheduling of new sites but also in the guarding and maintenance of old ones. In 1930 he was awarded his M.A. at Sheffield University, the first archaeological thesis awarded at that University. His last paper, on the Nine Ladies Stone Circle, appeared as recently as 1980 and offered new suggestions for its interpretation. His published plan of sites on Stanton and Harthill Moors has recently been checked by re-survey and found to be remarkably accurate. His collections, despite frequent disturbance by students and scholars, have remained intact and he was able to arrange, before he died, for their permanent preservation at Sheffield City Museum. His work, in the many fields he cultivated, will live on and be of permanent value.

## J. P. HEATHCOTE BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. D.A.J. contributions

- (1930) Excavations at barrows on Stanton Moor. 51: 1-44.
- (1936) Further excavations on Stanton Moor. 57: 21-42.
- (1938) Flint adze found at Oldham's Farm, Newhaven. 59: 96-7.
- (1939) Excavations on Stanton Moor. 60: 105-115.
- (1939) Excavations at Doll Tor stone circle, Stanton Moor. 60: 116-25.
- (1939) The Nine Stones, Harthill Moor. 60:126-8.
- (1950) Reference list of ancient monuments in Derbyshire. 70:102-3.
- (1954) Excavations on Stanton Moor. 74:128-134.
- (1957) List of scheduled ancient monuments in Derbyshire up to 31st December 1957. 77:30-7.
- (1961) List of scheduled ancient monuments in Derbyshire. 81:136-7.
- (1961) List of scheduled ancient monuments in Derbyshire. 81:136-7.
- (1963) Scheduled ancient monuments in Derbyshire. 83:94-6.
- (1980) The Nine Ladies stone circle. 100: 15-16.

### 2. Booklets published privately

- (1926) *Birchover - its Prehistoric and Druidical Remains*. Revised edition 1934.
- (1956) *Arbor Low - Today, the Days of Old and the Years of Ancient Times*.

## OBITUARY: DR. J. WILFRID JACKSON F.S.A., F.G.S.

By I. H. MORTEN

The passing of Dr. John Wilfrid Jackson in his 99th year at the end of 1978 took from our midst a very distinguished scientist and a greatly respected man who had a wide circle of friends and professional acquaintances.

Born in Scarborough, his family moved to the Manchester district where Dr. Jackson received his early schooling, after which he entered first the cotton industry and then the woollen industry, but already his true interests were apparent in that he was also pursuing his geological studies, qualifying in this subject at the then Manchester School of Technology.

In 1907 came perhaps the first of many milestones in an outstanding career, when he was appointed Assistant Keeper of the Manchester Museum, later to become Senior Assistant Keeper with distinction for some 37 years. Early in his museum career he carried out research on mammalian osteology under Professor Sir William Boyd Dawkins, a man whom Dr. Jackson always held in the highest regard — a fruitful association which lasted until Sir William's death. His academic work suffered some interruption in the 1914-18 War when he served as a special constable with the Manchester City Police and was also involved with the University Officers' Training Corps. In 1921 he was awarded the Degree of Master of Science of Manchester University and in 1929 he received his Doctorate of Science. By this time he was acknowledged nationally and internationally as a leading authority in many facets of the natural sciences and there are few learned Societies which did not seek to benefit from his research and his readiness to share his work and interests. In many cases his achievements were rewarded with Honorary Membership in recognition of his work, while he was president of many Societies, a role he carried out with distinction.

Dr. Jackson contributed to countless scientific journals and in 1917 he published an authoritative work on *Shells as Evidence of the Migration of Early Culture*. His interest in and knowledge of shells was profound and lifelong; he was an Officer of the British Conchological Society for many years. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Geological Society of London, and a Founder Member of the Manchester Geological Association, which he served as President and Honorary Secretary. In the inter-war years his research took him to Northern Ireland where his work was widely acclaimed. In 1934 the Geological Society of London awarded him the Murchison Fund for Research. In 1931/2 at the invitation of Sir Robert Mond and the Egyptian Exploration Society he visited Egypt to study the remains of sacred cattle in early burials and to identify human and other remains in predynastic graves.

Locally he served the National Trust in various ways, being for some time Honorary Secretary of the Dovedale Committee: Dovedale was an area he loved and, in his association with the late F. A. Holmes, he contributed much to safeguarding its future. As early as 1930 he gave evidence to the Addison Committee on National Parks and later was to serve on the Peak National Park Board, during which period he wrote the section on geology in the Official Guide. Dr. Jackson contributed much to the Buxton Museum, of which he was Honorary Curator, especially in establishing the present Museum after its removal from the Town Hall. In recognition of this work he was presented with an Illuminated Address in 1961 by the old Borough Council. He also contributed much to geological advancement in Liverpool University through his membership of their Geological Society. His extensive geological research included the Carboniferous Stratigraphy and Palaeontology of North Derbyshire and Dovedale, and he identified and named the Edale Shales. He had a long association with the Derbyshire Archaeological Society and contributed to the Journal, his last contribution being on the lynchets at Taddington. Dear to his heart also were Workers Education

Classes, which he ran in many towns until relatively recently — here he was bringing to many an understanding of what meant so much to him and for many these classes revealed a new world. As Vice-President of the Buxton Field Club he contributed greatly in the Club's formative years, both as lecturer and leader of excursions. For over thirty years he was an Honorary Member and President of the Buxton Archaeology and Natural History Society, in which he was most active. One of his last public duties was to lay the foundation stone of the new Interpretation Centre at Pooles Cavern in the Buxton Country Park — a cave which he had known well for some eighty years.

He will long be remembered not only for his contribution to scientific knowledge but also for his kindness, friendliness and understanding — particularly to young people, to whom he was a shining example and an inspiration. He achieved so much in an age when it was the hard work, effort and dedication of the individual that counted. Many will long remember him and hold treasured memories of associations with him. We are grateful for his wonderful and unselfish life, and join his daughter and daughter-in-law in their loss: the happiness of family and home surely helped make Dr. Jackson's life so fulfilling.