

Obituaries

Robin George Livens, 1929-1999

By the death on 1 April 1999 of Robin Livens, the Association lost a senior member and an assiduous officer. His special service to this Association was as Series Editor of the Cambrian Archaeological Monographs. The Association has always striven to publish Welsh excavations as they occur, but in the 1970s, as reports were becoming longer and more complex, a single excavation might require a whole volume of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, to the exclusion of other material. An innovative solution for publishing major excavations was devised in partnership with the Department of the Environment (predecessors of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments), whereby the Association would provide the editorial input for a series of special volumes supplementary to *Arch. Camb.*, to be devoted to 'rescue' excavations in Wales which had been financed from public funds, while the DoE would meet the cost of printing. In all, six Cambrian Monographs appeared.

Robin George Livens was born at Penarth in Glamorgan, the son of a professor of mathematics at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire in Cardiff. After attending schools at Penarth and Reading, he read Classics at University College Cardiff, graduating with Honours in Greek in 1950. Having completed his National Service, he took a diploma in Classical Archaeology in 1953 at Jesus College, Cambridge. At that time he began his initiation into practical archaeology by assisting Dr V.E. Nash-Williams in excavations at the Roman legionary fortress of Isca at Caerleon, an experience which he considered among the most important of his archaeological career.

In 1955 he was appointed Assistant Curator in the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow, where he worked under the redoubtable Dr Annie Robertson. His duties involved not only curatorship but undergraduate teaching. He published notes on fieldwork undertaken in south-west Scotland — at Drumore, Castlecary, Knockmade — and he carried out a petrological survey of Scottish stone implements. In 1957 he gained the Diploma of the Museums Association. In Glasgow he met his future wife, Margaret.

In 1960, to his great delight, he was able to return to Wales, appointed to a new post of lecturer in archaeology within the History Department of the University College of North Wales at Bangor. Later promoted Senior Lecturer, he remained at Bangor until 1988. As part of his duties he was for some years curator of the Museum of Welsh Antiquities, which then came under the aegis of the University College. There he initiated an important project for the analysis of Welsh bronze implements.

His special subject interest was Roman Wales, but his teaching perforce covered a wider field. He encouraged his students to join in various excavations then taking place in north Wales. His affable manner and friendly hospitality is remembered with affection by many generations of students. He joined this Association in 1956 and became a familiar figure at meetings, especially as guide to sites visited.

In his editorial work he was a considerable literary stylist, with an aversion to the split infinitive. He was joint editor of *Archaeology in Wales*, the burgeoning Newsletter of CBA Wales (1967-71), and for many years was editor of the archaeology section of the *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* of the University of Wales; there he raised the profile of his subject by securing more space for archaeological contributions.

In 1988 he left Bangor for the Archaeology Department of Nottingham University. Sadly, the onset of an illness, which proved to be protracted, prevented him from realising many of his hopes and from completing various accumulated projects. His own excavations of an enclosed hut group near Cae Metta, Llanddeiniolen, Caerns., were published posthumously in *Arch. Camb.*, volume CXLVIII (1999). The Association extends to his widow Mrs Margaret Livens and their family its deepest sympathy.

Compiled by the Editor
from notes contributed by Mrs Margaret Livens and Mrs Frances Lynch Llewellyn.

Hubert Newman Savory, 1911-2001

Dr H. N. Savory, F.S.A. for many years Keeper of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales and a past President of this Association, died aged 89 on 21 February 2001 after a long and incapacitating illness. He was perhaps the last survivor of a notable generation of British prehistorians—Clark, Hawkes, Piggott, Grimes, Daniel are names that come to mind—who reached maturity in the nineteen thirties, something of a golden age in the discipline following the re-foundation of the Prehistoric Society. The aims of the new generation emerged as a desire to raise the standards of field-work and excavation, giving due emphasis to geographical determinants, and to set British cultures firmly in their European contexts, their great exemplars in these being respectively Cyril Fox and V. G. Childe. Hubert Savory, a perceptive excavator, field-worker and colleague of Fox, and a former holder of the travelling studentship once held by the great Gordon Childe himself seems neatly to have embodied these two strands.

Hubert Newman Savory was born in 1911 at Oulton Broad, Norfolk where his father was working as a boat engineer. On the outbreak of the First World War his father joined the army and his mother, not to be outdone, worked on the land, taking her two small sons with her and teaching them to read in the evenings after work. After the war the family returned to his father's home in Oxford, where Hubert won a scholarship to Magdalen College School. Here began his lifelong interest in Ancient History and languages, as well as in field archaeology, stimulated by cycling trips into the Oxfordshire countryside. In due course he entered St Edmund Hall to read Classics, in which he achieved a First followed by the Randall MacIver Studentship in Archaeology. This took him to Europe, especially to Portugal and Spain during the troubled years of the Civil War, a night in a Spanish gaol under suspicion of spying becoming part of the Savory legend. During these years his mentor was Edward Thurlow Leeds, director of the Ashmolean Museum, under whose direction he also undertook what would now be called 'rescue archaeology' in the Oxford gravels.

In 1938 he gained his doctorate for a thesis that examined the influence of continental cultures on the British Iron Age, and in the same year Sir Cyril Fox appointed him Assistant Keeper in the Department of Archaeology at the National Museum of Wales. Here he remained — except for the interval of the Second World War, when he served in the Intelligence Corps — for the rest of his working life, becoming Keeper of the Department in 1955 on the premature death of V. E. Nash-Williams. He retired in 1977, remaining for two further years as a Research Associate.

His industry was prodigious. From his arrival in Cardiff he threw himself wholeheartedly into the prehistory of Wales. The constraints of specialism were less rigid in those days, and over the years he excavated a wide variety of sites from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age, with a significant excursion into the 'Dark Ages': Hoyle's Mouth Cave, the chambered tombs of Pipton, Twlc-y-filiast and Pen-

y-wyrldod, Bronze Age barrows at Crick, Letterston, Marlborough Grange and Newton, the Iron Age settlement at Mynydd Bychan and the great hill-fort of Dinorben, the ‘Dark Age’ stronghold of Dinas Emrys — the list could be extended. There was also the prompt and meticulous publication of Museum acquisitions in a plethora of papers and notes that rolled out without apparent effort: the county lists of Iron Age and later earthworks; the corpus of Bronze Age pottery; the Bronze and Iron Age fascicules of the Museum’s prehistoric catalogue — as well as a steady stream of specialist reports, reviews and festschrift papers. A bibliography in his own festschrift, contributed by some of his friends and proteges, and published by the Museum on his retirement, listed close on two hundred and fifty items, some fifty of them in this journal alone. He was also an assiduous editor: notably for many years of the archaeological section of the Board of Celtic Studies *Bulletin* and of the Cardiff Naturalists’ Society’s *Transactions*, of Willoughby Gardner’s early excavations at Dinorben, and of the second volume of the Glamorgan County History.

Savory’s international reputation was established by two masterly papers, ‘The Sword-bearers: a reinterpretation’ and ‘The Atlantic Bronze Age in south-west Europe’ published in the late nineteen forties in successive numbers of the Prehistoric Society’s Proceedings, and for all his intense local commitment he never lost sight of, or ceased to be involved in the European scene. Throughout his career he was a contributor to Spanish and Portuguese journals, and in 1968 published *Spain and Portugal: the archaeology of the Iberian peninsula* in Thames & Hudson’s splendid ‘Peoples & Places’ series, a widely respected work that led to fresh invitations to advise on excavations, and to address a conference of Portuguese archaeologists as a guest of the municipality of Lisbon.

Apart from these scholarly preoccupations he also played a full part in archaeological public affairs in Wales, serving on the Ancient Monuments Board, as Chairman for four years of the Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments in Wales, as founder Chairman of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, and as President of this Association in his retirement year; these were the most prestigious among a host of other activities and posts too numerous to mention.

One of his significant qualities was an ability to form a rapport with the volunteers on his excavations and with amateurs generally, to whom he gave generous encouragement and much of his time, an important factor in days when there were far fewer professional archaeologists than at present. For it led to the creation of a network of ‘Museum observers’ and to the reporting of many sites that might otherwise have been lost.

Although appearing frail, Savory was a man of great mental and physical energy: an enduring image is of him expounding the Bronze Age while walking very rapidly uphill. To the end he remained completely absorbed in his discipline and never lost an eager anticipation of the next new find or discovery. A shy—even diffident—man, he could yet call on resources of firmness when they were required. His unfailing courtesy and dry humour endeared him to his Museum colleagues, who held him in great affection and cherished his eccentricities. The humblest enquirers would be given as much attention as the most eminent: he paid all comers the compliment of assuming that they had the same range and depth of knowledge as himself. It always helped if you knew your Herodotus, which few of us, alas, did. He was of a breed that we may not see again.

He is survived by his wife Priscilla, who nursed him in his long illness, and a devoted family of four sons and two daughters.

J. M. Lewis

(A photograph of Dr Savory addressing the Cambrians at Tinkwood burial chamber in 1963 appeared in *Arch. Camb.* Vol. CXLVII (1998), page 37. — Ed.)