

OBITUARIES

WILLIAM FRANCIS RANKINE

By the death, at the age of 85 on 28 March 1962, of William Francis Rankine, F.S.A. (Scotland), not only was this Society deprived of a member of outstanding eminence and one who had served it as Honorary Editor from 1947 to 1949 and in other capacities, but archæology in the country as a whole lost a leading worker in the field of Mesolithic studies, and one whose writings over many years are to be found in the leading archæological journals. Although brought up mainly in Surrey (he was at school in Dorking), his family connections were all with Scotland; there he spent much time in his younger days, and thither he went for holidays whenever possible in later life, when, as a schoolmaster at Badshot Lea, near Farnham, the end of summer term permitted a dash to the North. Those who, like the writer, knew him first in the period between the wars, will have pleasant memories of weekend visits with him to many sites of archæological and geological interest, and of tea-parties at his home when lively discussions on these and kindred subjects took place. There are many in the Farnham area who owe their interest in these matters to the instruction which they obtained from Mr. Rankine, who had a rare gift of arousing their interest by the manner of his explanation and description of the things to be seen or found in the country, whether birds, wild plants, fossils or archæological remains. The first site of outstanding importance which he discovered in the area, was that of the mesolithic habitation site, with a wealth of flint implements and remains of dwellings, on part of the land of the Farnham sewage works (site '507' or site 'A' as it is variously termed). This he investigated in a series of excavations, some in co-operation with Dr. J. G. D. Clark, during 1929 to 1935, and reported fully in volume 54 of our *Collections* and in *Antiquity* and the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*. In 1936 his discovery of a neolithic long barrow at Badshot Farm brought about the excavations which he carried out in conjunction with the late Alexander Keiller and Professor Stuart Piggott, and which uncovered the remains of the only such barrow as yet known in Surrey. The pottery and implements there found are in Guildford Museum, and a full report in this Society's special volume on Farnham. His work on many important sites of the mesolithic period, largely in Surrey but also in other counties, provided the material for many important reports and research papers and in this work he had the invaluable assistance of his wife. At the time of his death he had completed and published work on the extensive sites which he discovered in the forest and heaths of East Hampshire (Oakhanger, Selbourne), and had it not been for ill health and his untimely death, he was planning still further work in the area. His never-failing cheerfulness and enthusiasm will long be remembered

by all his friends. His publications for the Society comprise two Research Papers (*A Mesolithic Survey of the West Surrey Greensand* and *The Mesolithic of Southern England*), Part II (*Mesolithic and Neolithic Studies*) in the Society's *Survey of the Farnham District* and a number of articles in the *Collections*.

A.W.G.L.

BERNARD RACKHAM, 1876–1964

The Society has lost an old and active friend by the death of Bernard Rackham on 13 February 1964 at the age of 87. He was a most distinguished scholar; his erudition, which was great, lay lightly on him: in conversation it was the breadth of his culture, the versatility of his informed interest, the courtesy of his approachability and his sense of fun which were striking. His knowledge was always at the disposal of those who asked, however young, however ignorant, and he would take immense pains over small fragments of pottery or china found in excavation. He was born in 1876, and after winning a first in Classics at Cambridge he entered the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1898. Here, in the Department of Ceramics, was to lie his life's work. His numerous publications in the fields of Porcelain and Maiolica and stained glass were of the highest standard not only of scholarship but of clarity and popularization; and his output continued for two decades after his retirement with unabated vigour and originality. In his subject he was supreme: indeed he was its creator, for he can be regarded as the founder of the scientific study of ceramics in this country. He had an international reputation. He was made C.B. in 1937, and had been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1928; he joined our Society in 1938, and for many years was an active member of its Council. His services to the Society after he came to live in Guildford were especially in demand: for many years he was our representative on the Library, Museum and Arts Committee of the Guildford Corporation, and he was Honorary Editor of the *Collections* from 1942–1948, being responsible for the appearance of volumes 48–49 in the difficult conditions of those days. He also served on the Society's General Purposes and Library Committees. In 1956 he was elected a Vice-President. The Society mourns the passing not only of one of its most distinguished members, but of a very lovable personality.

S.S.F.