

OBITUARY

WILLIAM WHEATLEY, M.A., A.R.I.C.

No one can have been so well known to members of the Society as William Wheatley, who has given such long and loyal service to the Society, and with his passing, no one is so likely to be missed. He died on the 7th April, 1972, at the age of 89.

He was born at Nottingham in 1883, and was at University College Nottingham from 1897 to 1903. From there he became a Non-Collegiate member of Oxford University, remaining until 1907. Concurrently with his degree work he attended the Oxford Day Training College from 1903 to 1906. He read for the Final Honours School of Natural Science, and was placed in the Second Class for Chemistry in 1907. He was awarded his M.A. in 1910, and became an Associate of the Royal Institute of Chemistry in 1918.

His first teaching post was at Preston Grammar School from September 1907 to December 1909, and then he went to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn, as senior chemistry master from January 1910 to March 1917. During the War years he was engaged on scientific work connected with the War effort. In 1919 he was appointed an assistant master at Latymer Upper School, Hammersmith, W.6., where he stayed until he retired in 1953.

To appreciate his character and achievements, it is necessary to know how he occupied his leisure, for never did a man's activities so usefully complement each other, exercising both hands and brain. Apart from his skill as a worker in metal and wood, he was a keen draughtsman, and a student of geology. His collection of minerals he has given to the School.

Whilst delving into the historical side of science, examining documents and papers relative thereto, he became aware of his aptitude for historical research, which gave him considerable pleasure, but what was more important, it was pointing the way for work with which his name will always be connected.

When he came to Latymer Upper School very little was known of the life of the Founder or the early history of the Foundation, and this is where his skill found exercise for a period of about twenty years. He searched the records in churches, libraries, etc., in various parts of the country, until he eventually recounted the results in his very readable — *The History of Edward Latymer and his Foundations*. Cambridge University Press. 1936; a revised and enlarged edition was published in 1953.

The same skills were devoted to his science, and aided by his rare mechanical skill, William Wheatley successfully repeated some classical chemical experiments hitherto not carried out in schools. His methods attracted much attention in the educational world, and his experiments were published in the *School Science Review*. The models and charts he used in his science teaching were shown at a Conference of Science Teachers, and the Ministry of Education incorporated the underlying ideas in their *Report on Visual Aids*.

It was with our Society that he gave the remainder of his boundless energy, for he joined us in 1933; was Auditor in 1943; elected to Council in 1944; Director of Meetings 1948–1966, i.e. for 18 years. It was in this capacity that he will be best remembered, for there is no doubt that the Society owes him a great debt of gratitude for all the hard work he put in arranging the excellent programmes of visits and lectures which in no small measure helped to rebuild the Society after the Second World War.

He was Deputy Chairman of Council 1948–1963, and he was elected a Vice-President in 1967.

Another of his interests was the Hammersmith Local History Group of which he was a Founder member. (Now the Fulham and Hammersmith Local History Society.) Under the auspices of this Society he wrote the booklet entitled — *Isaac Le Gooch the King's Jeweller and Latymer Benefactor* 1964., which completes the picture of that Foundation.

Having done so much in life to further the interests of these bodies, it remains to say that in his Will he has left the sum of £5,000 to the School Governors to be invested to create a Closed Scholarship for Latymer Upper boys to read Mathematics or Science at St. John's College, Cambridge (Edward Latymer's College). And, he has left the sum of £250 to be used to place a permanent memorial to Isaac Le Gooch in the School premises.

To our own Society he has left the sum of £500 to be used by Council as they may think fit. A legacy has also been left to the Fulham and Hammersmith Local History Society.

Those who knew him best would say that under his quiet exterior there was a fund of humour, generosity and humanity. In his passing he has left a fitting memorial by which we shall always remember him, and be profoundly thankful.

A genius was in our midst and we knew it not.

S.W.H.

(The author is indebted to the Headmaster of Latymer Upper School for the academic information about the late William Wheatley.)