

OBITUARIES

JOHN GORDON CHENEVIX TRENCH

Editor of the *Records of Bucks*, John Chenevix Trench was born on 20.10.1920 in Sussex into an army family. After education at Wellington and the Military College, Woolwich, he spent six years with the Royal Corps of Signals in Somaliland, Abyssinia, the Western Desert and northern Europe before being invalided out in 1946. He described the highpoint of his military career as 'mending' the Emperor Haille Selassie's radiogram. Having been delegated to see what could be done to repair the Emperor's large Italian radiogram, John and a fitter took it back to a workshop where it was repaired and then loaded onto the back of a truck. On arriving back at the palace it was discovered, inconveniently, that the radiogram was no longer in the back of the truck; the tailboard had given way and the radiogram 'scattered in small pieces all over the Via Vittorio Emanuele'. The radio was therefore declared to 'have been beyond repair' and an even larger replacement was eventually delivered to the Emperor.

In 1946 he joined the advertising agency of SH Benson as a copywriter and worked with the company in various capacities until retiring as an Associate Director in 1980. Whilst with Benson he was, among other tasks, responsible for production of the *Guinness Annual*, distributed to the medical profession and much appreciated by them.

Not surprisingly he was a great enthusiast for the English language. His creative work at the agency did not, however, exhaust his literary energies for whilst there he also had four novels published: *Docken Dead* (Macdonald 1953), *Dishonoured Bones* (Macdonald 1954), *What Rough Beast* (Macdonald 1957) and *Beyond the Atlas* (Macmillan 1963). As a sideline there were also lesser works such as *Archaeology without a Spade* (1960) and *History for Postmen* (1961), both Newman Neame Take Home Books.

In 1944 he married Ann and in 1954 they moved to Windmill Farm, Coleshill. His long-term fascination with history and archaeology led him to an intensive study of the village's origins and its archi-

ture. He was a highly competent draughtsman and prepared his own drawings of buildings which he had measured. In 1976 he chaired the Society for a year and in 1980 became its Editor, a position he held until 1997. His editing was meticulous but he also went out of his way to patiently encourage and assist potential contributors, utilising the considerable research skills he had developed over the years in the PRO and elsewhere. Many in Buckinghamshire are grateful for his generous assistance. He was also happy to prepare drawings for other contributors.

Between 1974 and 1995 he himself published eight major papers in *Records*, including several on timber-framed buildings written jointly with Pauline Fenley, one being a definitive account of the County Museum buildings. In 1987 he was made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

John was active in local affairs, for example, he sang in a number of local choirs including that of All Saints, Coleshill, served on the PCC and constructed scenery for a local drama group. Both John's wife and daughter predeceased him; he is survived by his son Max.

It seems appropriate to conclude with two quotations relating to a man who led a full and interesting life. The first, presumably autobiographical, is from the jacket of the Penguin edition of his crime novel *Docken Dead*.

'His extensive interests include sailing and singing. His dislikes the Enclosures, the Reform Acts, and all manifestations of Subtopia'

... the second, a family recollection of a conversation about the tendency of cats to turn up on stranger's doorsteps to cadge food.

His son commented 'if a well fed cat turned up at my back door I'd tell it to bugger off'. John replied 'you wouldn't have to use bad language. You could say 'Shoo, shoo' and it would bugger off just the same'.

PAULINE FENLEY

Pauline Fenley, who died on 3rd March at the age of 85, will be remembered by architectural scholars principally for her twelve years' editorship of *Vernacular Architecture* to which, after Barbara Hutton had established the journal firmly in its first decade, she gave a more international flavour in keeping with her education and background.

Joan Pauline Addison Trumpler was educated at Roedean and Somerville College, Oxford, where she read Modern Languages. Her command of French and German led to wartime work in Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty and Bletchley Park and subsequently to Berlin where she worked with Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre). Following the enforced retirement and early death from multiple sclerosis of her husband, Acting Captain James Fenley, she developed her historical interests, first through membership of the Royal Archaeological Institute and then through working for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. After a short unhappy spell in the typing pool, Pauline became a member of the small team working with me on the houses of Hertfordshire, helping to organise the fieldwork and acting as research assistant. In the latter capacity her attendance at Royal Archaeological Institute and Vernacular Architecture Group conferences and concurrent activities in the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society combined with Commission experience to enrich both her official and private work, so that within a few years she advanced from a comparatively slight knowledge of buildings to an understanding of their complexities and an awareness of the historical problems they raise. She served terms as council member for the RAI and this society.

Since it was impossible to know Pauline for long without becoming aware of her concern for precise language, both written and spoken, she was an appropriate choice to take over VA in 1982 and

helped initially in the preparation of copy for the printer by two RCHME colleagues at Cambridge, quickly became a notably efficient editor. Her interests combined in membership of two foreign societies, the *Arbeitskreis für Hausforschung* and the *Société française d'Archéologie*, attendance at whose meetings further enlarged her architectural sympathies and caused her to seek articles about European architecture and French and German books for review. Meanwhile two important friendships developed. One, with John Chenevix Trench, led to collaboration in fieldwork and four interesting articles about local houses in *Records of Bucks*. The other grew out of Pauline's Commission work when Clive Rouse was persuaded to report on wall-paintings in the houses of Hertfordshire; she drove him around and herself became knowledgeable in the subject, eventually assisting him to get his findings into print.

Rouse, who was curator and trustee of the Kederminster library at Langley Marsh, inspired Pauline's interest in this unusual collection. It was entirely characteristic of her historical enthusiasm and care for antiquities generally that she herself later became a trustee and she took a proper pride in her article on the library and its founder (*Records of Bucks*, vol. 42) that this activity produced. She was also a guide at Osterley Park and Ham House for several years.

Pauline, left a widow in mid-life, made of her loss an opportunity and, starting from a fairly low level of knowledge, made a significant contribution to the study of national as well as local antiquities of various kinds. Education, interests and employment enriched one another and her election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1984 recognised her growing standing and potential. She was a loyal colleague and a good friend to whom I, like many others, owe much.

J T Smith