

OBITUARIES

CAPTAIN SIR THOMAS ERASMUS BARLOW, Bt, R.N. (retd.), D.S.O.

Long-time supporter of the Bucks Archaeological Society and Chairman of its Natural History Section, Tom Barlow, as he was almost universally known, died in London on 16th October 2003. Born on January 23rd, 1914, he was the eldest son of Sir Alan Barlow, 2nd Baronet and Second Secretary of the Treasury, and Nora, grand-daughter of Charles Darwin. In 1953 he married Isabel Body, with whom he had two sons and two daughters.

Sir Thomas' mother in 1951 founded and became first president of the Society's Natural History Section (her obituary is in *Recs* 31 [1989], 246) and he himself was chairman of the Section for many years. His father, Sir Alan, was a President of the Society (1946–1963) and his mother a Vice-President (1969–89). His grandfather, a distinguished physician, had lived at Boswells, Wendover, as did the family for many years afterwards. Sir Thomas became a Vice-President in 1990 in 1990. A great enthusiast for the natural environment, on occasion he led the Section's birdwatching expeditions

Educated at Winchester and as a cadet in the Royal Navy, his career was divided into two parts, at first in the Navy, and latterly as a local landowner and keen conservationist and naturalist in his native Buckinghamshire. he served as a submariner throughout World War 2 in most of the world's

oceans, and ended his naval career as Commodore, HMS Drake, Devonport. He continued to be active in various naval associations and charities.

Soon after he retired in 1964, he became Hon. Secretary of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust (BBONT) and served it in various capacities for many years, finally as its President. He was active in many county affairs and was appointed Deputy Lieutenant in 1977. Always a keen naturalist and lover of the English countryside, for a period he organised Operation Neptune for the National Trust among other services to that body.

Appropriately for a great-grandson of Charles Darwin, he was active in Galapagos affairs, and master-minded the despatch to the Charles Darwin Foundation in the Galapagos islands of the research vessel *Beagle II* in 1963. he was also a Vice-President of the Galapagos Conservation Trust.

On leaving Boswells he moved to Chesham and then to Shepherd's Hill, Highgate, however, even after leaving Buckinghamshire he took a close interest in the Society's affairs and travelled regularly from London to meetings. He was President of the Wendover Society and active in local affairs.

Richard Fitter

DONALD G. WHEELER

The death of Don Wheeler of Aylesbury on 21 June 2004 at the age of 68 has sadly and unexpectedly robbed the local history community in the Vale of Aylesbury of a well-known personality. Don was a keen supporter of both the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and the Buckinghamshire Branch of the Historical Association, of which he was a committee member. A memorial service, attended by many of his friends, was held in July in Aston Clinton parish church, where he worshipped regularly.

Over many years, Don amassed a sizeable collection of historical postcards and photographs of local interest, which his family have in accordance with his wishes kindly donated to the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS), together with many local publications, notes and original documents. He was a frequent visitor to the CBS, where one of his recent research interests had been the history of St Peter's church, Quarrendon, for whom he helped compile an exhibition to celebrate their 40th anniversary in 2002.

Though he never fully recovered from the stroke that he suffered in 1995, Don was determined to keep up with his interests and hobbies, another being his passion for handbells. He was a member of the Launton Handbell Ringers for more than thirty years and even a month before his death was able to attend a regional rally of the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain.

Don was a real gentleman in the true sense of the

word, who refused to be down-hearted and would think nothing of walking halfway across Aylesbury on a cold winter's evening to attend a meeting. It is sad to know that never again will his customary cheerful greeting be heard, 'Excuse me, but I know someone who looks just like you!'.

*Roger Bettridge, County Archivist
Gill Dean, County Reference Library*

BRYAN HARRIS BLAKE

Bryan Blake, who was born in June 1934 and died in March 2004, had strong Aylesbury roots. His great-grandfather had been a shepherd in the Quarrendon area and his parents were for a period licencees of the Railway Hotel in Great Western Street. Bryan started his career working with Bourne's, a nurserymen then in Wendover Road, and met his wife Betty at the Aylesbury's Buckingham Street Methodist Church.

Bryan always had a strong interest in the countryside and its past. A member of the Society since 1978 he had become directly involved with archaeology through the County Museum Archaeological Group (CMAG). He helped with many of its activities, being a regular Tuesday evening attender at the museum, washing his way through mounds of broken sherds, and helping on a number of excavations. He and his family moved to Haddenham in the 1970s and his contacts with local farmers enabled the Group to carry out an extensive field-walking project around the village. The wealth of finds of prehistoric and Romano-British date which

resulted from this work gave an indication of what could be expected in other parishes given similar depth of coverage. He himself conducted two small excavations in the village, both of which produced early Saxon pottery (still quite rare in the county) and demonstrated that, as at Walton, on topographically-favoured sites, continuity of settlement might be expected. After three years part-time study, in 1984 he gained the Oxford University Department of External Studies Certificate in British Archaeology.

An energetic man with strong views who enjoyed a good argument, he was always entertaining and a fund of useful information. Not many people know that it takes twenty-five gallons of water to make one lettuce, but once told it's not something you readily forget! In later years Bryan transferred his considerable energies from Archaeology to Cuddington Methodist church. He will be missed by very many people.

M.E.F

The Society was sad also to learn of the deaths of the following members during the year.

Mr. A.L.E.Barron
Mr. S.K.Baker
Mr. E.S.Hemming
Mr. A.W.E. Muir
Mr. G.A.Wood

Pauline Fenley (Obituary in *Recs* 44)
John Chenevix Trench (Obituary in *Recs* 44)
Mr. K. Spencer
Mr. N.G.Timson