

OBITUARIES

PAUL ASHBEE, M.A., D.LITT., F.S.A.

After a short illness Paul Ashbee died on 19 August 2009, aged 91. He was born and brought up in Bearsted and developed a keen early interest in archaeology spending many school lunchtimes in Maidstone Museum admiring the worked flints on display or poring over the 'serried periodicals' of the Kent Archaeological Society's library. Forays on foot, bicycle and bus led to his own discoveries of flint tools. A sturdy six-footer by his early teens he was attracted to the site of the Roman villa at Thurnham where he took a leading part in the 1933 excavation alongside KAS and local volunteers. His family have a press clipping from the national *Daily Sketch*, dated 24 October 1933, showing the fifteen year old hard at work and described, prophetically, as 'a lad who will make a name in archaeology'! (Paul recalls this first experience of excavation in an article in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CIII, 1986.)

Despite these fine extra-mural achievements, and shining in German, he left school without having obtained a certificate because of a weakness in mathematics and could not therefore proceed to University. He joined the West Kent Regiment in 1939 and his command of German led to an extended service in the British Army in Germany until 1949.

Following demobilisation from the army in 1949 Ashbee resumed his early interest in the ancient past. Between 1950 and 1952 he studied for a Diploma in European Prehistoric Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. He also engaged in field practice participating in a training excavation at *Verulamium* (St Albans) under the tutelage of Sir Mortimer Wheeler followed by supervision of the excavation of a cist cemetery of Roman date at Porth Cressa in the Scilly Isles under the patronage of the then Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments, B.H.St J. O'Neil. He continued to work in the South-West of England, with Rupert Bruce-Mitford at the early Christian settlement of Mawgan Porth, returning to the Scilly Isles to excavate late Iron Age and Roman settlement.

Recognising that opportunities for archaeological careers were scarce Ashbee took a Diploma in Education at the University of Bristol followed

by a M.A. at Leicester University. From 1954 he taught History at a school in London. His holidays, however, were spent excavating prehistoric barrows across England fostering an expertise on which he founded his reputation both as an innovative and skilled excavator and as an academic.

Building on barrow excavation techniques pioneered for example by Sir Cyril Fox and Professor W.F. Grimes, Ashbee paid particular attention to mound structure and traces of relict activity on the pre-barrow surface leading to the identification of timber structures and stake circles and the recognition that both long and round barrows were often multi-phase monuments with a complex chronological sequence. His excavation of the Fussell's Lodge long barrow in Wiltshire in 1957, with the discovery of a timber mortuary structure and well-preserved mostly disarticulated skeletal remains, shortly followed the excavation of the West Kennet megalithic long barrow, also in Wiltshire, by Professors Atkinson and Piggott in 1955-56. Those two very important excavations combined radically to change perceptions of early Neolithic mortuary practices in Britain. In 1960 he published *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain* (Dent) and in 1970 *The Earthen Long Barrow in Britain* (Dent); they remain starting points for any student of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary traditions.

Ashbee's well-recognised technical expertise led to his involvement in work at two remarkable sites. A pond barrow on Salisbury Plain on investigation in the early 1960s was found to contain a 100 foot deep shaft rich in material culture including exceptional organic finds. The interpretation of the enigmatic Wilsford Shaft remains a matter of debate. He also assisted Rupert Bruce-Mitford as co-director of the re-excavation between 1964 and 1969 of the famous Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon ship burial first excavated on the eve of the Second World War. Valuable information was recovered which contributed towards definitive publication of the discovery.

In the late 1960s Paul Ashbee was appointed to a post in archaeology at the University of East Anglia where he remained as senior lecturer until retirement in 1983. He published an account of the archaeology of the Scilly Isles, *Ancient Scilly* (David & Charles) in 1974, and a rather traditional overview of British prehistory *The Ancient British* (Geo-books) in 1978. In retirement Ashbee was a regular contributor of articles to *Archaeologia Cantiana* and he also wrote a synthesis of the archaeology of prehistoric Kent, *Kent in Prehistoric Times* (Tempus), published in 2005.

Elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1958, a member of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments from 1975 to 1985, and awarded an honorary D.LITT. by the University of Leicester in 1984, Paul Ashbee was a particularly respected and influential British prehistorian of the second half of the twentieth century.



'Fifteen-year old Paul Ashbee, of Bearsted, Kent, is a lad who will make a name in archaeology. He has discovered and commenced to unearth the remains of a Roman villa in a meadow at Thurnham. Members of the Kent Archaeological Society have volunteered to help him in the excavation. Here he is with pick and shovel, prepared for work, and (inset) busy with some of his helpers on the site.' (*Daily Sketch* photographs.)

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Living in Norfolk for the past forty years, Paul Ashbee nevertheless remained exceedingly proud of his Kentish roots and the various links he had to the archaeological community here were clearly very special to him. In 2002 he was elected as a Patron of the Kent Archaeological Society in recognition of his services to the history of the County.

ANTHONY WARD

TERENCE LAWSON

(The Spring 2003 KAS Newsletter carries an excellent profile of Paul Ashbee with more details of his life, family and interests.)

FRANCIS SEDLEY ANDRUS, L.V.O., M.A.

Sedley Andrus died on 9 November 2009 aged 94. The son of Brigadier General Andrus, he was educated at Wellington College, St Peter's Hall (now College), Oxford, where he awarded a B.A. in History in 1938. From 1926 to 1952 the family home was Hartley Court and then Scadbury Manor, Southfleet, when he became Lord of the Manor of Scadbury.

In 1938 he became assistant to Alfred Butler, Windsor Herald of Arms taking up his post again at the College of Arms after the war, now as assistant to Richmond Herald. In 1970 he was appointed Bluemantle Pursuivant, one of four such Heralds. In 1972 he became Lancaster Herald of Arms, one of the six Heralds. Finally, on retirement, he became the first Beaumont Herald Extraordinary. During his 40-year career at the College of Arms he undertook considerable genealogical research and produced working documents on how to compile a pedigree and how to grant arms. He transcribed and translated old documents from Latin and produced Coats of Arms for clients. In his retirement he continued this work from home as well as extracting material from publications for the College. He had ceremonial duties, wearing a Tabard at the State Opening of Parliament and the Annual Garter Service at Windsor Castle. For these services, in 1982, he was made a Licentiate of the Victorian Order by the Queen. He was present at the Queen's Coronation in 1953.

He was a Council member of the Kent Archaeological Society from 1979 to 1984; and President of the Dartford Historical and Antiquarian Society (DHAS) from 1974 to 1999.

From 1969 he lived with his younger sister in Longfield. Sedley will be remembered as a kind, courteous and friendly gentleman. In the village he was regularly seen on his daily walks which were a lengthy process as he would stop and chat to all he met.

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ALEC MILES

Alec Miles, who died on 5 January 2010 aged 81, was a member of the Society for 46 years having joined in 1964. He served as a member of the Council from 1974-2005 and was assistant Local Secretary for the Mid-South Kent area for many years. Alec was also a long serving member of the Fieldwork and Membership/Publicity committees where his archaeological experience and wise words were greatly valued.

Alec worked as a Technical Field Officer for the former Milk Marketing Board until retiring in 1988. This work involved travelling across South-East England visiting farms where the subject of archaeological finds often cropped up in conversation with landowners.

Alec assisted at several excavations after joining the KAS including recording a section of the Roman road at Sandhurst together with the nearby Bodiam Romano-British site; the Quarry Wood Belgic *oppidum* with David Kelly from 1963-66; Eccles Roman villa; Higham Priory; Benenden Roman ford; and Ebony Church.

He subsequently directed his own excavations at the Cooling Romano-British salt extraction site on the north Kent marshes from 1966-74. This led on from his earlier involvement with the fieldwork and surveys of the Lower Medway Archaeological Group. The 1960s and 1970s represented in many ways a golden age for 'amateur' archaeology in the county. Alec's account of this important work at Broomhey Farm, Cooling, was published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* in 2004, with reports of his earlier fieldwork also appearing within its pages. Alec also had a keen interest in family history research and the study of Roman pottery.

The writer first came to know Alec when he joined him on the excavations at Ebony Church from 1977-87. Together with learning the techniques of archaeological investigation, he greatly enjoyed the anecdotes from Alec's many past excavations. Alec was a humorous, gentle, patient man always encouraging amateur involvement in archaeology and inspiring others to undertake their own fieldwork.

NEIL ALDRIDGE

ARTHUR RUDERMAN

Arthur Ruderman died after a short illness on 22 December 2009, aged 87. After school in Birmingham where he grew up, he followed his father in taking up accountancy and started his career in Local Government in Hemel Hempstead, which was soon interrupted by the War. Due to Arthur's limited mobility he was unable to enlist but was active in the Home Guard. In early 1942 prompted by his interest in aircraft identification he

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joined the Observer Corps. (He remained active in the Corps until 1968 achieving the rank of Chief Observer at the Sevington post.)

After the War Arthur pursued his Local Government career with vigour. With his wife and their three children he moved to Ashford in the mid 1950s where he was promoted to the office of Treasurer. Following local government reorganisation brought about by the Maud Report in the early 1970s, he moved to Folkestone. After several years as Financial Director, Arthur was appointed Chief Executive of Shepway Council.

Arthur was always interested in local history and after completing the Diploma in Local History at UKC in 1998 he contemplated a PH.D. in local government, a subject in which he had wide experience and which was close to his heart. It would seem from his history of Ashford that he became interested in the town in the early 1970s, stimulated by the classes under Dr Fred Lansberry. His fine book on the town, *A History of Ashford*, was published by Phillimore in 1994. Arthur set about transcribing and recording many classes of records relating to the town. He also wrote at a time that saw massive changes to the market town to what is now a thriving centre with industrial and commercial activities and an international passenger railway station. Whilst building on the work of earlier authors of the town he was meticulous in combing primary sources for details on Ashford providing a history of the town that will stand not only as a testament of his industry but as a reference work for many years to come. A leading light in the Ashford Historical Society, much of his recording work is now available through the Kent Archaeological Society of which he was a member from 1973.

L(ansberry) R(uderman) B(riscall) Historical Publications published five books between 1982-1997. The last, *Doctor John Wallis FRS*, who was born in Ashford in 1616 was Arthur's own work and combined his love of mathematics with his encyclopaedic knowledge of the town.

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