

OBITUARIES

LT.-COL. G. W. MEATES, F.S.A.

(*Frontispiece*)

By the death, on 9th July, 1985, of Lt.-Col. G.W. Meates at the age of 85 our Society has lost a distinguished Vice-President and the world of Romano-British archaeology an eminent figure.

Geoffrey Wells Meates was born in Hereford on 31st May, 1900, the only son of Thomas Wheeler Meates, Chartered Accountant, and his wife Gertrude Wheeler. He was educated at Rossall and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, where he was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant, Royal Artillery, just too late for active service in the First World War. To this circumstance, since the life-span of the average subaltern on the Western Front was counted in weeks, he probably owed his preservation for the distinguished career which lay ahead. Much of his military service between the wars was in India, where he was a friend of the Maharajah of Chattapur and acted as District Magistrate in that area. In the Second World War, he was in the B.E.F. at the evacuation of Dunkirk, and later was Commanding Officer of the anti-aircraft regiment defending Malta during the siege.

In 1945, Colonel Meates retired from the Army and came to live in Kent, first at Otford, then at Hildenborough, and finally in the sixteenth-century gatehouse of Lullingstone Castle. Here he began an entirely new career as an archaeologist, joining the Darent Valley Archaeological Group which, directed by Mr E. Greenfield and Mr W.C. Birchenough, was resuming the survey of the antiquities of the valley which they had begun immediately before the war. The report of this survey, published in *Arch. Cant.*, lxi (1948), showed that several excavations had already been undertaken and were still in progress. These culminated in 1948 in the excavation of the important Roman villa (II) at Farningham (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxviii (1973)).

The triumvirate then proceeded to investigate a suspected Roman building at Lullingstone, an excavation which in the event was to last for thirteen years and to reveal the remarkable complex of buildings

OBITUARIES

which attained worldwide celebrity and is now visited annually by thousands of people. The Darent Valley Archaeological Group, for the first four years directed by the triumvirate and for the next three years by Colonel Meates alone, was responsible for the excavation, which in 1956 was taken over by the then Ministry of Public Building and Works and continued under Colonel Meates' direction until its conclusion in 1962. A popular book, now long out of print, on the villa was published by Colonel Meates in 1955, and vol. I of the definitive account by the same author, published by our Society in 1979, is shortly to be succeeded by vol. II.

The last important field work undertaken by Colonel Meates was in 1967 when, with Sir Eric Fletcher and others, he excavated the ruined church of Stone-next-Faversham, proving that the church had been built on the foundations of a Roman mausoleum (*Antiq. Journ.*, xlix, 272-94).

While Colonel Meates will naturally be remembered by most people as the presiding genius of the Lullingstone villa, he was no narrow archaeologist but a man of wide learning and culture, classical music being a particular interest: a true philosopher in the sense in which that term was understood in the eighteenth century. This was nowhere more apparent than in his deeply thoughtful contribution to the centenary volume of *Archaeologia Cantiana* on Christianity in the Darent valley, a worthy valediction of a truly great man, mourned by a wide circle of devoted friends.

Colonel Meates joined our Society in 1947, and was elected to the Council in 1950. In 1963, he became the Society's General Secretary, and on relinquishing that office in 1971 was made an honorary member and Vice-President. He was elected to the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1950, and served on the Council, 1956-58.

C.R.C.

V.J. NEWBURY

Viney J. ('Nicky') Newbury, a member since 1945 and vice-chairman of the Kent and Medway Towns Numismatic Society, died on 23rd February, 1985. He was an authority on seventeenth-century tokens, especially those of Kent, and for some time owned a good proportion of the coins from the Hollingbourne Roman hoard. After the war, Mr Newbury helped Sheppard Frere in his Canterbury excavations and also took part in digging at Little Chart and Chart Sutton Roman sites (the pipe-clay Venus figurine he found at Chart Sutton is now in

OBITUARIES

Maidstone Museum together with the rest of his archaeological collections).

L.R.A.G.

JULES de LAUNAY, Ph.D.

The sudden death on 4th September at Canterbury has deprived the many friends of Jules de Launay of an energetic and gentlemanly scholar. An eminent scientist both in the field of optics and physics, he made some remarkable observations and deductions and at least one of his textbooks is still in current use. After his retirement in 1971, he moved away entirely from science and devoted the remaining years of his life to the genealogy of his family and demography. He published three volumes on his own family history and a large corpus of material on the Weald of east Kent. His mammoth project on the Weald arose out of his interest in genealogy and the fact that the area was a nursery for many of the early emigrants to the New World. Jules' intention to track down the correct genealogy of these early Kentish emigrants became increasingly frustrated and hampered by lack of any transcripts or indexes to the records he wished to search. Borne out of necessity he set about transcribing and indexing all the prime source material for the 18 parishes of the Weald of east Kent. Much of his material has been published by the *Kent Family History Society* and they will be continuing to publish further material that he compiled. One of his volumes of will abstracts for the parish of Cranbrook 1396–1640 was printed by the *Kent Records Collections*. His efforts over twelve years have created a mass of material that future generations will be heartily thankful to receive. An unassuming man of truly extraordinary abilities in science, linguistics and as an artist, his published works will ensure a lasting tribute to a fine Kentish scholar.

D.H.

N.H. MacMICHAEL, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., F.S.G.

By the death of Nicholas MacMichael, on 24th November last, Kent has lost one of its most notable and able medievalists.

OBITUARIES

Nicholas Hugh MacMichael was born on 2nd February, 1933, and educated at Eastbourne College and Cambridge. On coming down from Magdalene College, he was appointed Assistant to the Librarian and Keeper of the Muniments of Westminster Abbey, and it was about this time that he became attracted to the armorial shields in the glass of Nettlestead Church which led to his paper on 'The Descent of the Manor of Evegate in Smeeth, with some Account of its Lords' (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxiv (1960), 1-47). It was largely as a result of this paper and of his appointment in 1961 as Hon. Secretary of the Harleian Society that he was elected in 1962 a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He was greatly interested in the projected *New Dictionary of British Arms*, and worked closely with T.D. Tremlett. It is a matter of regret that MacMichael did not live to see the first volume in print.

From 1960-62, MacMichael was on the Council of the British Archaeological Association, served on the Executive Committee of the Society of Genealogists from 1963-67 and was elected a Fellow in 1969. From 1964-70, he was Hon. Editor of the Harleian Society and, in 1967, was appointed Keeper of the Muniments at Westminster Abbey. He joined the Kent Archaeological Society in 1955, was elected to the Records Publication Committee in 1967 and to the Council in 1973; his work received further recognition in 1972 by his election as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. MacMichael's work is well known to the public through the current edition of the *Official Guide to Westminster Abbey*, which he produced in 1977. His work for the Abbey did not end with being Keeper and Editor, for he also carried out research and lectured on historical persons.

As a companion, he was an entertaining conversationalist, with a dry and penetrating sense of humour derived from acute observation, and he was ever ready to impart knowledge and advice. Of a quiet and reserved disposition, his life and work were blighted by asthma, which had latterly become so severe that his untimely and tragic death came as no surprise.

P.H.B

P.R. PAYNE

Percy Payne, born at Cuxton, entered the Royal Navy at an early age and, after war service, worked at Grain and became interested in

OBITUARIES

archaeology. He had a naturally observant eye and ability to gather information in friendly talk with country folk. He joined the Society in 1973 and took part in many excavations in the Rochester area but, eventually, the tidal marshland of the Thames became his special hunting-ground and he had more than one narrow escape from its clinging mud. Few things gave him greater pleasure than to show and discuss some of his finds with audiences of school children. His cheerful personality and infectious enthusiasm will be greatly missed.

P.T.