



Plate 10. Dr. Herbert Taylor, 'Porthos'.

OBITUARY NOTICES

HERBERT TAYLOR, M.B., Ch.B.

It is with deep regret that we record the death on 9th October, 1982 of Dr Herbert Taylor at the age of 85. Known since his student days at Bristol University by the nickname 'Porthos', he had been a member for over 60 years and was our senior Vice-President, having been first elected to that office in 1933. He was born on 24th June, 1897, at Chesterfield and was educated at the Friends School, Sibford Ferris, and at Daventry Grammar School. The last of several moves brought the family to Bath in 1914 and Porthos came up to the University of Bristol to read law, but having joined the O.T.C. he enlisted after Christmas in the Royal Artillery, and by his 18th birthday was serving in Flanders as a 2nd Lieutenant, remaining in France, apart from a spell in Ireland, until 1919.

He fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, and was four times wounded. On one of these occasions he was the only survivor, despite being seated on a box containing live ammunition, of a direct hit which killed all the other occupants of the dug-out. He was promoted to Captain, was mentioned in despatches more than once and was recommended for the award of the Military Cross. His wartime experiences left an ineffaceable impression, so that when after demobilisation he returned to the University, it was to read medicine. He proved a brilliant student: he gained his M.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S. in a year less than the usual period. After qualification he set up in practice in Bristol, at first in St Philips, later moving to Stapleton Road and finally to Muller Road. During the 1939-45 war he was for a time Medical Officer of Health for Bristol. On his retirement and after his death letters from three generations of patients testified to the respect and affection he inspired as a doctor. He was survived by his wife Betty, whom he married in 1934, by his son and daughter and seven grandchildren, as well as by his three younger sisters, of whom the youngest, Molly, sadly, died in February 1983.

Though not a founding member, Porthos (the nickname came from his being one of a trio of students known as the Three Musketeers) joined the Society in the first year of its existence. As a member his main interest was in archaeology and in the 20's he took part in most of the Society's excavations, was in charge of the excavations at Rowberrow Cavern and took over from Tom Hewer at King Arthur's Cave and from Reg Read in work on the Mendip barrows. We owe to him the rescue of the very early Bell Beaker grave at Brean Down where his observations made over a period of 25 years laid the foundation for the definitive account of the site.

In 1941 he helped excavate the burnt-out debris of the Society's museum. After the war he followed up his notable work on the Tynings Farm barrows by 5 years of weekends and holidays devoted to the patient dissection of the round barrow and cemetery at Burrington (T5), dug the Beaker site at *Bos Swallet* and did further work at King Arthur's grave. His last excavation, at the interglacial bone fissure at Alveston, was brought to an abrupt end in 1963 when the site was obliterated by road construction. In all this work his wife Betty was his constant companion, while for many years Mr and Mrs H. Masterman were his faithful helpers.

Porthos was a very talented photographer; for 50 years there was hardly a UBSS excavation on which his camera was not in demand. His skill and patience were exemplified by his restoration of prehistoric skulls and pots and by his beautifully detailed scale models of excavated barrows. His anatomical knowledge gave professional authority to his reports on human remains while his microscope helped him elucidate the finest strands of evidence. In matters archaeological he was a perfectionist, never satisfied with a report until every detail was right. This, coupled with wartime destruction of finds and records and the demands of a busy doctor's life, meant that he did not succeed in publishing all his excavations.

Tall, with a natural dignity and authority, Porthos had a forceful personality disguised by his quiet-spoken and courteous manner. Rarely would he let impatience with stupidity show. Though he never sought the limelight he could be a good speaker and twice addressed meetings of the British Association on the Society's work. His absent-minded manner cloaked intense mental concentration; friends will long remember him muttering half to himself, the copious letters requiring typing for legibility, the way in which he would worry away at a problem until resolution was achieved. We all had the deepest respect for his abilities as an archaeologist and the deepest love and affection for him, for his generosity and enduring goodness of heart. Porthos was one of the small band who through a lifetime *were* the Society and we all mourn his death.

He had made a complete recovery after an operation for cancer in 1969, and was still very much himself when we discussed King Arthur's Cave in 1980 but never regained good health after a serious heart attack and a major operation in 1981. Our sympathies go especially to his wife Betty and to their family.

A. M. ApS.

ROBERT FREDERICK EVERTON, M.B., B.S.

1925 - 1983

Bob Everton died in March 1983. He started collecting bones at the age of twelve and this interest lasted all his life. He went to Bromley Grammar School and then became a lab. boy at the Siemen's Electrical Laboratory and started doing a sandwich course in electrical engineering