

OBITUARIES

TOM HEWER

1903–1994

Tom Hewer, who died in March, was the secretary of the UBSS from 1924–1927. Those were the days when students always wore ties at the hut, and sometimes in the caves, and when trips out to Mendip were by bicycle. A caving trip was followed by a bath in Bath Swallet and it was traditional to run naked to the summit of Blackdown at dawn on New Year's day. The countryside looked very different as the areas of forestry and the woods behind the hut are recent and so the hut itself stood in open country while Burrington Combe itself was completely bare of trees as a result of grazing by sheep and rabbits.

The Society was at the time one of the most popular clubs in the University, chiefly for social reasons. The sport of caving was still in its very earliest days and many routine trips in the Burrington area would have involved some element of exploration. However, archaeology was of equal importance and Tom Hewer, a medical student, carried out various excavations, especially of tumuli on Mendip and of King Arthur's Cave in the Wye valley. He was centrally involved in the establishment of the museum, which was sadly destroyed by bombing during the war.

It was the activity of such members in the early years of the Society that established its position in the Burrington and Blackdown areas. On one occasion Tom Hewer visited the local land-owner, a Major Leacroft, to ask permission to excavate Rowberrow cave. As the Society had earlier been denied permission he was keen to make a good impression and when offered a drink politely accepted. To his consternation the servant appeared with a tray containing a bottle of champagne and a single glass, the Major saying that he himself never drank before mid-morning. Tom Hewer duly consumed the whole bottle, for the sake of good form, with the Major looking on, and was duly granted permission. As he left, the Major said that he had turned down the previous applicant as "the insufferable little squirt couldn't hold his drink". The squirt in question was Edgar Tratman.

After leaving the University Tom Hewer went on to work in the Sudan, where he once fell out of the cockpit of a bilane in turbulent air, fortunately being pulled back by the pilot's hand on his ankle. Whilst he had a parachute it would have been of little use as he was using it as a seat at the time. On returning to England he worked in Liverpool before taking the chair in Pathology at Bristol, where he worked throughout the war, on one occasion being forced to leave a dinner party after a waiter opened a serving hatch to find that an incendiary bomb had landed in the kitchen and that the back half of the building was ablaze and collapsing. He then went down to the General Hospital where he spent the night patching up casualties of the air raid, still wearing dinner jacket and bow tie.

On retirement Tom Hewer devoted more time to his interest in Botany and on several occasions drove his landrover to Iran, Afghanistan and Soviet Central Asia on plant collecting expeditions. back in England he spent most of his time developing his beautiful garden in Henbury, but re-established his links with the Society in his late eighties, visiting the hut and

attending the opening of the new rooms. He often reminisced about caving and was once heard to say that he had devoted so much time to caving that he was somewhat surprised that he had managed to pass his finals. Modern cavers may not wear ties anymore, but has anything else changed? One can only hope that the cavers of the 1990's go on to lead such eventful and enjoyable lives.

C.S.C. Martyn

For further details of Tom Hewer's career see also obituaries in *The Independent*, 19 March 1994; *The Guardian*, 22 March 1994; *The Times*, 23 March 1994; and *The Linnean*, in preparation.

GEORGE COUNSELL BOON, B.A., F.S.A.

1927–1994

It is with deep regret that we record the death in Penarth on 31st August of George Boon, some three weeks before his 67th birthday and some 47 years since he joined the Society. George began his career as an archaeologist while still a Bristol schoolboy, by recording Roman finds made in the course of building development at Sea Mills. At the University he studied in the Classics Department, notably with Dr Momigliano, and his interest in archaeology, encouraged by our Vice-President, Dr Dina Dobson, brought him to the Society, where he rapidly became one of the small group of younger members who revived archaeological work by the Society in the post-war years. He was a member of the committee in 1948-49 and 1949-50 and took an active part in the work on the archaeological collections prior to the re-establishment of our museum following its war-time destruction. In 1948 he directed the first excavation, that on the Romano-British field system at Charterhouse-on-Mendip. He also directed rescue excavations on the Roman villa at King's Weston.

His appointment in 1950 as archaeological assistant in Reading Museum, took him away from Bristol, but he always retained a lively interest in the archaeology of the area and was a valued member of the group of archaeologists working in and around Bristol in the 50's. In Reading, his meticulous scholarship, his untiring industry and his enthusiastic devotion to his work, soon won him the golden opinions of his superiors. His ordering of the vast store of remains dug up from the Roman town of Silchester early in the century led to his undertaking new excavations there in 1954-56, which with the later work under the leadership of Michael Fulford, made Silchester the best understood Roman town north of the Alps. His work was made accessible to the general reader in a way unparalleled at the time, by his book *Roman Silchester* (1957), later followed by his *Silchester: the Roman town of Calleva* (1974).

From Reading he went in 1957 to the National Museum of Wales, where he speedily became devoted to the *Amgueddfa* and to the Roman archaeology of Wales, rising to become Keeper of Archaeology in 1976, in succession to Dr. H.N. Savory, and Senior Keeper and Curator in 1987. His sterling work there, notably on the Roman legionary fort of *Isca* at