

OBITUARY

JOHN FREDERICK HEAD (Jack) died on 14 January, 1984, aged 86.

In 1914, at the age of 16, he enlisted in the Army and served in the Cavalry throughout the First World War, including France and Flanders. On his discharge in 1919 he joined the then National Provincial Foreign Bank and worked in Europe for three years. He continued in banking until his retirement in 1957 as Manager of the Swiss Cottage, London, Branch of the National Westminster Bank.

His return to England in 1922 marked the beginning of his life-long interest in archaeology, particularly in Buckinghamshire. His special interest was the pagan Anglo-Saxon period.

In 1929 he joined the Buckinghamshire Architectural and Archaeological Society; was elected to the Council in 1944 (Chairman 1957-61), and Vice-President in 1973. In 1938 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, serving on their Council and Finance Committee, and from 1958 as their Local Secretary for Buckinghamshire. From 1954 to 1966 he acted as Chief Correspondent for Buckinghamshire to the then Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of the Ministry of Works. From 1952 to 1976 he served on the Council of the Buckinghamshire Record Society. From 1960 to 1965 he was on the County Committee of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

He was closely concerned with the affairs of

the Roman and Mediaeval London Excavation Council from its inauguration in London in 1946, and served as its Chairman from 1972 to 1979.

He was created M.B.E. in 1957, and was made a Freeman of the City of London in 1975.

In 1962, at the request of the late Sir Alan Barlow, Bart, he arranged for the excavation of the hillfort on Ivinghoe Beacon by Professor S.S. Frere and Dr M.A. Cotton.

His first wife, May, daughter of H.W.L. Way, J.P., of Spencer Grange, Great Yeldham, Essex (the senior member of a collateral branch of the Way family of Denham Place) died in 1965, leaving issue one daughter. In 1971 he married Lorna M. Stowell, daughter of Hugh Spencer Stowell. She now acts as Honorary Librarian of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

The basic facts of Jack Head's life and career, set out above, show an impressive list of appointments and activities connected with archaeology. But he was such a modest retiring man that his true contribution to archaeology, and particularly to Buckinghamshire and the Bucks Archaeological Society, can only be realised by those who knew him well, among whom I am happy to count myself.

In addition to organising much of the complicated excavation of the hillfort on Ivinghoe Beacon, he conducted a number of excavations on his own, and with Colonel Serocold and other pioneer Bucks antiquaries. Lodge Hill and Saunderton were among these. Though some were not fully published, much of the material was given to the County Museum. Mention of this leads me to recall the vital and helpful part he played in the sometimes difficult negotiations with the County Council at the time when the Museum was handed over to them. His wise counsel and practical business experience were invaluable.

He contributed numerous articles, including

reports of his excavations, to the *Records of Buckinghamshire*, but his greatest achievement was undoubtedly the book published by John Wright of Bristol in 1955 and entitled *Early Man in South Buckinghamshire*. Though some of his ideas have had to be modified by more recent discoveries and research, it still remains the standard work on the subject. Typical of his modesty is the note he sent with the autographed copy he gave me. "I hope you will find something in this to interest you — if you think it suitable for notice in the Records I should of course be most grateful if you could find space for a few not too devastating lines".

His M.B.E. in 1957 was the reward for his work — I think as Treasurer — for the Roman & Mediaeval London Excavation Council, which was concerned with excavating and recording bombed sites in London, and investigating old sites before redevelopment.

He was no dry-as-dust archaeologist, but had a wide vision and interests, as his connection with the Bucks Record Society and the C.P.R.E. demonstrate.

A glance at the names in the list of acknowledgements in *Early Man* will show his wide contacts, and the way he sought the best authorities: Dr Morley Davies, G. C. Dunning, Professor Hawkes, A. D. Lacaille, Thurlow Leeds, J. N. L. Myres, K. D. Oakley, J. G. Jenkins, Professor Grimes . . .

Many younger members of the Society can testify to his generous encouragement. His wide knowledge, scholarship and wise counsel will be greatly missed.

E.C.R.

Deaths recorded during 1983 were those of the following: F. Fancutt, M.B.E., Mrs. Trye, T. Woodman and Miss Faith Stewart-Liberty, who was a great-niece of Sir Arthur Liberty, the founder of Liberty's store in Regent Street and a great benefactor of this Society.