

## OBITUARIES

### SIR DENIS ARTHUR HEPWORTH WRIGHT, G.C.M.G.

Sir Denis, who was an active Vice-President of the Bucks Archaeological Society, died on 18 May 2005 at the age of 94 at his home in Haddenham.

Sir Denis was born on 23 March 1911 and was educated at Brentwood School and St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. On leaving Oxford he started his working life in advertising, but in August 1939 a holiday in Romania changed his life dramatically. When he reached the Black Sea port of Constanta war was imminent and he was persuaded to become a temporary member of H.M. Consular Service. His fiancé Iona took the decision to follow him and travelled out to Constanta where they married and stayed until 1941. He was appointed Vice-Consul-in-charge at Trebizond in Turkey 1941–43 and Acting Consul-in-charge at Mersin 1943–45. Successive postings took him to Belgrade and Chicago before becoming the Head of the Economic Relations Department in the Foreign Office in 1951. He served as Charge d'affaires and then Counsellor in Tehran from 1953–55 and in 1959 he was appointed Ambassador to Ethiopia. While Emperor Haile Selassie was on a state visit to Brazil, Sir Denis was able to alert him to a military coup in Addis Ababa. The Emperor was able to return home to suppress the coup.

However, probably the most important posting of his career was as Ambassador to Iran 1963–1971. His earlier postings to the country had given him a great affection and understanding of the Persians and their way of life and he was delighted to return there. His involvement with, and interest in, Iran remained with him for the rest of his life. After the Islamic revolution in 1979, when the Ayatollah Khomeini swept to power, Sir Denis was given the unenviable task of meeting the Shah in temporary exile and informing him that he

would not be welcome in Britain. He became chairman of the Iran Society (1976–1979) and President of the British Institute of Persian Studies (1978–1987). He devoted a great deal of his retirement to writing two books on Persia 'The English amongst the Persians' (1977) and 'The Persians amongst the English' (1985).

After retirement, in 1971, Sir Denis moved to Haddenham and, in addition to his Persian interests outlined above, took on non-executive directorships with Shell, the Chartered Bank and Mitchell Cotts. He was also in great demand from local and county organisations and was made a Vice-President of this Society in 1981. He regularly supported our programme of lectures and, with his wife Iona, participated in summer coach outings until last year when declining health prevented them from coming. Other organisations who enjoyed his support included the Aylesbury Hospice Appeal, Chiltern Society, Friends of the Vale of Aylesbury, Haddenham Village Society and Haddenham Museum Trust.

Sir Denis was awarded numerous honours. He was made a CMG in 1954, a KCMG in 1961 and GCMG in 1971. He was made Hon. fellow of his old Oxford College in 1972 and St. Anthony's College in 1975. He was a man of great charm and modesty and esteemed by all who knew him. It was very much in character that he requested that there should be no memorial service. However, the overflowing congregation at his funeral service at St. Mary's church Haddenham showed the affection in which he was held.

*Diana Gulland*  
2005

## DAVID DONALD MILLER

Born in London in 1916 Don followed his father as a pharmacist and, as a London University student, was evacuated to Cardiff during the war, graduating in 1940. He worked in several London pharmacies, then as an industrial chemist with Organon before joining R.P.Scherer Ltd in Slough in 1951 as the company pharmacist, settling in Burnham. He retired in 1979 when the factory relocated to Swindon.

He and Dorothy, whom he had married in 1954, had attended evening classes together and they completed the London Diploma in Archaeology in 1974. They worked as volunteers on excavations for the Museum of London and then joined the Buckinghamshire County Museum's Archaeological Group. They became loyal supporters of its excavations and fieldwalking, and of the 'Tuesday Group' where they worked, amongst other projects, on the creation of the Disturbance Map (of pits and quarries) which is now part of the County SMR. In the 1980s they were persuaded to help with the sorting of the Museum's photographic collections: at the time they began about one thousand photos had been catalogued but when they finally decided the drive to Aylesbury was too much over 16,000 images had been analysed and listed. They gave the County the equivalent of 4

years full-time work and without their efforts the photo collection could never have been made available to the public as it is today.

In their own locality they belonged to the Middle Thames Archaeological Society, and were involved in studies of several moated sites in South Bucks. They published their surveys of Hartley Court Moat in Burnham Beeches (*Recs Bucks* 20) and with Sister Jane Mary of Burnham Abbey (*Recs Bucks* 27). They formed close social ties with the nuns of Burnham and appropriately their ashes were buried in the Abbey gardens at the suggestion of the sisters.

Don and Dorothy were a devoted couple who made many friends within the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society. They had unexpected enthusiasms, such as their motorbike and side car, the breeding of Siamese cats, and their camping holidays in Scotland (they even camped for a week on-site at the Bierton excavations), but it is in the history and archaeology of Buckinghamshire that they have left their permanent and valued mark.

The Society extends its sympathy to their son Robert and his family.

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