

# OBITUARIES

## ANGELA VERA COLMER

Angela Colmer (née Traylen) was born in March 1938 at Guildford, Surrey, and died at Budleigh Salterton, Devon, in January 2007.

A lifelong interest in wild flowers was fostered from an early age by her mother and at school. Her father's encouragement was in the field of sport and Angela's particular prowess was in athletics. She represented Surrey in the Schools Athletic Association Championships in 1953 and 1954. On leaving school, Angela entered the family antiquarian bookselling business, based in Guildford, where she remained until her marriage in 1971. During that period she developed an interest in archaeology through W.E.A. courses progressing to the London University Diploma in Archaeology, on which course she met Tony, her future husband. Angela had completed two years of the four-year Diploma course when she and Tony moved to Lancashire. They joined the newly formed West Lancashire Archaeological Society and Angela tutored adult education classes in the subject.

Returning to the south, Angela joined the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society in 1975, soon after moving to the county. Interested in all aspects of BAS she, and Tony, regularly attended lectures and supported summer outings. Angela became actively involved in the running of the Natural History Section from 1978 when she was elected onto the committee, becoming Hon. Secretary the following year. She held office for some 21 years, with two short breaks, running the section with great efficiency and skill. In 1997 Angela designed the natural history display for a very successful exhibition celebrating BAS's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ansorge's collection of butterflies, a central part of the display, proved particularly popular with younger visitors. Angela's natural history knowledge was extensive; the Society was very fortunate to have had her support for so many years.

Her interest in archaeology continued and she joined the Buckinghamshire County Museum's Archaeological Group. She became part of the legendary 'Tuesday Group', which met at the Museum and later at Halton to wash and catalogue finds

from excavations and fieldwalking. The darts matches, at the Christmas socials of the Group, were a highlight of the year and on one occasion Angela won the coveted Roman bone trophy with Hal Dalwood! Angela completed her Diploma in Archaeology course and went on to teach the subject at W.E.A. classes.

When Tony retired in 2000, Angela stepped down as Hon. Secretary of the Natural History Section as they planned to move away from the county, however they still maintained regular contact with BAS until in 2004 they finally found the right house and location in Budleigh Salterton, Devon.

Inevitably with her interest and skills, the Fairlynch Museum at Budleigh soon claimed Angela for their own and she became actively involved in re-classifying the archaeology collection. She had completed a draft of the re-classification by November 2006 when she became seriously ill and was unable to continue. Tony has taken the task on adding it to his own work for the museum. The large congregation at her funeral showed how well she had settled into her new home and the esteem in which she was held in Budleigh.

Angela had many talents and interests outside BAS. To name just a few, she was an extremely competent artist, dress-maker, embroiderer, lace-maker and gardener. She had great compassion for animals, particularly cats, and over the years usually had a family of two, sometimes four, from rescue centres. Her other great love was her classic car, an Austin Healey sprite, which she drove fearlessly up and down the steep hills of High Wycombe double-declutching as she went!

The Society extends its sympathy to Tony, her constant companion and supporter.

*Diana Gulland*

## SIR OLIVER NICHOLAS MILLAR, G.C.V.O. (1923–2007)

An early product of the Courtauld Institute, the young Oliver Millar approached Anthony Blunt, the Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures and in 1947 took a job as his assistant. Thereafter his entire career was focussed on the royal collection, which was at that time administered in a very amateur and rather haphazard way. Millar was deeply interested in British art and in particular the portraits held by the Crown, and he was more comfortable than Blunt in the social aspects of the Surveyor's department. He set about the monumental task of cataloguing, and publishing, the entire royal holding and he was responsible for a series of elegant catalogues which used documentary records and previous inventories, as well as the pictures themselves.

In 1972 he succeeded Blunt as Surveyor and during his time in office the collections were curated in a much more organised manner and became far better known. He superintended several important exhibitions, most notably that on his special enthusiasm, Anthony Van Dyck. He was a conscientious and active trustee of the National Portrait Gallery and the National Art Collections

Fund and a member of the British Academy.

Living in Penn, he and his wife had joined the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society in 1958 but were passive members until 2003 when Sir Oliver played an invaluable role assisting the County Museum in its exhibition about the Civil War in Bucks. Sir Oliver regularly attended exhibition planning meetings and his encyclopaedic knowledge of English country house collections meant that he was able to advise the museum in its choice of works for the exhibition, including paintings by Van Dyck and William Dobson. Moreover, no sitter or artist was too obscure or lowly to have escaped Sir Oliver's attention and the museum was able to locate many less well known representations of locally important figures thanks to his guidance. He further aided the project by writing notes on the paintings which he had helped to select in the catalogue *Buckinghamshire in the Civil War*. His good humour and enthusiastic support were greatly appreciated and the success of the 2005 exhibition was due in no small part to his expert involvement.

George Lamb

## BAMBI STANTON (21 October 1924 – 27 July 2007)

Bambi was born in Woking, Surrey, the daughter of Dr. Alan and Helen Snowden. In 1930 she went with her mother to live in Bermuda, where her fascination with marine biology began. Her first formal schooling began at the age of fourteen on her return to England. After only two years she was ready to transfer to Cheltenham Ladies College in 1941. At the commencement of the war, she was working as a technician in a biology laboratory then joined the WRNS being posted first to the Naval dockyards at Rosyth, and then Station X at Bletchley Park. Although given a place at the Royal Free Hospital in London, a family decision to emigrate to Canada, subsequently reversed, meant that she had to give up an opportunity to become a doctor. Later on whilst working in Cheltenham she met Thomas Stanton, whom she

married in 1949. In 1950 they moved to Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

For the next 25 years Bambi was a dedicated wife and mother but by 1974 found time to enrol for a diploma in Archaeology at Oxford, which she gained with distinction three years later. About this time she joined the Chess Valley Archaeological Society, which had a flourishing field section, and was later to become its Honorary Secretary. She became heavily involved in outside activities, organising fieldwalks etc. Regular meetings, finds washing and identification sessions came to be held at her house. She developed particular expertise in identifying and drawing worked flint, which led her to offer her services to, amongst other the Portland, Dorset, Mesolithic project. She saw into print the important Mesolithic site at Stratford's Yard,

Chesham (Recs 31, 1991) and co-authored the excavation of a Roman kiln site at Gerrards Cross (Recs 29, 1987). Her other published works include 'The Ice Age and After' in *The Archaeology of the Chilterns*, edited by Keith Branigan (1994), which booklet she assembled, and 'Fieldwork of the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society (CVAHS) in the Buckinghamshire Chilterns' in Holgate R.(1995) *Chiltern Archaeology: recent work*. She gave many talks on the archaeology of the Chilterns and on her travels, to the Chess Valley Society and other groups. All of her work was thorough and of a high standard.

She gave much assistance to the County Museum through its County Museum Archaeological Group, joining in fieldwalks and helping on excavations

whatever the weather, and frequently appearing with welcome refreshments for the excavators.

At 62 years of age she gave a home to her grand children, Abigail and Julian and began a strong association with St Michael's and All Angels, Beaconsfield. In her later years although slowed by arthritis, she managed to visit all of the historic places she had wanted to visit as a child, the Yorkshire Abbeys, Egypt, the Grand Canyon, Petra, Malta, and Crete.

Her husband Tom died in 1985. She is survived by three sons, Rowan, Timothy and Nigel.

This obituary includes information kindly supplied by Bambi's family.

MF/MW/SC/HH

## EDWARD LEGG

As this volume is going to press, the Society is very sad to learn of the death of Ted Legg, the

Society's Chairman for many years. An obituary will be included in Rec 2009.