

OBITUARY

ARTHUR MASSEY ApSIMON
19 October 1927 – 21 April 2019



With the death of Arthur ApSimon the Society has lost its most senior academic archaeologist. Arthur was a prolific writer for our *Proceedings* and a past Vice-President and President. I and many others in the Society mourn a close and much-loved friend.

Arthur was born in the family home, in Wallasey near Liverpool, the first son of Thomas Trevor ApSimon, a GP, and Nancy Isabella ApSimon née Davies who had studied chemistry at Liverpool University. Arthur was home-schooled by his maternal grandfather Jonah and briefly attended Wallasey Grammar School before they relocated to Bradford on Avon in 1938. There he attended Fitzmaurice Grammar School throughout the war years.

On leaving school in 1945, Arthur was persuaded by his father to follow him into medicine and gained a place at the Medical School in Bristol.

An ascent of Tryfan with Jonah and visits with him to Stuart Piggott at Avebury and with the family to Mortimer Wheeler at Maiden Castle in the mid-1930s ignited interests in outdoor life and archaeology, and when some classmates invited him to go caving, he accepted. Arthur joined UBSS in 1947 and remained a member until his death.

In the late 1940s, after the devastation of its museum in the Bristol Blitz, the Society was actively recovering and sorting what remained of its collection, Arthur was drawn into that work and also became involved in excavation at Rhino Rift, and at Gorsey Bigbury, on which he published his first archaeological report in these *Proceedings* in 1949.

Arthur became increasingly unhappy with the idea of practising medicine, did not take his final exams and so never graduated. However, an alternative was at hand; his father listened this time, and arranged for a transfer to the Institute of Archaeology in London. Arthur spent the next two years studying under V. Gordon Childe and remained in academic archaeology for the rest of his working life.

With a gap for National Service in the RAF, 1952-54, he remained at the Institute until 1957 as Childe's research assistant before moving to Queen's University, Belfast in 1957, first as research assistant to Martyn Jope and then as lecturer in archaeology. Field work directed during this period included excavation at the multi-period site at Brean Down Sandcliff, Somerset and excavation of the Brean Down Roman temple. In Northern Ireland Arthur directed excavations at the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age site of Ballynagilly in Co. Tyrone from 1965-70.

This was followed by a move to the Department of Archaeology at the University of Southampton where he remained from 1967 to 1993 and became a Senior Lecturer. Fieldwork directed during this period included a group of Passage Tombs at Quélarn, Finistère and the Lower Palaeolithic site of Red Barns, Portchester. Arthur's involvement in the prehistoric archaeology of Cornwall included study of the Bronze Age and Iron Age site of St Eval, and specialist reports on Bronze Age pottery, while his academic duties required lecturing across a wide range of British and European prehistory. His early work suggested the Wessex I/Wessex II division of the Early Bronze Age. For ten years he was Archaeology Editor of the Hampshire Field Club Proceedings. After 1970 much of his time and energy was taken by work on Miss Dorothy Dudley's archaeological archive concerning not only the Tregiffian Barrow, but also Roughton, Smallacombe Downs and others.

In 1956, Arthur met Pat Tangye, then a Bristol undergraduate and a member of the Society, which, like him, she had originally joined to go caving, but with which she also took part in a number of archaeological digs, mainly under Arthur's supervision. They married in July 1962 and their early years were spent together in Belfast where their three eldest children were born. The youngest arrived in 1969, after the move to Southampton.

Throughout this time, Arthur remained an active member of the Society, corresponding frequently with Tratman and being involved in its digs. His association with Picken's Hole is a large part of that story; it took many years to resolve all the problems associated with the site, many of which were caused by the poor quality of the recording at times when he was not directly involved. Pete Smart and I were determined to get the report finished while we were still able to discuss it with him, and in September 2018, I was delighted to be able to give him his copy of *Proceedings* containing the Picken's Hole papers to which he had been a major contributor.

Arthur served the Society in various ways. His long membership of the Editorial Committee was only briefly interrupted by a disagreement with Tratman, and he acted as archaeological advisor to the editor when the committee fell into abeyance after 1991. He was a Vice-President for many years and served as our President from 1996 to 2010. He was a trustee of the Oliver Lloyd Memorial Fund and also served as a Convocation Representative on Court for Bristol University, for two terms from 2004 to 2012.

Pat died in 2015, but Arthur is survived by his four children, Trevor, David, Meirwen and Gwyneth. This account draws heavily on material collected by the family and kindly shared with us.

GJM