

## Obituary

### George Jobey

The sudden death of Professor George Jobey, DSO, MA, FSA, Hon FSA Scot, on 19 December 1991 marked not only the loss of a unique individual, but also the end of an era in the archaeology of North Britain.

Born on 8 April 1918 in Tynemouth, George Jobey was a dedicated North-Easterner throughout his life. He was educated at Tynemouth Municipal High School and at Bede College, Durham University, where he studied archaeology within his degree course in history and wrote a dissertation on the Roman fort at Carrawburgh. After the Second World War, he embarked on a teaching career as a history master at his old school. Although he subsequently switched emphasis to the more distant past, he always retained an interest in recent, and military, history and his unusual breadth of knowledge is reflected in his wide-ranging field investigations and published works. He never departed from his natural role as a teacher, however, and he was an inspiration and friend to all his students, many of whom moved on to make their own contributions to archaeology and history. There can be no greater tribute to his gift as a teacher than that each one remembers him with respect, gratitude and affection.

George Jobey was always a modest man. He never spoke of his experiences in the Durham Light Infantry during the Second World War for which his bravery was recognised not only by a double mention in dispatches, but also by the award of a DSO for gallantry at the Salerno landings. There can be no doubt that as Major Jobey his actions, leadership and humour would have been as much an inspiration to those under his command as they were to his students and colleagues in his later career. His active war ended with wounds received in 1944, the marks of which he bore for the rest of his life, but in his indomitable way he continued to contribute to the war effort by teaching tactics at battle school.

Shortly after resuming his teaching career George moved to the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at King's College in the Newcastle Division of the University of Durham, later Newcastle University. While there he began the long series of excavations and field surveys which made him one of the most prolific researchers in archaeology. He also began to establish the strong core of support among extra-mural students who enabled him to achieve his success in the field and who have served North British archaeology so well.

His undergraduate teaching began in the Department of Classics and Ancient History in the University of Newcastle and flourished with the formation of the Department of Archaeology in 1972. His outstanding contribution there was recognised first by the award of a Readership in 1974 and later by his Personal Chair in 1981. Professor Jobey's retirement from the University in 1983, was marked by two *Festschriften*: *Settlement in North Britain 1000 BC-AD 1000* (eds J C Chapman & H C Mytum 1983) and *Between and Beyond the Walls: essays on the prehistory and history of North Britain in honour of George Jobey* (eds R Miket & C Burgess 1984). The breadth of scope in both subject and period reflected in their contents fittingly attested George's own exceptionally wide-ranging contribution to the archaeology and

history of North Britain, while the large number of contributors to each clearly demonstrated the high regard in which he was held by his colleagues and students. Not surprisingly George's own contribution to his subject continued well beyond his retirement from University life.

George Jobey's fieldwork began in 1956 with Farhill Crags and Huckhoe, Northumberland, and continued over the next 30 years: an impressive record of active research. He adopted a systematic approach to the landscape by combining survey with small-scale excavations, thereby establishing recurring patterns in the archaeological evidence and setting them in a chronological framework. This approach, which reflected that of the Royal Commissions on Ancient and Historical Monuments, the national survey bodies, was carried out – and published – speedily and with very limited resources, mostly from research grants. It stands as a testament to the great deal that can be achieved with determination, will, motivation and enthusiasm; and it earned George Jobey the accolade from C E Stevens that he was 'virtually a Commission in himself'. Certainly the archaeology of the county of Northumberland is much better understood, and more widely known, as a direct result of his efforts; so, too, is the archaeology of much of southern Scotland.

His original, best-known, and perhaps most lasting, effort was directed towards native settlement of the Roman period. George moved this subject forward almost single-handedly in North Britain and many of his excavations and subsequent papers remain seminal works. At a time when Roman archaeology was dominated by military and classical interests, he built bridges between Romanists and prehistorians and established common ground. His role is evident in his key contributions to such volumes as *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain*, and *The Iron Age in Northern Britain*. His list of excavations is long, and includes many key sites, for example, Huckhoe, Hartburn, West Brandon, Burradon, Boonies, Belling Law and Burnswark Hill. These led to a greater understanding of the range and complexity of native settlements, brought together in a series of important synthetic articles in *Archaeologia Aeliana*. His interests extended into south-west Scotland and he produced a number of parallel papers for that area. He also enabled a greater appreciation of the relationship between the native population and the Roman forces, and began to show the 'barbarians' as rather more sophisticated peoples than was often believed or admitted: his work on Burnswark Hill, in particular, showed that the assumed relationship between the native settlement and the Roman camps was mistaken; his review of Traprain Law demonstrated the significance of its unparalleled assemblage of Roman material; while his papers on population problems linked developments on native sites to the *Pax Romana*. In short, he transformed our understanding of the interaction between Roman and native in the Tyne/Forth Province. It is a measure of his contribution that his works are still the fundamental reference for anyone working in the period in North Britain.

George's own breadth of approach, however, was reflected in the considerable work he undertook on earlier prehistoric sites, both Bronze Age and Iron Age. Perhaps less well-known than his Romano-British interests, his work at Green Knowe, for instance, highlighted the nature of unenclosed platform settlements and was followed by a review of such sites throughout southern Scotland; while his work at sites such as Chatton Sandyford and High Knowes, Alnham, concentrated on the problems of cairns, cairnfields and palisaded settlements. He also had long-standing interests in much later periods, such as Civil War military installations and 18th-century millstones and quarries in Northumberland. Indeed, George Jobey was interested in the full development of the landscape before landscape archaeology became fashionable, and his work reflects his essentially multi-period approach. This overview reached its culmination in his presentation to the Society of the Rhind Lectures

in 1982, which was the most authoritative recent synthesis of prehistoric and Roman archaeology in North Britain. Unfortunately, George's own modesty, and acute awareness of the limitations of his evidence, made him reluctant to publish this presentation.

His publication record is outstanding, including all of his excavations and surveys, supported by numerous synthetic articles. There is hardly a volume of *Archaeologia Aeliana* since 1957 which does not contain a publication by Jobey, together with several volumes of *PSAS* and various local journals. This is an exemplary publication record which we would all do well to emulate. In addition to his academic contributions, however, he found time to present his work in more popular form, producing a guidebook for Northumberland. In this, and other publications, he mirrored his teaching skills, demonstrating a popular and human touch which so many professional archaeologists and academics find hard to achieve.

George Jobey worked tirelessly. His routine of field season followed by publication was continuous, and he was regularly involved in lectures and conferences, both academic and public. He served the Society, of which he was an Honorary Fellow, for a lengthy period as councillor and was its representative on the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland for 14 years; he was a Commissioner for the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland for 10 years; he served as both President and Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne; and he was involved with CBA Group 3 from its inception. His commitment and dedication serve as a model for us all.

In the end no review of the achievements of Professor George Jobey can adequately convey the essential, unassuming, character of the man. His modesty and humour, his readiness to listen to all views, his inspiring leadership and teaching earned him the sort of loyalty, affection and respect which few individuals command. Yet he always remained firmly rooted in his home, where he found both his own inspiration and the support essential to his work. It is a testimony to his human qualities that colleagues everywhere regarded him as much of a friend and part of their community as did his compatriots in Newcastle and Tynemouth. His *Festschrift, Between and Beyond the Walls*, published a cartoon with which all his students were familiar: it depicts George during the excavation at Boonies, Dumfriesshire, reassuring his hard-working team with patience and persistence that 'It'll come m'dears. It'll come . . .' That image captures much of the spirit of the man. He will be sorely missed.

*Lesley Macinnes*