

DAME AGATHA CHRISTIE MALLOWAN

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With her death on 12th January, 1976 the School has lost not only a much loved Founder Member but one of its most devoted and generous supporters. As the wife of our former Director, Chairman and now President, Sir Max Mallowan, whom she first met at the Ur Excavations in 1930, her life has in no small measure encouraged the major projects of the School since its inauguration in 1932. For more than forty years, on many expeditions, at Chagar Bazar, Brak and Arpachiyah, on the Balikh area survey and annually at Nimrud, she not only accompanied her husband but also actively shared in the labours of the various expeditions and enjoyed the rigours of camp life. One of her most entertaining books, republished a few months before she died, was a new edition of her *Come, Tell Me How You Live*, in which she recalled some of those earlier moments, both grave and gay.

Her kindness will not be forgotten. All who were at Nimrud, whether as members of the expedition or visitors, will recall the wit and charm with which she presided over the expedition table. Her kindly and charming personality contributed in no small measure to the happy team-spirit which marked expedition life with the Mallowans. She enjoyed cleaning ivories and small finds, printing photographs or working in the heat of the dark room, typing the field catalogue or dosing those who might succumb to any prevailing internal disorder. At Nimrud she readily played her part in entertaining a stream of visitors, many of them distinguished, all of them enthusiastic. In 1951 a small room was added to the mud-brick expedition house to which she could retreat and write undisturbed and uninterrupted. There, as in the old School house overlooking the river Tigris in Baghdad where she wrote *They Came To Baghdad*, she would read and write in peace. At Easter she composed cautionary verses, in which no member of the expedition was spared, and these will themselves one day prove another record not just of some individual's efforts or eccentricity but of the exciting discoveries or of the more routine activities or outings. Many of us will think of her joining in the exploration of some uncharted *tell* as we searched for clues to its history among the sherds. The culinary delights of the expedition table were often indebted to her generosity and care, and many will remember her admonition to the driver leaving for a shopping run to Mosul of "... and don't forget the cream". Her donation of the manuscript of *A Pocket Full of Rye*, but one of her many contributions to the School, some of them anonymous, will be remembered with gratitude. The discerning eye will see many of her experiences of travel in the Middle East reflected in her works.

Dame Agatha occasionally attended meetings of Council and was regularly present at functions in Baghdad, Mosul and London, and her last, in Oxford last year for the presentation to Sir Max of the volume of *Iraq* prepared as his *Festschrift*, gave her special pleasure. While the world mourns the passing of one of its most renowned authors, the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, with its friends in many countries including Iraq itself, has a more personal and poignant sense of loss. It extends to Sir Max and the family its deepest sympathy and assurance that her part with him in the progress of the School will always be recalled with pride and gratitude.

D. J. W.

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