

OBITUARY

SIR CYRIL FOX, D.LITT., PH.D., F.B.A.

President 1944–9. Gold Medallist 1952

Died 16th January 1967. Memorial service 16th March 1967

CYRIL FRED FOX was born at Chippenham, Wiltshire, on 16th December 1882, and was educated at Christ's Hospital. He was destined for a career in market gardening but, by a happy accident, came under the wing of Dr. Louis Cobbett, University Lecturer in Pathology at Cambridge, who was largely responsible for Fox's appointment in 1912 as Superintendent of the University Field Laboratories. His early interest in archaeology now received full scope and he was admitted to Magdalene College as a mature student to read for the Tripos. Professor H. M. Chadwick was so impressed by Fox that he secured permission for him to proceed straight to the Ph.D.; his thesis eventually achieved publication as *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, still a classic example of the synthesis of archaeology and environmental studies. In 1923 he became assistant to the Curator of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology; in 1924 he was invited to the dual post of Keeper of Archaeology in the National Museum of Wales and Lecturer in Archaeology in the University College at Cardiff. In 1926 he succeeded to the Directorship of the Museum where he remained until his retirement in 1948; he was knighted in 1935.

He was elected a Fellow in 1923, served on the Council in 1930, and as Vice-President from 1938 to 1941, and was President from 1944 to 1949. His Presidency thus coincided with the final years of the war and the difficult post-war period; under his wise and skilful guidance the Society resumed its full activities, and publication and research again played their normal part. At the same time, he served as President of the newly formed Council for British Archaeology and thus was a key figure in the archaeological scene of those years. But all this was in addition to his achievements in the National Museum at Cardiff, particularly the supervision of building work at Cathays Park and the installation of departments there, efforts which were recognized by his Presidency of the Museums Association in 1933–4.

Meanwhile, his own research never faltered. His early days in Wales were marked by the systematic survey of Offa's Dyke, eventually to appear as a British Academy monograph. In 1932 appeared the first of many editions of *The Personality of Britain*, a classic which applied on a broad scale the principles embodied in his Ph.D. thesis. In later years his versatility led him into the fields of Celtic art and vernacular architecture where again he achieved notable results in *Pattern and Purpose* and *Monmouthshire Houses*, the latter in collaboration with Lord Raglan. But his earlier interests found expression in *Life and Death in the Bronze Age*, a work which reflected his virtuosity in barrow-digging. At the same time a steady flow of papers attested his tireless scholarship, marked by a distinctive style of draughtsmanship. In the broad scope of his interests and the high standards which he achieved, he can perhaps be regarded as one of the last archaeological polymaths.