

Obituary Notice

Major George William Graham Allen, died 24th November 1940. By the accidental death of Major G. W. G. Allen this country has lost, if not one of the first, certainly one of the foremost of those who have taken up air-photography in the service of archaeology. Major Allen, primarily interested in flying, was led by the work of others to observe first the phenomena around his base in the vicinity of Oxford, but gradually he widened his ambit as his interest and enthusiasm grew. The full extent and range of his activity it will not be possible to assess until the great collection of negatives and prints which he has bequeathed to the University of Oxford has in accordance with his wishes been transferred to the Ashmolean Museum.

No one who has seen any of the results of his skill will deny their superb quality; as in other things the standard he set himself was high; critical of his own efforts, he was the better able to judge success when he achieved it. His contribution to archaeology is in every respect remarkable; untrained and unversed in its lore, he quickly brought his essentially practical mind and a large fund of common sense to bear upon its problems. Nor was he content merely to record photographically what he observed from the air. Where possible he checked his results by field-work on the ground, thereby adding greatly to their value.

His most intensive work was naturally carried out in the Upper Thames Valley, and he has left behind him an almost complete air-record of the archaeological remains in the Oxford district, providing material which will suffice to occupy and facilitate archaeological research in that area, one may say, for generations to come. But this was not the limit of his activity; again and again he readily responded to calls upon his skill to aid the progress of exploration in other parts of the country, even extending his flights with that object to the continent. At all times he generously placed his photographs at the disposal of students and others both at home and abroad. It needs no more than a glance through the *Antiquaries Journal*, *Archaeologia*, and other publications of the late decade, too numerous to cite in detail, in order to appreciate the enormous debt that archaeological research already owes and long will owe to his assistance, rendered all the greater by the high quality of his work. In addition, in his lifetime he ungrudgingly and widely imparted to others the valuable experience he had acquired in lectures and also in a modest degree in print, and there is little doubt that had he been spared we should eventually have had from his pen a larger monograph, which would unquestionably have reached a high standard of scientific achievement.

This tribute would be incomplete, if it did not place on record some appreciation, however inadequate, of the man. Those who had come into contact with Major Allen cannot have failed to be attracted by his unassuming, genial charm. A deplorable accident has untimely deprived this country not only of a brilliant exponent of air-photography, but what is more, of a personality which will long be missed by those who were privileged to work with him and enjoy his friendship.

Major Allen was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1936.