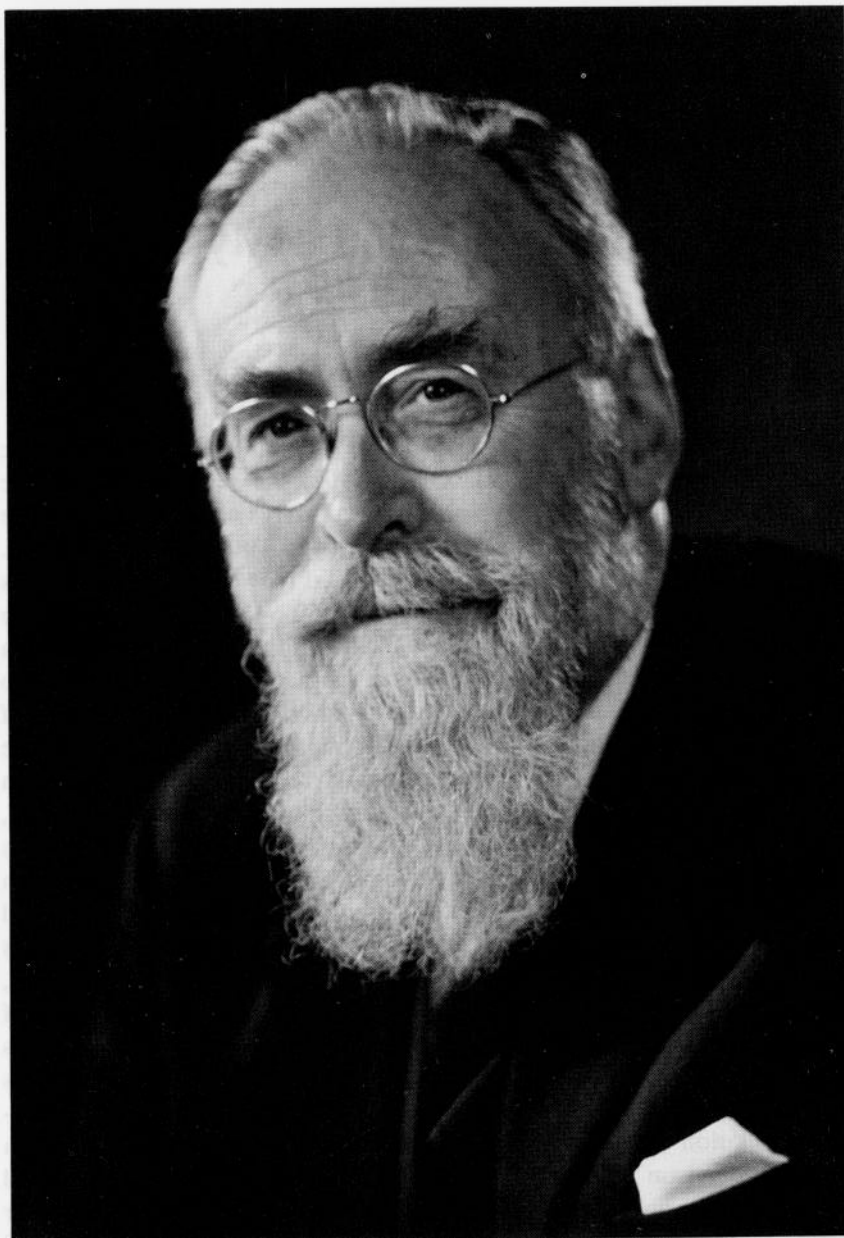


John Nowell Linton Myres 1902–1989

JOHN NOWELL LINTON MYRES was born at 1 Wellington Place, a cul-de-sac off St Giles's, Oxford on 27 December 1902, the second of the three children of John (afterwards Sir John) Linton Myres and Sophia Florence Ballance, his father being at that time Student and Tutor of Christ Church. The family name points to a Norse origin, and Nowell's recorded Myres ancestry goes back to a John Myres (c. 1710–94) who combined the farming of a 47-acre holding on Walney Island off the coast of Furness with a share in local seafaring. It was no long sail across Morecambe Bay to the Ribble, and it was to Preston, rapidly expanding under the pressures of the Industrial Revolution, that the family transferred its fortunes at the beginning of the nineteenth century. John Myres's great-grandson, John James Myres of Preston (1811–81), who was Nowell's great-grandfather, was a civil engineer and surveyor. He took a prominent part in the town's development, both he and his brother Miles Myres serving several turns in the mayoral office. It was from his great-grandfather Myres that Nowell took pleasure in deriving his status as a hereditary Guild Burgess of this ancient Lancashire town. John James Myres married Margaret Harrison, daughter of the Revd John Harrison (1767–1823), Second Master of Preston Grammar School. Of their four sons one, a second John James (1841–1913), followed his father as a civil engineer; another, Thomas Harrison Myres (1842–1926), became an architect, a circumstance prompting speculation as to a possible relationship through his mother with Thomas Harrison (1744–1829), designer of bridges at Chester and Lancaster, of Chester's city gates and of the new buildings of Chester castle, rated by H. M. Colvin as the finest group of Greek Revival buildings in Britain; a third, Edward Myres (1844–1915), became a Preston solicitor. In 1857 the eldest son, William Miles Myres (1838–1901), Nowell's grandfather, won a Hulmeian scholarship from Preston Grammar School to Brasenose and was thus in Nowell's words the first Myres to



J. N. L. MYRES

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School to Fitznosse and was that in Nowell's words the first Myres to

explore the great world beyond the borders of the Duchy. That he had an antiquarian bent is shown by his writing a comparative liturgical study of the two Prayer Books of Edward VI. After ordination he married (1867) Jane Linton, one of the eight children of the Revd Henry Linton, vicar of St Peter-le Bailey Oxford and Honorary Canon of Christ Church; Jane's sister Charlotte Linton married James Allen Smith, sometime Dean of St David's; their son Martin Linton Smith, Bishop of Hereford (1920–30) and Rochester (1930–39), was Nowell's godfather. Nowell's father Sir John Linton Myres (1869–1954), memorialized in an earlier volume of these *Proceedings*¹ and in Nowell's *Tenth J. L. Myres Memorial Lecture*, was William and Jane's only son.

Nowell's mother was of Huguenot descent, and it was in his widowed grandmother Ballance's house in Hampstead that he made his first acquaintance with books, some of them brought over from France with the family after 1685. As he wrote many years later, these dusty calf-bound volumes were intensely exciting to a small boy who had never personally handled the raw materials of history before and could make discoveries which were all his own. The library at 58 Fellows Road played a major part in stimulating his youthful interest in two directions which thereafter remained paramount, the study of history, and particularly family history, and the love of old books for their own sake. These two things, he writes, 'bound me from a very early age to what I always thought of as the living past. Old books have always seemed to me the most direct personal and evocative links that exist between the present and past generations.' His grandmother's gift to him, at the age of 15, of most of the Fellows Road books of greatest interest to him was a landmark in Nowell's life. He was soon saving his pocket-money for the purchase of books printed before 1700, and was 'rather pleased' to secure for 10/- *Calvin on the Minor Prophets* (Geneva, 1581), bound up with Tossarius' *Paraphrases* (Basle, 1558), in a splendid binding that was itself dated 1587.

Meanwhile in 1912, when he was not quite 10, Nowell had followed his elder brother to Cophorne school near Worth on the Surrey/Sussex border whence under the sympathetic tutelage of Montagu Rendall's youngest brother Bernard and his second master E. S. Workman he won his Election to a Winchester scholarship four years later. While in the larger sphere these were years which in 1914 saw the end of the world in which Nowell had so far grown up, they had also in 1911 seen the publication of his father's *The Dawn of History*, a bestseller that was to make the name Myres a household word in educated circles. As it turned out, therefore, the father was away waging his highly idiosyncratic war in the Aegean

¹ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 41 (1955), 349–365

along with the future Admiral of the Fleet Lord Cunningham, when the son, the future Bodley's Librarian, followed him to Winchester. Only his own words can convey something of what that turning point meant to Nowell and what it must have contributed, as we who come after can see, to the making of the man we remember:

My first and overwhelming impression, which has never left me, was of the quite staggering beauty of the College buildings. I recall feeling almost helplessly drunk with the overpowering quality of their architecture and hardly able to contemplate the prospect that I should actually be living for what seemed like five endless years as an intimate inmate with a legal and moral right to this unbelievable heritage of flint and stone. The effect which the place had on me was the more remarkable because I had after all been born and bred in Oxford and was no stranger to splendid architecture of every kind. But Winchester has always seemed to me in a class by itself. . . . Wherever the inspiration may lie I have never recovered from its effects. If there is anything lovelier anywhere than Chamber Court moonlit at midnight I have yet to discover it.

For a boy who was a natural solitary and in general happiest in his own company, who had worn glasses from the age of nine and had a bad stammer, life in College was less rewarding socially than its surroundings were architecturally. What made it more tolerable was a fortuitous escape from compulsory games and the wisdom of knowing how and when to keep out of harm's way. Thus aided Nowell quickly moved up the school to the coveted haven of Sixth Book. While taking the routine classical work in his stride, he was becoming all the time increasingly attracted to the study of history, especially medieval history, and to all its artistic and archaeological accompaniments. Nowell saw as the main influence on his development at this time the inspired history teaching of the then Second Master A. T. P. Williams, then a young man in his early thirties. To a boy who already had an unusually mature taste for old books, whom architecture already affected almost as physically as poetry affected Housman, the stimulus of a brilliant history teacher was all that was needed to bring the far-away past into the living present, thus laying the foundation for what throughout his creative years was one of Nowell's most characteristic attitudes. To all this the only fitting ending was to leave Winchester on foot, and the epilogue was a glorious five-day walk in the company of his greatest school friend Charles Stevens, whose sister Joan he was to marry, along the Pilgrims Way to Canterbury. What better prologue, too, to Oxford and those long walks of observation and reflection through the length and breadth of England that were to be the groundwork of so much later insight.

When he went up to New College in 1921 it was therefore to history

that Nowell's mind was directed. Instead of spending the usual five terms reading Honour Mods he opted for History Prelims, which he passed with Distinction at the end of his first term. This allowed eight terms instead of the usual seven for Greats, in which he obtained his First in 1924, followed by a First in the Final Honour School of Modern History in 1926. There was still leisure for many extra-curricular activities. Physical relaxation was provided by the New College Beagles. On the more serious side, with thoughts of a career in Holy Orders much in mind, during his earlier undergraduate years he was actively involved with the Student Christian Movement, becoming its Social Services Secretary and attending its conferences at Swanwick and Toynbee Hall. Then there was the Thomas More Society, of which Nowell was a co-founder and first Secretary, purposefully concerning itself with current social, economic and political problems, the Ascham Club, and in 1924 the Presidency of a lively college Essay Society. Nor will any of his fellow Cockeyed Hats of later years be surprised to learn that he was the begetter of a light-hearted dining club called the Ludicrous Society. Easter vacations supplied the unforgettable first experiences of foreign travel: Belgium in 1922, Italy and Sicily ('I fell for Rome at once . . . captivated most by the early churches, and particularly their enchanting brick campaniles') in 1923, and after Schools in 1924 a North American tour linked with his father's secretaryship of the British Association, which met that year in Toronto.

Above all there was already archaeology, which in all its forms and all its periods and always hand in hand with history was to become increasingly the dominant preoccupation of Nowell's life. In his first year he joined the University Archaeological Society started by E. T. Leeds in 1919, becoming its President in 1923. From its very modest beginnings he saw it evolve, as he was to write more than 60 years later, into one of the largest of all undergraduate institutions in Oxford, with its old members found all over the world in positions of influence and authority in cultural and artistic contexts as well as the more strictly archaeological professions. That this was so was due in no small measure to his own part when between 1927 and 1954 he acted as the society's Senior Treasurer and only graduate officer. In the friendliest way he made himself the link with the academic world outside, suggesting speakers and topics for lectures, encouraging and guiding aspiring entrants to careers in archaeology. One has ineffaceable memories from the early thirties of committee meetings after hall at 91 St Aldates, with the first enlargement of the young Myres family participating from his carrycot on the hearthrug, and later of hospitality at Drayton Grange.

Nowell's own practice of 'dirt' archaeology, as it was starting to be called, appears to have begun with soundings undertaken to account for

the abundant scatter of Early Iron Age sherds found in the garden of The Copse, the house on Hinksey Hill to which his parents moved from Banbury Road in the spring of 1924. Then in 1925, after a small dig with Charles Stevens on the line of Akeman Street, came the first of the four summers' major exploration (with Charles Stevens and Christopher Hawkes) of St Catharine's Hill Winchester, followed in the autumn by a spell with R. E. M. (Sir Mortimer) Wheeler at the Roman fort of Brecon Gaer. The following year, 1926, was traumatic. Schools in June (characteristically preceded by walking from end to end of the Malverns) and the viva in July presented few worries. But it was also the second season at St Catharine's Hill, while in May there was a mercifully brief excursion to London as a would-be volunteer dock-labourer in the last days of the General Strike. The pressure and trauma arose from having to take over from Wheeler, then in the process of vacating the Directorship of the National Museum of Wales for that of the London Museum, the whole on-site responsibility for running the excavation of the Caerleon amphitheatre. For this Wheeler had obtained, in return for the 'sole rights' and a degree of publicity less welcome to his stand-in than himself, substantial backing from the *Daily Mail*, Fleet Street having been persuaded—not for the last time—that excavations at a site associated with the name of King Arthur could not fail to be a popular money-spinner. To this end the man on the spot (which indeed he was) was expected to have some suitable newsworthy discovery to telephone to the paper each evening, while at the same time keeping the local newsmen at bay.

It was in the midst of this turmoil that Nowell went up from Caerleon to Oxford to be interviewed for, and as it turned out appointed to, a newly established college Lectureship in Modern History at Christ Church. The House was to be his academic base, as Lecturer, Student, Librarian, Research Student and distinguished Honorary Student for the remainder of his life. In his first year as a college tutor he taught the whole of English history from beginning to end, several of the later Foreign Periods and all the Political Science. A pupil of the early years writes how his comments on your essay would leave you with the understanding that Nowell had revealed a new world, which seemed like yesterday. I myself recall his lectures on 'Roman Britain and the Saxon Invasions' given in Christ Church hall in the Trinity Term of 1932, delivered with an attractive hesitancy over an occasional initial consonant, which probably echoed the troublesome stammer of earlier days, for such I think must be the significance of certain phrases I recorded *verbatim*—'the practice of bbarrow bburial', or 'those who pprofess and call themselves historians'; lectures delivered too with authority and a clarity that made it easy to take intelligible notes which still read well nearly 60 years later. It was at one of

these lectures, as he was afterwards to tell the Jubilee Dinner of the Arch. Soc., that he found an anonymous poem pinned to his lectern:

When some folk see a cemetery,
 The sight of it inspires
 Sad memories of dust and death,
 And all their lost desires;
 And others think of Purgatory
 And everlasting fires.
 But when I see a cemetery,
 I think of Mr Myres.

Side by side with lecturing and teaching and a growing involvement in college and faculty business, in the 1930s Myres took a leading part in organizing and carrying out four very different excavation projects, namely at Sheepen Farm, Colchester 1930, Butley Priory, Suffolk 1931–3, Mount Farm, Dorchester, Oxon. 1933, and Isurium Brigantum (Aldborough, Yorks.) 1934–5, all in due course fully published. Moreover, because he was asked in 1931 to contribute a section on the Anglo-Saxon settlements to Collingwood's forthcoming volume on Roman Britain, Myres surveyed the state of the archaeological evidence for these settlements and was quickly impressed by the absence of any systematic studies of the pottery. He resolved to 'look into the matter further', but those he consulted gave him the impression that it was a forlorn endeavour. However, Sir Thomas Kendrick passed on to Myres some provisional ideas for a typology of the cremation urns by shape, and E. T. Leeds gave him some sketches of pottery stamps: 'so equipped I sallied forth into the unknown', Myres recalled in the introduction to *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, with consequences that were not fulfilled until after his retirement. *The English Settlements*, the second (and entirely self-contained) part of 'Collingwood and Myres' was published in 1936. In this he set out to trace the make-up of the two dark centuries between the last days of Roman Britain and the first days of Christian England, for the first time weighing and balancing the different kinds of evidence, literary, archaeological and toponymic, in the light of up-to-date knowledge and discovery on both sides of the North Sea. Peter Hunter Blair's verdict that the volume's importance extends far beyond the period which it covers (*EHR*, 1937, p. 687) is as true of its second part as of its first.

When war came in 1939 Nowell was about to take over as Chairman of Examiners in the History School. Once free of these duties in July 1940, he took up work as a temporary civil servant in the Ministry of Food, in due course becoming head of the 200 staff of the Fruit and Vegetable Products Division, administered from requisitioned quarters in St John's College. Suffice to say that he never regretted or regarded as wasted the time thus

spent in dealing with civil servants and producers and consumers and playing a not ineffective part in contributing to the nation's sustenance. He epitomized the activities of those five years in a felicitous mural inscription of his own composition placed on a landing of the Buttery Staircase and deserving also to be placed on record here:

SCIANT PRAESENTES ET FVTVRI
 QVOD IN HIS CAMERIS ALMI COLLEGII D. JO. BAPT.
 PER SEX FERME ANNOS BARBARAE TRIBVLATIONIS
 MCMXL–MCMXLV
 MVLTI TAM VIRI QVAM FEMINAE
 PROVISIONI ET DISTRIBVTIONI CIBORVM
 AD SVSTENTATIONEM POPVLI
 GRATO ANIMO VIRES INTENDEBANT

—
 FECERVNT BONA ĪN MALO TEMPORE ET SPERAVERVNT IN
 PERICVLOSO

The last sentence is a clever paraphrase of an inscription at the church of Staunton Harold, Leics. commemorating its builder Sir Robert Shirley who died for his Royalist convictions in the Tower of London during the Civil War,

Whose singular praise it is
 to haue done the best thinges in y^e worst times
 And
 hoped them in the most callamitous.

In October 1945 Nowell resumed his teaching work and also the college librarianship at Christ Church. Within two years he was asked to accept the post of Bodley's Librarian, and thus to become head of one of the great libraries in the world as well as custodian of a group of library and associated buildings of unsurpassed historic and architectural importance. The tenure of this heavy responsibility was to last for 18 years, from 1948 to 1965, and to constitute the major single task and achievement of his long working life; nevertheless it was never wholly separated from—indeed it was repeatedly brought into close practical partnership with—his underlying concern with history, particularly architectural history, and archaeology, of the periods which preceded and followed it. His appointment to this particular post at this particular time meant that the Curators, acting for the university in the governance of the library, judged him to be exceptionally well fitted as a scholar, as librarian of the House, and by his experience as a wartime administrator, to carry through the heavy dual task which, delayed by the war, had now to be taken in hand. This was to establish unity of working, in terms of staffing and of services to readers,

between the 'old' Bodleian as it had been before 1939 and the 'new' Bodleian on the other side of Broad Street begun in 1936 but only finally opened by King George VI 10 years later. At the same time the new librarian would have to oversee a total structural overhaul of the floors and roofs of the three-storeyed north, east and south ranges of the Schools Quadrangle, as well as the conversion of their interiors into up-to-date reading rooms with open-access shelving. All this was accomplished between 1948 and 1954 under Nowell's constant and detailed supervision. Incidental to it was the reassessment, cleaning and restoration of the collection of university portraits that had formerly hung in the Picture Gallery on the top floor; the rediscovery, and restoration by Clive Rouse, of the Gallery's remarkable early 17th-century frieze of portrait heads;² and the removal from the Tower Room of Le Sueur's statue of the Earl of Pembroke to its now long familiar and much more appropriate position in the quadrangle below.

Five years later a still greater and entirely unexpected upheaval resulted from the discovery that Duke Humfrey, the oldest part of the library, was structurally unstable and liable to sudden collapse through the 15th-century vault of the Divinity School beneath it; the state of its 17th-century west and east wings, Selden End and Arts End respectively, was found to be little better. This necessitated total closure of the affected buildings from July 1960 and the complete removal of books and furnishings to temporary refuge in the New Library and elsewhere. The old overweighted floors had to be taken out and their steel and concrete replacements tied into ring beams inserted at floor and wall-plate level, these in turn being linked to steel uprights encased within the medieval buttresses. An ideal *rapport* between the librarian and his architect (Mr Robert Potter, FSA, FRIBA) resulted in the revealing and recording of much hidden evidence for the building's architectural history, and in a sensitive and practical regard being had to it wherever possible in the reordering and embellishment of the restored library. In 1962 Myres delivered to the Society of Antiquaries an account, at once learned and

² A less antiquarianly minded librarian would almost certainly have had the first accidentally-revealed roundel plastered over again as quickly as possible, if only for reasons of cost and convenience. Nowell at once saw the possibility of restoring and preserving the heavily pock-marked series of pictures as a major feature in the decoration of the newly created Upper Reading Room, and he knew who to ask to do the job. To commemorate the origin and restoration of the frieze he composed a Latin inscription in two elegiac couplets, drafted (he wrote) 'in such a way that the second couplet contains a double chronogram marked by two sets of differently coloured letters which come alternately and between them tot up to form the two significant dates, 1618 and 1954, in Roman numerals. I thought that such a piece of learned nonsense would be in tune with the *Zeitgeist* of Renaissance Oxford which took great pleasure in verbal Latin conceits of this kind.'

exciting, of what near-disaster had brought to light, publishing it with a wealth of illustration in *Archaeologia* 51 (1967). In the event not all that Myres had conceived and planned for enhancing and making more effective use of the buildings to the west of the Schools Quadrangle could be carried out before he gave up the librarianship in 1965. Nevertheless it is as he intended them to be that the Divinity School and the Proscholium are today occupied as they are.

It is not within the scope of this obituary to recall in any detail the circumstances which led Nowell to resign office as Bodley's Librarian at the end of 1965, four years before what would have been the normal date for his retirement. All that need be said here is that he saw acceptance of a University proposal to take away from Bodleian control the premises of the nearby Indian Institute, transfer its library of 80,000 volumes to more remote accommodation and convert its building for use as university offices, as contravening the oath he had taken publicly in Congregation on his appointment that he would 'promote the interests and usefulness of the library'. On this point of principle he was adamant. Though the University's measure was finally only passed in Convocation by a minimal majority (18 in a house of 588) secured through the organized intervention of an interested third party, the die was cast, and for Nowell's unswerving temperament there was no alternative to resignation. It was an unhappy episode, in which the conduct of the Curators showed less than due appreciation of the extraordinary care and skill with which Myres had guided the library through the most critical period in its history. Not only had he presided over the complicated and delicate processes involved in making it structurally safe and aesthetically more beautiful; he had also brought about its modernization as an institution, revolutionizing its position in a world wider than Oxford, representing its interests at library conferences on the American as well as the European continent, founding (to its immense advantage) and personally nurturing the society of Bodley's American Friends, initiating the Copyright Libraries Conference, and much more. Small wonder that the *Times Literary Supplement* printed a letter in which the head of a university library in California wrote of his departure as the 'loss to librarianship of one of the most eminent and effective of the modern practitioners of that profession.'

The loss to librarianship, sad as it was for one who did not have the heart ever to set foot again in the Upper Reading Room, or to give more than a passing glance to the beauties of Duke Humfrey and Selden End, was gain to archaeology: archaeology, that is, in the service of writing history. Not that archaeological studies were ever set wholly aside or far from Nowell's mind during the 18 Bodley years now ended—witness his bibliography from 1936–66. A three-month break at Princeton in the

winter of 1956–7 had been devoted to the sorting and preliminary classification of his drawings (already amounting to over 1,000) of Anglo-Saxon pottery and work towards the later Antiquaries Research Report on the Caistor-by-Norwich and Markshall cemeteries; also it was while he was Bodley's librarian that he delivered the Ford Lectures ('Britain and the Anglo-Saxons 350–600 AD') in Oxford in 1959 and the Rhind Lectures in Edinburgh in 1965. Moreover, between 1956 and 1965 he took part in seven study conferences of the Sachsensymposion at Bremen, Münster, Amersfoort, Schleswig, Hannover, Oxford (which he hosted) and Oldenburg, as well as representing the University at meetings of the International Historical Congress in Rome, Stockholm and Vienna. Now, with the immensely constructive but ultimately thankless tasks of Bodley behind him, he was free as never before to give his mind to what had for so long been his main research objective, namely to study the least spectacular and most neglected class of artefact left by the English peoples on both sides of the North Sea, viz. the ceramic pots in which they buried the ashes of their dead. This was made possible by the House's continuing his Studentship without interruption when Bodley ceased to provide him with bread and butter: *Domus salvatio mea*, as he might have put it.

The first-fruit of this freedom was the publication of the Rhind lectures, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, in 1969. With its 30 photographs and 350 drawings from 60 museums the book was recognized as a landmark in Saxon archaeology; as one reviewer said, its clear text was a pleasure to read, offering a far better understanding of the Anglo-Saxons than any number of graphs or depersonalized figures and tables. Even so it was as it were but a preview of the definitive *Corpus Vasorum Anglo-Saxonicorum*, which illustrates over 4,000 pots, more than 10 times the number in the earlier book. When, after delays not of his making, the great 2-volume *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period* eventually came out in 1978, he had triumphantly achieved his purpose. In the two complementary books, 'Rhind' and 'Corpus', he claimed he had presented the whole of this important body of material evidence for the English Settlements in such a way that historians could use it with confidence in reconstructing the earliest days of Anglo-Saxon England.

Lastly in 1986, when he was nearing the age of 84, the Clarendon Press brought out as a volume in its own right a replacement for the section he had contributed 50 years earlier to 'Collingwood and Myres'. Writing this was a considerable feat, though not seen in that light by some of the younger reviewers, who would have preferred something less unrevolutionary and more didactic in its conclusions, something paying less regard to the meagre literary evidence, though after all in 1986 this still stood exactly where it did 50 years earlier. But the book was fully rethought and

rewritten to take account of the great advances in archaeological and also place-name knowledge during the intervening half-century. Above all it is written with the ease and lucidity of its author's matchless English, not always a concomitant of historical writing in the 1980s. Moreover, as he is at pains to point out, it is intended to be a history book and nothing else. It is rewarding to compare its closing paragraphs with their 1936 counterpart, and to reflect how much the perceived lessening of the darkness at the end of the tunnel was attributable to the work of Myres himself.

Nowell Myres played many parts, so many that it would be tedious to attempt to enumerate them all here. At Winchester, college and cathedral, excavations and research committees, likewise the city library, all claimed his loyalty and benefited from his far from token participation in their affairs. At Oxford he rendered unique services to the House throughout his long membership of the Governing Body, services alike to college and collegiate cathedral, where he was a fairly regular worshipper and where he took delight in reading the Lessons;³ and to the college library, whose original building accounts he caused to be transcribed by Jean Cook and edited by his successor John Mason to present in sumptuous format as his offering to his learned and noble fellow members of the Roxburghe Club. No less appropriately it was in his capacity as a Fellow of both colleges that for many years he represented New College on the Governing Body of William of Wykeham's sister foundation. For 15 years he was also a member of the Council of St Hilda's. For a full five years, as President of the Society of Antiquaries, he made the return journey from Oxford to London twice a week from October to May, seldom troubling a deputy to take his place at Council, committees or ordinary meetings, and being awarded the Society's Gold Medal in 1976. Amongst a diversity of similar offices he was also President of the Library Association, the Oxford Architectural and Historical Association, the Friends of St Frideswide's and the Council for British Archaeology. He was elected to the Fellowship of the Academy in 1966 and was Raleigh Lecturer in History in 1970. Honorary Doctorates were conferred on him by the universities of Durham, Reading, Belfast and Toronto, and he was appointed CBE in 1972. The University of Oxford is conspicuous by its absence from the list of those that honoured him—even perhaps in time of contrition as *Bibliotecarius Emeritus*. One recalls too the pleasure he derived from his membership of the Ancient Monuments Board, joining in its visits to historic

³ ... IPSE QUIDEM PER XLV ANNOS PLVS MINVS ALIQVOTIENS LECTOR
 ANNO { SALVTIS MCMLXXIII } : LVCERNA PEDIBVS VERBVM TVVM—as he
 characteristically wrote inside the cover of the Reader's copy of the set of Books of Common Prayer which with the Friends of St Frideswide's he presented to the cathedral.

sites and buildings in the days when they were preserved in national guardianship more for their intrinsic merit than their revenue from tourism.

Most of all, Myres is remembered by his friends for his kindly ways. Different correspondents have written of different recollections. One, who was long a subordinate in Bodley, who knew many of the lowest ranks in the library and how they felt, recalls how Joan and Nowell started to have staff parties at Christmas and a children's party for the staff's families; it was wonderful, he writes, to work under a great scholar, and be able to get on with one's own work without any fussy interference, knowing that one had the complete confidence of the head of the library. Another, a former pupil, tells how when Nowell went to Bodley he gave a splendid dinner to all his ex-pupils who had won Fellowships: 'the fact that there was a tableful is itself a tribute.' Two letters, one from Oxford, the other from Cambridge, deserve quotation: 'Apart from his wisdom and complete lack of intellectual arrogance', says the first, 'the most striking thing about Nowell was his great friendliness, especially his willingness to take endless trouble to help young workers. In 1948 I consulted him about some early Saxon pottery I had excavated. His response went far beyond that of the normal specialist, for he invited me to Oxford for a feast in ChCh—a memorable experience for a young archaeologist, and one which laid the foundation for a lasting friendship.' And the second: 'I used often to go to see Myres in his house at Kennington. He was always most welcoming and encouraging and his wife always plied me with tea and biscuits. I thought the house enchanting, especially the huge book-lined study. . . . I owe my career, as it has turned out, to NM.' How many there must be who would say the same. From Winchester Mr Robin McCall writes, 'I think Myres' great service here was quiet encouragement of what we did, with his occasional chat when in Winchester. A word of encouragement from such a man was worth a whole page from lesser mortals.'

It is, perhaps, not inappropriate that after Nowell's death the Winchester Governing Body agreed that his ashes should be placed in the Cloisters around Fromond's Chantry and that the inscription on the tablet in the wall above includes the words:—

'Antiquam Collegii bibliothecam
aspiciens hic jacet'

There are some who will remember Nowell Myres as he was during the 70s and early 80s, in his room, entirely surrounded by all the works necessary for Anglo-Saxon scholarship. All will feel a sense of gratitude in recalling his wisdom and unvarying kindness.

ARNOLD TAYLOR

Note. In preparing this memoir I have had the help of many friends who have responded to my enquiries. My especial thanks are due to Dr M. T. Myres, until recently of the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Calgary, and Rear-Admiral J. A. L. Myres, FRICS, Hydrographer of the Navy, for their kindness in allowing me access to the typescript of a personal autobiography compiled by their father for circulation within the family, and also for much other help. I have also to thank the following who wrote to me: Rupert Bruce-Mitford, Jean Cook, Sir William Deakin, Sheppard Frere, Albert Genrich, John Harvey, William Hassall, Christopher Hawkes, Sonia Chandwick Hawkes, Catherine Hills, Maurice Hugh-Jones, Robin McCall, Michael Maclagan, John Mason, Robert Potter, Clive Rouse, John Stoye, William Thomas, Hugh Thompson, David Vaisey, Anne Whiteman.

Bibliography

A bibliography of Nowell Myres's published works 1926–78 will be found in V. I. Evison, *Angles, Saxons and Jutes: Essays presented to J. N. L. Myres* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981), pp. xvii–xx. In addition to the 216 numbered items there listed, the following were published between 1977 and 1989:—

- (1977) Review of John Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*. *Soc. Jersiaise Bulletin*, **22**, 98–101.
- (1979) Review of Peter Brandon, ed., *The South Saxons*. *Antiquaries Jnl*, **59**, 453–4.
- (1980) *Blackbeard of the Aegean* (Tenth J. L. Myres Memorial Lecture).
 — Review of Stephen Johnson, *Later Roman Britain*. *Ant. J.*, **60**, 383–4.
 — Review of Vera I. Evison, *A Corpus of Wheel-thrown Pottery in Anglo-Saxon Graves*. *Ibid.*, 389–91.
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