



*Photograph by Rouley of Rickmansworth*

DEREK FORTROSE ALLEN

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1910–1975

**D**EREK FORTROSE ALLEN was born on 29 May 1910 in Sutton, Surrey, the son of Ernest Allen, solicitor, and Elsie Mackenzie *née* Skues. On his father's side Derek inherited artistic traditions. His great-grandmother was the well-known Shakespearian actress, Fanny Stirling, whose portrait hangs in the Garrick Club. A first cousin was a good engraver and stage designer, another cousin at present (1976) is Principal of the Central School of Speech and Drama. Derek's middle name Fortrose points to a picturesque ancestry on the distaff side. In 1827 George Skues, Lieutenant in the Royal Marines and member of a Cornish family traceable back to 1733, married Mary Gibbs Mackenzie, daughter of Alexander Mackenzie, Esq., of Breda in Aberdeenshire, his wife being Maria Rebecca, sister of Francis Lord Seaforth. Lord Seaforth, Chief of the clan, was the last male member to bear its name, a result popularly associated with the curse of the Brahan Seer. George Skues's son William Mackenzie Skues graduated Bachelor of Medicine at Marischal College, Aberdeen, having earned the money to pay for his medical studies by working as coffee planter in Ceylon and trader in West Africa. He then served in the R.A.M.C. in many parts of the world, eventually retiring from Aden with the rank of Brigade Surgeon. It was during a posting to Newfoundland in 1857 that he married Margaret Ayres. Derek's mother, Elsie Mackenzie, was the seventh child of this marriage, born in 1872 at Citta Vecchia, Malta. She was musical, responsive to painting and poetry, gentle and unworldly, and she passed on her own artistic gifts to Derek.

In Derek's own family, life was real, life was earnest. 'There was generally enough, but never too much, money' Derek himself wrote; and the bonds of a stern Evangelical Christianity were relaxed only by his father's penchant for amateur dramatics. Derek had an elder brother, Raymond Seaforth (d. 1974), whom he always acknowledged as far cleverer than himself, and an elder sister who died at the age of 10. Of three younger brothers and sisters only one, Ian Mackenzie, survived infancy. Lessons on the cello began at the age of 10. There was always music in the house, for his mother taught the piano.

Schooling was at Homefield, Sutton, then Wellington College, Crowthorne. At the latter Derek had a cleverer elder brother to live up to, and rebelled against its militarism and conformity. Fortunately he broke a leg playing football, and this excused him games and gave time to play the cello. 'I learned nothing at school', he wrote, 'except the ability to survive in an uncongenial milieu with my own thoughts and interests intact. The worst struggle, which I won, was to discard the shackles of an inflexible religion.' On his sixteenth birthday he asked for and received from a favourite aunt a copy of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

Money became suddenly very short in 1928 and Derek had to leave school early. He registered at the Guildhall School of Music with a view to a career as professional musician, but was prevailed on to sit the scholarship examinations for Magdalen College, Oxford, and was awarded an exhibition. He himself claimed that he owed this selection to the interest taken in his music by Mr. P. V. M. Benecke, grandson of Mendelssohn and Roman historian, who walked with hands firmly clasped behind his back and eyes fixed unwaveringly ahead and did good by stealth to many generations of Magdalen men.

At Oxford Derek began to live; there was room to breathe, to ask questions, to talk (one of Derek's Oxford testimonials dwells on his powers as a conversationalist), to do what *he* wanted to do. For Honour Classical Mods. he created a sensation by choosing Greek sculpture as his special subject, the only Magdalen man to do so within living memory. It was in college that I first met him, invited to his room one Saturday to play Beethoven Op. 18, No. 1. Other players included W. Hughes and I. de Lisle Radice (who later shared digs with Derek in Alma Place). Though he was a year ahead of me, we became firm friends. He had a fine cello, Sam Gilkes 1810, from which he elicited a firm, warm tone. I can never hear the long-breathed opening tune of the first Rasoumovsky Quartet without also hearing his playing of it. In moments of relaxation he would throw his head back, close his eyes, and make Saint-Saëns's *Cygne* float across the water. (This cello incidentally and a viola da gamba of about 1650, attributed to the school of Henry Jaye, Southwark, London, as performer on which in the thirties he was much in demand, have been sold by his family and the proceeds generously donated to the Academy to provide a prize bearing his name, to be awarded in the fields of musicology and numismatics, with special reference to Celtic studies.) A man having his contacts with musical life in London was marked out

to be Secretary, then President of the Oxford Musical Club and Union. During his period of office in Trinity Term 1932 (Presidents then held office for a term only) the professional concerts included recitals by the London Vocal Quartet, the Isolde Menges String Quartet, and piano duets by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson.

The Holywell Music Room of those days presented an untidy, battered interior compared with the glory of its baroque rejuvenation: bare floor-boards, wired book cases, a continental-type cast-iron stove, the coke in which was sure to collapse with a roar on concert nights at ten past nine in the quietest part of the slow-movement of the second work on the programme, huge leather arm chairs the worse for wear. From the depths of one of them I can remember teasing him on looking melancholy and grim—I must add that such melancholy moments did not last long. Cheerfulness would keep breaking in, the face cracked in an enchanting smile. On this occasion he explained: 'The trouble is that I have to write an essay on Truth. The others can do it in the terms of academic philosophy. I can't. I must think things out for myself.' Unlike jesting Pilate, he continued to search all his life, and to search warily and as an individualist. Ready-made approaches did not satisfy, he must test all the steps himself. Of the mystical and eschatological one must be especially suspicious. Even of music one must beware. He enjoyed Beethoven's last quartet Opus 135 for its musical qualities, not for any supposed metaphysical statements implicit in Beethoven's quotation—'Muß es sein?' (Must it be?) 'Es muß sein.' (It must be.) The light-hearted dance that followed the doom-conscious growl of the cello held no promise that the Universe also danced, but it was musically satisfying. Certain things were basic: that there was a truth to be found, and it was worth looking for, craftsmanship and artistic creation counted deeply, whatever was to be done must be done whole-heartedly and unobtrusively.

It was this quest and this dedication and not mere good fortune that enabled him to a degree unusual nowadays to combine the active and the contemplative life. He was helped by a robust constitution—one remembers his fireless winters in the bitterly cold New Buildings at Magdalen, the thick English suits that (apparently unaware of heat) he wore in hot climates. It may well be that taking good health for granted betrayed him in the end—for he should not have forced himself to travel to a committee meeting in London on that fatal day of

his death. It was, however, characteristic of his moral robustness—his refusal to give up a determined course of action, even against the odds.

His ancient history tutor H. M. D. Parker made a great impression on him; so also did R. G. Collingwood, whose lectures on both philosophy and history he attended. Meantime he had come under another influence, that of Dr. Mortimer Wheeler and Mrs. Tessa Verney Wheeler. Under them he helped in two seasons (1932 and 1933) of excavation at Verulamium, and one (1934) at Maiden Castle. At the latter he was made site director for the Romano-British temple and shared in the discovery of a small hoard of late Roman gold solidi. In view of this new interest of his, Michael Parker arranged for him to be 'nominated' to the British Museum (at this period only persons nominated by the Principal Trustees could apply for a vacancy). He was also awarded the H. F. Pelham Studentship at the British School in Rome for the year 1933-4 at a remuneration of £100 a year. One way in which Derek was able to supplement the award was by dubbing for Laurel (the thin one) in the Italian versions of Laurel and Hardy films: *colla lingua toscana in bocca britannica*, Italian of adequate fluency and an accent strange enough to be funny. 'I even heard my own voice mimicked on the Italian music halls' he has recorded; 'and at the equivalent of £2 a day in 1933 in Italian lire it was one of the most lucrative things I have ever done.'

He had amusing contemporaries as fellow students in the British School; life in Rome was pleasant; at the American School the composer Samuel Barber was a student and Derek took part in the first performance of a piano trio by him. But the subject of his research—*Magna Graecia*—proved intractable:

Unsupervised, and with little encouragement except from my contemporaries who included Tom Dunbabin of Cretan fame, I concentrated on the walls and fortifications of the ancient cities of Sicily and south Italy; but even so, the subject was too large to be tackled in a single experimental year. Of all the subjects I have worked on, this, the first, is the only one on which I have published nothing, though Dunbabin has quoted me in footnotes. But the art of rough travel, which I learnt in Sicily and Calabria, has been invaluable later on.

A commentary on the term 'rough travel' may be supplied from a recollection of thirty years later: 'The first coin I ever acquired was a Syracusan tetradrachm bought from a Sicilian peasant. But the Mafia had it off me, with the rest of my luggage,

before I left Sicily. I was warned early of the hazards of collection.' Derek remained to the end a forceful supporter of the work of the British School at Rome.

Back in England he applied at the British Museum for the only post advertised, that of temporary cataloguer. The Director Sir George Hill advised him instead to apply for an Assistant Keepership in the Department of Coins and Medals, suddenly vacant through the premature death of G. C. Brooke. Sir Edward Robinson was on the interviewing board and wrote later that 'the appointment of Derek Allen was the best I ever made to the Medal Room'. Derek could not have had kinder or more distinguished colleagues at the Museum, both inside the department and outside. The department itself was a small one: John Allan, an Indianist, was Keeper; E. S. G. Robinson, Harold Mattingly, and John Walker were responsible respectively for the Greek, Roman, and Islamic coins. The rest—that is, British, Medieval and Modern, and all the Medals—effectively became Derek's responsibility. On his first day in 1935 he was told by the Keeper that it would be his first duty to catalogue what went by the name of Ancient British Coins.

Derek had to learn his task from scratch. This included acquisition of technical expertise and a working knowledge of the whole range of coins committed to his care, as well as sharing in departmental routine. Advice had to be given to the public, acquisitions had to be selected, registered, and incorporated, treasure trove handled. It was an understood thing that an Assistant Keeper gave organizational time to the affairs of the Royal Numismatic Society and in 1936 Derek helped to arrange its International Centenary Congress. To it he contributed a paper on 'British tin coinage of the Iron Age' (printed in its *Transactions*); to this subject he was to return nearly forty years later with his magisterial discussion of *British Potin Coins*. In 1937 he also became Secretary of the British Numismatic Society, whose relations with the Museum up till that time had not been good. From 1941 to 1943 he was editor of its journal. He also ghosted for older, famous numismatists. Of his experiences he wrote:

The undertaking which did most for my numismatic education was undoubtedly the Clarke-Thornhill bequest. This wonderful collection of English, Scottish, Irish, Colonial and north European coins had to be checked in detail, selected, recorded and incorporated. It took a well-spent year, partly because an accession on this scale called in so many areas for complete reorganisation of the existing collection.

For a time Derek made his London headquarters an attic room in the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club, then occupying a beautiful house at no. 6 Bedford Square, its ground and first-floor rooms not yet split into offices. He played much chamber music there. One of its members, Frank Joseph, ran an orchestra which met at his house on Sunday afternoons. He joined in the enterprises of his friends: Mr. E. Croft Murray recalls his playing at the Club in a bogus Rossinian overture of his contriving entitled *Il finto castrato*, and Derek's remark afterwards 'I suppose that is what we call a *pasticcio*'. He even composed himself:

It was no great problem to me to churn out light and tuneful compositions . . . The most interesting was the incidental music to a Stage Society performance of the *Peace* of Aristophanes, very typical in 1937, produced by Cecil Trouncer. I conducted a band of 6 performers on recorders and strings, accompanying a chorus of heavies on the stage.

In 1938 Derek married Winifred Gell, daughter of Major P. F. Gell, D.S.O., and Mrs. E. Lewis Hall, and the couple set up housekeeping in Bloomsbury. Little though they knew it then, a permanent home was to elude them for nearly thirty years. Their three sons were born during the war. His marriage was a never-ending source of delight and strength; and Derek (whose own childhood had been unhappy) found as father a real and continuing pleasure in family life that he had missed as a son.

Rumours of war in August 1939 took Derek down to Boughton House, Northants, to the centre selected for safekeeping of a third of the British Museum collections as well as the royal effigies from Westminster Abbey. Sir Edward Robinson put Derek in charge of fire precautions, and Dr. Eiddon Edwards recollects the thoroughness with which he set about the job.

He visited the local fire station on many occasions to obtain advice, and made a survey of the house, particularly its roof, which had a number of potential traps for fire bombs. It was a rather frightening experience for some of us to have to practice fire-drills on that large roof and then to have to descend by fire-escape from one of the uppermost windows, but Derek made us do it until we became quite proficient and even the fire-escape drops were less terrifying than they had been at the beginning.

At Boughton House the preliminary sketch for the *British Museum Catalogue of Ancient British Coins* was turned into a paper for publication (p. 451 below). Derek's mind could not be idle.

When this task was finished he extracted the cabinet of 'Tealby' Coins of Henry II and began to decipher their difficult legends. 'Six weeks work with young eyes . . . produced the skeleton of a catalogue' which was eventually to appear in 1951.

Early in 1940 Derek was seconded to the newly formed Ministry of Shipping. Under Sir Cyril, later Lord, Hurcomb a mixed bag of academics, professionals from the shipping lines, and civil servants from the Board of Trade were fused into a team whose task was to bring as much foreign shipping as possible into Allied service. There were negotiations in London with Belgium, later with Poland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, and very complicated, not to say tricky, almost 'cloak and dagger' dealings in Dublin over Latvian and Estonian ships that had taken refuge in Eire. Professor Peter Brunt, who worked for a time in the same room as Derek in dealings with the French, has put the following account on record:

In June 1940 H.M.G. requisitioned French ships in British ports, and somewhat later French ships, which continued to operate between French colonies and south French ports, were from time to time captured at sea and, after proceedings had been started against them in the prize courts, requisitioned for service; it was never the intention to pursue the proceedings, and it was always realized that compensation would be payable after the war to the owners or to the French government. In the meantime there were various problems to be solved regarding their crews and the claims of de Gaulle to be in control of French assets abroad. Derek and I were both involved in these matters. Immediately after the allied invasion of N. Africa in 1942, he was sent out to Algiers to negotiate with Admiral Darlan for the use of French ships in North African ports. Moreover, the Vichy government had as a reprisal for our action requisitioned a large number of British and allied ships that were in French N. and W. African ports at the time when the various colonial administrations rallied to the support of Vichy; they had not in fact been able to make any use of them, but the ships had been rotting for two years in port. After completing his negotiations with Darlan, and taking what steps he could to bring the British and allied ships in N. Africa into immediate service, Derek cabled that he was proceeding to Dakar to do the same for the ships there. He acted on his own initiative. He had been sent out to Algiers at a moment's notice, and now he set off for Dakar in his London suit and no baggage. There he bought himself a cycle and contrived to get the co-operation of an initially hostile governor who kept part of a British shell on his desk to remind himself of the attempt on Dakar in 1940. After 2 or 3 months, he had done the job, for which he had no obvious qualifications, except what he had picked up from shipping colleagues in the ministry. In fact he mastered a great deal of technical information,



and also of commercial law; he became quite an expert on charter-parties.

G. V. Hole, C.B.E., who for the next twenty-five years was to Box and Cox with Derek in Whitehall, has also written of those days:

Whatever he did he improved. I followed him in negotiating the terms of charter after his Dublin, North and West African adventures, and though the risks were large and the dangers tremendous, when I got down to the small print Derek's handling was incredibly right. He did not fail to get the correct documents signed even under hostile enemy fire (North and West Africa), or even in a perhaps more difficult legal position in Dublin.

As the Allied cause made progress there was an increasing call for implementation of the clauses under which ships should be returned to their owners, questions on which Derek had made himself an expert. He was constantly on the move between London and Paris, later Germany and in May 1945 Washington. 1945/6 saw him involved in the Tripartite Mercantile Marine Commission and the Interallied Reparations Agency, with the acting rank of Assistant Secretary.

Should he go back from this relatively exalted and well-paid position to that of Assistant Keeper at the British Museum? He now had three sons to provide for, and in self-examination admitted to pleasure in active participation in events. As things turned out, he did not remain in the Civil Service either, but in August 1946 accepted an offer to join a firm of London shipping and insurance brokers, Matthews Wrightson & Company. When he was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries during this year he had it in mind that numismatics should in future be a hobby. In fact he did not enjoy the City, interesting addition though it was to his range of experiences.

He just could not resist the urge to improve everything he touched. When his managing director asked him to write down his impressions, as a newcomer to Lloyd's, he penned a critical appreciation of the holy of holies of British marine insurance which also suggested reforms. The director, much taken by its fresh point of view, showed it around and on 10 April 1947 it was printed anonymously in *The Financial Times* as a principal feature article, and made a considerable stir. It was not long before the anonymity was penetrated. 'The trouble with the article', Derek wrote later, 'was that too much of it was true.' However, the publicity did no harm to either the firm or to Derek, and when in August 1947 Derek accepted an invitation

to rejoin the Ministry of Transport as Assistant Secretary, both parted on the best of terms.

Derek's new job was to act as shipping representative for the Ministry in the Far East. He was stationed with his family for two and a half years in Hong Kong, moving to Singapore in 1950 with the title of Shipping Adviser to the Commissioner General of South East Asia. The Far East was in turmoil, and shipping entered into every question. These were adventurous, densely packed years. As public record of them stand the two volumes of 1951 and 1953 on the *Major* and the *Minor Ports of Malaya*, which were adopted as part of the World Bank Report on the economic development of Malaya. But life consisted of much more than negotiation and commercial diplomacy. 'Derek's reports to Whitehall were read', writes G. V. Hole, 'with respect, attention and of course with hilarity.'

Some highlights [Derek himself wrote] included the arrival in Hong Kong almost unannounced of a once sunken British ship, raised by the Japanese as a gesture of goodwill and returned with a Japanese crew—the first Japanese back in Hong Kong after the war, amidst fears that their reception would be riotously unwelcoming; the Japanese captain's ceremonial visit under my armed guard to a war criminal serving a life sentence in Stanley Jail; evacuation ships to Shanghai to remove European residents in the face of Communist advance; negotiations, through back street Chinese in Bangkok, for the repatriation from Malaya to China at so much a head of thousands of interned Chinese immigrants, all guaranteed terrorists—this at a time when there were no diplomatic relations with China. We used Panamanian ships with Norwegian crews but the passengers, once aboard, were a law unto themselves.

In 1952 Derek returned to England. His Ministry was keen that he should gain experience of policy-making in Whitehall, the children must go to school. Derek hoped for a transfer to the Colonial Service, instead he found himself in this Ministry's department of Vehicle Regulations and Taxation, involved in the dullest possible routine duties. Unable to decide whether he should stay on in the service, he lived on a barge moored in Chiswick Mall, from which it was four years before he moved to a house on Strand-on-the-Green, Chiswick (when the boys became too venturesome). On board the barge 'I unpacked my notes on Celtic coins and began again to turn to numismatics'. This statement of his is true if work in depth is meant. That they had never been far from his mind is, however, shown by his bibliography (see p. 457. From now on details of his numismatic

life will be told separately). Only under the years 1950, 1952, 1955 is there no entry at all; even the crowded year 1945 saw the composition of an obituary notice. It was in the Far East that the text was finished and proof corrected of that volume of the B.M. Catalogue on *The Cross and Crosslets* ('Tealby') type of *Henry II*, published in 1951. Sir Edward Robinson wrote in the preface to this book that it was 'a labour of love . . . carried out under exceptional difficulties . . . in the course of constant travel from Indonesia and Borneo in the south to Korea and Japan in the north'.

Derek constantly needed some intellectual task, even if only of a mechanical nature. There were always proofs to correct, papers to write. 'Work took priority over everything with him', Winifred reports. 'Every holiday for instance was a working holiday—he hated relaxing or sitting on beaches in the sun doing nothing in particular. Beaches were in fact only tolerable if he could watch sea beasts or find interesting plants.' In 1952 he also formed a string quartet which met regularly, led by Carl Lewis of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra; Reginald Morseman was viola, and Reginald's son Raymond took the second fiddle part. When concerts were given Derek would offer a few exhilarating comments on the works to be played. At least one quartet, Beethoven Op. 130, was recorded, and the Cavatina from it was played at Derek's funeral service in Oxford. But Derek would have nothing to do with recorded music in his house; the gramophone was held at bay right to the end.

It must be recalled that Derek had never undergone the normal discipline of a Whitehall regular. Gradually he broke himself in to drudgery and wrung from it some of his most remarkable successes. The amateur became the complete professional, both in his concept of the larger theoretical issues and his masterly working out of the detail needed to translate them into action. G. V. Hole, this time his predecessor (a reversal of their roles in the forties) writes about this period: 'In his Traffic and Safety work Derek really did complete what I had started, and as a result of his follow-through the traffic on British and probably many other roads in the world was significantly changed, for the better I think. The concepts underlying car parking were his, and the whole way in which the motor car is dealt with was radically affected by his work.' When he took a new posting in 1958 he had a most impressive achievement to his credit. His division was responsible for about a third of the Road Traffic Act 1956, which launched parking

meters, No Waiting restrictions, double white lines, Zebra crossings, the 40 m.p.h. speed limit, etc. For all of these novelties regulations had to be devised and drafted. 'Derek', adds G. V. Hole, 'got accepted policies which no one dreamt possible at the time, even though they are commonplace now. But determination, persuasion, common sense and his unfailing sense of humour got through even the most determined "No" men in Whitehall . . . His thinking is now enshrined in Acts of Parliament *which work*.'

It was to the Air side of the Ministry that he moved in 1958, and was put in charge of the buying and selling of aerodrome lands. These duties were anything but arduous. The Lady Fortune had timed her smile nicely, for his numismatic work was now really coming to the boil—four major papers being prepared simultaneously. Professor A. L. F. Rivet has contributed a note:

I well remember our first meeting in his office in the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation . . . The room was completely orderly and civil service fashion, but he had no difficulty in switching at once to the Celtic coins which were the subject of my visit. Thereafter we collaborated closely, with me supplying notes of finds and findspots from Ordnance Survey sources and Derek providing a mass of information, quite unknown to us, from sale catalogues and the like, and, of course, bringing it all together to produce his brilliant interpretation of the whole body of material in his section of the Introduction to the *Ordnance Survey Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age* and in his chapter in *Problems of the Iron Age*.

The respite was a short one. For the next ten years he had to keep balls in the air strenuously in both Whitehall and in numismatics. A new Ministry of Aviation was formed in 1959 and Derek was set to the licensing of Civil Aviation under the exacting supervision of Duncan Sandys. In the same year he began a five-year term as President of the British Numismatic Society. He took a prominent part in the British Academy's project, *The Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* (*Coins of the Coritani* was a volume in this series)—indeed he acted as secretary to the Committee after Mr. P. D. Whitting retired.

Both activities brought their rewards. A new air-licensing system was steered through Parliament and put into operation, and in 1962 Derek was at long last promoted Under Secretary. 'It must be a source of considerable satisfaction to you', wrote a former chief, 'to reflect that you have at last triumphed against the prejudice, and indeed downright hostility that has

for so long deprived you of your proper place.' In 1963 he was elected Fellow of the Academy.

The remainder of his Whitehall service can be quickly told, for it was either too secret or too recent to retail here. From 1962 to 1964 Derek was in charge of Security, Atomic Warheads, and Research. A positive gain, later put at the service of the British Library, was experience in the computerization of research libraries. In 1964 he was back in the Civil Aviation Division, which in 1966 became part of the Board of Trade. Equipment, control of fares and routes, the Anglo-French Concorde, pilots' strikes, fell into his province. In 1967 he was created C.B.

His numismatic career went from strength to strength. In 1964 the Rhind Lectures were given in Edinburgh, in 1966 he was elected President of the Royal Numismatic Society. By general consent he was a good President of societies over which he presided, bringing to their service a wide range of personal contacts, reading, and practical experience. In return the Royal Numismatic Society awarded him their medal in 1967, and the British Numismatic Society, which as early as 1953 awarded him the Sandford Saltus medal, made him an honorary member in 1971. He was a person of great natural modesty, and no lover of formality for its own sake. Entertaining was his relaxation. It was easy to see that he was temperamentally more at home in the Savage Club than in the Athenaeum. Dr. Michael Crawford remembers a kindness done to a young unknown on the night of his retirement from Whitehall: Derek took him and his wife out to dinner and they compared notes over coins. Professor Rivet relates another kindness of 1964:

It was while he and Winifred were staying with us in Edinburgh for the Rhind Lectures that I came to Keele for an interview. Before I set out he gave me a mock interview, based on his civil service experience, including the invaluable piece of advice that any candidate should try to think himself into the job and answer questions, as it were from the inside, thus relieving the interviewing board of *their* chief difficulty of imagination (a piece of advice I constantly pass on to students).

Professor Rivet recalls also that it was in 1964 that he had just acquired a hearing aid, 'which he still regarded as something of a toy, and therefore insisted that our children should try it'. The deafness, alas, increased.

Often, when talking [Winifred writes], Derek literally did not hear (it was not that he would not listen to) the remarks of others, a cause of embarrassment and sometimes annoyance to other people. Derek

would not admit how exhausting it sometimes was to him to strive to hear remarks made in a low voice or from the far end of a meeting—just as he would not admit any physical limitations if he could help it.

In 1968 in preparation for retirement he bought Grenna House, Chilson. The seven years spent in this friendly grey stone house were, in Winifred's opinion, the happiest of his life. By one of life's ironies they were also among his busiest. He had planned to retire from the Civil Service a year early and spend twelve months at All Souls working on his coins. Instead he became Secretary of the British Academy. Sir Kenneth Wheare recollects that a principal task of his Presidency was to urge Sir Mortimer Wheeler to find himself a successor. 'For a long time I could not get him to take an interest in any candidate. Then the name of Derek Allen was mentioned and his eyes lit up.' Wheeler put the matter to Derek over lunch, and Derek accepted the proposal, and was eventually elected to take office on 1 January 1969. The understanding was that the post would be a part-time one, and Derek would have opportunity to go on with his own work. Derek was attracted by this prolongation of active life beyond a normal civil service retiring age in a function which would bring him back to the academic world he had left nearly thirty years before.

Derek acted as Secretary of the British Academy from January 1969 to July 1973. To one who saw him intimately during this period, it is hard to realize that his secretaryship lasted only some four and a half years, so full was it of achievement. He succeeded a very great Secretary whose achievements he consolidated. Like his predecessor he had a clear conception of the part the Academy could play in the life of the country, and of the crucial responsibility of the Secretary in translating those ideas into action. To a scholar's authority and fastidiousness Derek added a knowledge of the ways of Whitehall and of the world and a civil servant's professional touch, immense resourcefulness, readiness to take the initiative, sound judgement of persons and policies, determination, and a gift for sympathy which not only made friends easily but made his friends feel they existed to be his friends. A new British Institute was founded in Kabul (1972), and plans were made for launching another in Singapore, for which he drew on his own experience in South East Asia; work in Libya was sponsored by the Society for Libyan Studies (founded 1969). A new fillip was given to existing enterprises, such as the publication of Early English Church Music; scaffolds went up in churches to photograph

their medieval glass, and a successful international conference under the auspices of the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* in York and Canterbury brought home to the public the realization that their ancient painted windows were fast disintegrating and called counter-measures into action. With the Royal Society joint seminars were organized (1969 on Archaeology and the Natural Sciences; 1972 on The Place of Astronomy in the Ancient World), as were a number of joint committees such as one to review the problems of science-based archaeology. He had ideas (which have still to be brought to fruition) for a central home in London for learned societies under the sponsorship of the Academy. He was not only invited to, he actually attended committee meetings of, the majority of such societies in London. When he spoke at such committees it was always with constructive suggestions. These were the years of his Trusteeship of the British Museum, Vice-Presidency of the Society of Antiquaries, active membership of the Committee of the British Museum Society and the Council for British Archaeology. All these involvements brought him immense pleasure as well as work. I should like particularly to dwell on his whole-hearted espousal of international co-operation. It fell to him to persuade the government to finance exchanges of scholars in the humanities as it was already doing in the natural sciences through the Royal Society, and after Mr. Geoffrey Rippon announced such grants on 6 March 1972, he played a leading part in devising an organization to administer it through the Academy. He sponsored a number of joint undertakings with other Academies such as the annual exchange of lectures with the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* in Rome; and together with Sir David Martin of the Royal Society helped to organize a joint colloquium with the Royal Netherlands Academy. He also gave valuable preliminary counsel on the part the humanists might play in the European Science Foundation. Every year he acted as one of the Academy's delegates to the *Union Académique Internationale*. For the Union in 1973 he wrote a distinguished paper on the role of Academies in national life, delivered during their visit to London in that year, a visit which he organized. I have reason to be grateful for his counsel. Formalities and procedural rules (which are often the breath of life of existing international meetings) he hated; he had a way of foreseeing how they might be called into play, and therefore was able to forestall or short-circuit them.

It was his realization that his own writing would not make

progress if he remained Secretary that made him exchange this post in 1973 for the less exacting one of Treasurer. It was only comparatively 'less exacting'. Though he had intended serving only on the supervisory committees for the C.V.M.A. and the Sylloge of British coins, and on the Committee of Management of the British School at Rome—three enterprises dear to his heart—he found himself drawn into the regular meetings of the Academy's Publications and Overseas Policy committees. In autumn 1974 he was much upset by the death of his friend Hans Hahnloser, director of the international committee of the C.V.M.A. on the same day as his elder brother. At the end of November 1974 I had a letter from him, after I had myself been ill: 'I have been conscious of mortality in the last few weeks . . . I am impelled to double my pace on the things I am writing . . .' The pace was still not fast enough, and they remain uncompleted.

12 June 1975 was one of the hottest days of that year. Derek was out of sorts, but he forced himself to travel to a committee meeting of the C.V.M.A. in Burlington House. Back at Chilson that night he collapsed and died early on Friday 13th at the comparatively early age of 65, when he still had so much to give and do.

It is probably too early to assess Derek's numismatic achievement, and a non-specialist would essay it at his peril. But it is in place to sketch his methods of work and his contributions to his subject. I have been enormously helped by the comprehensive bibliography of his works compiled by R. H. Thompson and published in *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1976, pp. 259–71. Its existence has also allowed me to refer to works by short title, confident that the reader will trace them easily.

To his task Derek brought developed powers of observation and memory and the intellectual range to see connections between a wide range of phenomena. In the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum he obtained a thorough grounding in the technical aspects of the numismatist's craft: identification of types and mints, rejection of forgeries ancient and modern, tracing of die-links, chemical and spectrographic analysis, etc. Such are the elements needed to arrange specimens by objective classification in a way to allow room for the insertion of new finds: in short, a catalogue. 'In addition to being a fine researcher, he was a born cataloguer', comments Dr. J. P. C. Kent. 'It was the way his mind operated. He was also a fast worker, sure and confident, little given to hesitation



or changing what he had written.' This ability to produce order out of chaos was the quality which made him so good a civil servant. The catalogue of the 'Tealby' coins of Henry II in the B.M. series, or his papers on seventeenth-century Civil War and Commonwealth coinage are excellent examples of this side of his work.

His Tealby catalogue [writes Mr. Christopher Blunt] is a worthy successor to G. C. Brooke's *Catalogue of the Norman Kings*—and that is saying a lot. As with the Ancient British Coins it is generally necessary to have more than one specimen from the same dies before anything like a complete reading can be obtained. So badly executed were these coins that of the total of some 5700 found at Tealby in 1807 over 5000 were melted down at the Tower as believed then to be of no numismatic interest. A tragedy, of course, but a reflection of the state of this coinage.

Coins—and medals—also evoked an artistic response in Derek. An excellent and early example of this sensitivity is to be found in his study of *Thomas Simon's Sketchbook* (*Walpole Society*, xxvii, 1938–9, 13–53, plates v–ix), a miniature study of the rise and fall of the art of the medallist in seventeenth-century England. More than thirty years later in 'The Sark Hoard' (*Archaeologia*, ciii, 1971, 1–31) he was to set in their archaeological and art-historical context the silver-gilt discs or phaleræ found in 1718 which have now disappeared. Until they turn up again they are known only from George Vertue's drawings of them in a bound volume 'rediscovered' in the library of the Society of Antiquaries in 1966. Derek had the knowledge to analyse the objects represented, their technique of manufacture, and to present the surviving parallels authoritatively and convincingly, as well as to classify the lost coins.

It is clear therefore that from the outset coins were for Derek something more than interesting and sometimes strange and beautiful objects to be catalogued. This was true supremely in the sphere of archaeology and history. He would have subscribed to the distinction recently reaffirmed by Louis Robert (*Journal des Savants*, 1975, p. 191) between 'the history of coins' and 'history from coins'. 'Numismatics', he is reported by Dr. D. MacDowall as saying, 'is the window through which I look out on the past.' From his practical experience of archaeology under the Wheelers in his undergraduate days he had learned the multiple value of a known provenance for a coin. As early as 1939 he is found speculating on the significance of the quantity of a given issue of coins (*Numismatic Chronicle*, xix,

1939, 180, 'The La Marquanderie hoard of Armorican coins'). Later on such speculations will be applied to historical problems, i.e. a catalogue will be turned into a tool for quantitative, even qualitative, assessment of the society which produced it.

His own participation in Romano-British excavation gave him an interest in British archaeology and it is no surprise that he should have early essayed a study of the Celtic coins of Britain which should set them in their archaeological context. It was, moreover, a period of ferment in 'Belgic' archaeology. The excavations of the Wheelers at Verulamium and Maiden Castle and of Professor Christopher Hawkes at Colchester had upset all previous syntheses. Acknowledging in particular the inspiration of Hawkes, Derek wrote a long paper, 'The Belgic Dynasties of Britain and their Coins', read in February 1940, and printed in *Archaeologia*, xc (the volume for 1940 but not actually published till 1944). The gold coins were ranged side by side as if in a family tree; for the silver and bronze issues, distribution maps and arrangement of mint types were the basis. 'Proof that the general picture is correct lies more in the consistency of the whole than in certainty of details', he wrote. 'The story rests on a fundamental hypothesis—that the chain of coin evidence is complete in itself.' In later years Derek was to criticize freely some of the assumptions made, and many of the details in this survey. But it marked an important step forward. Its classifications were adopted as his base in 1953 by Commander R. P. Mack in his *The Coinage of Ancient Britain* and it was the foundation on which to build when Derek returned to serious numismatic work at that time.

He decided then and there to restrict himself to Celtic coins: even that field was to prove eventually too large, and in the background of his thought was a feeling of obligation to complete the *Catalogue of Celtic Coins in the British Museum*. He set his sights high. A first essential was a comprehensive inventory of British Celtic coins (i.e. those outside the Museum as well as in it), the find-spot to be listed at the same time. This list would give an assurance 'that the chain of coin evidence was complete'. He soon found that it also involved closer attention to the Celtic coinages of Gaul and indeed the whole of Europe. How could the evidence and the argumentation most economically be presented? One method was tried in the *Coins of the Coritani*, by a fluke the last published of a quartet of works under simultaneous incubation. Over provenances Derek worked closely with A. L. F. Rivet, then of the Ordnance

Survey Office (cf. p. 445 above), and Sheppard S. Frere, at that time Reader in the Institute of Archaeology of London University. The results were embodied in the *Ordnance Survey Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age* (publ. 1962) for which Derek wrote an introduction on the Celtic coins and produced a series of detailed distribution maps (completed 1958). Complementarily he gave a paper in London in 1958 (published in 1961) on *The Origins of Coinage in Britain: a Reappraisal*, having as appendix a gazetteer of find-spots in which the coin evidence is organized on a simpler system than in the *Coins of the Coritani*. Inventories and distribution maps for Celtic coins were not new; but they had never previously been done on this scale, with such a refined analysis of types coupled with provenances. A precision tool was thereby added to the armoury of the British pre-historian for the period 100 B.C. to A.D. 60. Moreover, in proposing a 'long' chronology for the Belgic invasions, and setting out the coin evidence to show that there were good grounds for accepting it, Derek offered an escape from the constricting dogma that the Belgae arrived in Britain in about 75 B.C. The pre-historian also felt a great sense of release.

In Britain coinage did not develop spontaneously but appears to be the direct result of a series of major movements of people from Belgic Gaul; the part played by trade was secondary [a direct reversal of the ruling view owed to G. C. Brooke]. There is evidence of six distinct waves of invaders, many of whom settled here. No doubt the settlers brought their wealth with them, and being more advanced and aggressive than the pre-existing population of the areas settled, dominated the situation; furthermore they were able to bring under cultivation areas hitherto virgin. The coinage probably points fairly accurately to the place of origin of the settlers and the areas over which they initially took command. The distribution of the coinage also indicates, with varying distinctness at different times, the progress in this country of the differing invading stocks, and finally, when the coinage began to bear the names of rulers and towns, defines their tribal and political groupings. (*Ordnance Survey Map*, introd., p. 9.)

On his collaboration with Derek during these years Sheppard Frere has kindly contributed the following note:

I first came into close contact with Derek Allen about 1957 and worked with him over the editing of his most important paper on *The Origins of Coinage in Britain*; publication of the full lists of coins and find-spots which is the enduring contribution of that paper to subsequent research was only made possible through the great generosity of I. D. Margary, who has just died.

At that time Derek was in the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, and I used to go very often to his office in the Strand for consultations over coins, sometimes over a pub lunch. One of the characteristics of Celtic coinage due to individual striking and the frequent disparities between die- and coin-size is that each coin has an identity of its own and can be distinguished from others of the same type by small differences of size, shape, and incidence of pattern. We decided that for a proper record a photographic card index of coins was required. This was one of the lessons of the coin lists we had published: so many coins had lost their find-spots and lacked pedigree. I undertook to compile the Index at the Institute of Archaeology first in London and later at Oxford with the co-operation of the respective photographic departments. Coin collections, public and private, were by degrees photographed, and photos of the obverse and reverse of each coin mounted on a record card. All the many newly discovered coins which came to Derek from excavations and hoards for identification and report were similarly treated. All details of find-spot, owner, type, metal, weight, and specific gravity were also recorded on the cards, and duplicate photographs were supplied both to Derek and to the finders or owners. The Index, though still incomplete, now contains many thousand cards and is frequently consulted in research.

Co-operation between us extended to continental coins as these gradually came to occupy more of his interest. All available coins were photographed but Derek died before completing his great work on these. Enough material and notes survive, however, for the hope to be entertained that the work may be completed by a continuator.

Derek had begun his special interest in British pre-Roman coinages during his term at the British Museum before the war, and he retained many invaluable notes taken at that time of coins submitted to him. He also possessed a superlative visual, as well as an extraordinarily fine, normal memory which was of great value to this study.

Two revolutionary lines of argument were involved in Derek's reassessment. He himself acknowledges the sources which prompted them. One was the discovery of a hoard at Le Catillon in Jersey in 1957, which was the basis for putting forward the 'long' chronology of the Belgic invasions. The second was the invitation to publish thirty-five coins found during Mrs. E. M. Clifford's excavations at Bagendon from 1954 to 1956 (published in *Bagendon: a Belgic Oppidum*, 1961), which expanded into a full study of Dobunnic coinage. It was in the course of this work that Derek was able to draw out and demonstrate their complete pattern for a number of dies; only a portion of the pattern will be found in any particular coin (the characteristic already alluded to by Professor Frere). The peculiarities of these coins and the distribution maps on

which they were plotted drew attention to the confusion caused by projecting backwards in time the geographical cantons occupied by British tribes at or shortly before the Roman invasion. Derek's results were used by Professor Hawkes to demonstrate the Belgic origin of the Dobunni and to make it certain that 'all tribal coinages in Britain emanate from Belgic ruling houses'. At the same time the Dobunni highlighted an anomaly: 'surrounding the culturally advanced [Belgic] tribes of central and south east Britain lay a ring of four distinct outlying tribes . . . the Durotriges in the Dorset area, the Dobunni in the Cotswolds and Mendips, the Coritani in and around Leicestershire and Lincolnshire, and the Iceni in East Anglia' (*Coins of the Coritani*, p. 9). Why alone of these four had the Coritani no distinctive coinage? In this study (imprint date 1962) Derek showed that they in fact possessed one, but it had been wrongly attributed (largely on the fallible basis of location of coin hoards) to the Brigantes. By a powerful, convergent set of arguments Derek returned it to the Coritani, incidentally robbing Queen Cartimandua of a coin long accepted as of her striking, and giving the Coritani 'an archaeology and a personality'. The same service was performed for the Iceni in 1970.

The discovery of the Le Catillon hoard was important because it offered a secure *terminus post quem* for British Celtic coinage, which could be shown to be much earlier than previously supposed. From this time on Derek began to publish in continental journals on Celtic coins struck on the Continent. The coins of the Continental Celts (more precisely, *The Coins of the Ancient Celts: and the Pattern of Europe in the Late Iron Age*) was selected as theme when he was invited to deliver the (as yet unpublished) Rhind Lectures for 1964. The lectures treated not only of manufacture, origins, and regional influences, but also of coin legends and subjects, their artistic value and symbolism (there was an interesting foretaste of this area of investigation in *Belgic Coins as Illustrations of Life in the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age in Britain*, 1958, including a reconstructed carnyx, and discussion of animal helmets). Naturally Derek took every opportunity offered by official travel to steal a day here and there in collections abroad, and a series of articles followed on Czechoslovak, French, Swedish, Belgian, German, Swiss, and Italian Celtic coins. He also frequently lectured abroad—for instance in Czechoslovakia, Stockholm, and Switzerland. His position as leading British expert was recognized by the invitation (fulfilled in 1969) to contribute the supplement on British Coins to

the re-edition under Karel Castelin of R. Forrer's *Keltische Numismatik der Rhein- und Donau-länder*. He took particular pleasure in following across Europe the famous gold stater of Philip II of Macedon. His study of 1968 on Monnaies-à-la-Croix (which he dated early in the second century B.C., though not early enough if the arguments of Dr. M. H. Crawford for two Spanish coin hoards are accepted) had by 1975 provoked thirty further studies of these coins (J. C. M. Richard, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 15 (1975), 46 ff.).

There were many by-products in the seventies for British Celtic coins too, of which only three will be mentioned individually—beginning with the paper given at a colloquy in 1972 (published 1976, *Some Contrasts in Gaulish and British Coins*) on Celtic Art in Prehistoric Europe. One element in this paper was developed in the magisterial posthumous article 'Cunobelin's Gold' (*Britannia*, 1975) estimating the amount of gold circulating in Cunobelin's kingdom as 3,000 Roman pounds by weight of fine gold, and speculating on the relationship between this wealth and the tribute payable to Rome before the conquest. This paper also contains the latest published correction to the archetype of 1944, in the form of a thorough die-study of a much larger number of examples of Cunobelin's gold coins. They are now organized

in five main series forming a sequence, and there can be little doubt that the order suggested is correct [even though] actual continuity of issue between the five series can be demonstrated in only one instance . . . This sequence has an interest for the art historian, since it is not the order which on grounds of style alone would have been presumed. One must clearly reckon less with a stylistic evolution than with a series of individual styles, deriving from the work of the particular craftsmen available, and also from the conditions under which they were required to work. A more technical examination of the results will bear this out.

The other bonus from his studies that will be alluded to here is 'British Potin Coins: a Review', printed in *The Iron Age and its hill-forts: Papers presented to Sir Mortimer Wheeler*, 1971. I was able to help Derek by conducting some experiments with modern plaster moulds and ancient papyrus, and thereby to show incidentally that papyrus was in use in pre-Roman Britain. But the interest of the paper lay elsewhere. Recurring to a subject he had first treated in 1936, Derek was able to refine his earlier analysis of the 'tin' coinage (the 'small change') of the societies immediately preceding the Roman conquest into a new series of fifteen types. Important results followed for the

chronology of the coins, the objects with which they were associated, and the history of these societies.

There is good hope that one major unpublished work will be published and one major unfinished task finished. The former is the *Rhind Lectures*. Dr. Daphne Nash, with the encouragement of Professor Stuart Piggott and Dr. Colin Kraay, has undertaken to put the manuscript into order for publication by the Edinburgh University Press. The latter is the *Catalogue of Celtic Coins in the British Museum*, responsibility for which has been taken over by Dr. J. P. C. Kent. The catalogue of Continental Celtic coins (about 2,000 entries) is indeed in a very advanced state. For the British Celtic coins (also about 2,000 items) none of the detailed entries has yet been written. Perhaps this appreciation may best conclude with an extract from the intended introduction to the first section:

To some extent there is an understandable prejudice against Celtic or other native coins; they may seem little more than the barbarous reflection of the real thing, travesties of the cultivated products of the advanced civilisations of Greece and Rome. The disintegrative tendencies of modern art and the cult of the primitive provide an ambience within which the balance can be restored. Barbarous or not, the history of Europe is written in these coins, and no other surviving Celtic remains illustrate more vividly the life and thoughts of our quarrelsome but imaginative forebears, farming and fighting while Theocritus and Vergil were describing the Mediterranean peasant's life in vastly different terms.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Written sources:

1. 'The Pursuit of the Root of All Evil', unpublished autobiographical lecture given by Derek F. Allen on 21 January 1975 to Birmingham Archaeological Society as part of a series of lectures by senior or retired archaeologists.
2. Bibliography of Published Work of Derek Fortrose Allen, compiled by R. H. Thompson, *Numismatic Chronicle*, xvi (1976), pp. 259–71.
3. Skues (Mackenzie) family bible and family papers.

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