



ARNOLD TAYLOR

Society of Antiquaries of London

Arnold Joseph Taylor 1911–2002

ARNOLD TAYLOR, or Joe as he was known to some, was a medieval scholar, archaeologist and architectural historian, who spent his working career in the public service within the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate. An international expert on castles and, in particular, the authority on the North Wales castles of Edward I, he was not restricted in his interests in medieval buildings as a whole. Nor did Taylor study castles solely as monuments to medieval military architecture. He was fascinated by their construction, who designed and built them, where the materials and craftsmen came from, and how this side of the work was organised. To do this he combined study of the standing remains with intensive documentary research. There were two other main strands to his professional life; his wider career in the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, first in the Office of Works and ultimately in the Department of the Environment, and second, his service to the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Arnold came from a long line of schoolmasters. Three generations of Taylors were consecutively headmasters of Sir Walter St John's Grammar School for Boys, Battersea, London. Arnold's father was in post from 1932 to 1946. His mother was also a teacher. Arnold was born on 24 July 1911 at the family home, 36 High Street, Battersea. This was reputedly within earshot of Bow Bells, and he was to remain a committed Londoner. He was particularly delighted to be made a Freeman of the City in 1959.

From 1922 to 1930 Arnold was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, at that time situated in the City of London, where matters historical were an early fascination for him. Together with fellow sixth-formers he contributed to *Merchant Taylors' School—its Origin, History and Present*

Surroundings (1929). His chapter was on 'The Priory of St. John, Clerkenwell, and the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England'. He had already contributed to the school magazine, in the same year, on the Diary of Henry Machyn and on the Palace of Bridewell.¹ The following year (1929), there were short pieces on 'Merchant Taylors' and the Great Fire', and demonstrating his long-standing religious beliefs, a review of *Hymns and Prayers for Use at Merchant Taylors' School* and *School Prayer Books*.²

It was at Merchant Taylors' that Arnold met his lifelong friend, Reg Adams, who later accompanied him to St John's College, Oxford. Adams, indeed, collaborated with Arnold in some of the latter's early archaeological investigations during 1932, particularly in the roof space above the Hall. 'This involved preparing an extension cable from the pendant lamp socket over my [Reg Adams's] bed to the louver from which access to the roof of the Hall was possible, a somewhat dangerous activity for amateur electricians in a fire-risk building, but the results are now part of Arnold's historical discoveries.' Arnold became President of the University Archaeological Society with 'A Medieval Roof in St. John's College' as his Presidential lecture in June 1932.³ The development of the buildings of St John's was a major interest, together with survivals from the earlier Cistercian college of St Bernard, eventually incorporated into St John's. This study was included as Appendix XVI, 'The Building of St. Bernard's College and Subsequent Developments' in W. H. Stevenson and H. E. Salter, *The Early History of St. John's College*.⁴

Upon graduating with a second-class degree in modern history, Arnold followed the family tradition of teaching by joining Chard School, Somerset, as an assistant master in 1934, after taking the Diploma in Education. He had not been there long when an advertisement for a vacancy in the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate appeared offering an opening to a career that matched his chief interests. Bryan O'Neil, also an old Merchant Taylors' and St John's man, having been promoted to be Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Wales, sought advice from his former college tutor, A. L. Poole, on filling the resultant vacancy for assistant inspector. Taylor was recommended, approached and invited to apply. Yet this was a difficult personal decision for Arnold in which he felt it necessary to take advice from his father, who in fact

¹ *The Taylorian*, 51 (1929), 150–3; 252–4.

² *The Taylorian*, 52 (1930), 171–3; 194–6; 231–5.

³ *British Archaeological Journal*, NS, 38 (1933), 278–92.

⁴ *Oxford Historical Society*, NS, 1 (1939), 93–110.

had no hesitation in encouraging his son to apply. Arnold's subsequent appointment led him to the Office of Works in 1935.

An early task was to oversee archaeological work at Minster Lovell Hall, Oxfordshire. This ruined fifteenth-century manor house had just come into the care of the Office. Arnold's analysis of the ruin was published in 1939.⁵ He also became aware of the former alien priory of Minster Lovell. Nothing remained of this small house dependent on Ivy Abbey, but its origins involved Arnold in fieldwork by bicycle in France, and associated documentary research at the Archives Départementales. This resulted in an article in *Oxoniensia*.⁶ Documentary research occupied much of his spare time in the years immediately before the Second World War. His transcription of the *Records of the Barony and Honour of the Rape of Lewes 1265–6*, together with appendices relating to later court and account rolls, were published by the Sussex Record Society.⁷

At the beginning of the war he was retained within the Office of Works and engaged in establishing office accommodation for the civil servants being dispersed from London into the provinces. While this prevented his immediate desire to be on more active service, it was an opportunity for him to marry Patricia Katharine Guilbride, a twenty-year old Canadian working in London, on 19 April 1940. She had earlier helped him in the preparation for his Sussex Record Society publication, particularly in the compilation of the index and checking the proofs, which he acknowledged in the preface. He was then living at Seaford, Sussex, and already a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Taylor's historical and archaeological standing during the late 1930s was now sufficient for him to be proposed for fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries of London by O'Neil in May 1941. His 'blue paper' was impressively signed, not only by colleagues in the Office of Works but by leading antiquaries in Wales and by English historians. In the citation he was described as a member of the Council of the British Archaeological Association. He had joined the Association 1932, while still an undergraduate at St John's, and was a member of its Council in 1938. As well as his various articles in archaeological journals, the 'Records of the Barony and Honour of the Rape of Lewes' was given prominence. By now his address was 12 Thornton Hill, Wimbledon. He was duly elected a Fellow on 26 March 1942 immediately prior to war service.

⁵ *Minster Lovell Hall* (official guidebook) (HM Stationery Office, 1939).

⁶ *Oxoniensia*, 2 (1937), 103–17.

⁷ *Sussex Record Society*, 44 (1939).

He joined the RAF and was trained as an intelligence officer in the aerial photographic interpretation branch. Being based at the training establishment at RAF Medmenham put him in fairly easy bicycle reach of London and home. He was eventually posted to Algiers and, briefly, to Tunis, before arriving in Italy. Here he was to study aerial photographs involving counting the numbers of aircraft on enemy airfields, and later analysing German convoys over the Alps. In some respects this was a most fortunate posting since he was able to visit many Italian historic towns during his short periods of leave. Significantly, while travelling back to England prior to demobilisation in 1946, his train took him through Switzerland past a castle, subsequently identified as Saillon in the Vallais, 'whose very stance', as he later wrote, had seemed to him even from a mile away to have an affinity of form and line with Conwy Castle, different in scale as the two might be. This experience was prescient as a precursor for his future researches. Stimulated by this acute observation, Taylor was later able to point to other direct similarities between the Edwardian castles in Wales and the Savoyard castles in the mountains around Lake Geneva. The helicoidal putlog holes (spiralling scaffold sockets) that provided ramped access for the builders, making it much easier to carry up materials during construction, was, for example, a technique that impressed itself on him and which he was to observe in some of the English castles in Wales.

Returning after the war to the Office, now in the Ministry of Works, in 1946, he found that Bryan O'Neil had become Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments. Arnold was now promoted to O'Neil's former position as Inspector for Wales. This was to involve him in all aspects of ancient monument protection, conservation and interpretation over the next eight years as well as providing opportunities for research into castles and town walls. In the course of this time he wrote ten official guidebooks to Welsh monuments, He was also more broadly involved in Welsh history and archaeology, publishing a wide range of articles in various Welsh national and local society journals such as one on 'Usk Castle and the Pipe Roll of 1188'.⁸ Another early publication was on Montgomery town wall (1947)⁹ and 'A Note on Walter of Hereford, Builder of Caernarfon Castle' (1949),¹⁰ though it later seemed that Walter was more master mason than 'architect'. This note was to be later qualified by Arnold's seminal study in

⁸ *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 99 (1947), 249–55.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 281–3.

¹⁰ *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, 9 (1948), 16–19.

1950 of the career of Master James of St George.¹¹ He was, however, not restricted to the study of castles. When the Cambrian Archaeological Association published its centenary volume, *A Hundred Years of Welsh Archaeology* (1949), Arnold contributed an article on 'The Greater Monastic Houses', which included a résumé of the consolidation of their ruins that had resulted from their coming into state care. His reputation as a historian led him to be elected Vice-President of the Flintshire Historical Society in 1953. A significant contribution was 'Castle-building in Wales in the later thirteenth century: the prelude to construction', written in homage to his mentor and predecessor in Wales, Bryan O'Neil.¹² Later, in 1969, Taylor was to become President of the Cambrian Archaeological Association. At a more official level, between 1956 and 1983 Taylor served as a Commissioner of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales and Monmouthshire). He was awarded an honorary doctorate of the University of Wales in 1970.

These years in Wales were dominated in an academic sense by the figure of Master James of St George, and this thirteenth-century master mason's role in the design and construction of the Edwardian castles in North Wales. Taylor records that as far back as 1937 he had noted the earliest references to Master James as '*magister operacionum Regis in Wallia*'.

Master James was indeed already known in the literature. J. E. Morris in 1901 had considered that he was the 'chief architect and designer' of Edward's castles.¹³ Later, Sir Charles Peers thought that St George was the master mason of Rhuddlan, Harlech and Beaumaris but omitted others in the series.¹⁴ Douglas Simpson argued that St George was not a master mason at all, still less an architect, but rather an administrator who supervised the financial aspects of these undertakings.¹⁵ To Taylor it was desirable that their architectural authorship should be firmly established.

Taylor's paper 'Master James of St. George' (1950) was to do just that, and in fact anticipated his excursions to Switzerland and Savoy. It was achieved by researching predominantly in the English and Welsh sources at the Public Record Office for references to the construction of the North Wales castles in the various royal accounts. Arnold was already

¹¹ *English Historical Review*, 65 (1950), 433–57.

¹² *Studies in Building History: essays in recognition of the work of B. H. St J. O'Neil* (London, 1961), pp. 104–33.

¹³ J. E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward the First* (Oxford, 1901), p. 145.

¹⁴ *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1915–16, 28, 29.

¹⁵ *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club*, 1928, 41.

aware of Master James at Yverdon Castle in Savoy, and other clues that anticipated his services as Edward I's architect and military engineer. This paper was subsequently reprinted without alteration in *Studies in Castles and Castle-Building* (1985) but with ten pages of addenda and corrigenda keeping abreast with subsequent research during the thirty years interval.¹⁶ Taylor's prolonged study of this influential castle designer eventually saw him awarded the Médaille d'Honneur de la Ville de Saint Georges-d'Espérance in 1988.

By carefully comparing the North Wales castles one with another and noting some of their particular features, Taylor was to identify five constructional or architectural elements that were not, to his knowledge, paralleled in other English or Welsh castles, and were therefore likely to be directly derived from a Continental source. These, and the identity and previous whereabouts of Master James of St George, led to a dual purpose: to search, on the one hand, for architectural parallels and, on the other, for authentic sources for dating them, which might also throw light on the overriding problem of authorship. He thus set out from England in the autumn of 1950, as he was later to record in the Albert Reckett lecture given to the British Academy in 1977.¹⁷ He added that the journey owed something of its inspiration to T. E. Lawrence's *Crusader Castles* (1936), a copy of which had been given to him in 1949 by E. T. Leeds, sometime Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and a good friend to both Lawrence and Taylor. The perception of the link between Wales and Savoy was influenced by the latter's geographical situation, and to the close family relationship between Edward I and Savoy's ruling Count Philip. The Savoy archives at Turin certainly seemed to demand urgent investigation. Initially, however, Arnold disappointedly felt he had drawn a blank in his first visit to Turin, and he returned to Switzerland to study the castles of Grandson, Chillon, Yverdon and Champvent.

Similarities were found between the ground plan of Champvent and Yverdon with Flint Castle; also the accommodation on the principal floor appeared to have matched, almost exactly, that of Edward and Eleanor's apartments at Conwy. At Chillon, 'surely beyond doubt were the ancestors I was seeking of the Harlech fenestration'. The documentary 'break-through' came on 22 September in the University Library at Lausanne. 'This day's work has made it clear to me', he quotes from his diary, 'that

¹⁶ 'Castle-Building in Wales in the Later Thirteenth Century: the Prelude to Construction', Arnold Taylor, *Studies in Castles and Castle-Building* (London, 1985), pp. 99–128.

¹⁷ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 63 (1977), 265–92.

I must go back to Turin, tedious journey as it will be, and look at the “comptes savoyardes” for myself to see how much early stuff there really is there.’ ‘It sounds like a forgotten era to recall that at 3.37 a.m. the next morning I was leaving Lausanne on the Orient Express for Arona, bound once more for Turin. The next 3½ days . . . were as productive of crucial sources as any I have ever spent.’ They pointed to the presence of Master James then working under his father, Master John, at Yverdon. Later there were payments to him at Chillon in 1266–7. That St Georges-d’Espérance in the Viennois, south-east of Lyon was coming to the fore in the early 1270s with the building there of a new ‘palace’ castle by Count Philip gave rise to the possibility that it might be from *this* St Georges that the Master James who made his debut in English records in 1278 took his local surname. A visit to Saillon, like that to Chillon, at once revealed examples of the architectural parallels Arnold was seeking for Harlech, and Conwy.

The next major step in Taylor’s examination of Master James’s architectural career was a detailed study of the Castle of St Georges-d’Espérance.¹⁸ A year after the trial run to Switzerland in 1950, the help of a Leverhulme travel grant enabled him to return and devote a whole month to exploring other parts of Savoy and other archives. The significance of St Georges-d’Espérance enforced itself upon him.

The new castle built at St Georges for Count Philip of Savoy in the 1270s was expressly termed his *palacium*. It was Count Philip’s latest and favourite creation. It had a particular interest for Anglo-Savoy relations, for it was here on 25 June 1273 that Count Philip of Savoy rendered homage to his great-nephew, the as yet uncrowned King Edward I. At the time the castle was so new that parts of it were still under construction, so that Edward and his circle, themselves shortly to be engaged in castle building on a very large scale, actually saw it in building. The documents demonstrated that Master James was associated with it and there was architectural evidence, which made the ascription of St Georges to Master James ‘very likely indeed’. Arnold recognised that ‘We have here conditions which might play a part in the transference, in this matter of castle-building, of ideas from the Continent to north Wales.’ Elsewhere, the suggestion was put forward that it was from St Georges-d’Espérance that this Master James took his name, it having been either his birth-place or the professional headquarters from which he set out for England and to which, in his new sphere, he looked back as his home. There was

¹⁸ *Antiquaries Journal*, 33 (1953), 33–47.

similarity between the castles of St Georges and Yverdon, and between Flint, Rhuddlan, Aberystwyth, Conwy, Harlech and Beaumaris. There was the exceptional use of octagonal towers at St Georges, contrasting with the characteristic round towers employed at other contemporary castles in the Viennois. Arnold went on to argue that ‘in north Wales as in Savoy not only do we have a unified group of castles in which round towers are the rule and polygonal towers the exception, namely at Caernarfon, which has something in common with that of the Savoy exception, namely St. Georges’. For Caernarfon was essentially intended as a palace of the English principality of Wales, the formal official seat of the prince’s government and it may be that in some way similar ideas underlie the distinctive treatment accorded to both buildings. Arnold had written separately on the date of Caernarfon Castle.¹⁹ His purpose was to examine afresh certain of the early documents on which the previously accepted dating was based, and to reconsider, where this seemed desirable, interpretations of them that had been put forward by Sir Charles Peers. The following year saw the publication of ‘Building at Caernarfon and Beaumaris in 1295–6’.²⁰

The idiosyncratic elements of the royal castles were thus traced back to Savoy in regular solitary visits, and later incorporated into family holidays. He would drive long distances often with just a bunch of grapes on the passenger seat for refreshment. As Peter Curnow has said, ‘Those who have been passengers with Arnold Taylor will know that these journeys were not for the faint-hearted.’²¹ He was moved to examine the archives of the Counts of Savoy (relatives of Edward I) finding further evidence that Edward had chosen Master James of St George, to be architect and master-builder for his great military project in Wales. This research in 1960 led to essays demonstrating additional close associations between England and Savoy: ‘A Letter from Lewis of Savoy to Edward I’²² and ‘Count Amadeus of Savoy’s Visit to England in 1292’.²³

The various links between Wales and Savoy were summed up in the Albert Reckitt Archaeological Lecture in 1977.²⁴ In this lecture Arnold referred to Sir Goronwy Edwards’s paper to the British Academy in 1953 on the subject of ‘Edward I’s Castle-Building in Wales’ setting out the

¹⁹ *Antiquity*, 26, no. 101 (1952), 25–34.

²⁰ *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 15 (1953), 25–34.

²¹ *Études de castellologie médiévale*, 21 (2004), 3–4.

²² *English Historical Review*, 68 (1953), 33–47.

²³ *Archaeologia*, 106 (1979), 123–32.

²⁴ See above, n. 17.

documentary evidence for the creation of eight new royal castles in Mid and North Wales between 1277 and 1295.²⁵ 'The study broke new ground', Arnold claimed, 'in that it was the first time the building of these great works had been considered as a single state enterprise, costing so much money, requiring the recruitment and movement of so much labour, calling for special expedients of finance, and taking this or that number of years to carry through.' Arnold went on to say that for a long time he had been pursuing one aspect which Sir Goronwy specifically excluded, namely the architecture of the castles and in particular their authorship and affinities.

In his lecture Arnold made the point that

I have stated elsewhere [*Kings Works*] the grounds for believing that the real explanation of the differences between Caernarfon and Flint, Rhuddlan, Conway, Harlech and Beaumaris lies in the king's intention that Caernarfon should be a palace castle reflecting in its symbolism its own Roman origins and using the likeness of the Theodosian walls of Constantinople to invoke the imperial theme.

Taylor was the first to suggest that the banded walls of Caernarfon were inspired by the walls of Constantinople, reflecting the legend that the Emperor Constantine had been born in the town where his father had been a legionary.

The authorship of the North Wales castles and the parallels and associations with Savoy was followed by a detailed analysis of their construction and the organisation of the works in 'Castle-building in Wales in the later thirteenth century: the prelude to construction'.²⁶ In this essay Arnold recorded his indebtedness to O'Neil who had given every encouragement to the documentary study of these castles.

O'Neil realized the need for a full recourse to original sources in unravelling the building history of the great medieval monuments whose custody became increasingly his concern . . . He accordingly gave full scope for record research wherever it might be expected to further the right understanding of the buildings in his charge. Especially was this so in regard to castles, always the holders of a foremost place in his interests.

Here, Taylor considered some of the indispensable preliminaries to the building of the castles, namely the administrative planning, the organisation of labour and the supply of materials, which were the foundations of medieval building achievement. This detailed analysis, supported by

²⁵ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 32 (1953), 15–81.

²⁶ *Studies in Building History*, pp. 104–33.

distribution maps which had been compiled before 1961, anticipated the more comprehensive account of Edward I's castles in 'The King's Works in Wales, 1277–1330'.²⁷ As a scholar, Taylor, an obituarist was to write, 'was exact and cautious, requiring an unimpeachable array of evidence before reaching a verdict. He had a prodigious, almost photographic memory for physical details.' His tenacity in scouring the remnants of damaged Exchequer Rolls in the Public Record Office for scraps of evidence pertaining to castle construction was to impress his collaborator, Howard Colvin, who had been commissioned in 1951 as General Editor of *The History of the King's Works*. It was inevitable that Arnold, already an authority on Welsh castles, was one of the contributors along with R. Allen Brown and Colvin himself. As well as chapter VI, Arnold contributed to some of the appendices dealing with expenditure, and to Harlech Castle in particular, as well as notes on Savoyard and other foreign craftsmen employed by Edward I in Wales. Arnold's chapter was later reprinted separately under his own name.²⁸

Already, in a more general context, Arnold had contributed the chapter on 'Military Architecture' in *Medieval England* where he summarised the current state of knowledge on the development of castles.²⁹ *The History of the King's Works*, however, was the climax of Taylor's writings on the North Wales castles, though there were later essays on particular aspects. And then there were the official guide-books, five in all, which went through innumerable printings and several editions. As a tail piece in 1995, came 'The Town and Castle of Conwy: Preservation and Interpretation'.³⁰ This he explained was a note which summarised and expanded one of the short papers communicated to the Society of Antiquaries on 23 February 1995 under the title of 'New Thoughts on Some Castles in Wales'.

Leaving aside his academic achievements in Wales, Arnold's most visible memorial lies in the glorious walls of Conwy, where through patient negotiation and diplomacy he secured the removal of numerous sheds and scrap metal yards built against the outside of the walls, including the local fire station, so that the walls could be appreciated in their full medieval splendour. However, with the work complete, the whole grand effect was threatened by the construction of the new North Wales Expressway, which was planned to be carried across the river below the

²⁷ H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works* (London, 1963), I, 293–408; II, 127–40.

²⁸ A. J. Taylor, *The King's Works in Wales 1277–1300* (London, 1974).

²⁹ Austin Lane Poole (ed.), *Medieval England* (Oxford, 1958) I, 98–127.

³⁰ *Antiquaries Journal*, 75 (1995), 339–63.

castle on a bridge of grotesque ugliness dwarfing in scale the castle and the town walls. Taylor was not a man to be hobbled by his political or Civil Service masters, important as the road was held to be economically, and both before and after his retirement, he put his full energy into ensuring that the road was set out of sight in a tunnel. This he chronicled in his Presidential Anniversary Addresses to the Society of Antiquaries and photographically in his final 1995 paper.

As has already been said, Arnold's academic interests went beyond castles and Wales. Of papers on ecclesiastical subjects, 'The Cloister of Vale Royal Abbey',³¹ was an early example in 1949. 'Evidence for a Pre-Conquest Origin for the Chapels in Hastings and Pevensey Castles',³² 'Royal Alms and Oblations in the Later Thirteenth Century',³³ and 'Edward I and the Shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury',³⁴ were just a few which he felt deserved to be included in his *Studies in Castles and Castle-Building* (1985).³⁵

To return to his official career in the Inspectorate, this was to change dramatically with the sudden and premature death of Bryan O'Neil in October 1954. He was succeeded as Chief Inspector by P. K. Baillie Reynolds. A new post of Assistant Chief Inspector was created shortly afterwards and filled by Taylor. While he still retained an interest in Welsh matters and more widely in England, Arnold was now largely London based. This had an advantage for the preparation of the first two *King's Works* volumes. It made possible research in the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, most afternoons and allowed the coordination of the work of the Ancient Monuments drawing office in the preparations of plans for the volumes and of individuals who were contributing in various ways.

The preparation for the *King's Works* also included fieldwork. While studying the records for Calais, it has been said that Taylor and Howard Colvin had been puzzled by references to crosses on the town walls.³⁶ Reckoning themselves the first Englishmen to study the Calais fortifications since the sixteenth century, they found an intact stretch of

³¹ *Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historical Society*, 35 (1949).

³² *European Castle Studies: Château Gaillard III* (1981).

³³ F. G. Emmison and R. Stephens (eds.), *Tribute to an Antiquary: Essays Presented to Marc Fitch by his Friends* (1976).

³⁴ *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 132 (1979).

³⁵ Arnold Taylor, *Studies in Castles and Castle-Building* (London, 1985).

³⁶ *The Times*, 14 Nov. 2002.

the defensive wall with crosses formed of characteristic English flush-flintwork marking the length of each sentry patrol. Much later, Arnold was to be the first to identify the mysterious castle of Belrem illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry, showing that it corresponded to earthworks of the motte and bailey castle that he had observed at Beaurain in Artois.³⁷

The retirement of Baillie Reynolds in 1961 saw Taylor's promotion to Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, a post he was to hold until 1972, first within the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and later in the former Ministry's new guise as the Department of the Environment. This was a time when the responsibilities of the post and the Inspectorate as a whole were widening and the general archaeological discipline was expanding. The traditional diet of castles and abbeys had changed. In this new role he maintained rigorous standards. The business of the department he believed was to identify, describe, preserve and transmit to posterity the physical relics of the past in its stewardship, without embellishment, addition or encroachment. The former Permanent Secretary of the old Ministry of Works wrote in his Foreword to Arnold's Festschrift.

Those who complain of the inadequate complement of the Inspectorate should look back and then realise how much is owed to Arnold Taylor for the size and status of the Inspectorate today. It is the case that his years as Chief Inspector were seminal in the development of today's Inspectorate, including not least the development of the Ancient Monuments laboratory. Furthermore it fell to him to lead the Inspectorate into the new world of amalgamation with the Historic Buildings organisation of the former Ministry of Housing: an amalgamation which for years had proclaimed itself as a necessary development in the administration of these matters . . . Arnold Taylor was among the more distinguished of the line of Chief Inspectors of Ancient Monuments.³⁸

His period as Chief Inspector encompassed rapid archaeological expansion and an enlargement of duties and functions. In his last ten years of service he was responsible for leading the Inspectorate into this wider role and succeeded in maintaining the traditional identity of the Inspectorate; its professional standards, philosophy and its corporate sense remained unaltered. During the 1960s the archaeology of the countryside was under enormous threat from the plough, motorway construction and quarrying as never before, while historic town centres were gutted for redevelopment. The concept of rescue archaeology, that is the salvaging of information for understanding the past by excavation, and

³⁷ See below, n. 46.

³⁸ M. R. Apted, R. Gilyard-Bear and A. D. Saunders (eds.), *Ancient Monuments and Their Interpretation, Essays presented to A. J. Taylor* (Chichester, 1977).

the recording of standing structures that were being destroyed, became an urgent matter. This was first recognised by O'Neil during the Second World War as a counterpart to the physical protection of sites and monuments, but the mechanics for achieving this on any scale were inadequate at the time. Arnold saw that it was essential to achieve greater input from the Inspectorate to match and support the efforts of independent archaeologists. Three new posts were created to cover the three main periods—prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval. These inspectors were to be engaged on rescue archaeological excavations full time, and, what was revolutionary for the Ministry, the crucial task of bringing the results to publication, was part of their duties. As the rate of destruction accelerated, particularly in urban areas, pressure from the archaeological profession for greater resources grew during the late 1960s and early 1970s and became increasingly political. Arnold felt overwhelmed by this pressure, and regretted the political lobbying, as it pushed the department into unforeseen territory.

On the other hand, new areas of involvement such as industrial archaeology, which was then becoming recognised as a legitimate discipline, and whose remains needed protection and, in selective cases, preservation were more congenial. The maintenance of country houses, and historic buildings generally, was recognised by government, and the identification of cases for consideration by the newly created Historic Buildings Council formed another area of responsibility for the Inspectorate. Following closely behind were the problems of redundant churches, and by the time of his retirement, the grant aiding of churches in use was another new step. Taylor and the department were therefore at the centre of new pressures demanding increased public expenditure and additional specialist staff. In all this he proved an effective and generous leader, stimulating and encouraging younger colleagues.

Arnold Taylor retired as Chief Inspector in 1972 and on the occasion of a farewell dinner, his colleagues announced their intention of publishing a volume of essays in his honour. This appeared in 1977 under the title of *Ancient Monuments and Their Interpretation: Essays presented to A. J. Taylor*.³⁹ It is unusual among Festschriften in that all the contributors, whether from Wales, Scotland or England, adhered to a central theme: the work, philosophy, and methods of the Inspectorate as it existed at the time. The volume also contained a bibliography of Taylor's publications, consisting of 105 titles, covering the years 1929–76. Unusually for someone outside the mainstream of academic life he was, in the year of his

³⁹ See above, n. 38.

retirement, elected to the Fellowship of the British Academy. The award of the CBE in the previous year marked his place among official honours.

After his retirement, he continued to act in an advisory capacity to government. He was a member of all three Ancient Monuments Boards—England 1973–82; Scotland 1974–9; and Wales 1974–82. He also served on parallel bodies as a Commissioner, first on the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments (Wales and Monmouthshire) 1956–83 and on the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments (England) 1963–78.

He was a committed member of the Church of England and his concern for the future and preservation of England's medieval churches and cathedrals was another important feature of his life. In 1942, following the destruction caused by bombing in London, he produced a pamphlet entitled 'Friends of the City Churches: Statement of Policy'. His friend Reg Adams records that together they visited most of the City churches and observed the post-war development of their roles within the 'square mile'. Proposals for change without due respect for tradition met with opposition which 'we were both anxious to support'. Arnold's research and publications respecting ecclesiastical buildings and subjects were a continuing process from his days at Merchant Taylors'.

In later life, he was able to put this to active and practical service towards the preservation of churches through membership of the Cathedrals Advisory Committee (1964–80). He served on the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches at a time of increasing concern for the number of churches across the country being demolished on the grounds that they were of no historic or architectural interest. It was during his chairmanship (1975–7) that the first grants for historic churches were announced. More locally, he was on the Westminster Abbey Advisory Panel from 1979 to 1992.

With his familiarity with archives in France, Italy, Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, Taylor was international in outlook. It was therefore appropriate for him to be invited to join a small group of architectural historians who individually represented most West European countries. The International Burgens Institute (IBI) was formed during the late 1940s. There was a strong scientific base which produced an annual *Bulletin* to which Arnold contributed in 1966 with a paper on 'The rehabilitation of castles in the country districts in England and Wales'.⁴⁰ It

⁴⁰ *Bulletin de l'Institut International des Châteaux Historiques*, No. 22, 71–4.

was a cultured association of like-minded scholars, who met annually in different countries to discuss broad castle themes.

In May 1962, a conference gathered at Les Andelys at the foot of Château Gaillard as the first public showing of the recently created Centre for Medieval Archaeological Research of the University of Caen. Michel de Bouïard, its director, who was then excavating the Château of Caen, had invited the participants, choosing from among archaeologists, historians, architects and inspectors of ancient monuments those who had distinguished themselves by their excavations or writings in medieval castle research. The choice of Château Gaillard, recently restored, was symbolic.

Dr Joseph Decaëns has recalled the creation of this European institution and his personal memories of one of its founders and pioneers.

I can visualise him on 30th May 1962, a little before the start of the first conference at Les Andelys on a very Norman morning when spring dithers between cold showers and lovely sunny intervals. He was wearing a big raincoat, which made him seem even taller. Armed with his camera before everyone else, he had already climbed the hill to look at Richard the Lionheart's fortress on his own, in peace and quiet. I saw him coming out of a steeply sloping path. It was impossible not to be struck by his very British elegance, his natural air of distinction and the kind smile which lit up his face.

Decaëns went on to describe the Conference and the details of its creation.

In 1962 Arnold Taylor already had a long career behind him as Inspector of Ancient Monuments. He was renowned for his great knowledge of buildings, his vigour and the quality of his documentary research. At the Les Andelys conference he found a special friendship with Michel de Bouïard, which never faltered. During the final session of the conference, on the proposal of A. Herrnbrodt, it was decided unanimously to continue the meeting in regular conferences which would take place every two years under the name of Château Gaillard Conferences in different parts of Europe to advance castellology—the word was invented that very day. Thus in 1962, was born almost spontaneously a European scholarly institution. It has lasted for more than forty years, always equally successfully, without, however, comprising statutes or rigid rules: it was governed by genuine customary law! Arnold Taylor was immediately appointed to represent Great Britain in the group of five individuals around Michel de Bouïard given the responsibility of ensuring liaison between researchers, archaeologists and amateur enthusiasts, and arranging future conferences. This group became the liaison committee and later the permanent Château Gaillard Committee. Nowadays, the conferences are held in turn in European countries. The second conference was held in Germany (Büderich 1964). Arnold Taylor organised the third at Battle, Sussex, in 1966, on the very site of the Battle of Hastings and on its nine hundredth anniversary. It was a great success both in

the proceedings, whose quality is attested in the beautifully published volume⁴¹ and in the excursions and visits to ancient monuments that were so carefully chosen and arranged. In 1980, Arnold was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Caen. The last time Arnold Taylor was seen in Normandy was in 1990, at the unveiling of the plaque in honour of Michel de Boüard at the Château of Caen, President Colloque International du Château Gaillard. In spite of his age and health problems Arnold wanted to pay his tribute to his friend who had died a year earlier.

Decaëns added a final tribute to Arnold, which is more telling since it comes from a foreigner:

All those who read and appreciated his writings will never forget him. He will be remembered for his great courtesy, his kindness, his urbanity but also for his accurate and penetrating observation of machinery and monuments, his chronological analysis of buildings and his reliable and deep knowledge of texts and history.⁴²

Another important component of Arnold's life was the Society of Antiquaries of London. Having been elected a Fellow during the war at the age of 31, he was elected to its Council in 1955–6 and again in 1963. From then on he maintained steady progress in holding the major offices: Vice-President 1963–4, Honorary Secretary 1964–70, Director 1970–5 and finally President 1975–8.

His first Anniversary Address to the Society as President on 29 April 1976⁴³ is revealing of the man:

If filial piety to an *alma mater* is not out of place on such an occasion, may I say that one of the special pleasures you have given me, a Londoner born and bred, by electing me as your thirty-third President, is the thought that there is one thing which Peter Le Neve (the first President, chosen in 1707) and I and no other two Presidents have in common: we were nursed upon the self-same hill, though admittedly the nursing of the 1670s and the 1920s took place on opposite sides of the Walbrook. I find another source of pleasure, and indeed pride, in reflecting that the occupant of this chair in the days when I made my first three visits to these rooms in 1932 was also my predecessor as Chief Inspector: and if it is to the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Pitt Rivers, that we look back as the father of modern field archaeology, it is the second, Sir Charles Peers, successively Secretary, Director, and President of the Antiquaries from 1908 to 1934, who deserves to be remembered as the initiator of Britain's approach to the conservation of standing monuments, an approach which has brought renown to this branch of the public service and set the standards which

⁴¹ *Château Gaillard: European Castle Studies*, III Conference at Battle, Sussex, 19–24 September 1966 (Chichester, 1969).

⁴² *Château Gaillard: European Castle Studies*, 21 (2004), pp. 5–6.

⁴³ *The Antiquaries Journal*, 56, part 1 (1976), 1–10.

are still its guide today. It is not a little sobering to glance back over the line of outstanding Presidents who over the last forty years and more have come after, to realize one has known them all, and now to find oneself following on in their distinguished company. But pride is quickly overtaken by humility, and I have no words to thank you for having chosen me as their successor. I do not need to tell you I am no archaeologist in the earthier sense of that term; most of my digging has been done in the Round Room in Chancery Lane and places like it in this and other lands. But I think I can say, with John Aubrey, that 'I was inclined by my Genius from my childhood, to the love of antiquities: and my Fate dropt me in a cuntry most suitable for such enquiries'. I can only add that I will do my utmost to preserve, enhance, and hand on undiminished the heritage that you have entrusted to me.

Arnold recorded that it was in the previous year (1975),

ironically European Architectural Heritage Year, when the longest Public Inquiry yet seen took place into objections to a new road scheme which saw the District Council of Aberconwy, engaged in combat with the Welsh Office in a determined defence of the setting and amenity of Conwy Castle and Town Walls, no less, against their threatened obliteration by the ill-conceived and stubbornly pressed proposals of the Welsh Office.

Arnold accepted the local authority's invitation to appear as their principal archaeological and historical witness along with many other Fellows of the Society and on behalf of other bodies. The process was described and illustrated in his final paper of 1995.⁴⁴

Taylor was finally awarded the Society's Gold Medal for distinguished services to archaeology in 1988. The then President, Michael Robbins's citation deserves to be quoted in full.

In recognition of his work in two adjacent areas: the practical problems of conserving ancient monuments, throughout his distinguished service which culminated in appointment as Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments; and, second, his outstanding contribution to knowledge derived from the combined study of evidence from physical remains and from documentary sources. In particular, for his investigation of the records of the process by which the north Welsh castles of Edward I came into existence has sharply illuminated many aspects—technical, financial and economic and personal—of this important group of fortresses, several of them, as he has written, 'buildings of surpassing architectural and scenic beauty'. And he has enlivened the impersonality of the account books by tracing the careers of the master masons, especially by establishing the importance of Master James of St George—from St Georges d'Espérance in Savoy. But his concerns have not been bounded by Wales: Merchant Taylors' School, Sussex, London and Middlesex, the Channel Islands, Normandy, Sicily, the international Château Gaillard conferences are all within the range

⁴⁴ *The Antiquaries Journal*, 75 (1995), 339–63.

of Arnold Taylor's inquiring mind and activity, backed by his skill at connecting things apparently far apart as Caernarfon and Constantinople. In 1976 his score of recorded publications was 105, not out, and he goes on adding to it. Arnold Taylor has combined skill and enthusiasm as conserver, researcher, and interpreter at the highest level in all three departments: and he devotes time and effort to one of his recreations, which he lists as 'resisting iconoclasts'. There can be no one who has proved more worthy to receive the Society's gold medal.⁴⁵

Active membership of other national archaeological societies, and the holding of offices in them, included the Royal Archaeological Institute as well as his first love, the British Archaeological Association. Winner of its Reginald Taylor Prize in 1949, he was its President in 1993. He was President of the Cambrian Archaeological Association (1969). He had won its C. T. Clark Prize in 1956. He was President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology (1972–5). Among more local societies he was President of the Surrey Archaeological Society (1979) after serving as President of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (1971–4). Another of his interests was English place-names and he was Vice-President of that Society in 1953.

After formal retirement, his scholarly activity did not slow as he got older. Publication of source materials, monographs on castles, historical and archaeological articles added to a bibliography that was already extensive. In 1991 he took part in the Battle conference, where he paid tribute to R. Allen Brown, his long-standing friend and collaborator, recently deceased. Arnold's Memorial Lecture, entitled 'Belrem', was a profound analysis of the caption above scenes 6–7–8 of the Bayeux Tapestry. He identified Belrem with the motte and bailey castle of Beaurain-Sur-Canche on the banks of Ponthieu, which he had visited and photographed himself.⁴⁶

Taylor had produced many articles in learned journals and guide-books often on subjects which were not castle related. It has been observed that he did not publish the 'great book' but his contribution lay in key articles many of which he consolidated in his *Studies in Castles and Castle Building* (1985). This was in addition to *King's Castles in Wales*, which was a reprint of his chapters in *The History of the King's Works*. The former he described as 'a by-product of a career spent in a once much respected government service now broken up in the supposed interest of "profitability"'.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *The Antiquaries Journal*, 68, part 1 (1988), 1–2.

⁴⁶ *Anglo-Norman Studies, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1991* (Woodbridge, 1992), 1–23.

Arnold's final entry amongst his recreations in *Who's Who* was 'resisting iconoclasts'. This he achieved in no small measure with the victory over the Conwy Expressway bridge. He successfully resisted the authorities at the Tower of London, who wished to convert the partially filled moat into a car park. Closer to home he fought the addition of a coffee/meeting room to his local church at Chiddingfold. It was an issue which split the village but Arnold stuck fast to his principles.

He maintained the family links with Walter St John's School and was President of its Old Boys Association (1969). He was also a member of the Sir Walter St John's Schools Trust. Lydiard Tregoze was the Wiltshire seat of the St John family, one of whom, Sir Walter, founded the school in Battersea which carries his name. The house fell into disrepair until bought by Swindon Corporation in 1943. Arnold was one of the 'Friends of Lydiard Tregoze'. Similarly he retained his association with the Old Boys of Merchant Taylors' School, becoming President of the Old Merchant Taylors' Society (1985–6).

His personal life revolved round his family of Patricia and their son John and daughter Kate. For much of his working career they lived in Teddington, moving out to Chiddingfold, Surrey, after retirement. Music and reading figured strongly in his interests. One of his great delights was attending meetings of the Cocked Hat Club, a dining society of the Antiquaries, whose whimsical procedures, conversation and outings gave him great pleasure and companionship. A gentle person, sometimes quizzical, on occasions quietly obstinate, in private Taylor was apt to undervalue his achievements. But while modest about himself he was also singularly free from academic jealousy. To his junior colleagues he was a kindly and sympathetic superior and they repaid him with affection and loyalty. Other scholars benefited from his constant and unselfish readiness to share his erudition.

It was a personal tragedy that in later life progressive blindness and deafness made his last years wretched. He never really recovered from a fall, which led to a fractured shoulder, arm and hip. He was to die of old age in a nursing home on 24 October 2002, aged 91, never really believing the extent of his life's achievements and the respect in which he was held in the academic world.

ANDREW SAUNDERS