

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
BY SIR KENNETH WHEARE

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WE meet today in the shadow of the deaths of two former Presidents of the Academy, Sir David Ross and Sir Maurice Bowra. I should like to begin by speaking about them, though inadequately.

When I arrived at Oriel College, Oxford, in October 1929, as a Rhodes Scholar from Australia, I reported, as instructed, to my tutor in Philosophy. He fixed the time for my tutorial at noon on Saturdays. As I was about to take my leave, he said: 'This, I imagine, will be a new experience for you, Wheare, to work on Saturday morning.' 'No, sir', I said. 'But', he went on, 'I understand that nobody in Australia works on Saturday?' 'No, sir', I said, 'We all do.' 'Indeed', he said, and I felt that he did not entirely believe me. This was my first encounter with W. D. Ross, who had been elected to the Academy two years previously, who was to be its President from 1936 to 1940 and who died this year at the age of 94.

As I recall that first meeting, I am astonished at my temerity in contradicting him. But the attack on the working habits of my fellow countrymen and even more of myself gave me courage. However, I soon came under the influence of the stern and unbending Presbyterianism of the authority upon the right and the good and seldom answered back. I was an enthusiastic, even dedicated, student of philosophy, but unfortunately I was no good at it. I must have been a sore trial to David Ross as a pupil. In one of my earlier essays for him I referred to 'values'. He stopped me. 'Value I understand', he said. 'But I shall be surprised if you can convince me of the existence of values.' 'But, sir', I said, 'Sorley has written a book called *Moral Values and the Idea of God*.' 'No doubt', he said, 'But that still does not convince me.' I remember that one of his most severe criticisms of other philosophers was to call them 'viewy'. Collingwood sometimes incurred that rebuke. His relief when I decided to specialize in what he described as 'the rather less rigorous' study of political science must have been considerable. This is,

of course, not the occasion for a proper assessment of Sir David Ross's work as a scholar or as an administrator, nor of his work for the Academy. You will learn with great satisfaction, I am sure, that the obituary notice of him for the Academy's *Proceedings* has been undertaken, at the Council's invitation, by Sir George Clark, his immediate successor as Provost of Oriel College, and his successor but three as President of the Academy. We are extremely fortunate that this distinguished historian has accepted our invitation.

I would only wish to recall, as Sir David Ross's most unlikely successor but six as President, that from our first encounter in those somewhat austere and forbidding circumstances, I was fortunate to be allowed to get to know him better and to be treated as a friend. The Academy over which he presided operated on a somewhat smaller scale than that to which we are now accustomed. It received a grant of £1,000 from the Treasury; and that was cancelled in 1940 though restored in 1941. But its problems must have appeared as difficult and as important to those who held office then as our problems appear to us now. When I think of Ross I recall a story he told me. He was not given to frivolity where philosophy was concerned but I was privileged from time to time to be told a cautionary tale. An undergraduate was asked in an examination to say what he knew of the Stoics. 'Stoics', he said, 'were followers of Zero, and believed in nothing at all.' Ross was never a follower of Zero.

I have tried to recall the memory of Sir David Ross to you. It is quite certain that I do not need to recall the memory of Sir Maurice Bowra, our President from 1958 to 1962, who died suddenly last Sunday, 4 July. His character and personality are so vividly present to all of us who knew him that it is not possible for us yet to realize that he is dead. Of his services to the Academy Sir Mortimer Wheeler has written most eloquently in his history of the years from 1949 to 1968, and in particular of the part that he played in the establishment of the British Institute of Persian Studies in Teheran, and in the completion and fruition of the Rockefeller Inquiry begun during the presidency of Sir George Clark. If we can think today of the Academy performing the function of a humanities research council, a great measure of the credit for that goes to Sir Maurice Bowra. We shall wish to commemorate in our *Proceedings* in due course his fame as a scholar and the distinction he brought to the Academy, of which he was elected a Fellow in 1938 when he was just 40, an early age by our standards. At this

moment I must content myself by recording the loss of one to whom I personally owed much in friendship, encouragement, hilarity, and occasional reproof. A week or so ago, in addressing the Congregation of Oxford University on a controversial subject, for the last time as it proved, he described himself as an 'extinct volcano'. Of many of those who describe themselves as extinct volcanoes, it can be said that they are certainly extinct but equally certainly never were volcanoes. Maurice was a volcano. I cannot believe that he is extinct.

I have begun my address to you by looking back and I shall continue to look back but not quite so far. It is natural, perhaps, for a President who has reached the end of his normal term of four years to recall what has happened in his time. Without going into detail, may I mention one or two achievements. First I place our move to Burlington House from our old quarters in Burlington Gardens, a move made possible by the initiative and imagination of my predecessor as President, Lord Robbins, by Sir Mortimer Wheeler then Secretary, and, not least, by the hard work of our office staff upon whom, and especially upon Miss Myers, fell the arduous burden of the actual move, and the settling in.

Next I would mention the development of our exchanges with foreign countries and our contacts with foreign academics, to which the benefactions from the Leverhulme Trust and the Wates Foundation have made a most valuable contribution. As a result of this initiative, the Government has included in its grant for this year a contribution towards exchanges, so that we have gone some way towards establishing this part of the Academy's activities on a firm foundation. The importance of this development is illustrated by our revival of the office of Foreign Secretary to which Professor Dickens was elected in 1969. In the same year we established an Overseas Policy Committee of which the Foreign Secretary is chairman. Professor Dickens has been a most vigorous and successful Foreign Secretary and we are grateful to him for accepting re-election today for another year.

Perhaps I should add a word or two about developments in exchanges with Eastern Europe. We have had formal exchange agreements with Hungary for a considerable time and more recently with Bulgaria and Romania. We are discussing agreements with Poland and Czechoslovakia. These agreements cover or are intended to cover short-term exchanges of visits by scholars in the humanities, although there is in the Bulgarian

agreement a provision for collaboration in other aspects of archaeology, at present in the field of the early history of agriculture. I am glad to be able to announce today that we have been able to conclude a two-year agreement with the Institute of Archaeology of the U.S.S.R. for the exchange of scholars on a large scale and for longer periods than has been usual. This agreement was negotiated with the authority of the Council, by our Fellow, Professor Stuart Piggott, on a visit to Moscow earlier this year and we express our gratitude to him and our gratification at the outcome. Subject to ratification by the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, we can expect the agreement to come into operation in the latter part of this year.

From a slightly different point of view, a most important part of the Academy's activities overseas arises from our functions in relation to the British Schools and Institutes for whose financial provision we have considerable responsibility. When I addressed you last year I referred to possible developments in Afghanistan and South-East Asia. I can report this year that discussions with Afghanistan have advanced very well; our Secretary visited Kabul in April 1970 and Dr. D. MacDowall is to undertake a short mission to Kabul in the next few months. South-East Asia is at an earlier stage, but I can report that Professor Maurice Freedman, the Professor of Social Anthropology at Oxford, is to make an exploratory visit to the area in the autumn of this year.

In our election of Ordinary Fellows today one name calls for special mention. I refer to our election as a Fellow of the Academy of Dr. Joseph Needham, Master of Caius College, Cambridge, a Fellow of the Royal Society since 1941. More, perhaps, than any other scientist now alive he has combined a high level of research in the humanities with his achievement as a natural scientist and his massive work on Chinese science and civilization is outstanding. Seldom, if ever, has the Academy elected an F.R.S. to be an F.B.A. Happily I can report also that earlier in the year the Royal Society elected Professor David Glass, a Fellow of the Academy since 1964, to be an F.R.S., and he joins Sir Mortimer Wheeler in holding this double honour. We welcome this evidence of a closer association between the Academy and the Royal Society. It was symbolized in December 1969 when the first joint symposium organized by the two bodies was held at Carlton House Terrace on the subject of *The Impact of Natural Sciences on Archaeology*. It was a successful meeting and the proceedings have been published

jointly as a book. We have had discussions since about other suitable subjects for joint symposia and have arranged one for December 1972 on the subject: *The Place of Astronomy in the Ancient World*. I am always glad of an opportunity to express the gratitude of the Academy to the officers of the Royal Society for the help, advice, and encouragement which they have given us so freely, and in particular Lord Blackett, who has recently retired as President, and Sir Harold Thompson, the Foreign Secretary who has really taught us how to organize and develop our overseas exchanges. We have been able to entertain the new President, Professor Alan Hodgkin, and some other representatives of the Royal Society at a working lunch here in the Academy and to discuss plans for close co-operation in what seemed to me a most hopeful and fruitful way.

Some reference to money is expected from the President at least once a year. I will confine myself to one fact. In the five-year period from 1966-7 to 1971-2 our grant from the Government has been increased from £196,000 to £390,000, an increase of 100%. One significant and encouraging aspect of this period has been that we have been able to increase our allocation to research from £50,000 in 1966-7 to £75,000 in 1971-2; it is our aim to reach £100,000 in due course. There are plenty of worthwhile projects to justify it. The larger part of this grant, however, goes to the schools and institutes abroad. It has done more than just keep up with inflation; it represents a net growth in their activities of which they and we may be proud and grateful. I say 'grateful' although I know it is not customary to express gratitude to the Government for a grant in case, I suppose, it should be misunderstood and taken as evidence that someone has blundered on the side of undue generosity. I do not think that our relations with the Department of Education and Science are so abnormal that we cannot express our gratitude to it for the financial help we have received. We take it as a mark of confidence in our administration which we shall strive to continue to deserve in the future.

May I conclude by expressing my personal pleasure at the election of Sir Denys Page as our new President, a great classical scholar to whom the Academy awarded the Kenyon Medal in 1969. I express the hope and belief that we shall prosper under his good government.