OBITUARIES

Mr. S. E. RIGOLD

We record with much regret the death on 5 July 1980 of Stuart Eborall Rigold, a past president of the Society. Rigold was born at Blackheath on 8 December 1919. His father, Ernest, was a mining engineer and the family came originally from Germany or Austria. The surname is thought to be a variant, probably of Reginald, and is also found as Rigauld, Rigault and Rigaud. Eborall was his mother's maiden name. He was proud of his initials, reflecting, as he liked to tell us, the fact that his great-grandfather had been general manager of the South Eastern Railway.

He grew up near Rolvenden in Kent and remained particularly attached to that county. After school at Sutton Valence, where he was much handicapped by a stutter which he later succeeded in mastering, if not entirely overcoming, he went to St. Andrews university in 1936 where he read geology together with English, French and Classics; but his university career was interrupted by the war when he became a member of that highly secret organisation that ended up at Bletchley as the now celebrated 'Enigma outfit' that intercepted and decoded German signals often of the highest priority. It was a motley gathering of considerable talent, largely dons, graduates and undergraduates, some in uniform, others in mufti: Rigold was in uniform but did not, as a contemporary has told me, fit in very well (as one can imagine) with barrackroom discipline; but he diverted the party with his little cartoons and drawings of local happenings, none of which, it is sad to record, has survived because he invariably drew them on the back of top secret documents - which when done with went to the shredder. As the war ended he had a posting to Denmark. He could easily have obtained a commission but preferred to remain among the 'other ranks' and was demobilised as a Staff Sergeant.

From 1946 to 1948 Rigold was at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford, where he read 'Greats'. On leaving Oxford he joined the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments which was to prove his life's vocation, and in 1955 he married Eleanor Pike who survives him. There were no children of the marriage. In 1963 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and ten years later served on its council. He was also a member of a number of other societies, including, of course, Kent, to whose publication, Archaeologia Cantiana he contributed a number of articles, and he played a prominent part in the Society of Medieval Archaeology, where his wide ranging knowledge was of particular service on the editorial committee, and in the Royal and British Numismatic Societies of the latter of which he was president from 1971 to 1975 and gold medallist. His Chestertonian figure was familiar at both Burlington House and the Warburg Institute where he was a regular and highly valued contributor to the discussions that followed the papers.

In the course of his 30 years service with the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, where he ended for his last two years, 1976-8, as Principal Inspector for England, he produced some ten guides, short and long, including what has been described as 'a masterly account of the Chapter and Pyx Chamber at Westminster', in addition to a large number of excavation reports. He had a special interest in medieval architecture on which he...
wrote extensively, and was a pioneer student of timber framing.

In the present notice primary attention must be paid to his numismatic work, but a full bibliography of more than 300 items has been published in a memorial volume by the Kent Archaeological Society.

Rigold's numismatic interests lay primarily in two widely different fields: the sceattas of the 8th century and the very much later medieval jettons of which so many turn up in excavations. But his interests were more wide ranging than these two series alone and one of his earlier numismatic publications entitled 'The trail of the Easterlings', which appeared in the 1949 number of this Journal, offered, as he described it, 'a harmonious interplay of numismatic, political and economic history'. It painted with a broad brush the various waves of imitation of English coin that occurred from time to time throughout the middle ages and offered explanations for their occurrence.

In 1954 he published in The Numismatic Chronicle a paper entitled 'An Imperial Coinage in southern Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries?' which, in accordance with his later admirable practice, he supported by a detailed list of the material he was reviewing.

Rigold made a very important contribution to the study of the sceatta coinage when he established beyond reasonable doubt what were the two primary series. This he based on the examination of the somewhat limited hoard evidence and his conclusions were most satisfactorily borne out when the composition of the major hoard from Hougham was established. In continuation of this he published in 1977 a valuable summary of his conclusions on the remainder of the sceatta coinage to which he added (jointly with Dr.D.M.Metcalf) a check list of English finds.

In the first volume of the definitive report on the Sutton Hoo ship burial Rigold reviewed the coins found in the purse 'in the light of the contemporary background of coinage in England'. He defined four chronological phases in the gold coinage found in England, dating from the second half of the sixth century to the third quarter of the seventh, and in an invaluable list that follows records nearly 150 finds of such coins in England (in addition to those from Sutton Hoo and Crondall).

In Richborough V (1968) he reviewed the post-Roman coins found in the excavations 1931-38 which included some unusually important early Mercian coins and proved of more value than those recorded in Richborough IV (1949).

Rigold's work on jettons remains largely unpublished. It is true that he wrote records of them in many excavation reports, but completion of his magnum opus on which he was understood to be engaged awaited his retirement which he had only lately begun. It is much to be hoped that it had reached a stage which will make ultimate publication possible.

His presidential addresses to the British Numismatic Society were as lively as they were varied, as their titles suggest: 'A discourse on method and terminology' (1971); 'Concepts of style in coinage' (1972); 'Coinage and the myth of the Renaissance' (1973); 'Seals and titles' (1974); 'Coins and museums' (1975).

Rigold enjoyed the respect and affection of those with whom he worked and he will be much missed in both archaeological and numismatic circles.

The writer is indebted for information and help in preparing this notice to his widow, Mrs.Rigold, and to his friends Mr.David Sherlock, Mr.R. Hawkins and Mr.Robert Thompson, which he gratefully acknowledges.

C.E.Blunt
MAJOR FRED PRIDMORE, RAPC

After some years of ill-health to which he was loath to admit, Fred Pridmore died, aged 65, on 6 August 1980. Over the years he had become the foremost student of the British Colonial series and fellow enthusiasts world-wide, most of whom he never met, will miss his frequent papers, covering a wide range of topics and usually published in Spink's Numismatic Circular. Only one paper was published in this Journal, so he was hardly eligible for consideration for the Sanford Saltus medal, but he was elected to Honorary Membership of the Society in February, 1976. For someone who never sought recognition, he was delighted with the honour bestowed upon him.

He was born 18 December 1914, the only child of Frederick William and Florence May Pridmore, master tailor and tailoress, of Kirkburton, near Huddersfield, Yorkshire. The family soon moved over the county boundary to various homes in Lincolnshire, and after a short spell in New South Wales, settled in Skegness. A collector since his school days, which included a period at the Training Ship Exmouth, at Grays, Essex, he enlisted in the 5th Dragoon Guards in December 1934, just before his twentieth birthday. In September 1938, he transferred to the Royal Army Pay Corps, having spent almost two years as a bandsman. This was due to sub-standard eyesight: what was apparently not good enough for the army certainly proved good enough for coins. During the next 37 years, in which time he progressed from private to major in 1968, he was posted to West Africa, 1945-46, Singapore and Hong Kong, 1950-52, Egypt, 1955, Aden, 1955-58, Cyprus, 1966-70, and no less than 25 postings to 17 different places in the United Kingdom, mostly in the south of England, retiring to his home in Taunton in 1975.

Wherever he went he looked for coins, and would soon publish anything he found of interest, so much so that one could almost trace his travels through his writings. In Singapore he met Erich Wodak with whom he collaborated in the writing of Coins and Coinages of the Straits Settlements and British Malaya, 1786-1951, published by the Raffles Museum in 1955. Of all the people that Pridmore ever met it was Erich Wodak whom he held in the highest regard and it is undoubtedly at this time that the re-writing of James Atkins' work on Colonial coins was conceived as a joint enterprise. Unfortunately Wodak died, aged 55, in September 1958 and Pridmore's obituary for his friend appears in the December issue of the Numismatic Circular for that year. In Cyprus, he met Michael Santamas, and Modern Coins and Notes of Cyprus was written, published by the Central Bank of Cyprus in 1975.

His major work was The Coins of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Part 1 - European Territories (1960); Part 2 - Asian Territories (1962); Part 3 - West Indies (1965) and Part 4 - India, Volume 1 (1975) and Volume 2 (1980), only weeks before he died. During the thirty years spent on the task of writing this work, he published more than 150 articles, some updating earlier efforts. What is not generally appreciated is the wide range of subjects covered in his writings, written very often whilst serving away from home, often abroad. There is some irony in the fact that the West Indies and India, the coins of which were to become his major interest, were two stations to which he was never posted during his military service.

Relatively few people met him: far more knew him by correspondence, especially American collectors who shared similar interests. For the more devout, Taunton was the Mecca to which British Colonial pilgrims came, often
travelling far, and in earlier years the visits could last for days on end with never ending coin chat, stimulated by nothing more than tea or "soda pop", for Fred, a professional soldier, was teetotal.

P.D. Mitchell