

IN MEMORIAM

SIM WHITELEY[†]

4.12.1896 – 14.6.1986

Mr S Whiteley died in St Augustine's Hospital, Durban on 14 June 1986. He will be remembered with affection and respect by all who were privileged to know him.

Born in Yorkshire on 4 December 1896, he was educated at Giggleswick Grammar School from 1907 to 1915. From there he won an Exhibition to Queen's College, Oxford but after only one term he went to serve King and Country as a signaller with the 79th Heavy Artillery Brigade and spent over two years with the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium. After his release, in 1919, he went back to Oxford where he obtained a First in Classical Honour Moderations in 1920 and a Second in Greats (Literae Humaniores) in 1922.

After teaching at Christ College, Brecon and King William's College, Isle of Man, he was appointed Lecturer in Classics at Rhodes University College in 1923. There he met and married Elizabeth, a South African of English descent who had recently taken a degree in English at Oxford. In 1928 both returned to Oxford for a year of further study but this was interrupted when he was appointed the first Professor of Classics at the newly-established Ceylon University College in Colombo. Here he built up a Department which went on to produce not only teachers, lawyers, officials and others who played an important part in the development of Sri Lanka but also scholars of international repute. He also founded the Classical Association of Ceylon, which still flourishes, and suggested the name *PALMA* as title for the Journal of the Association.

In 1942 when the University College became an independent University, he retired to South Africa and in October of that year he became a Sixth Form Classical Master at St John's College in Johannesburg.

In January 1946 he returned to Rhodes where he remained as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer till December 1956.

During his second period of retirement, he was invited to Howard College to open a full-time branch of the Classics Department of the University of Natal.

One of his achievements there was to preside over the first third-year course in Latin offered to Indian students. After his third and final retirement, he remained in Durban where he retained a study at the University which housed his considerable library and where on occasions he gave Honours classes on his favourite subjects, especially Virgil and Latin Prose Composition.

In a tribute sent to me from London, Professor K D White (Head of the Classics Department at Rhodes during Mr Whiteley's second spell), writes: 'He was a great support to me in difficult times in South Africa from the moment he arrived — weaned away from a teaching appointment at St John's College.'

I first met Mr Whiteley in 1955 when I was an Honours student at Rhodes. He taught me Virgil and Latin Prose Composition. It was typical of the man to ascribe any errors in Latinity to typing errors on my part! He took a great interest in my subsequent career and I could always turn to him for guidance on any topic, academic or otherwise. I came to rely more and more on his wordly wisdom. Nothing was too much trouble for him.

Typical of his self-effacing modesty was the title chosen by Mr Whiteley for his article in *Acta Classica* (21 [1978] 99ff.) 'Fossicking through Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*', where the term *fossick* is explained as follows: '(Austr.) v.t. to undermine another's diggings, to work over waste heaps for gold; to search about for any kind of profit; to prospect.'

His latter years were troubled by the death of his wife, his daughter Jill and his granddaughter. He is survived by a son. Those of us who were able to visit him regularly in his hotel room will always remember his quiet dignity in the face of adversity and the stoic manner in which he faced a long period of ill-health.

Mr Whiteley was an Honorary Vice-President of the Classical Association of South Africa. We mourn his passing and reflect that the world of classical studies has suffered an irreparable loss.

K.O. Matier
University of Durban-Westville

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