

obituary

David Clarke, who died in Cambridge on June 28, after a short illness, was a rare, almost unique figure in the academic world: he was a theoretical archaeologist. At the age of only 38 he had already established an international reputation, largely as a result of the massive volume entitled *Analytical Archaeology* (1972) and the volume of papers which he edited as *Models in Archaeology* (1972). Behind both of these lay his substantial research on late neolithic pottery in Britain, in which he had pioneered many revolutionary quantitative techniques.

It was as a result of this initial interest in classification that he became aware that many of the problems of archaeology had already been partly solved in neighbouring subjects. The work of Sokal and Sneath in numerical taxonomy provided an obvious parallel, while the quantitative revolution in geography—exemplified in Haggett's *Locational Analysis in Human Geography*—suggested exciting new possibilities for archaeology.

These developments stimulated him to attempt, in a general investigation of the techniques and procedures of archaeology, to define the unique qualities required of a subject whose raw material is the oblique record of two million years of hominid behaviour. It was his objective to trans-

form it from a body of partially synthesised knowledge and recognised but undefined procedures, into an explicit discipline for the investigation of the pre-literate past. This he did, not by attempting to force archaeology into a positivist hypothetico-deductive strait-jacket, in the manner of the American New Archaeology, but by an investigation of the kinds of model which had been, or could, potentially, be used in archaeology. These ranged from the abstract treatment of systems analysis to the carefully calibrated ethnographic comparisons with which he illuminated the patterns of prehistoric material culture. In all these his writing was marked by brilliant insights and the application of a fertile imagination. It was his aim to make archaeology a human science, but with unique opportunities for the study of particular scales and dimensions of behaviour, notably of long-term processes of change.

As he himself anticipated, his writing evoked a wide range of responses. Especially in America and Scandinavia it was eagerly taken up and soon became required reading for undergraduates. At his own university, Cambridge, he became involved in a productive dialogue with other viewpoints and emphases, to the benefit of both. In the rest of Britain, however,

his work was treated with reserve, verging on incomprehension: the enthusiasm of his written style, with its dense noun-clusters interspersed with vivid and striking metaphors and examples from an enormous range of reading, both within archaeology and outside, was the delight of the imaginative and the despair of the pedantic.

But a bare description of the aims of his written work gives only a partial view. It was his intuitive feel for the evidence and the questions which could be asked of it, as well as his infectious enthusiasm, which made him so impressive in discussion and as a teacher. Those who knew only Clarke the polemical author were charmed to discover a most unpretentious person whose interest both in the subject and those who wished to learn about it was most evidently expressed in the circle of students which gathered about him.

He combined an intellectual authority with a readiness to see other points of view and subsume them in his own. Always willing to give his time to those who wanted it, he was a friend and adviser to many beyond his own students. Both at a personal level, and as an intellectual discipline, archaeology is impoverished by his death.

Andrew Sherratt

announcements

Meetings

August 19–28, **Atmospheric Radiation**, Garmisch-Patenkirchen, FRG (The Secretariat, WMO, Geneva, Switzerland).

September 7–10, **Gas Discharges**, Swansea (IEE Conference Department, Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL, UK).

September 25, **Short-Period Weather Forecasting**, London (The Executive Secretary, Royal Meteorological Society, James Glaisher House, Grenville Place, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 1BX, UK).

September 26–29, **Annual Fall Meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society**, Chicago (AOCS, 508 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820).

October 3–7, **Tumour Viruses**, Grindel-

wald, Switzerland (Xth European Tumour Virus Group Meeting, Secretariat, Department of Molecular Biology, Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research, Bugnon 21, 1011 Lausanne, Switzerland).

October 12–15, **Electrical Phenomena at Membrane Level**, Saclay, France (Dr C. Troyanowsky, General Secretary, Société de Chimie physique (29th International Meeting), 10, rue Vauquelin, 75231 Paris, Cedex 05, France).

October 14–16, **RRIM Planters' Conference** (Chairman, Organising Committee, RRIM Planters' Conference 1976, Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia, PO Box 150, Kuala Lumpur 01-02, Malaysia).

October 17–22, **Water Pollution Research**, Sydney, Australia (Dr S. H. Jenkins, International Association on Water Pollution Research, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW, UK).

October 25–29, **Medical Radionuclide Imaging**, Los Angeles (L. J. Johansson, Applications Section, International Atomic Energy Agency, PO Box 590, A-1011 Vienna, Austria).

October 26–28, **Experimental Use of Algal Cultures in Limnology**, Sandefjord, Norway (Knut Pedersen, Norwegian Institute for Water Research, PO Box 333, Blindern, N- Oslo 3, Norway).

November 8–9, **Genetic Mechanisms of Sexual Development**, Albany, New York, (H. Lawrence Vallet, M.D., Symposium, Room 572, Empire State Plaza Tower Building, Albany, New York 12237).

December 5–7, **Freight Pipelines**, Washington, D.C. (Prof. I. Zandi, Room 113A Towne Building/D3, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 19174).