

***An Intellectual Adventurer in Archaeology: Reflections on the work of Charles Thomas***  
edited by **Andy M. Jones** and **Henrietta Quinnell**. Archaeopress. 2018. 285 pages.  
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Charles Thomas (1928-2016) is best known, perhaps, for his work in Cornwall but his career stretched much more widely than that. He studied law at Oxford but was already more interested in archaeology following army service in Egypt, and started excavating on his family's land at Gwithian in the vacations. This continued while he took a diploma in archaeology at London and then while working as a tutor for the Workers Educational Association. In the 1960s he obtained a university post at Edinburgh where his interests shifted from prehistory to the centuries following the end of the Roman empire and in particular the spread of Christianity in western Britain and Ireland. He was then invited to set up the department of archaeology at Leicester University in 1967. He returned to Cornwall in 1971 as head of the Institute of Cornish Studies and worked in Scilly and at Tintagel as well as with other organisations promoting the creation of a national archaeology service. He retired in 1991 but continued research in the early Christian period before turning once more to Gwithian.

This book, written by former colleagues and friends from across the country, covers Thomas's long career and very wide range of interests, but it will be the chapter on his excavations on Lundy that will be of most interest to readers of this Journal. Written by Henrietta Quinnell who worked with him on the island, it tells how a chance discovery of a possible sherd of post-Roman pottery led Keith Gardner, an amateur archaeologist working on the island, to contact Charles, eventually leading to the excavations at Beacon Hill cemetery in 1969 under the auspices of the LFS. Initial reports were published in *Current Archaeology* and the *LFS Annual Report* but, in a similar way to much archaeological work at the time, no detailed, definitive publication was produced. Charles continued his membership of the LFS and interest in the island, contributing a chapter on Lundy's pre-Norse name to the volume, *Island Studies*, published to celebrate the Society's fiftieth anniversary. He also worked the evidence from Lundy into an interpretation of the history of Brychan, a king with Irish family origins who ruled a kingdom in South Wales named after him which became Breconshire. Many early Cornish 'saints' are said to have been children of Brychan, and Charles suggested that the king abdicated to pursue a religious life on Lundy where he was buried.

Charles Thomas was a man of hugely ranging interests, from military history to Methodism as well as archaeology, as can be seen from the twenty-page list of his publications at the end of this volume. This book, produced with a great deal of affection, will be of interest to all who met him or whose work intersected with his.

*Chris Webster*

