

## **Albinia de la Mare**

Janet Nelson Fri 8 Feb 2002 10.41 GMT

The librarian and palaeographer Albinia "Tilly" de la Mare, who has died aged 69, was a specialist in 15th century Florence.

Born into a book-loving family, and the granddaughter of the poet Walter de la Mare, she was educated at Queen's College, Harley Street; Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she read history; and the Warburg Institute in London. Her PhD was on the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci.

Her professional career, too, was divided between Oxford, at the Bodleian library, and London, at King's College in the Strand. As assistant librarian of the Bodleian from 1964 to 1988, she conserved and unlocked its treasures to researchers from all over the world. Her impeccably produced manuscript catalogues and exhibition guides - still more her own publications on her beloved 15th-century Florentine humanists - revealed how scribes, scholars and patrons co-operated to make the Renaissance. Here, detail is crucial: Tilly had the palaeographer's eye to spot and explore it, and the historian's empathetic range to show why it mattered.

In 1989, she was appointed professor of palaeography at King's College London, and embarked on a new career. She proved an inspirational teacher, dispensing a nicely-calibrated mix of wisdom, training skills in research, and delightful humour. Her lectures were unforgettable, opening windows on the humanists' world for fellow scholars and postgraduate students.

Tilly was as openhearted with her time as she was lavish with her expertise. Not for her the so-called academic hour of a mere 50 minutes. She was elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1987, and awarded an OBE in 1993.

She had been ill for a long time, but her death, though not unexpected, seems cruelly untimely because, since retirement in 1997, there were new research possibilities, and she had much that she still wanted to write.

She was a stalwart colleague who embodied key virtues of a modern school of humanities, not least a commitment to interdisciplinarity, and a willingness to work tirelessly at collaborative projects, national and international. It is good to know that she has left major work in press.

· Albinia Catherine de la Mare, librarian and palaeographer, born June 2 1932; died December 19 2001.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/feb/08/guardianobituaries.humanities>

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### OBITUARIES

JAMES F. H. CHECKLEY, F.S.A., P.R.I.B.A., F.R.N.S.

The sudden but peaceful death of our member, James Checkley, on 3rd August, 1964, at the age of sixty-six, has taken from Kent a numismatist of outstanding distinction. For over thirty years he was a member of the Kent Numismatic Society and for long held office as Honorary Treasurer. His influence on the study of coins in the county has been very fruitful, for the example of his high standard of collecting and scholarship has caused many youngsters to enter this field of learning with a proper, critical background. He had but recently retired from his position as a senior architect in the Buildings Department of the Kent County Council. Of late years he had specialized in school buildings but visitors to Whitby will recall with pleasure the delightful Pannett Art Gallery there which was a product of Ms earlier career. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1958 for his services to architectural studies and numismatics.

L.R.A.G.

<https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.079%20-%201964/079-18.pdf>