

## Roger Warner (1913 - 2008)

It is with great sadness that the death of Roger Warner is announced. The society was fortunate to have been able to publish his memoirs in *Regional Furniture* in 2003. This detailed account, written from scrupulous notes and records, provides an insight into his work and family life, and describes an age of antique dealing now long gone. With this wonderful record available it is not necessary to set out his biography and achievements here, but it might be of interest to record some personal memories of him while the journal was being prepared for publication.

I first heard of Roger through Gabriel Olive, who spoke of him with deep fondness and respect. Gabriel had worked with him as a young man and had clearly learnt a great deal; his love of enquiry into an object's history and social significance came from Roger's influence. It was Gabriel who proposed that the society should publish the memoirs, and I was able to act as assistant to our editor David Jones, visiting Roger and his wife Ruth on several occasions while we put the journal together.

I arrived one sunny day in Burford with what seemed like scant directions: 'Everyone knows him in Burford!' Gabriel had told me. A discreet sign by the door announced the house they had moved to after closing the famous shop in the High Street, and I was welcomed with genteel hospitality by Roger and Ruth. It was a narrow and rambling house, every room filled with curious, interesting and often unique objects and furniture. Roger had a wonderful eye for quality, whether in an early and important tapestry or a piece of folk art. One of his many interests was unusual vernacular chairs, of which he had many fine examples.

His garden was also a great joy to him, beautifully set out with a lawn and flower beds near the house and a fruit cage and large greenhouse beyond. The day I arrived, a large marquee still stood on the lawn following a family gathering. Roger and Ruth were immensely proud of their son and two daughters.

That was the first of several visits while we went through album after album of photographs, many taken by his son Michael, a professional photographer. Sometimes there would be a point that David Jones wanted to clarify, and it was always hard to limit Roger to the point in hand; he had so many fascinating tales to tell. On one occasion I collected Gabriel and took him to see Roger. Neither was very mobile so they hadn't seen each other for some time. That afternoon I sat in a straw chair (shown on page 43 of the memoirs) and listened while they reminisced. At times they both became quite emotional and I will always remember it as a most wonderful afternoon.

Michael Warner has expressed the family's thanks to the RFS for enriching Roger's final years by publishing his memoirs. Ruth died in January 2007.

*Alison Lee*



*The Roger Warner Collection will be sold at Christie's South Kensington on 20 and 21 January 2009.*