

- . Tono-Bungay. Ed. with an introduction and notes by Bryan Cheyette New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 1 + 427 pp. "World's Classics" series.
- . The War of the Worlds. Ed. by David Y. Hughes with an introduction by Brian W. Aldiss. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. xlvii. + 188 pp. "World's Classics" series.

#### OBITUARY

We regret to announce that George Hay, who was Chairman of the Society from 1975-1978, died on 3 October following an operation.

George became Chairman at a very difficult time, when the Society was seeking to re-establish itself after a long period of quiescence. He inspired all who knew him with his energy and enthusiasm, and his total commitment to the Society and the works of H.G. Wells. His zest and drive were infectious, and he possessed the ability to enthuse the committee to give of their best. Despite his encyclopaedic knowledge of science fiction and his undoubted skills as a Chairman, he remained a modest man and was always courteous and kind.

In addition to his work for the Society, George was instrumental in persuading a leading paperback publisher to re-issue a number of Wells' titles which had been long out of print including *Star Begotten*, *Men like Gods*, *The Food of the Gods* and *A Story of Days to Come*. He edited a number of anthologies for the Penguin Science Fiction series including the excellent *Pulsar* anthologies containing pieces by Wells, Isaac Asimov and others.

As Chairman, George steered the Society through some difficult waters, and when he handed over the Chairmanship to Bob Watkins in 1978, he left it in much better shape than he had found it. We are indebted to George for his sterling contribution to our work, and we will remember him with affection.

John Hammond

#### Review Articles

##### H.G. WELLS AND REBECCA WEST

Carl Rollyson, *Rebecca West A Saga of the Century*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995

442 pp., index, notes. £20.00 ISBN 0 340 59050 5

The sub-title of this new biography of Rebecca West is well-chosen. Carl Rollyson *does* present us with a saga of the century because his avowed aim is to cover all of West's long life and all aspects of her work in as much detail as possible – most studies, he claims, have tended to "chop her up" (Preface) by concentrating on one or other aspect of her life and work at the expense of the others. He points out that Victoria Glendinning's biography, which appeared in 1987, four years after its subject's death, focused on her early life – in expectation of a massive authorised biography - and was hampered by not having access to the Yale archive of West's papers, which was restricted until Anthony West's death in December 1987.

This book is of considerable interest to Wellsians because it gives us an insight into the ways in which Rebecca West's ten year relationship with H.G. Wells continued to be important to her through her entire life. Up until now we have had Anthony West's account of his parents in *H.G. Wells: Aspects of a Life*, which – although it was projected in 1949 - was not published until after his mother's death, and is, in any case, a book which tells us far more about the writer than it does about his subjects, and Gordon Ray's 1974 *H.G. Wells and Rebecca West*, written with Rebecca West's help, which, it now seems clear, was circumscribed if not distorted by her perspective on events. John Hammond's 1991 study of the relationship presents a far more balanced and sympathetic view, but the emphasis tends to be on Wells rather than Rebecca, and the scope of the book does not allow for a detailed portrayal of their subsequent lives.

Rollyson's biography, however, gives us both an in-depth view of the ten year partnership Rebecca West and H.G. Wells and an account of how their lives interconnected after their separation, partly because of their concern about Anthony, and the quarrels this entailed. Then, in the 1970s, nearly thirty years after Wells's death, Gordon Ray's and the Mackenzies' biographies aroused conflicting feelings in West – she resented the exposure of her private life, but at the same time was anxious that her