Raymonde Hainton, 1922-2012

RAYMONDE ('RAY') HAINTON, who died in February aged ninety, was the first biographer of Derwent Coleridge, the second surviving son of S T Coleridge. '*The Unknown Coleridge*' was published by Janus in 1996 under the joint names of Ray and her husband, Godfrey, but in fact, with the exception of the introductory chapter, the entire work was written by Ray herself on the basis of Godfrey's meticulous research.

Although Ray had read History at Bedford College during its wartime evacuation to Cambridge, she later trained as a medical social worker and it was only Godfrey's sudden death in 1976 that spurred her into renewing her interest in history.

Ray celebrating her 90th birthday

She found that working from Godfrey's notes was immensely therapeutic and she became steeped in her subject, visiting all the locations central to Derwent's life in order to expand on her husband's documentary evidence. Strangely, much of the geography of Derwent's life seemed to mirror her own: the Lake District, where she taught in the evacuated Roedean School; the University of Cambridge, where she had met her husband; Plymouth, where Godfrey was teaching when he died, and Helston in Cornwall. Finally, they lived in Hanwell, in reach of St Mark's and St John's College in Chelsea, where Godfrey was Head of History in the 1960's.

Ray became a member of The Friends of Coleridge while working on the book and was a regular attender at the Kilve Study weekends until 2010. She was a vivid and doughty presence. I remember her arriving late one year, having spent the afternoon demonstrating on the streets of Exeter and she was, I believe, a committed Quaker. Copies of Unknown Coleridge's were always taken out of her battered holdall or backpack on arrival and laid out for sale. The pile slowly but steadily diminished over the years until there were only a few left. The book retains its significance, for not only is it the first and, thus far, the only full length biography of its subject, but it also contains a great deal of Coleridge-related information, which is exceedingly difficult to find elsewhere. Ray's daughter, Joanna Bazley, has kindly donated the six remaining copies to The Friends and they will be set out for sale, as always, at this year's Study Weekend. They will remind us of Ray and of her seemingly indomitable spirit.

Justin Shepherd