

In Memoriam

CAREW ARTHUR MEREDITH
 (1904-1976)

DAVID MEREDITH

Carew Arthur Meredith was born on July 28, 1904. His father, Arthur Carew Meredith, was a Dublin barrister and King's Counsel, whose opinion, years later, was sought by De Valera on legal matters concerning the Irish Free State. His mother, Jessica, née Twemlow, was one of the first women in Ireland to obtain a degree—she and eight others were dubbed “the nine muses.” With two sisters, Meredith grew up in Dublin, attending Irish schools until he won a scholarship to Winchester in England. From Winchester he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied mathematics. He obtained First Class Honours in Part I of the Tripos in 1923, First Class Honours with Distinction in Part II in 1924, and took his B.A. in 1925. An interest in mathematical logic met with small encouragement from Littlewood, who remarked “I don't see what you can get out of it,” but Meredith gained some knowledge of the field in general and of the work of the Polish logicians in particular.

After graduating, Meredith married Sybil Clark and settled down to what was to be for many years his occupation: that of university coach or “grinder.” He worked assiduously on his own—often going to bed at nine and rising at three, to have the freshest hours of the day for his own use—but it is not clear what he was working at during this period: no papers were published and no notes survive.

Until 1939, the Merediths lived in England but Carew Meredith was a convinced pacifist, and with the coming of the war he and his wife removed themselves to Ireland—the English authorities declining an offer to have the Meredith views directly explained to them. In Ireland Meredith continued to coach, shedding a fairly heavy load only slowly, after he was appointed lecturer in mathematics at Trinity College in 1943. This post he retained until he retired in 1964. After retirement, the Merediths spent a few years in Cornwall, England, but finally returned to Ireland, where Carew Meredith died on March 31, 1976.

The climactic event to which innocents in logic, and to the rambunctious pre-medical students who for many years brought Meredith the