

## OBITUARIES

### KENNETH GRAVETT: AN APPRECIATION

At the Society's Annual General Meeting on 21 November 1999 I reported that, for several months, Ken Gravett had been seriously ill in an intensive-care ward at Kingston Hospital but that I had heard that within the past few days he had started to show some signs of improvement. I was therefore shocked on returning home to find a message saying that he had had a relapse and died on the previous day.

Ken had been allowed, exceptionally, to join the Society as a schoolboy in 1944 and became an Honorary Vice-President in 1983. I first met him in 1959 when I joined the staff of Battersea College of Technology. I was in the Physics Department and Ken in Electrical Engineering, which he had joined as a lecturer in telecommunications in 1957. We often met in the Common Room and, especially, walking to and fro between the College and Battersea Park railway station. I soon discovered that Ken was a tremendous authority on historic buildings, particularly timber-framed buildings in the south-east of England, and that he took vast numbers of photographs which he had no time to print. At the end of 1962 Ken left Battersea to take up appointments at Brighton Polytechnic and Borough Polytechnic and later became an Inspector with the Inner London Education Authority.

However, I continued to meet Ken occasionally at archaeology and local history functions and, after Battersea College became the University of Surrey and moved to Guildford, I started to attend symposia organized by the Surrey Local History Council. This was established in 1965 and Ken was co-opted on to its Executive Committee in 1967, became Chairman in 1972, and fulfilled this role until his death. He was of course, in practice, far more than the Chairman. He organized symposia, spoke on a wide range of topics at these meetings, typeset and marketed the Council's annual journal *Surrey History*, produced a quarterly newsletter and supported local history societies by purchasing all of their publications and willingly lecturing to their members. I appreciated all these contributions even more after I joined the Executive Committee and helped to arrange the annual symposium at the University of Surrey and, especially, when my wife Glenys became its Honorary Secretary.

Ken was also very much involved with other organizations particularly the Society of Antiquaries, of which he became a Fellow in 1967, and the Kent Archaeological Society, of which he was President for ten years. Clearly Ken devoted an enormous amount of time to supporting many bodies as well as carrying out research on historic buildings. Unfortunately this left little time for publishing his own work and we must all hope that his notes, photographs and other material have been adequately indexed and catalogued so that future generations will be able to benefit fully from his research. This is something of which we must all be conscious! However, it was encouraging that Ken was a co-author of a paper in volume 86 of the *Collections*, the volume which was published shortly before he died.

One does of course have many recollections of interactions with Ken, many associated with his appreciation of good food and the meals we shared before committee meetings. His understanding of buildings was impressive, as when, on a visit he led to Albury in the early 1970s, his hand disappeared into a mortice in a window frame of a timber-framed house which enabled him to interpret and date that part of the building. Later he helped Glenys to understand the history of a house used by framework knitters in Godalming but as he could get no more than his head into the loft, Glenys and I had to do all the crawling around shining our torches at features for Ken to comment upon. In November 1998 he attended the conference on Alexander Raby, Ironmaster, held at Cobham, and when we visited Downside Mill agreed to come back to

help us to date the workers' cottages on the site. Regrettably he was unable to do this before he died and perhaps we shall now never learn the answer.

In conclusion Ken Gravett was an enthusiastic authority on vernacular buildings and a wide range of topics in local history. He was also a very friendly person always ready to help and encourage. The Society will greatly miss his many contributions.

ALAN CROCKER

#### LIONEL GUILLEM, 1920–1997

Lionel Guillem was born at Streatham on 24 March 1920. He and I were at the same primary school, Cheltonia College, at Streatham and many years later met up again when we lived a few doors apart in Fetcham, Surrey.

He qualified as a chartered accountant in 1948. In his spare time he began to study the stock market and to dabble in a small way. His judgement was particularly astute and his hobby turned into a way of life. He developed an uncanny knack of picking winners.

When the Society had a vacancy for a treasurer, I approached Lionel who willingly agreed to be appointed to the Board of the Society and to be its treasurer, which office he filled from 1980 to 1986. His term of office was particularly valuable as he was able to invest wisely and manage the substantial funds bequeathed to the Society by the late I D Margary. Under his skilful stewardship the financial future of the Society was assured, so marking the start of a significant new stage in its progress.

Lionel Guillem was elected a Vice-President of the Society in 1986 and was chairman of the Finance Committee from 1989 until his death on 16 December 1997. The Society owes much to this dedicated member and his kindly and unassuming presence is greatly missed.

STEPHEN FORTESCUE