



Obituaries.

PROFESSOR J. C. BRIDGE, M.A., MUS. DOC., F.S.A.

It is given to few men or women to enjoy the honour of exerting a stimulating influence upon a large community for the better part of half-a-century. Dr. Joseph Cox Bridge, M.A., Mus. Doc., F.S.A., who died on the 29th March, 1929, was the *fons et origo* of all musical endeavour in Chester, with a benevolent unchallenged leadership also over a larger area, from about 1876 to 1925. Born in 1853 at Rochester, educated at the Cathedral Choir School of that city, elected to an organ scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford, he was clearly destined for a musical career. He was appointed to Assistant Cathedral-Organistships first at Rochester, then under his brother at Manchester, and in 1876 at Chester under Mr. Gunton, whom he succeeded in 1877. It is naturally as a musician that he was best known and will be most truly remembered, and a short notice such as this of one whose musical life was so full and varied must of necessity be painfully inadequate. Cathedral Organist and Master of the Choristers 1877 to 1925, Conductor of the Chester Triennial Musical Festival 1879 to 1900 (resuscitated by him), Music Master of the Chester Historical Pageant 1910, Founder and Organiser of the Chester Amateur Orchestral Society and later of the Chester Musical Society, Professor of Music at the University of Durham (1908-1929), Examiner in Music to the Universities of Oxford, Durham and London, Conductor of the Bradford Festival Choral Society, Chairman of the Board and Director of Studies at the Trinity College of Music (in succession to his distinguished brother Sir Frederick Bridge)—such a list of honourable and responsible positions in the world of music

betokens gifts of a commanding order combined with an exceptional intensity of conviction and enthusiasm. Concurrently with these activities, "the Doctor" poured out his treasures to a delighted public through his innumerable organ recitals and his generous support of all efforts to enlarge the scope of musical education and culture. Of the rich contribution from his own pen to musical literature, memory will recall in particular *The Chester Symphony*, *Daniel, Rudel, Resurgam* and the *Requiem in honour of the dead in South Africa* (1900).

It is therefore not strange that the public of Chester and of a large country-side including Cheshire and North Wales, presented to him and to Mrs. Bridge after twenty-five years of unselfish service, and again in 1925 on the occasion of his retirement from the Cathedral Organistship, handsome gifts affectionately offered and affectionately received.

Incidental to this absorbing career was Dr. Bridge's interest in Historical and Archæological research. His published writings and lectures give evidence of much patient work and skilled investigation. The Chester Mystery Plays afforded him a wide range and a deeply congenial subject. It is known that he amassed a very extensive and probably very valuable collection of books, papers and pamphlets on the mediæval Plays of which the Chester Mystery Plays were a striking example. His most important publication was *Cheshire Proverbs and Sayings*, which takes its place as a standard work on the subject, and for the compilation of which he was well-fitted by temperament and judgment. Other contributions were *Ludlow and the Masque of Comus*, *Two Cheshire Soldiers of Fortune* (Sir Hugh Calveley and Sir Robert Knollys), *Chester Madrigalists*, and *Pepys' Diary*.

Our Society paid him its greatest honour by electing him to the Chair of the Council and presented him in February, 1925, with a silver loving-cup to mark their high and grateful appreciation of the valuable services which he had rendered through many busy years. The Council gladly accepted from him on that occasion a bust of himself which stands in

the Society's Library as a memorial of one who was a faithful, loyal and unselfish member and who left upon the Society permanent marks of his sound practical wisdom, and varied antiquarian knowledge.

This notice must not close without some reference to the strong and irradiating influence of "the Doctor." His opinion was always definite and sometimes indeed dogmatic, but it was so evident that he spoke out of wide knowledge that those who knew him were content to be guided by him. A virile personality, impatient of artificial restraint, generous in personal contribution of labour and learning, far-seeing and wise by natural endowment and accumulated experience, saved from the intolerances of the mere specialist by the grace of happy humour and by touching the world at many points, Dr. Bridge was a man whose memory remains fresh and inspiring. Even the accents of his voice come back delightfully to the ear and recall the charm of days that are no more.

R. A. T.

MR. W. E. BROWN.

On April 8, 1929, our Society lost by death, at the age of 73, one of its oldest and most valued members, in the person of Mr. William Elisha Brown, of St. Oswald's Mount, Parkgate Road, Chester.

Mr. Brown, who was a son of the late Mr. William Brown, of Ashgrove, Chester, was educated at the King's School, and practised as a Surveyor and Estate Agent in this city for upwards of forty years. Throughout a long and busy life he found relaxation in antiquarian interests and pursuits, and was particularly well versed in the history of his native city. Joining the Society in 1886, he was elected to the Council in 1899, and in 1919 succeeded the late Mr. Francis Skipwith, J.P., as Hon. Treasurer, an office from which he only retired two months before his death. In this capacity he rendered invaluable service, and it is largely due to the manner in which he husbanded our financial resources that

the Society continued to exist during the difficult years immediately following the war. He was a contributor to the *Journal*, faithful in his attendances at all our meetings, and a foremost promoter of visits to places and objects of antiquarian interest. Ever ready to encourage the study of local history and topography, his collections and personal knowledge were freely at the disposal of his fellow-members. It is difficult to estimate the indebtedness of the Society to his unwavering fidelity to its interests, and to his enthusiasm in all matters antiquarian.

P. H. L.

MR. HARRY BESWICK, F.R.I.B.A.

The Society also deplores the loss of Mr. Harry Beswick, F.R.I.B.A., of Queen's Park, Chester, who died on July 8, 1929, aged 73 years.

Mr. Beswick, who was a native of Chester, was educated at the King's School, where he was awarded the Westminster Gold Medal. Articled to the late Mr. T. M. Lockwood, architect, he was appointed in 1895 architect to the Cheshire County Council, and during his thirty years' service was responsible for many fine buildings that remain a lasting memorial to his talent. He became a member of the Society as far back as 1886, and contributed several interesting sketches in illustration of lectures, of which a number appeared in Old Series, vol. iii of our *Journal*. On the re-organisation of the Society in 1887, he was appointed Assistant Honorary Secretary, in which capacity he continued to serve until 1890. His account of the important discovery of the *Remains of a Roman Building found in Northgate Street*, in 1897, now known to have been part of the *Prætorium*, was published in New Series, vol. vi.

P. H. L.

