

## OBITUARY.

### Arthur Bonner, F.S.A., 1861-1939.

Mr. Bonner's death on 11th July robbed the Society of one of its most active and honoured members, and his friends of a charming personality. He joined the Society in 1906, served as Honorary Treasurer from 1920 to 1935, and was elected a Vice-President in 1936.

Mr. Bonner was well known in the printing trade and established the business of Bonner & Co., Ltd., periodical printers; but he had many interests outside business, foremost among them in later life being archæology, to which, as an ardent walker and mountaineer, he was attracted by the opportunities it gave him of combining physical and mental recreation. He specialized in the study of place-names and dene holes. The volume on Surrey Place-Names published by the English Place-Names Society was made possible by and largely based on the material collected by him through years of patient research. He was an inveterate foe of facile theorizing and all speculation that was not grounded on thorough investigation. His method is well illustrated by his study of the origin and significance of the name Coldharbour, in the course of which he examined all the 6 inch O.S. maps of England and collected over 340 examples of the name, and in addition consulted leading philologists both at home and abroad. His contributions to our *Collections*, though few in number, are marked by scholarship and research and throw fresh light on the subjects treated. He was also in request as a leader and speaker at the Society's excursions, a rôle for which he was well equipped by reason of his wide knowledge of the County and its antiquities, a knowledge, it may be added, which he gladly imparted to any who sought his help.

His home life was singularly happy and his interests were fully shared by his wife, who was the younger daughter of Charles Bradlaugh. Mrs. Bonner's death in 1935, shortly after the celebration of their golden wedding, was for him an irreparable loss.

W. H.

### Lord Farrer of Abinger, 1859–1940.

The passing of Lord Farrer, though his many activities have been the subject of suitable comment in more than one connexion elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> must not be allowed to go without some special mention in these *Collections*: for though his personal contribution to our publications never, I think, went beyond the matter for an occasional note, he played in other ways a very great part in the active work of the Society and in the shaping of its policy; and that for an exceptionally long period<sup>2</sup> and without cessation up to the time of his final illness.

Lord Farrer, as he was fond of telling us (especially if he could make it the cover for shrewd comment on some practical aspect of our affairs), was a Yorkshireman; and, Family History being one of the lines along which his natural bent for study developed readily, he did not forget it. But residence and other circumstances made him a Surrey man too, and emphatically he did not forget that either. The position of our County, and the consequent urbanization of large parts of it, the breaking up of big Surrey Estates and the migration and disappearance of Surrey Families, have made it increasingly difficult in recent years to secure that special kind of support, from Members qualified either by long family connexion with the County or by close association with its modern administration to sponsor movements for the conservation of its Antiquities and the spread of knowledge of its History, which facilitates the Archæologist's work elsewhere. It was precisely this help which Lord Farrer gave so generously during his long connexion with us. Public Service was for him a natural part of life, and History one of its great interests. Convince him (he required to be convinced) that a particular activity, publication or piece of research was practical and useful public work in the interests of Surrey and Surrey History, and he would spare no personal pains—he was not content with the mere addition of his name to a list of supporters—to ensure that it should be successfully launched and effectively carried on.

It was thus that he associated himself with that Archæological activity in our County in which he was afterwards most prominent; though he took a part in all and was particularly interested in establishing and maintaining a connexion between the Archæologists and the Local Authorities, especially the County Council.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A sympathetic obituary notice appeared in *The Times* of April 13, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> He joined the Society in 1901 and became a Vice-President in 1902.

<sup>3</sup> He was a member of the Records and Ancient Monuments Committee of the Surrey County Council from its inception in 1911, and its Chairman from 1913 till his death.

This was the foundation in 1913 of a separate organization to take over from the Archæological Society, and prosecute on a larger scale, the task of publishing Surrey Records. He allowed himself to be persuaded to sign the letter which proposed this, presided at the Meeting at Burlington House which brought the new Society into existence, and remained, until he died, its President; a President who, even when he was most shaken by illness, did not think a Council Meeting in London too unimportant for his personal attendance.

Lord Farrer's conviction that for our purposes the County of Surrey must be the old administrative County, before so much of it was carved away by modern legislation, was particularly valuable to those who had to shape the policy of both Societies in regard to publication. His personal researches were in the direction rather of the Parish and the Family. So early as 1901 (when such interests were not common) he had himself investigated and listed the contents of the Parish Chest at Abinger and this list was printed in the *Third Report* (1919) of the Royal Commission on Public Records: in connexion with his own family history he published in 1923 *Some Farrer Memorials* and in 1936 a good Calendar and Index of the 1700 *Farrer*<sup>1</sup> *Wills and Administrations* between 1309 and 1852 which he had so far discovered. At the Council of the Record Society his own predilections led him naturally to dwell on the importance of *Parish Registers* and of the later *Feet of Fines*, as yet uncovered by any Surrey volume: but recognizing and approving the policy of restricting its energies in the main to the publication of documents of general County interest he only allowed his desire for Parish publications to take the generous form of subsidizing them, which he did on two occasions. The *Feet of Fines* volume was a difficult problem for other reasons, but it is a source of great satisfaction that before his death he saw the problem solved and the volume on its way.

By most Members Lord Farrer will be remembered best as a genial presence at Annual Meetings, a Chairman who had the gift of creating the feeling of a family party on an occasion devoted primarily to rather dull routine: his personal allusions (not excluding friendly objurgation of carefully chosen subjects) combining with quotations which were always apt and always unexpected to cheer the most arid business. Many also will recollect with pleasure the happy deploying of the same qualities at the hospitable lunch to Members of Council which often preceded these Meetings: and his letters were like his speeches—he would criticize an antiquarian

<sup>1</sup> He was liberal in his admission of variants on the name.

project with a Greek hexameter or a quotation from Goethe and enliven his remarks about a Committee with an interpolated disquisition on his favourite Jonathan Oldbuck. Personality is a thing for which there is no substitute : and the loss of Lord Farrer's will be felt by all who worked with him.

H. J.