



## OBITUARY

JAMES COCKBURN BATLEY  
28th April, 1915 – 6th July, 1982

With the death of James Batley the Society has lost a great enthusiast in all aspects of local history, especially of the Caterham area. He joined the Society in 1952, was local secretary for Caterham, Chelsham and sometimes Coulsdon and Purley between 1961 and 1969, and served on Council 1965–9 and 1975–9. In 1980 he was elected an Honorary Vice-President of the Society.

He graduated with a law degree from Worcester College, Oxford in 1934; and as a conscientious objector he spent the war doing agricultural work. From there he drifted into teaching in 1948, firstly French, then history and finally English. On retiring in 1970 he continued giving evening lectures. James was one of the first members of the Bourne Society soon after it was founded in 1956. His boundless enthusiasm launched numerous ventures in the study of local history. It is in no small part through his efforts that the Bourne Society can claim to be the largest society of its type in Britain. In 1961 he inaugurated the *Bourne Society Local History Records (LHR)* and edited it until 1971 as well as contributing many articles on the local history of the area. From 1971–76 he was chairman of the Bourne Society.

It was from a suggestion of James that the local district council of Tandridge got its name, see *LHR* 17 22–25 (1978). He helped found the East Surrey Museum at Caterham in 1980 and earlier in 1960 founded the Surrey Museum loan service. He was a member of the Standing Conference for Local History and served on its publication sub-committee. He drew on his experience as an editor to write a series of articles on publishing in the *Local Historian (LH)* 12 360–364; 424–429 (1977); 13 163–167, 227–232 (1978).

His interest in pictures as a source for the local historian (see *LH* 10 355–360 (1973)) was particularly concentrated on the work of John and Edward Hassell. He traced a vast number of pictures of Surrey by these two artists, who were active during the early part of the 19th century,

and he recorded most of them on two reels of microfilm in conjunction with the Surrey Archaeological Society. A catalogue of these appears elsewhere in these *Collections*. He presented his collection of books by John Hassell to the Surrey Local Studies Library, Guildford and his collection of colour slides to the Bourne Society. He encouraged Miss Christie to donate to the Society many pictures of Surrey by her uncle Ernest Christie, and his sketch books to Caterham Library: see *LHR* 15 3-6 (1976), *SAS Bulletin* 111, October 1974; 128, July 1976.

Apart from local history as recreation, his passion for travel and interest in writing poetry might be noted. His collection of Russian icons was presented to the British Museum. Local historians in Surrey will greatly miss the infectious enthusiasm of James Batley.

GPM