

OBITUARY— MISS MARJORIE BLANCHE HONEYBOURNE

With the death of Miss Marjorie Honeybourne, M.A., F.S.A., on 13 November, 1974, the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society lost a much-valued, dedicated and hard-working member, and local historians throughout the London area will be the poorer for her passing.

Coming after she had been in hospital only a few days, her death was wholly unexpected to most of her friends and colleagues, who were even unaware of her illness. Many of us heard the sad news for the first time in our President's short and moving tribute made at the opening of the Society's Local History Conference at Guildhall on 16 November, a conference which she herself had helped to organise and the ninth in a series of highly successful annual gatherings in which, as chairman of the Local History Committee, she had played a leading part for nearly ten years.

Miss Honeybourne was born in 1899 in Highgate, where she lived until, on the death of her parents, she moved to Barnet in the 1930s. She was educated at the North London Collegiate School from 1914 to 1917. In the latter year she was awarded the Clothworkers' Prize for Design and, while still at school, enlisted in the Women's Land Army. A keen hockey player, she played for her school First XI and later for her college and for the County of Middlesex. In 1921 she graduated from Bedford College, London, with an honours degree in history and an M.A. degree in 1930. Her great enthusiasm for London history may stem from her college days, for one of her tutors was Miss E. Jeffries Davis, of whose writings she later compiled a bibliography. She trained as a teacher at the London Day Training College and subsequently taught history, first at St. Mary's School, Wantage, and later at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for Girls, Barnet, the Bloomsbury Technical School, Queen's Square, London, and latterly at Southaw School, East Barnet, from which she retired in December 1963.

Miss Honeybourne joined the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society in 1948 and served on the Council almost continuously from 1949 until her death. It is interesting to record that in 1949 she herself made history as one of the first two women to become Council members. Miss Honeybourne was active on Council Committees, including the Editorial Advisory Committee from 1969, and in 1970 gave the address at the Stow Memorial Service, the text of her address being printed in the *London Topographical Record* (vol. XXIII). She represented our Society on a number of bodies, including the City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Standing Conference for Local History. Many, however, will consider that her outstanding contribution to the work of our Society was as chairman of the Local History Committee, an office to which she was elected at the Committee's first meeting in April 1965 and to which she gave unsparingly of her time and energy. This Committee was set up to carry on the aims and work of the Middlesex Local History Council (with which Miss Honeybourne had already closely identified herself), when it was amalgamated with the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society in 1965 on Middlesex ceasing to be a local government authority. A staunch supporter of the Middlesex Local History Council, Miss Honeybourne was one of the many who felt deeply that the identity of the ancient historic county should not be lost. She was a strong advocate for the retention of "Middlesex" in our Society's name and, as chairman of the Local History Committee, was concerned that its origin should be recognised and that it should retain some measure of the

autonomy and independence of action of its predecessor. During her chairmanship the Committee's sphere of activity gradually enlarged, drawing support also from societies south of the Thames, and the Local History Conferences, attended by ever-increasing numbers, became important annual events in the calendars of affiliated societies from all parts of Greater London. During her régime a number of projects begun by the former Middlesex Local History Council were brought to a conclusion, such as the Middlesex County Bibliography, or given fresh impetus, as with the Portrait Survey, and it was she who initiated and largely saw through the press the first publication sponsored by the Committee, John Rocque's *Topographical Map of Middlesex*, 1754.

Outside our own Society, Miss Honeybourne's interests were many and far-reaching. Hers was never a passive rôle and many societies owe much to her enthusiasm and activity. She was chairman of her local society, the Barnet and District Local History Society, which she joined in 1934, becoming a committee member in 1947 and a Vice-President in 1961. She also served on the Council of the Hammersmith Local History Group and was an active member of the Hertfordshire Local History Council. A member of the London Topographical Society since 1931, she became its honorary treasurer in 1959 and honorary editor of the *London Topographical Record* on the death of Sir Walter Godfrey in 1961. She was a Vice-President of the Historical Association and served on several of its committees, including the General Purposes, Local History, and Teaching of History Committees. She was also, from 1967 until her death, honorary editor of the *Transactions* of the Ancient Monuments Society and served on the Executive Committee of the Friends of Friendless Churches. Mr. Bulmer Thomas, in his *Times* obituary, paid tribute to her as a "doughty fighter" in the preservationist cause and revealed how she had offered (alas fruitlessly) "her life's savings to avert the demolition of the Moor Hall Chapel, Uxbridge". Members of our own Society will know, from more than one public inquiry, with what tenacity she was wont to press the case for the preservation of threatened buildings.

Generous of her time and energy in forwarding the work of so many societies, Miss Honeybourne still contrived to pursue her own scholarly research and to share her findings with others in published articles in the journals of a number of diverse learned societies, such as the *Transactions* of the Jewish Historical Society (The Pre-expulsion Cemetery of the Jews in London, vol. XX), as well as in the *London Topographical Record* and in our own *Transactions*. Her work received early recognition when she was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1949. Of her many contributions to our knowledge of mediaeval London, the most outstanding, perhaps, are the reconstructed maps of William Fitzstephen's London (Historical Association) and of London under Richard II (London Topographical Society) and major articles on "Charing Cross Riverside" (LTR, vol. XXI), "The Pre-Norman Bridge of London" (in *Studies presented to Philip E. Jones*, 1969) and on "The Leper Hospitals of the London Area, with an Appendix on some other Mediaeval Hospitals of Middlesex", printed in our own *Transactions* (vol. 21, pt. 1), with the aid of a grant from the Marc Fitch Fund. At the time of her death she was working on the preparation for publication of a map of London at the time of the Reformation. She was also the author of a brief Guide to one of her beloved City Churches, the church of St. James, Garlickhithe, where she was a churchwarden between 1963 and 1966 and where a memorial service was held for her on 25 February 1975.

These will be the enduring memorials of this quiet, homely, and deeply sincere woman, beneath whose diffident, even nervous, manner lay an indomitable spirit and courage to fight and to serve to the end, even against the odds of illness and ill-health.

E.D.M.