

OBITUARY

WILLIAM BRADBROOKE

The Society has lost an exceedingly faithful servant by the death of Mr. William Bradbrooke, the honorary secretary, who succeeded the late A. H. Cocks, and most actively and ably conducted the administration of the Society so long as he remained in the county. When he gave up his medical practice at Bletchley some ten years ago, he gave up the immediate secretarial labours, but continued to aid the Council and to contribute occasionally to the *Records* as lately as 1936.

As organizer of the Annual Excursion, he was at his best, being an accurate and agreeable lecturer, with an excellent delivery, and very popular with members. The number of his contributions to the *Records* was considerable; thus between volumes VIII and XII he was responsible for some fifteen articles, largely dealing with Parish Registers, Churchwardens' Accounts, and kindred subjects; but the article upon Royal Arms in Bucks churches, whilst also of ecclesiastical association, was an original and important contribution to our knowledge. He acted as editor of the Bucks Parish Register Society until it was closed down in the last war; seven registers he transcribed himself, besides preparing lists of monumental inscriptions at Walton and Great and Little Woolstone for the English M.I. Society. This is by no means the extent of his research work for archaeology; in 1911 he wrote a History of Fenny Stratford for the *Leighton Buzzard Observer*; a few copies were printed in book-form. In 1922 he contributed, in conjunction with Professor F. G. Parsons, a paper on "The Anthropology of the Chiltern Hills" to the Royal Anthropological Institute Journal. Many other short papers in recent years dealt with "Versions of the Mummers Play," "Culham, Oxfordshire," "On a Capital in the crypt of St. Peters, Oxford" (this in conjunction with his old friend Sir James Berry); besides "A short account of Sutton Courtenay Church."

His interest in heraldry enriched the pages of this journal with a very full article upon the armorial ceiling of St. Martin's, Fenny Stratford; he was also a foundation member of the

Society of Genealogists, in which he took a deep interest. Though he did not claim to be a great scholar, he had the accuracy and thoroughness which belongs, or should belong to scholarship; he was well, though not deeply, read and having abundant humour was extremely welcome as a companion in any circle.

The present writer had the privilege of constant association or correspondence with Mr. Bradbrooke, and hundreds of letters from him reflect the qualities outlined above; upon glancing through them one can see the writer and hear him speak, with odd scraps of erudition, gossip of the learned world, dog-Latin asides, and a curious mixture of delightful humour. They were not intended for publication, and one shrinks from attempting it, as one would from a betrayal of confidence. One of his curious little affectations (the sort of pose which endears rather than repels), was his fondness for using what Professor H. C. Wyld calls "*his* instead of possessive suffix,"—the kind of thing which Dickens ridiculed in "Bill Stumps his mark." Mr. Bradbrooke was so fond of this that it will occasionally be found in some of his learned papers; so used it has the agreeable oddity which would attach to a man who wore a beaver hat to-day.

A few papers to our own and other Societies dedicated to a study of the past,—the transcript of parish registers with extreme accuracy, but without notes or comments,—these seem very poor memorials of a very striking personality, and certainly do not illustrate the wide knowledge, the easy delivery which is derived from it, the humour, and the good nature which delighted many an audience.—All these will pass and cannot be re-captured. But we who knew him and worked with him have a very genuine consciousness that the qualities for which we loved the man are those which are never common, since a clear brain and a good heart are their foundation. In its early days the Society owed everything to the Rev. W. Hastings Kelke and the Rev. Charles Lowndes; in this century its greatest debt is certainly to William Bradbrooke.—Ed.