

## OBITUARY

The Society suffered the loss of an old member, and good friend, in the death of MRS. YATES THOMPSON, of Oving House. Notices in the *Times* of 19th and 31st January, 1941, furnish good memoirs of Mrs. Thompson, who continued her late husband's interest in old deeds &c. by liberally supporting the Society's appeal for aid in acquiring the Hartwell Deeds.

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The late MR. F. H. PARROTT was always interested in the work of the Society and Museum, and, as shown on p. 74, contributed valuable additions to our collections, by instructions to his executors.

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In DR. G. HERBERT FOWLER, F.R., Hist. S., the County has lost a great scholar, who published, through the Society, *The Pipe Rolls of Beds & Bucks, 1189-1199*, and *Sheriff's Rolls, 1332-4*. He contributed a paper to the 12th volume of the *Records*, entitled *An Early Boundary Dispute*.

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### MR. EDWIN HOLLIS.

Whilst this number of the *Records* is actually in the press, it is unfortunately necessary to record a grievous loss to the Society by the death of its faithful curator. In another seven or eight years the Society will be celebrating its centenary, but Mr. Hollis was the first to devote his whole time to its service. After all the amateur may be highly accomplished and is sure to be keen, but he often lacks the persistence and patient plodding of the man whose reputation, if not his actual living, depends upon the efficient performance of his duties. In 1908, the Society's collections were decidedly varied and indiscriminate; the late Mr. A. H. Cocks was honorary curator, and was certainly qualified by learning for the office, but he lived far away, and could not, even if he had been inclined to do so, have attended constantly.

Mr. Hollis was appointed as a whole-time professional curator, having had experience at Exeter Museum, but before that he had been on a trip to Canada, collecting mammals for the South Kensington Museum, so that he had the advantage of being a good taxidermist, and a sound, working zoologist. When our Museum was moved to its present quarters, and Mr. Hollis was able to live above it, he displayed its quickly growing contents to the best advantage in cramped space. As time passed he obtained better show-cases, and finally when the lay-out of the Museum was improved and additional area obtained in 1934, he made a most creditable arrangement of what is now an important and representative collection of local material.

Had he stopped there he would have done well, but Mr. Hollis was curiously painstaking and taught himself many things which lay quite outside his early training. For example, the work he did upon the Tradesmen's Tokens of the 17th century issued in Bucks was of the greatest importance. In 1933, he joined with Mr. J. O. Manton in producing a full handbook of 236 tokens, or 57 more than were shown by Williamson, but largely owing to Mr. Hollis's patient search in parish registers and elsewhere, many tokens ascribed to other counties were proved to belong to Bucks. In 1937 he added two more to the number. The actual collection of tokens in the Museum is probably as good as any county in England can offer, and the case in which Mr. Hollis arranged them shows them to great advantage. Thus he acquired knowledge of a side of numismatics, but he was equally ready to interest himself in ceramics, or palaeoliths, or brass-rubbings, or lace-bobbins, or those very heterogeneous objects in metal, wood, leather, or textiles conveniently known by the vague name of "bygones."

In addition to all this, a very great addition to his responsibilities was made when the Society was appointed custodian of manorial records for the county, and deeds of all periods from the 12th century

began to pour in; leading eventually to the construction of the Muniment Room. With great cheerfulness Mr. Hollis shouldered the very heavy duty of indexing and filing this mass; and though something more elaborate may one day be attempted, he was always able to say what he had with regard to any parish in the county. In 1930 he even contributed a paper to the Records upon a Compotus Roll of Water Eaton, and though nobody could make such a piece of accounting into a very human document, he dealt competently with his theme.

He was not, and certainly never claimed to be a deep scholar, but his wide and soundly-based knowledge kept him from errors, and his abounding good-nature and kindness of heart made him happy to pass on what he knew to all who sought for information. Whether he was lecturing upon birds, or addressing a class of children on the general contents of the Museum, he was equally clear and accurate; and visitors to the Museum might range from a geologist wishing to see "type" specimens of fossils, or an archaeologist seeking a relic of the Iron Age or mediaeval times,—to a party of children from a school for the blind, to whom the patient curator would pass objects which they could handle while he explained their significance.

Until very lately he looked nothing like his usual age, for continuous occupation of hand and brain kept him young; he was a good shot with gun and rifle, as Lord Cottesloe testified in a letter to the Press, and there is no better judge living. Such a busy, unselfish life must have been its own reward; though much respected by the Museums Association, of which he was long a Member, he was content with the task which lay to his hand, and in this he never failed. So long as the Society's collections remain as a unit they will reflect the skill, the care, and the devotion of Edwin Hollis.

G.E.