

OBITUARY

FRANK W. TYLER

ALL members of the Society and of the Records Branch in particular will have heard with very real regret of the death on August 31st, 1955, at the age of 84, of Frank W. Tyler. All his life he had been connected with Kent even when not actually living in the county. His mother was a native of Wingham and his grandfather on his mother's side of Lenham, while his great-grandfather was of Crundale House, near Wye. He himself was born at Market Harborough on March 21st, 1871. At the age of 17 he began his business life in an insurance office and worked his way up the ladder till he ultimately became General Manager of the Drapers' and General Insurance Company, which he had been largely instrumental in reorganizing. As a young man he joined the R.N.V.R. and although by the time of the 1914 War he was a keyman in insurance, he was among the first to get his uniform in the National Guard in London.

He lived in succession at Ealing, Birchington, Broadstairs, and Shortlands before moving to Canterbury, where he spent the last 24 years of his life. Mr. Tyler was one of the oldest members of the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men and in 1919, while still living at Ealing, he was elected a member of the Kent Archæological Society.

His interest in antiquarian subjects was always very keen and he soon joined the Records Branch. On the death of Mr. L. M. Biden, the first Honorary Secretary, in 1926, Mr. Tyler was persuaded by the Honorary Editor to allow his name to go forward for election as his successor. From then until his resignation in 1940 on the plea of age and health, the Records Branch enjoyed and profited by his great activities on its behalf. His keenness and knowledge was of the greatest value in collecting and preserving, and finally depositing with the county archives, a vast number of deeds which otherwise would have been destroyed or have perished through lack of care. Innumerable old parish registers were transcribed by him and surveys of churchyards made and their monumental inscriptions recorded. In one instance, during the last war, while living at Cold Harbour, the Vicar, discovering his interest in such matters, asked him if he would bring the plan of the churchyard up to date. Mr. Tyler found that the existing plan was not to scale, so he resurveyed the churchyard, drew a

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plan to scale and had it copied making a complete index of the names. A few days later a land-mine fell on the churchyard scattering many tombstones, but with the revised plan to hand all could be correctly replaced.

It was during Mr. Tyler's tenure of the Honorary Secretaryship of the Records Branch that it possessed an office, first of all in Chancery Lane and later, when he had moved to Canterbury, in Hawk's Lane. This was of the greatest help as a temporary resting place for the deeds which it was particularly necessary at this time to save from neglect and destruction, until they could ultimately be deposited in the County Archives Office, not yet established, in charge of a trained Archivist.

For some years Mr. Tyler acted as sub-Librarian in the Dean and Chapter Library at Canterbury, and that work, together with his work on local archives and Kent Records brought him in touch with many of like interests. To these he was ever most generous of the time and help he devoted to their problems. This side of his activities received well merited acknowledgment in his election in 1927 as Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

But, in addition to his antiquarian pursuits, he had many other interests, including yachting, growing cactus plants, and studying the habits of slow worms and lizards. He also designed calculators and in 1921 invented a clutchless gear motor-car which was not taken up by the motor trade on the grounds of expense.

As a very kindly and genial character he will be greatly missed by the many circles in which he moved, and above all by the members of his family to whom our deep sympathy is offered in their severe loss.

I.J.C.

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