OBITUARIES

THE REVEREND CANON DEREK INGRAM HILL,
M.A., D.D., F.S.A.

By the death of Derek Ingram Hill on 20 October 2003 at the age of 91 the Society has lost one of its most learned and colourful members. Born on 11 September 1912, he was perhaps the last of the clerical antiquarians of Kent dating back to Brian Faussett in the eighteenth century. His eighty-year association with Canterbury began in 1923 when he entered the King’s School. His dedication to the Cathedral began early as he wrote a guidebook for his mother while still a schoolboy and attended the enthronement of Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang, the first of eight up to Rowan Williams. While reading modern history at Trinity College, Oxford, he spent vacations visiting all the English and Scottish cathedrals (except St Magnus, Kirkwall). After Wells Theological College and ordination in 1935 he served as a curate at Buckland-in-Dover and then for eighteen years as curate and vicar in two south London parishes. Six summer holidays were spent cycling round northern France to study churches and cathedrals. In 1957 he returned to Canterbury and served in various parishes before his appointment in 1976 as a residential canon. He was already a Six Preacher and honorary canon as well as serving on numerous ecclesiastical committees and the General Synod. As a member of the Redundant Churches Commission he was forward-looking in devising new uses for disused church buildings; his former church of St Gregory at Canterbury is now a concert hall for Christ Church University College. His notable services to Canterbury and to scholarship were recognised in 1983 when he was elected a Freeman of the City and awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity by the University of Kent at Canterbury.

He joined the Society in 1936, contributing regularly to Archaeologia Cantiana, especially articles on stained glass, churches and his beloved Cathedral. Older members may remember his interjection at a particularly fraught Annual General Meeting when our General Secretary, Arthur Harrison, declared ‘What we need to sort out our problems is an unemployed archangel!’ Derek at once rose and
exclaimed 'Mr President, I can assure members on the best authority that there is no unemployment in heaven'. Elected an F.S.A. in 1974, he served as a wise and clear-sighted President during a difficult period in the Society's history between 1982 and 1986, as a Vice-President from 1986 to 2000 and was then elected a Patron.

His writings include The Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, Christ's Glorious Church, the New Bell's Guide to Canterbury Cathedral, the Ancient Almshouses and Hospitals of Canterbury (he was Master of the Eastbridge Hospital, Master of the Poor Priests' Hospital and trustee of others in the City) and The Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral (he was one). Much in demand as a lecturer, a tour of the Cathedral under his guidance was a memorable experience. His unrivalled knowledge of the building and its history was often called upon by broadcasters and TV companies alike.

Church music was one of his chief loves, from his first letter home as a schoolboy in which he recorded the settings of the services in the Cathedral the previous Sunday, to his daily attendance at Evensong during his retirement, ending the day, when his sight was failing, by playing a recording of a Bach cantata. His devoted wife Violet died in 1998 and his daughter in 2002; he is survived by a son, four grandchildren and a great-grandson. A dedicated priest with an unshakeable faith, his energy was unquenchable and his memory full and accurate. It was a privilege to be counted among his many friends.

LAWRENCE LYLE

H.A. JAMES

'Jimmy' James, who died in January 2003, was a long serving and successful Hon. Excursions Secretary between 1965 and 1979 whose strenuous efforts on behalf of the Society led to him being appointed an Honorary Member in 1980. He served in the RAF during the Second World War after which he became a teacher at Gillingham Technical School and a stalwart member of the Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society. Jimmy was an expert on monumental brasses and dovecotes. He belonged to various Brass societies and did all manner of jobs with church brasses including maintenance, replacement and resetting.

TERENCE LAWSON
OBITUARIES

ROGER WALSH

Our knowledge of the archaeology of the Borough of Dartford would be much diminished had it not been for the involvement of Roger Walsh who died on 14th April 2003 in France where he and his second wife, Stella, had made their home.

Roger’s connection with local archaeology dates back to the early 1960s when he was a member of the Fawkham and District Historical Society which had its own archaeological section. By 1965 the Fawkham Archaeological Group had been established, with research being carried out at North Ash Roman villa. Unfortunately, by October 1966, Roger was compelled to give up his leadership of the Group due to business commitments although he did maintain some links with the Group. In May 1969 it was reformed under the new title of Fawkham and Ash Archaeological Group. Roger was its first Director and, under his leadership, further excavations were carried out at North Ash villa as well as new research at the medieval site at Scotgrove.

In 1970 Roger was elected as Chairman of the Council for Kentish Archaeology. At this time a number of major developments were planned for Dartford and Roger realised that without an active local archaeological group important information on the area’s early history would be lost. Thus, in 1972, he began running a ten-week course in archaeology at East Hill House in Dartford which led to the formation in December of the Dartford and Darent Valley Archaeological Group (renamed Dartford District Archaeological Group in 1977). Two further evening classes run by Roger added further members to the Group as did publicity in one of the local newspapers. Roger directed the Group until 1983 during which time two Roman villas were relocated, one at Wilmington and the other at Dartford. The Roman cemetery at East Hill, Dartford, was also investigated and the ‘Darenth Bowl’, a fine example of Anglo-Saxon glassware, was discovered on a cemetery site at Darenth, now scheduled as an Ancient Monument. A medieval settlement site at Littlebrook, Stone, near Dartford, also received attention as did parts of the site of Henry VIII’s Manor House in Dartford. During this time the Group was able to establish a Research Centre in Dartford which is only just having to be vacated after 28 years. Group members gave up much of their spare time to change a derelict building into a place of which other groups of a similar size would be envious. Obtaining this property was made possible by the hard work and determination of Roger.

Between 1978 and 1982 Roger served on the Council of the KAS. In 1983 he stepped down as Director of Dartford District Archaeo-
logical Group and became its President, a post he held until his untimely death.

This obituary was produced with the assistance of Richard Jones, Jim Smith and especially Roger Cockett who readily provided access to the archive of the Fawkham and Ash Archaeological Group.

CHRIS BAKER
Director of the Dartford District Archaeological Group