

OBITUARIES

VALENTINE JOHN BERRY DE JERSEY TORR

John Torr, a descendant of the seventeenth-century antiquary, James Torr, died suddenly on 11th March, 1965.

His father, James Fenning Torr, was Recorder of Hastings, and earlier of Deal where his portrait hangs in the Town Hall. His mother, Beatrice de Jersey Moore, was the daughter of a former vicar of Holy Trinity, Maidstone.

He devoted the greater part of his life to an indefatigable study of church architecture, and in a lesser degree to secular buildings of historic interest. He was equally at home in deciphering medieval inscriptions and documents, where his mastery of Latin, acquired at St. Paul's School, stood him in good stead. For many years he was a leading member of the Council of the Monumental Brass Society and recently had organized an exhibition at All Hallows, London Wall, of brass rubbings, the greater number his own work.

He had a special zeal for Kent and played a prominent part in the deliberations of the Friends of Kent Churches. In 1954, he produced with H. R. Pratt Boorman, a book on Kent Churches, profusely illustrated with his own photographs.

Many County and Parish magazines were enriched by his articles and he contributed to *Archaeologia Cantiana*. He was fearless in criticism and his incisive pen often contributed to the preservation of much that was in danger of being destroyed. He lectured to countless organizations, but his encyclopaedic knowledge made it difficult for him to compress his material. He was ever ready to share his knowledge or give help freely to all who sought it. In Kent he will long be remembered for his invaluable labours for the preservation of architecturally distinctive churches, and the interest he aroused in the subject of Royal Arms.

A.R.

RUPERT GUNNIS

It is with great regret that we have to record the death of Mr. Rupert Forbes Gunnis on 31st July, 1965 at the age of 66 years. He had been a Member for twenty years and served on the Council from 1948 until 1963.

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Rupert Gunnis will best be remembered as the author of the *Dictionary of British Sculptors, 1660-1851*, now a standard work, and which reflected his lifetime interest in the subject. He was an *amateur* in the very best sense of the word and with ardent and tireless energy gathered an encyclopaedic knowledge of churches, their architecture, monuments and records. But his deep learning and careful scholarship covered even wider fields of history.

In particular his unrivalled knowledge of Kent churches and their monuments was of great help to the Council of the Society, to the Council of the Friends of Kent Churches, and not least to the Diocesan Advisory Committees of both Canterbury and Rochester of which he was chairman.

His great knowledge and phenomenal memory were always at the service of all who sought his advice and his counsels will be deeply missed.

J.H.E.

### COLONEL ARTHUR ALEXANDER MERLOTT-CHITTY, C.B.E., D.S.O.

Arthur Merlott-Chitty died suddenly on 15th July, 1965, and with his death Kent has lost a distinguished soldier and a meticulous worker in the fields of local and regimental history. He was born in India in 1895, educated at Clifton, and entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, in 1912.

Gazetted into the 1st Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment he continued an unbroken family service in the Army since 1768. He served with distinction in both world wars, and in 1935 was in command of the Regimental Depot in Maidstone, where he and his staff worked hard to strengthen the links between the County and its Regiment, and in helping the T.A. and Cadet organizations.

He retired to Littlestone in 1945 where he became absorbed in local affairs which led to his work on local history and careful research into local families from Parish records.

A.R.

### JOHN WILLIAM BRIDGE, F.S.A., F.R.N.S., M.S.R.

On the 30th November, 1964, Mr. John W. Bridge died peacefully in his sleep at the age of eighty-three. He joined the Society in 1906 although some earlier volumes of *Arch. Cant.* (for instance volume xlvi) mistakenly give his seniority as 1895, possibly through a confusion

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with his father, John H. Bridge. He was a member of Council for eighteen years.

He was born in Maidstone and his deep love for his native town and its neighbourhood showed itself in the zeal with which he restored several timber framed buildings and contributed notes to *Arch. Cant.* on such famous Maidstonians as Sergeant Surgeon Thomas Vicary and John Hall.

He was a builder by profession in a business which had been founded by his great grandfather in 1796. Preservation was a main item in his *Credo* and it was with this in mind that he bought the medieval house 'Weavers' by the riverside in St. Faith's Street, the home for many years of the West Kent Federation of Women's Institutes. He was Deputy Borough Surveyor of Maidstone during the 1914-18 War. Other offices he held were President of the Rotary Club of Maidstone, President and Hon. Secretary (for twenty-two years) of the Maidstone Scientific and Antiquarian Society, council member of the Royal Numismatic Society, Hon. Secretary (for thirty-three years) of the Kent Numismatic Society, founder member and Hon. Secretary (for eighteen years) of the Friends of Old Maidstone, Chairman of the Maidstone Fine Arts Committee, and a trustee of the Bentsliff Art Gallery.

He was an avid collector, especially of coins and bygones. A selection of the latter he presented to Maidstone Museum.

The present writer has on many occasions had cause to be thankful for his help, advice and support. He mourns a very pleasant friend and companion.

L.R.A.G.

### MAJOR COLIN MATSON, M.C.

On 1st February, at Pern's Cottage, Crawley, Winchester, Colin, aged 75 years, beloved husband of Dorothy; Major, formerly Grenadier Guards, and lastly Gloucestershire Regiment. Served Great War, Military Cross, mentioned in despatches, India, North-West Frontier. Cremation took place at Barham, Kent.

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