

OBITUARY

BRIGADIER E. V. BOWRA, O.B.E.

Edward Valentine Bowra was born in China. Educated at Cheltenham College and Jesus College, Cambridge, he was commissioned in the Royal Engineers in July 1915. He served in both World Wars and in Malaya in 1947–48.

He was awarded the O.B.E. at the early age of 23 and his long career earned no less than four Mentions in Despatches. The climax of his military career was his service in Southern India, beginning in 1931 and reaching the position of Chief Engineer, Southern Army, from which he retired in 1945 before going to Malaya on reconstruction work.

He joined the Society in 1945 and was a valued member of the Council from 1966 to 1971 serving on the Place-Names Committee from 1964 to 1966.

The above, rather formal, catalogue of his life is necessary to enable us to understand and appreciate the Edward Bowra whom we knew in his active and fruitful retirement.

An ancestor was John Bowra, a surveyor (c. 1750), many of whose splendid estate maps are now in the County Archives and the Maidstone Museum, so that his interest in local history was to be expected; but his interests went much further than that as he was a big enough man to divert his wide knowledge to the welfare of his village. There were few aspects of village life in which he was not active – the Church, the Council and the Cricket Club are but a few; but perhaps he was best known and loved for his profound knowledge of local and church history. His publications and lectures include ‘St. Peter’s Church, Ightham’, ‘Ightham, some glimpses of local History’, ‘The Dutch James Family of Ightham Court’ and ‘Ightham in the eighteenth and nineteenth Centuries’; he also did much work on field names in Ightham Parish. Recently he assisted the American historian, Dr. Peter Benes, in the study of Puritan gravestones in New England and here: a card index and slides are deposited with the Maidstone Museum.

His helpfulness to all enquirers on matters of local history, his kindness and wise council will be greatly missed. We send our most sincere sympathy to Mrs. Bowra.

C.G.T.

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