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OBITUARIES

ARTHUR F. ALLEN

Arthur Frederick Allen, who died on 21st June, 1987, was born on 23rd April, 1908. He came from an old Gravesend family with waterside connections and was secretary of the local sailing club for twenty-five years. He attended Holy Trinity School (of which he was later a governor for many years) and left at the age of 14. He then became office boy with Martin and Son, a firm of local solicitors; he was eventually given his articles, qualified as a solicitor in 1934 and, in due course, became senior partner, an exceptional achievement in an era when articulated clerks usually had to find a substantial premium and serve five years articles unpaid.

Arthur Allen was always interested in local history and archaeology and joined the Kent Archaeological Society in 1948; he served as a member of Council from 1962 to 1972 and was local secretary for Gravesend from 1953 to 1983 and a contributor to *Archaeologia Cantiana*. He was also a founder member of the Shorne Historical Society in 1942 and became chairman in 1951 until his death. He found and excavated the site of the lost church of Merston (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxi (1957), 198–205) and carried out various excavations at Shorne, Chalk and Higham Marshes as well as some work at Higham Priory, all of which he was careful to write up and publish.

When he married in 1939, Arthur Allen moved to Shorne and thereafter spent much time in research on the history of Shorne. At the time of his death his *History of Shorne* was in the press and he had revised the galley proofs; it has now been published. He also did a considerable amount of work on the affairs of the Gravesend Corporation during the nineteenth century and their financial problems arising from the pier disputes; this he has written in the form of a long article, and it is hoped that it may be published in the future.

R.H.H.

OBITUARIES

GEOFF PORTEUS

Members of our Society and a wide circle of personal friends will have learned with regret of the death of Geoff Porteus in March 1987 at the age of 68 after a short illness. Apart from a period of war service, all his life had been lived in Dartford and the history of the town and its environs had been one of his life-long interests. The other was cycling, by which means he had travelled extensively at home and abroad as a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club and for over 20 years he contributed travel articles to the *Kentish Times*.

Formerly he was employed by Seagers Ltd., and for 30 years by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. In his retirement he wrote three books on local history: *The Book of Dartford*, *Yesterday's Town: Dartford*, and *Dartford Country* reviewed in the last volume of *Archaeologia Cantiana*. All three proved of great popular interest and will find a place beside the earlier related works by Dunkin and Keyes.

In 1973, he joined the K.A.S., and he was a long-standing member of the Dartford Historical and Antiquarian Society on whose Council he served and acted as Editor of their publications. Not long before his death he was elected to the Chairmanship of the Society. A loyal churchman, he was a member of Holy Trinity Parish Council for over 33 years and was the author of a guide to the church. As a lecturer to Adult Education Institutes, he was much appreciated and his large collection of colour-slides added to the interest of his talks. He held London University Diplomas in History, History of Art and Literature.

A lifelong bachelor, he was a man of unassuming nature and friendly disposition, and although he will be sadly missed in Dartford, his publications will ensure that his service to the town in that respect will survive to perpetuate his memory. As an indication of the esteem in which he was held, it may be remarked that at his funeral the old Parish Church was filled with those who had come from near and far to pay their respects, and the occasion was honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Dartford.

P.J.T.

MISS ANNE ROPER

Miss Anne Roper died on February 7th, 1988. She was born in Liverpool on March 30th, 1903, although she claimed descent from Sir Thomas More, through his daughter, Margaret Roper. She won a scholarship to Howell's Grammar School, Llandaff, whence she proceeded to University College, Cardiff, to study French. An accident while playing hockey for the college brought her studies to an end and she came to Kent to recuperate over sixty years ago. She spent part of her convalescence studying the New Romney archives and became immersed in the history of the town. In due course she

became secretary to the late Major M. Teichman Derville, O.B.E., D.L., J.P., F.S.A., Bailiff of Romney Marsh, Mayor of New Romney and, later, President of the Kent Archaeological Society. She joined the Society in 1929 and local history became her absorbing interest. She launched a pioneer course of lectures on Romney Marsh at Ham Street in 1936 and in the years up to 1939 was the driving force behing many local history projects, connected primarily with Romney Marsh and south-east Kent, but also with churches and archaeological studies. She joined the Council of the Kent Archaeological Society in 1939. During the war she was a welfare officer for the troops stationed in the Marsh and also for the Women's Land Army and she was awarded the M.B.E. in 1944 for her services to army welfare. She joined the panel of lecturers of the Extra-mural Department of Oxford University and gave many stimulating lectures on Marsh history, smuggling, the Cinque Ports and Kent Inns.

Miss Roper has been a churchwarden at St. Mary-in-the-Marsh for fifty years, a member of the House of Laity of the Church Assembly for twenty-five years and was appointed a delegate to the first World Council of Churches, held in Amsterdam in 1948 and also attended the second Council held in the United States. A founder member of the Friends of Kent Churches, she has also been Vice-President of the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust and has been the author of several guides to Kent Churches. She was joint author, with J.R. Pratt Boorman, of *Kent Inns, a Distillation* in 1955 and in 1984 wrote her book *The Gift of the Sea - Romney Marsh*. She was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1949 and also served as Chairman of the County Local History Committee for sixteen years from 1956. Nearer her home she has been a Governor of Southlands School, New Romney and a Trustee of Southlands Charity, and Honorary Archivist to the Corporation of Hythe. A Justice of the Peace for nineteen years, she also worked for the British Legion and the Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association, and for three years was the first woman President of the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men. In 1979, she was elected a Vice-President of the K.A.S. She was Lord of the Manor of Eastbridge, one of the twenty-three Manors of Romney Marsh.

In 1984, in the Chapel at Lambeth Palace, His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on her a Lambeth Degree of Master of Arts, the culmination of her work for the Church in Kent and beyond.

Her enthusiasm for local history was unbounded, her local knowledge immense. Her great ability to encourage others and her devoted sense of service will be greatly missed.

K.W.E.G.