

# OBITUARIES

## SIR HENRY MARTEN, K.C.V.O.

SIR HENRY MARTEN, Provost of Eton, who had been one of our Vice-Presidents since 1943, died on 11th December, 1948, at the age of 76. His life was spent in the devoted service of his school, and he passed through all grades of its membership. What endeared him to everyone at every stage and made him so successful a teacher, was that he preserved to the

end the fresh and generous outlook of his boyhood at Miss Evans's, one of the most famous of Eton houses. We were hardly ever aware of his age, and so his death came as a shock to us all. From Balliol, where he met and appreciated a wider society than Eton's, he returned to Eton as its first and only History master. When he started teaching in 1896, History was but grudgingly admitted on an overwhelmingly classical curriculum: it is now the chief post-Certificate study for over a hundred boys. This was his life work, but many thousands of children in the county must have imbibed their chief knowledge of English history from the *Groundwork*, which he wrote in conjunction with the Harrow master, Townsend Warner, and of which the anecdotes in the footnotes are perhaps the most memorable and characteristic feature. This was almost his only literary output, apart from some excellent essays on 'The Teaching of History'. He was too busy a teacher, and too much occupied in the affairs of the College, for more.

He became Senior History Master, Housemaster, Lower Master, acting Head Master for one 'half', Vice-Provost from 1930 to 1945, and Provost on Lord Quickwood's retirement. No one could have been better fitted than he to organize and preside over the exhibition which celebrated Eton's Quincentenary in 1947, postponed seven years by the war. There never has been, and there never will be, so breezy and inspiring a guide through the treasures and history of the most venerable institution of the county, as many of our members can testify. The energy which he put into this exhibition affected his health and may well have shortened his life. The early history of Eton and the Founder's intentions was latterly his favourite theme, and the members of the school Archaeological Society, which owed very much to his encouragement, will not easily forget the November evening in Election Chamber, when he addressed them on this subject within three weeks of his death. He had given much thought and research to the problem of the destroyed windows in Eton Chapel. One wishes he might have seen their restoration begun.

Rooted as he was in Eton and perhaps difficult to imagine anywhere else, his interests ranged further afield. He had travelled widely; he loved to visit the College estates, notably at Bledlow in this county; he took part in many local activities; he was on the board of numerous other schools, he was active on the Council of the Historical Association, and from 1929 to 1931 its President. No one would preside over a meeting or thank a lecturer so genially: he raised the level of enjoyment wherever he went. One of the last public functions he attended was the inauguration of the first county boarding school, at Otter-shaw. Tribute has been eloquently and feelingly paid in a special number of the *Eton College Chronicle* to his character and charm. He had many endearing habits and unaffected mannerisms. It is credibly reported that two royal personages, the last of his pupils, after waiting for one of these for a few weeks, were duly rewarded. 'He's said it, he's said it', they reported excitedly as they emerged from their history lesson. The phrase was: 'Is that clear, gentlemen?'

A. K. W.

#### SIR WYNDHAM R. DUNSTAN, K.C.M.G., LL.D., F.R.S.

We also regret to record the death, at East Burnham End, in the early summer of 1949, of Sir Wyndham Dunstan.

Sir Wyndham was amongst the most intellectually distinguished of the Society's members, and was a man of wide interests and unflagging energy. He was a keen supporter of our Society and its work, and was an advocate of the holding of local meetings to cater for those who cannot always get to Aylesbury. His help and advice will be greatly missed.