

## OBITUARY

CHRISTOPHER A. COOKSON

Christopher Cookson, who was Secretary of the Society from 1958 to 1968, died on 13 December 1977 as the result of an accident in South Carolina. He was educated at Clifton College, Bristol, and took a degree in History at Magdalen College, Oxford. He also passed through the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, but instead of entering the navy he made a career with the Bombay Cotton Company in India. On his return to England he became Secretary of the Society in 1958, a post which he held until 1968. He lived at Hatch Beauchamp, where he was closely involved in village life (he was joint treasurer of the P.C.C., and wrote *A Short Guide to Hatch Beauchamp Parish Church*), and he was also a keen gardener. A note by Mr. Cookson on 'A Somerset Link with the American War of Independence', which appears elsewhere in this volume of *Proceedings*, bears witness to his interest in America (his widow is American, and they had recently celebrated their silver wedding anniversary), and it was during a visit to the United States that he died so tragically.

Mr. E. L. Kelting has written the following appreciation:

The sudden death of Christopher Cookson will be deeply regretted by his wide circle of friends which included so many members of our Society. I had seen Christopher and his charming wife a few weeks previously when they were celebrating their silver wedding, and it would have been difficult to find two happier people.

Christopher was a quiet man who loved Somerset, which he had known from his early days when he spent numerous holidays at Poundisford Park. During his eleven years as Secretary of our Society, he acquired an intimate knowledge of the museum and library, which he always made available to the host of callers seeking information on every aspect of Somerset life. He treated every request for assistance with seriousness no matter how trivial. He also had a flair for organization which ensured that the Society tours and visits all over Somerset and to many parts of England were greatly enjoyed by the members who were glad to be in his care.

His dedication to help anyone in trouble was extraordinary, and he always responded to the full irrespective of whether the call came by day or night, and no matter how long the problems took to solve. He rarely spoke of such things, but there are many people who have cause to be thankful for his help and wise counsel.

After his retirement in 1968 he entered even more fully into the village life of Hatch Beauchamp with great enjoyment, and once again was never called on in vain.

Such a man, whose standards of life were set so high, will inevitably be greatly missed. It was a privilege to have known him, and many of us have lost a very good friend.