

- Management Agreement, now a cabinet decision has been taken. *Direct negotiations were always with SCC. Contact with the lawyers of the other parties was always carried out through the Society's solicitors.*
13. SANHS would expect SCC to include in any future arrangement a robust, independent mechanism for assessing the performance standards of the Trust. *The performance of the Trust will be monitored by (i) its obligation to observe national standards of accreditation in respect of the stewardship of assets (ii) monitoring by SANHS and SCC as prescribed in the Forward Loan Agreement.*
 14. SANHS must have its position as a key stakeholder recognised at appropriate levels in any future arrangement. This could be through having the right to appoint a member to the Trust board, or, at the very least, a place in determining the constitution of the Trust Board. *SANHS Board decided not to seek a place on the Board of the SWHT (see 10.6 above). SANHS special position is recognised by the existence of the Forward Loan Agreement which prescribes a mechanism for monitoring the way in which SCC is holding the SWHT to account. SANHS would be represented on the proposed Advisory Forum of SWHT.*

OBITUARY: HILARY BINDING 1938–2014

The church of St John the Baptist, Carhampton, was filled to capacity for the funeral on 30 December 2014 of Hilary Binding, an Honorary Life Member of the Society and its former Chairman. She died at the age of 75 on 14 December following a short illness. That such a large congregation gathered to remember her was one sign of the great affection in which she was held. It was also recognition of all that she had achieved as a teacher, historian, writer and musician and as the servant of her community in so many different ways.

Hilary Mary Binding (née Gray) was born in Banbury, Oxfordshire, on 24 December 1938. Her father came from Ampthill in Bedfordshire, but her mother's family had deep roots in Somerset. Bridgwater, Spaxton, Crowcombe and Lydeard St Lawrence were some of the places they sprang from, and Hilary was proud to claim that the scientist Andrew Crosse of Fyne Court was one of her ancestors. When she was six years old her father, until then a Methodist minister, was ordained in the Church of England, and thereafter the life and worship of the Anglican Church became central to Hilary. In later years she was a Lay Reader in the Dunster benefice, a churchwarden at Carhampton, her home for 33 years, and Lay Chairman of the Exmoor Deanery Synod.

Hilary was educated at St Brandon's School, Clevedon, and took a degree in history and economics at Southampton University. Following

graduation she eventually became a teacher in Oxfordshire where she helped to develop courses in environmental studies with a special focus on local history. In 1967, the year she married, Hilary returned permanently to ancestral territory when she was appointed to teach history at Minehead Middle School. Her former pupils have many happy memories of her, since 'not only was she a good classroom teacher, inventive and engaging, but she cared deeply for the well-being of those in her charge.'¹

In 1989 she joined the staff of the Somerset Record Office on secondment, and in 1991, having decided to become a freelance, began her long association with the Record Office as an educational consultant. She also worked extensively with the National Trust and Exmoor National Park. In her new role Hilary visited schools to explain how archives could support learning, ran courses for teachers and pupils, and on one memorable occasion worked with young people to re-enact the life of a Victorian elementary school. Her enthusiasm and skill as a west gallery musician, not least with the Rodhuish Gallery Singers, found expression in a 'Music from the Archives' event, where manuscript sources from the Somerset Record Office were brought to life in performance.

It was in those same years that Hilary's skills as a writer about West Country history came to prominence. She had already, in 1974, become

editor of the *Exmoor Review*, and in 1977, with Douglas Stevens, completed a major new history of Minehead. Thereafter books and articles appeared regularly and demonstrated Hilary's consistent skill in writing with fluency and authority on a very wide range of subjects. They included, amongst much else, cider apples, cholera, privies and the poor. In 1997 she was appointed first editor of *Exmoor Magazine*, a post she held for 13 years, and in 1999 was co-editor of *Somerset: The Millennium Book*, published to mark the Society's 150th anniversary.

Her formal role within the Society began in 1995 when she became Chairman of the Local History Committee. Two years later she was elected Vice-Chairman of the Society's Council, and from 2000 to 2004 served as its Chairman. Her term of office coincided with some of the most demanding times in the Society's recent history, dominated by questions concerning the renewal of the lease of Taunton Castle and the future of the County Museum. From 2000 Hilary was the Society's representative on the joint working group which sought an agreed way forward. Eleven years and countless meetings later she finally stood on Castle Green to witness the opening of the new Museum of Somerset. Her role in its creation was crucial, both as an advocate of the Society's interests and as a social historian who helped to shape the museum's storyline and content. When she retired from a second term as Vice-Chairman in 2007, it was appropriate that the Society granted her the rare distinction of honorary life membership. Two years later her outstanding contribution to local history in Somerset was further recognised when she received the High Sheriff's Award.

In recent years the pace seemed to slacken only a little. She continued as a member of the Society's Board until 2012 and joined the partnership group created to support publication of the Victoria County History of Somerset. She also remained a key figure in all that concerned local history in West Somerset, including as Chairman of the West Somerset Village History Society.

Hilary is survived by her son Ned and by her grandchildren George and Joe. She will be long remembered and much missed for her friendship,

her wisdom and her generosity of spirit, as well as for the knowledgeable enthusiasm that achieved so much. We are the less for her passing.

Tom Mayberry

¹ Steven Pugsley and Naomi Cudmore, 'In Memory: Hilary Binding, True Friend of Exmoor', *Exmoor Magazine*, Spring 2015 (to which this obituary is particularly indebted).

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Hilary also contributed to many other books including *Somerset: the Millennium Book*, *Somerset: The Golden Years*, *Somerset Cider* and *Exmoor Village* (2004), journals and several publications for schools.