



MELTON PHOTOGRAPHICS

Jack Brownlow: a photographic portrait 1980

John Easom Brownlow — An Obituary

The death on 3rd November 1980 of John Easom Brownlow left a great void in the fields of history and archaeology within the county, but especially in the Melton area.

John E. Brownlow, more widely known as Jack to his countless friends and associates, had a lifelong interest in the history of the County of Leicester. He was the author of several papers on county history but his prime interest — one that could almost be regarded as a passion — was the history of Melton Mowbray and district. This reached its climax with the publication shortly before his death of *Melton Mowbray — Queen of the Shires*, a work chronicling Melton's history during the hey-days of fox-hunting, when its name was almost legend amongst devotees of the sport.

Jack Brownlow lived a full life and a list of organizations with whom he was, or had been associated with at the time of his death, would make almost endless reading. One particular interest was Rotary and he was President of the Melton Rotary Club in 1943-44, thus following in his father's footsteps. He had served the local community as a pharmacist, as well as being a local and county councillor. The Melton Mowbray Town Estate had also taken up a great deal of his time. On one occasion he was heard to say that 'at the latest tally I am or have served on over forty committees'. This involvement in public service did not prevent him from finding time for other interests and he was always willing to give help and assistance if asked. His list of contacts for visits and information was infinite. Many committee meetings of the Melton Branch of the Society would be gently interrupted by that quiet voice saying 'Leave it to me, I'll have a word with him at the next meeting of such-and-such a committee'. One knew then that the seeds of yet another successful excursion or lecture had been sown.

In the wider field of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Jack Brownlow's active membership spanned almost a generation. In 1954 he became a member of the committee and in recognition of his long and distinguished service he was elected a Vice-President in 1976. His interests and contributions were by no means solely of an executive nature. He led excursions, gave lectures and published articles in the *Transactions*; each contribution bearing the stamp of his careful scholarship and unflagging enthusiasm for his native region of Melton and its environs. In this respect the passing of Jack Brownlow sadly marks the end of an era for the Society. The period of the gifted and productive amateur historian in the tradition of George Farnham and S.H. Skillington.

One facet of his character that surfaced frequently was his inimitable humour, and his talks or reminiscences of days gone by would be illustrated with a humorous tale or anecdote about some local or other well known character. Jack Brownlow was a man who will be sorely missed not only within the immediate district of Melton Mowbray but throughout the county. Our sympathies go out to his wife and family who so quietly but ably supported him throughout his life, but especially during the last few difficult months. They can look back with joy and gratitude on the respect and esteem in which he was held by all who knew him.

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