

OBITUARY

George Fothergill, 1933-2011

George Fothergill, who has recently died in Winchester, fired generations of teenage students in Lancashire, Oxfordshire and Hampshire with enthusiasm for history. He was also the inspiration of the early teenage years of the Banbury Historical Society. He was appointed Head of History at Banbury School in 1965 when Dr Harry Judge was creating a new comprehensive institution from several existing schools. He quickly became involved with the eight-year-old Historical Society, joining the committee and then serving as chairman (1968-71), assistant secretary and secretary. He brought to the Society an array of distinguished speakers, Howard (later Sir Howard) Colvin, Brian (now Sir Brian) Harrison, Christopher Hill, E.P.Thompson, Tony (now Sir Tony) Wrigley and Brigadier Peter Young amongst others. George had a great sense of fun, and introduced music, drama and poetry to the annual dinners that were then a feature of the Society's programmes. He secured a notable coup in July 1971 by arranging for the Society to visit Nicholas Hawksmoor's great house at Easton Neston, and was closely involved with the *Son et Lumière* presentation at St Mary's Church in the autumn of 1972. He organised a memorable evening of reminiscences on 26 November 1970 which is recorded in the article 'Banbury at the turn of the century' (*C&CH*. 5.2 1972). George never became closely involved with the minutiae of local historical research but his all-round understanding of history was of enormous benefit to the Society. He wrote several authoritative reviews for *Cake & Cockhorse*, including a masterly survey of the Banbury volume of the *Victoria History of Oxfordshire* (*C&CH*. 8.8, Spring 1974). George initially lived at No 102 Bath Road whose frontage was adorned with the 'Salt Warehouse' sign from the Original Cake Shop in Parson's Street, but later moved to King's Sutton.

George Fothergill was born in Ravenstonedale, Westmorland, and educated at Appleby Grammar School and the Queen's College, Oxford, where he read Modern History. He did National Service with the Royal Norfolk Regiment, where he gained his first experience of teaching by assisting fellow soldiers with basic literacy and numeracy. He taught history at Bolton School in Lancashire from 1958 until he moved to Banbury. He left Banbury in the summer of 1973 to take up the post of deputy principal at Peter Symons Sixth Form College at Winchester, where he remained for 20 years. In 1984 he was elected Liberal Democrat city councillor for the Littleton & Harestock ward where he lived. He chaired the amenities committee of Winchester City Council, was instrumental in the establishment of *The Screen* cinema in the city in the mid-1990s, and served as Mayor of Winchester in 1998-99. He was active in the Winchester branch of the Historical Association until shortly before his death.