

## OBITUARY

*Ross K. Gilkes, M.A. (Oxon.), F.R.Hist.S.*

Ross Gilkes, who died in May, was a long-standing member of our Society and one of the more prolific contributors to *Cake & Cockhorse*. Moreover he was probably the only remaining member who had known our co-founder 'Dr' Ted Brinkworth in his younger days, when they were pupil and master first at Dashwood Road School and then at Banbury County (subsequently Grammar) School. These times, and his close friendship with 'Brinky' (as he called him) from sixth form days on, he recounted in 'E.R.C. Brinkworth: A Celebration', ten years after Ted's death, in vol. 10 no. 9 (Summer 1988).

Ross Gilkes's career was mostly teaching history at Fairfield Grammar School in Bristol (his centenary history was published in 1998). He was long a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Of much greater relevance to Banbury is that his close friendship with Ted remained until death, and that he worked on research for the Banbury section of the *Victoria County History*, although in the event others completed the work. We were to benefit from the comprehensive knowledge of the Borough Corporation (1553-1835) he thus gained, which he distilled in a series of articles between 1971 and 2004 (listed below). An account of Banbury Castle had appeared as early as 1960. This we reprint here, as, although it is available on our website, very few are likely to have it in 'hard copy', published as it was in Vol. 1, No. 5, of what at that time must have seemed likely to be an ephemeral newsletter.

However, undoubtedly his greatest contribution to recording Banbury's history was his edition of *The 'Bawdy Court' of Banbury: The Act Book of the Peculiar Court of Banbury, 1625-1638*. The original manuscript, much in abbreviated Latin, had been transcribed by Ted Brinkworth, who died before editing could commence. Fortunately his work was in the Society's care, and in due course Ross (very willingly) agreed to take on the formidable task of editing and preparation for publication. The triumphant completion of this work was published as our records volume 27 in 1997. His and Ted's combined work made available a source unlikely otherwise ever to have been used, revealing the often entertaining or embarrassing misdeeds of Banbury's avowedly strict puritan townsfolk. It received far more (all complimentary) reviews than any of our other publications.

**J.G.**