

OBITUARY

GRACE WYATT

Mrs Grace Wyatt, who died of cancer on 17 February 1992, was a long-standing member of the Historic Society. She indexed its *Transactions* from 1981, became a member of its Council in 1985, and acted as its Honorary Secretary from 1989 to shortly before her death. Grace retired from a post in the University of Liverpool Library in 1984, after sixteen years' service. During this period she had gained, by part-time study, the B.A. degree from the Open University (1975) and the diploma in Local History from Liverpool University (1981). After her retirement she wrote a thesis which gained her the degree of M.Phil. from Liverpool (1986), and in late 1991 she registered as a doctoral candidate in the Department of Economic and Social History at Liverpool. Her diploma dissertation was on the population history of Aughton, the village where she lived, while her master's degree used parish register material (made available by the Cheshire Parish Register Transcription Project, which she assisted) for a study of the eighteenth-century population history of the parishes of Nantwich and Wybunbury. Her interest in population history, and within that field in the history of women, particularly as mothers, had been stimulated in part by her Open University course and in part by her own early career in life as a wife and mother. Combining her knowledge of north-west local history with her knowledge of population history, she was an active member of the Local Population Studies Society and from 1985 onwards its dependable and very hard-working general and conference secretary. In this capacity Grace was known and respected in local population circles nationwide. She published several papers, her most recent being in volume 139 of these *Transactions*, and in recent months she had been engaged on a study of maternal mortality in Britain in earlier centuries. In various capacities she served many other organizations, including the local W.E.A. and the Ormskirk branch of the Business and Professional Women's Club, of which she was for some years Honorary Treasurer. It was impossible to know Grace without admiring her gritty determination to accept intellectual challenges in a field of historical study to which she brought her own strong views on present-day issues, based partly on her own life experience. She worked devotedly, uncomplainingly, and loyally to carry out the duties of any honorary post she

accepted; she worked all out on her research too. Modestly educated in her youth, as she regretted, her determined self-help was effective. But to any discussion that became too 'academic' she brought practical common sense. Beneath a slightly gruff exterior she was friendly and warm-hearted. Both in the north west and among those who knew her nationwide she will be greatly missed.

P. E. H. Hair