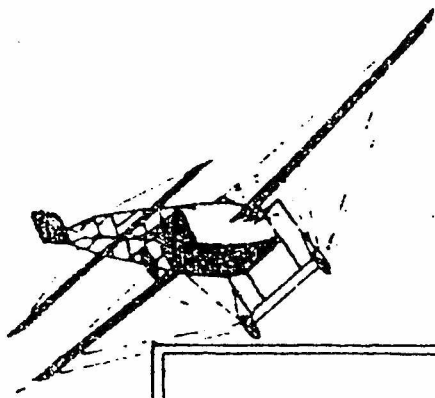


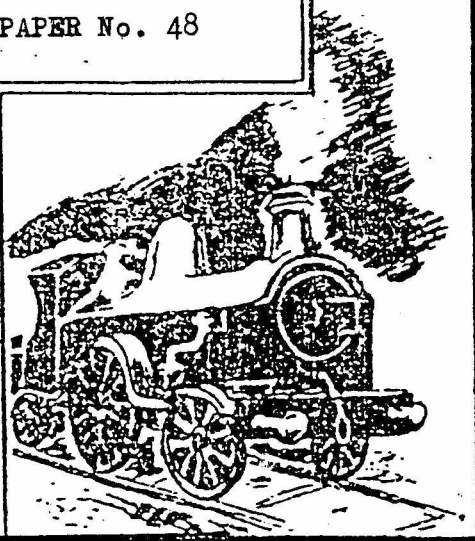
# An appreciation of Frank Brown



*Eastleigh & District  
Local History Society*

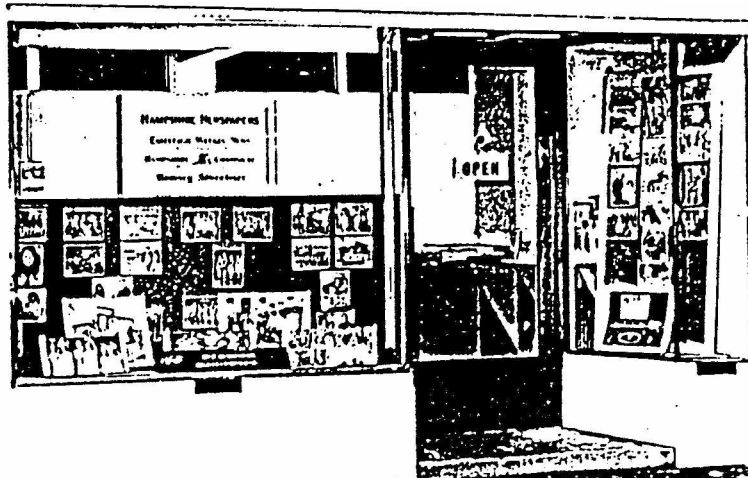
OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 48

*Ipsse henric  
tenei  
estlere in  
domin*



## EASTLEIGH WEEKLY NEWS

HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE GROUP





## AN APPRECIATION OF FRANCIS ERNEST BROWN

Frank Brown, Editor of the Eastleigh Weekly News, died on 14th May, 1994. He was a man devoted to his family, a loyal friend of the community and a distinguished journalist. He was never happier than when he was at home sitting at his typewriter, or more recently his computer, writing about his family life, his town and the community he loved. For me, he typified the best kind of journalist, courteous in interviewing, painstaking in research, with a phenomenal memory and accurate in reporting; perhaps his secret was that he loved people and writing about them.

The Eastleigh Weekly News is the kind of newspaper in which ordinary people have as much coverage as community leaders, politicians, vicars and even mayors. Things are reported in the right proportions and perspective with emphasis on the positive rather than the negative and avoidance of sensationalism and banner headlines.

I am reminded of a phrase used by Bishop John Taylor in an Induction Service prayer, "Fill the heart of your servant with joy in affirming all that is good in the community and. with courage in challenging all is that is mean and destructive". I believe that as a journalist and editor Frank Brown carried out those twin tasks admirably.

Frank Brown was essentially a man of Eastleigh. He was born in 1913 in a large house, No. 102, on the corner of Archers Road and the Crescent. His father died in March 1915, as a result of a cold after joining the Royal Engineers, and in 1929, at the age of 16, Frank started work at the Eastleigh Printing Works in a building, now named Grayton House, between Market Street and High Street, where the Eastleigh Weekly News was printed at that time. Within two years, he was appointed Editor. He was the youngest editor in the country and, apart from wartime service in India and Pakistan, he continued working for the paper until 1991, a period of over 60 years. Even after retiring, he continued writing for the paper with his weekly column, "As I Was Saying" and his memories in "Before Memory Fades".

For his war service, Frank was sent to the Middle East, being located at GHQ, Cairo, where he edited the Indian News Review and assisted with the Egyptian Mail and the Egyptian Gazette. At the end of the war, he was posted to India, where he served on the Public Relations staff of the Commander-in-Chief at GHQ, Delhi, editing an inter-services weekly newspaper called "Contact" and later, in Karachi, after the creation of Pakistan, editing a newspaper called "Dawn". He then returned to Eastleigh to resume his job as Editor of the Eastleigh Weekly News.

Writing, reporting and editing were in Frank's blood throughout his life; how fortunate for Eastleigh that we were to have the benefit of his wide knowledge, experience and outstanding talents for over 60 years. Yet, somehow, he found time for other interests and was involved in numerous local organisations.

There was the Eastleigh Carnival Committee which he joined in 1932 and rejoined when it was revived in the 1950s, playing an active part in collecting money. He was invited to become a life president. He was a life member of the Eastleigh and District Chamber of Commerce and of the Eastleigh Trades Council, of the Chandlers Ford Club and of the Eastleigh Unity Club. He was on the Board of Management of the Citizens Advice Bureau and an enthusiastic member of the Eastleigh Twinning Association. He served on the old Hospital Committee, on Age Concern and the former Accident Prevention Council. He was a founder member of the Borough Community Management Committee, founded by Mayor Reg. Lofting.

I have no doubt that all who served with him in these various organisations will attest to the quality of the interest and commitment he showed and, above all, his friendship.

For his service to his paper and to the local community, he was made a Freeman of the Borough in 1986, an honour which I know meant a great deal to him and which he eminently deserved.

Frank had other interests and hobbies. He loved reading and was familiar with all the classics, having a special liking for biographies. No doubt, his extensive knowledge acquired through his reading aided his considerable talent as a writer and journalist.

He also enjoyed listening to various kinds of music, in the main classical but with a special interest in 1930s dance bands and he built up a collection of CDs. He was familiar with local history and an enthusiastic supporter of the National Trust. Frequently, his son Robin would take him on afternoon outings when he specially liked visiting cathedrals.

He was a choir boy at All Saints Church enjoying the usual tricks traditionally perpetrated by choir boys. He certainly retained a deep love for the church and was always willing to give its various activities plenty of publicity. He readily accepted an invitation to become patron of the Appeal Fund and he was a valuable asset to the fund-raising campaign.

I have deliberately left until the end mention of family life. I am convinced that the love and support Frank received from Ellen, Robin, and Nick and his wife Maureen, formed the bedrock of his happy and contented life. Frank and Ellen were married for 48 years and were devoted to one another, giving each other tremendous mutual care and support. To have one of your offspring to follow in your footsteps is always gratifying and it must have brought much happiness that Robin should work so closely with him and succeed him as editor of his paper. I know, too, how much Nick, Maureen and their daughter meant to him. They were indeed a happy and united family.

So we give thanks to God for the life of Frank Brown and the kind of person he was - friendly, modest, courteous, unassuming, caring and generous, making all possible use of the talents he was given.

Nigel Harley

May 1994

© Eastleigh & District Local History Society

