

The following obituary was published in the periodical *Esperanto* (1918, 9/10, p.111) and translated in February 2013 by Paul Gubbins.

Clarence Bicknell

Following the death of Felix Moscheles ¹ our British colleagues have lost yet another old and distinguished person well known throughout the Esperanto world and loved by all on account of his charm and good nature. Who will not recall his tall figure, with the blue eyes and silvered beard, walking through the congress town with his faithful friends?

Who will not have read some of his neatly crafted poems written originally in Esperanto and often sung at one or another of the events at which we come together? Generally, at Christmas or New Year, his friends would receive a lovely card, always with an appropriate verse, carefully embellished and, at the same time, thoughtful. Thus he gave us something of his noble spirit, which wished to know only the best in others and which contained a wealth of love concealed beneath a retiring modesty.

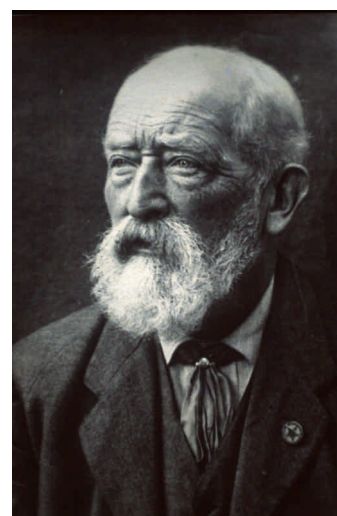
The last poem we received from him was on the death of Zamenhof ² and, with it, a melancholy postcard which grieved us greatly. Together with an invitation to visit Bordighera he added: "Come soon, because I feel my end is fast approaching." It was impossible to get a passport and attempts to do so proved in vain. The planned trip had to be abandoned. And now we receive news of his death. My dear British friends, and you too, our Italian cousins, all of whom knew him more closely, we weep with you for Clarence Bicknell, your supporter and counsellor wise.

His home in Bordighera remains an indelible memory for many of us who spent time there, next to the azure sea, surrounded by December roses. His guests would be already overjoyed with the welcome they received, but what a surprise when they entered that garden, forever in bloom, and went into the house: Esperanto through and through from cellar to roof. Our language was the only one to be heard there; everywhere were artefacts adorned with Esperanto symbols on vases, embroidery or cushions. It was life in an Esperanto paradise, with the external world excluded. Not that he forgot this other world: the poor children of the Italian town would testify to his constant charity.

In summer Clarence Bicknell decamped to the mountains, where he discovered ancient drawings made by stone-age man. In this field, as well as in that of botany, he became a noted man of science and corresponded with experts overseas. His museum was visited by many scholars.

As an esperantist he operated more behind the scenes, but worked hard for many years, not enjoying the limelight as a speaker or as one involved in public events, but generously supporting our cause and travelling to establish new groups or to convert people who might be able to serve. Everywhere and always he was arguing for our cause, and very many esperantists joined our ranks because of him.

He served the language most valuably with translations and original pieces crafted always with care. He patiently read and generously corrected the many writings of others. As a member of the Language Committee ³ he promoted and faithfully respected the basic language principles laid down by Zamenhof. In all areas he proved to be a quiet but diligent worker and was, in fact, one of our most sagacious pioneers, to whom many would turn in a difficult hour. His memory, and our gratitude to him, will now remain most precious in our grieving hearts.



¹ Translator's note: son of the pianist Ignaz Moscheles; painter, pacifist, pioneering esperantist, died December 1917

² Translator's note: creator of Esperanto, died April 1917

³ Translator's note: an advisory body, now the Academy of Esperanto, established to offer guidance on language use.