

## OBITUARY

**ALEXANDER JOHN WILEY**

It is with the deepest regret we again record in these pages the passing of another member of this Society, Alex Wiley of Kabete. He had been a member for many years, and at the time of his death, at the age of only 42, on the 17th September, 1959, was also a serving member of our Committee.

Alex was the only son of one of Kenya's early coffee pioneers, Mr. Tom Wiley of Ruiru, and after early schooling in England and later at St. Aidan's, Grahamstown, South Africa, he returned to Kenya in 1936 to a post in the Veterinary Laboratory at Kabete. He had intended to train as a Veterinary Surgeon, and had indeed started his University career in London in 1945, when ill-health forced him to give up his studies and return to Kenya, where he again resumed duty at Kabete, filling with distinction in latter years the post of Zoologist in the Zoological and Tsetse Research Section. His reputation as an authority on African ticks was known far beyond the borders of Kenya, and his scientific research on these, and latterly on helminthology, was distinguished by a meticulous and painstaking ability.

But there was scarcely a branch of natural history in which Alex was not also deeply interested, and in his methodical fashion he first studied and became widely known for his interest in butterflies, publishing a paper on these with Mr. J. Hudson in this Journal, which has guided the first steps of many Kenya boys in this fascinating study since then. He even amassed a valuable collection of natural history stamps, and botanical subjects, particularly poisonous plants, were of great interest to him. Latterly he took up the study of African cowries, of which his collection soon became known widely overseas, and on which his field notes and observations were outstanding for their accuracy and detail.

Birds were perhaps his deepest love, and of these his field knowledge was most extensive. He was in addition a photographer of considerable skill, his still pictures and films of birds and other natural history subjects being of most delightful quality.

To Alex, Kenya was home, and his quiet, unassuming, but firm personality will be missed by all, not least by our Committee to whose deliberations he contributed much sound wisdom in his short period of service. On the personal side, his cheerful, steady friendship will not be easily replaced; and to his widow Mary, and their three children who shared his love of nature, we extend our deepest sympathy in their loss.

V. D. v S.