

Edmund Chisholm Batten.

(Read January 31, 1898.)

During the past year (1897) the Royal Society of Edinburgh has lost one who took a lively interest in its welfare, and was, almost to the last, a constant attendant at its annual meetings.

Mr Chisholm Batten, who was a J.P. for Inverness-shire, was born in 1817, at Kingston, near Yeovil, Somerset.

He was the head boy of Sherborne School, and in 1834 proceeded to the University of Edinburgh. The *Life and Letters of Principal J. D. Forbes* (better known as Professor Forbes, the celebrated Alpine traveller, and discoverer of the theory of glaciers) tells how the young English student was the favourite pupil and life-long friend of the young Scotch Professor of Natural Philosophy.

Subsequently he was called to the English Bar, and *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1843 records: "On August 1, at Windlesham, Edmund Batten, barrister-at-law, [was married] to Jemima, only sister of 'The Chisholm.'" On the Chisholm's death, in 1858, this lady became the representative, the heiress-at-law, of the last three chiefs, her father and her two brothers.

Edmund Batten then assumed the prefix of Chisholm, by Royal Licence, and from that time his annual visit to Scotland, kept up till 1896, was usually extended to the Highlands.

Literary tastes seem to have been inherited with his manor of Thornfalcon in Somerset, for his ancestor, Robert Batten (whose estate at Pitminster was sold to buy that manor), is credited with having written, over the initials R. B., in the *Spectator*, to his friend Sir Richard Steele.

He was an original and prominent member of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society. He contributed to it almost annually a paper on biography or history, suggested by local architecture; he thus gave interesting accounts of the foundation of various churches and schools in that part of England, which

had been built and endowed by pious benefactors of former times; and traced, through the houses in which they took refuge, the similarity of the wanderings toward the south coast of Charles II. after Worcester, and of his son the Duke of Monmouth after defeat at Sedgemoor.

His connection by marriage with Inverness-shire led to his writing a work entitled *The Charters of the Priory of Beaully, with Notices of the Priors of Pluscardine and Ardchattan, and of the Family of the Founder, John Bysset* (the common ancestor of Lovat and of The Chisholm), published for the Grampian Club in 1877. He also published, in 1889, *The Register of Bishop Fox, while Bishop of Bath and Wells, with Life, temp. Henry VII. and Henry VIII.*

His antiquarian pursuits did not interfere with regular practice at the Bar. He wrote *A Practical Treatise on the Law relating to the Specific Performance of Contracts*; and in conjunction with Mr Henry Ludlow, *A Treatise on the Jurisdiction, Pleadings, and Practice of the County Courts in Equity.*

Mr Chisholm Batten was interested in many societies. Besides being a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, he was a member of the Northern Meeting, the Highland Society of London, the Somersetshire Society, the Tithe Redemption Trust, the Somersetshire Discharged Prisoners Aid Society, and the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society.

He was elected a Fellow of this Society in 1857, was one of the early members of the British Association, and was for more than fifty years a member of the Athenæum Club, 1846–1897.

Mr Chisholm Batten died at Thornfalcon, on Saturday, 13th February 1897, and was there, beside his wife, who died in 1883, in the forty-first year of their marriage, laid to rest under the shadow of the church which he had repaired from floor to roof.

J. F. C. B.