

# Obituary.

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GEORGE JAMES NEWBEGIN, F.R.A.S.

The world of amateur astronomers has sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. G. J. Newbegin on April 4th.

Born at Norwich in 1845 and educated at Priory School, he became apprenticed to a firm of booksellers and stationers at Tunbridge Wells. From there he returned to Norwich to assist his father in the business of tobacco manufacturing, to which he succeeded in 1871. The love for things scientific seems to have been inherited from his father, and to satisfy that longing, about 1875 he erected his first telescope—a 5-inch equatorial—in a quadrangle of the factory. This was about 35 feet square, the

walls being 30 feet high, and admitted of only a very limited horizon. Not to be daunted he built his telescope on a high pillar, and so overcame, to some extent, the difficulties of the situation.

In 1882 he was in a position to retire, and moved to Thorpe St. Andrew and re-erected his telescope in more spacious surroundings. In 1888 he added to his equipment by purchasing a 9-inch Cooke equatorial, housed in a fine dome 22 feet in diameter, and there for 16 years he devoted much of his time to the study of the Sun and contributed to the knowledge of our luminary by spectroscopic observations and also by photography of the sunspots.

In the early nineties he parted with his original instrument and set up a 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch Cooke photo-visual, which has done good work in other hands besides his own. Not being able to take part in Total Solar Eclipse Expeditions himself, he was ever ready to lend the instrument to some astronomer who could go, and, in 1898, Mr. C. Thwaites, M. Inst. C.E., F.R.A.S., took it to India, and in 1902 Mrs. Walter Maunder had the use of it at Mauritius, and again in 1905 Mr. Thwaites had the loan of it for the Spanish Expedition.

In the autumn of 1904, Mr. Newbegin moved to Sutton, Surrey, and re-erected the 9-inch, mounting the photographic lens alongside, and the remaining years of his life were spent almost entirely in observations of solar prominences, the results of which were published annually in the *Journal* of the Association.

It was always a great pleasure to him to show anyone interested something through his telescope, and young people, particularly, found him ready to satisfy their desire for knowledge.

For many years his observatories at Thorpe were open to the public on Easter Monday, and many people owe their first acquaintance with the heavens to his public spirit. On one occasion 241 persons visited Thorpe.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1888, and was an Original Member of the Association, and rarely missed the Meetings, especially in the days when he served on the Council of the latter institution.