



ERNEST H. NOON: 1886–1980

By the death of Ernest Noon, in 1980 January, the Association has lost one of its best-known and most popular members. Until recently he was a regular attender at our meetings, and served on the Council for many years.

Ernest Noon was born in London, but moved first to Dartford and then to Oxshott. His family had a restaurant business, and for most of his young life Ernest Noon was concerned in this—at ‘Noon’s’, a good lunch for workmen could be provided at 3d, and a three-course meal for 1s. 6d! Meanwhile, he had organized a Church Youth Group, and showed himself to be a good amateur pianist, organist and actor. In 1914–18 he served in the RAMC, and then joined the South Metropolitan Gas Company; he worked with the Company for a total of 40 years.

His interest in astronomy was long-lived. He was a member of our Association for 47 years; he was a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and he was above all an astronomical educationist. His classes at Morley College, for instance, were outstanding. When Eric Turner decided to found the Junior Astronomical Society, almost 30 years ago now, Ernest Noon was one of those who joined him at once; indeed, the first Council Meeting of the JAS consisted of Turner, Noon, and the present writer! Ernest Noon continued to play a major role in JAS affairs, and served a term as President.

At Oxshott he set up a private observatory, equipping it with a fine reflector. This, too, was used primarily for educational purposes. Ernest Noon's enthusiasm, his skill, and his generous, friendly personality made him popular with everyone; no would-be astronomer who went to him for help ever went away disappointed.

Ill-health handicapped him in his latter years, but he never lost either his interest or his enthusiasm. His last illness was short, so that he remained active until a very short time before he died. He is survived by his widow and their two children.

Ernest Noon was one of the truly great amateur astronomers. There are many people who owe him a deep debt of gratitude, and who feel that with his passing they have lost a friend who cannot be replaced.

PATRICK MOORE