

Obituary

Reg Spry 1902-1990

All members of the Association will be sad to hear of the sudden death of Reg Spry at the age of eighty-seven. He had been active to the last moments of his life and was actually preparing for lunch when he suddenly collapsed and died of a heart attack.

Francis Reginald Spry (he never used his first name) was born within sight of Greenwich Observatory, though his ancestry was in the West Country, and he lived for most of his life in Sussex - for many years at Littlehampton and then, since the early 1960s, in Selsey. He had a varied career; he ran a photographic business until the war, when he became an expert in repairing lofty radar masts, and was very much at home working on a precarious ledge hundreds of feet above the ground. Subsequently he ran a small general store in Selwyn, finally retiring in 1968.

Some people become amateur astronomers at an early age. Reg Spry was not one of these. It was only when he was 65 that he began to take more than a casual



interest in astronomy but, within a few years, he had made himself a splendid reputation. He was no theorist; he knew little about optics and his eyesight was not good enough for him to be a serious observer but, when it came to making the 'hardware' for telescopes and observa-

tories, he had few equals. He wrote an excellent small book on the subject; he broadcast and he lectured - and he had the wisdom to keep strictly to the one branch of astronomy that he knew so well. He was well-known at BAA meetings and served for several sessions on Council.

Reg Spry had many friends and no enemies. Despite the three tragedies in his life - he was twice happily married but both his wives died, while his only son died of meningitis at the age of thirty-nine - he never lost his sense of humour and he was the most amiable of men. He had other accomplishments too. For example, he was a very respectable pianist and, I remember, when I was ill-advised enough to challenge him to a game of snooker, he proceeded to make breaks in the twenties and thirties before calmly clearing all the colours.

He will be missed by his many friends but he will not be forgotten.

Patrick Moore