

## ERNEST OSBORNE TANCOCK

Osborne Tancock was born in Norwich on 1886 January 20. He was educated at Tonbridge School, and afterwards at Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he graduated in Natural Science in 1908. He then became a master at Giggleswick School in Yorkshire, and after serving in the Royal Garrison Artillery and being severely wounded on the Western Front was appointed to Wellington College, Berkshire, in 1918. There he remained until his retirement in 1946, being a Housemaster from 1928 to 1941. Throughout his teaching career he did all he could, in the classroom and outside it, to encourage an interest in astronomy, and at Wellington was in charge of the school observatory. After retirement in Oxford he continued the good work by lecturing to schools and societies, and by being a willing adviser to any who sought his help.

It was while he was at Giggleswick that Tancock wrote his first book, *Elements of Descriptive Astronomy*, published in 1913. This remained the standard elementary text for many years and ran through several editions. In its final and largely rewritten form it was a new book, *Starting Astronomy*, published in 1951. He was also editor of *Philips Chart of the Stars*, first issued in 1940 and since several times revised, and shortly before he died he derived great satisfaction in the knowledge that sales of this map had passed 50 000. The Common Ground series of astronomical filmstrips was launched in 1947 and Tancock was involved in that project, being the author of two of them. A demonstration in October of that year of the first three of the series was the last occasion on which he addressed a meeting of the B.A.A.

He had joined the B.A.A. as long ago as 1910, and when between the wars the Education Committee was formed he was appointed its secretary, a duty which, for a time, involved attending council meetings. He held this position until the Committee (recently revived) was abolished in 1946. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1919.

The closing years of this kindly and friendly man were overshadowed by illness. A legacy from his wartime injuries led to a serious operation when he was nearly eighty and his hearing and sight were failing. For the last year or so he was totally blind, but his mind and memory remained acutely active. When visited by the present writer there were always eager questions about the progress of astronomy and the activities of the B.A.A. He passed away after a very short illness on 1971 November 3.

In 1927 he married a teacher, Catherine Adams, B.A., who with their three daughters survive him.

E. A. BEET