

## ARTHUR WILLIAM VINCE: 1903-1980

Albert William Vince was born at South Green, Billericay, on 1903 January 27. He gained a scholarship to Sir Anthony Browne's School, Brentwood, where the Headmaster was James Hough, a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society whose father had been an astronomer at the Cape Observatory. The master introduced astronomical topics into the mathematical lessons, and the greatly interested young Vince subsequently won Baikie's *Through the Telescope* as a school prize.

After leaving school he spent many years in the City as a book-keeper and cashier for shipping agents, and the last 20 years of his career as an accountant in the Union Insurance Society of Canton. His knowledge of several European languages was put to good practical use in dealing with commercial correspondence, and also gave him access to reports and papers in the journals of foreign astronomical societies in the libraries of, first, the British Astronomical Association, to which he was elected in 1947, and second, of the Royal Astronomical Society, of which he became a Fellow in 1954.

He remembered seeing in 1910 both Halley's Comet and the Daylight Comet of that year, and Nova Aquila in 1918, when he bought a 3½-inch refractor which he used all his life, acquiring in addition a 162 mm Merz in 1947. He married Doris Franklin in 1932 and moved to Amersham in 1940, where he lived for the next 30 years, serving in the Home Guard for five years when the black-out greatly enhanced the already favourable country conditions for observing the night sky.

He had a wide interest in general astronomy, but his particular occupation as an amateur observer was with minor planets and the satellites of Jupiter and Saturn. For many years he worked as a member of the Computing Section on the compilation of tables of satellite phenomena.

On his retirement from business in 1963 Vince was appointed Treasurer to the Association in succession to Kennet Pollock, and for 10 years he carried out his duties with the utmost conscientiousness and devotion. Not only did he give a great deal of time to the financial affairs of the Association but he also engaged in a large number of other occupations involving the business of the BAA. From 1931 until her retirement in 1970 Miss Lydia Brown, the Assistant Secretary, had no assistant, and Vince relieved her of many routine office jobs. Among the tasks he took upon himself were the compilation of the List of Members up to its last appearance in 1969, the statistics of membership for the annual Council

Reports, the preparation for the printer of the yearly ballot list and of members' biographies, the production of the index to each volume of the *Journal*, the invoicing of advertisers, the revision of the Prospectus when necessary, and assisting in the proof-reading of some publications.

As Treasurer Vince introduced entirely on his own initiative two major responsibilities—the preparation of the complete set of accounts published with the Annual Report of the Council, work previously undertaken by the auditors, and the introduction of a pension scheme for the office staff.

Following his retirement from the Treasurership in 1973, Vince served on the Council as a Vice-President and was an elected member of the Council at the time of his death on 1980 March 17, following a long illness originating in ulceration of the leg. He was meticulous in all he undertook, and was a veritable watch-dog of all the procedures of the Council. His work for the Association saved literally many hundreds of pounds which would otherwise have been spent on paid assistance. The award in 1973 of the second Lydia Brown Medal was in every way a most appropriate and well-merited tribute to a good and faithful voluntary servant of the Association.

The few who knew him well were aware of an unsuspected sensitivity and quizzical humour behind a dry exterior. He was fond of music, especially of operatic works, reading and walking, and greatly interested in schemes for the preservation of steam railways. The loss of his wife in 1975 occasioned him deep grief from which he never recovered. Of the two sons he leaves, Philip, the elder, has been a member of the Association since 1952.

J. L. WHITE