

OBITUARIES

Arthur Frederick Bennett

It is difficult to assess the loss to the British Astronomical Association through the sudden passing of Mr. Bennett on 1937 May 14, but there is no doubt whatever his demise leaves a gap in the ranks which will be felt for a long time to come.

Ever since he joined the Association in 1922 he had thrown himself into its various activities with a zest which was at once a witness to the character of the man, and almost at once he joined the Solar Section. But he was a man of many parts and did not confine his interests to one branch of astronomy only. He was a true amateur astronomer in the sense that while engaged in his professional work he became attracted to astronomy by his love of the science, a love which developed as the boy grew to manhood.

His activities as an observer, however, did not begin until 1921 when he was presented with a 3-inch Watson Refractor. A year or so

later he became possessed of a fine 6-inch Cooke Equatorial which he erected in beautiful grounds at Leiston. This telescope was fitted with a Thorp-Beck direct-vision spectroscope for prominence work, and a pair of Watson "Aviation" lenses of 19.5 inches focus for stellar work. This instrument was put to many uses, and a reference to the indexes of the *Journal* reveals records of Occultations, observations of the Planets, Comets and the Sun. A few months before his death he installed a Synchronome sidereal clock, thus completing an outfit which was in many respects ideal.

In 1931 Mr. Bennett was appointed Hon. Treasurer of the Association in succession to Mr. Robbins and held the office until October 1933. Again on the election, in 1936, of the Rev. Dr. M. Davidson as President, he accepted the Treasurership and held it until the day of his death.

In everything he undertook Mr. Bennett was meticulously accurate, and being a man of "outstanding ability, sound judgment and vision," his handling of the financial resources of the Association was markedly successful, and his wise counsel and business acumen was of the greatest value.

Mr. Bennett was born on 1871 September 16 and was a son of the late John Bennett, Shipowner, of Grove House, Goole, in which house he passed his early boyhood. He was educated at Bramham College, Yorkshire, and on leaving school he was apprenticed to Messrs. Earles' Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Hull. In 1899 he was appointed by that firm as their Superintendent of Admiralty Contracts at Portsmouth Dockyard, and was responsible for the installation of the machinery and trials of H.M.S. *Formidable* and H.M.S. *London*. The former of those vessels acquitted herself with honour at the Battle of Jutland during the European War.

In 1902 he severed his connection with Messrs. Earles, and became General Manager of Messrs. Willans & Robinson, Ltd., Rugby. He remained with that firm until 1921, when they amalgamated with the English Electric Co. Ltd., a union for which he was largely responsible. To mark their appreciation of him his friends presented him with the 3-inch telescope already referred to. He retired from that position to become General Manager and a Director of Richard Garrett & Son, Ltd., Leiston, Suffolk, and retained that position until their works closed down in 1934.

Mr. Bennett was made a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1925, and was a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and a Member of the Institute of Naval Architects.