

Charles Lewis Brook

Charles Lewis Brook died on 1939 May 9 at the age of eighty-three. The Association has thereby lost one who, though personally unknown to a very large proportion of its members, was perhaps as active in its interests as anyone. As an observer, as Director of its Variable Star Section, as Vice-President, his contributions in each capacity, but especially his Directorship, were of great value to the Association.

Mr. Brook's interest in Astronomy appears to have begun in or before 1898, for he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1899 January and became a member of the Association the following June. How soon the study of Variable Stars attracted his attention is not known, but by 1902 January observations of his were being published in the *Memoirs*. His grasp of the subject must have become evident fairly early even to those outside the Association, for in 1908 vol. 58 of the *Memoirs of the Royal Astronomical Society* was published under his editorship, being Pogson's Observations of Thirty-one Variable Stars. In 1910 January he took over from Col. E. E. Markwick the Directorship of the Variable Star Section of the B.A.A., which he continued to hold until the end of 1921, when he was succeeded by Dr. Felix de Roy, though he continued observing (until the end of 1924, when ill-health put a stop to it) and to be responsible

for the SS Cygni reports (until 1928 inclusive). His own observations were made mostly with a 10-inch mirror.

A total of forty-two Interim Reports and two *Memoirs* were published by Mr. Brook. In addition we have the acknowledgment of his predecessor in office that most of the compilation of the two previous *Memoirs* was also done by him. He thus compiled all the observations of Long Period Variables published by the Association for the years 1900-19 inclusive. The two Appendices to these *Memoirs*, giving a continuous light-curve on an adequate scale for many Long Period Variables, though largely the work of Col. Markwick were nevertheless made possible through Mr. Brook's generosity, which showed itself even more in his very substantial contributions to the cost of publishing the Variable Star *Memoirs*, including the one for 1925-29. The uniformly high standard of his Interim Reports and *Memoirs* are perhaps Mr. Brook's most lasting claim to the gratitude of the Association.

Although Col. Markwick had already established the Section's chart material on the basis of charts after Father Hagen's *Atlas Stellarium Variabilium*, together with comparison star magnitudes to the Harvard scale, it remained for Mr. Brook to convert this material into the convenient form of blue prints, prepare the necessary negatives and provide the prints. These charts, dating largely from 1910, are only now being slowly superseded, a tribute to their general adequacy.

Those who came into contact with Mr. Brook agree in stressing two of his characteristics. First, he would approach any new problem slowly, and then after due consideration come to a decision about it that was invariably sound and showed a long view. Second, in spite of being an extremely busy man his correspondence with his observers was voluminous, and no trouble was spared in discussing points of detail that might be of help to the observer or to the work.

It was not only in Astronomy but also in Meteorology that Mr. Brook found an outlet for his scientific interests, and here again he was active both as an observer and in other ways, supporting the work of the British Rainfall and Thunderstorm Census Organisations. He also served a term as Vice-President of the Royal Meteorological Society.

Mr. Brook was born at Meltham, Yorkshire, and was educated at Uppingham and Trinity College, Oxford. He appears to have been good at games and to have kept up his interest in cricket; to have been an enthusiastic chess player and to have had a good ear for music. He was a keen churchman.

All the above activities were those of a man who in addition carried on an extensive family business and was also a Director of Messrs. J. & P. Coats, Ltd. Both on the technical and social side the thread mills over which he had control were, according to report, models of their kind.

It was a life the balance and fullness of which seems to have been peculiarly happy.—W. M. L.