

Henry Park Hollis

Members of the Association will have learned with deep regret of the death of Mr. H. P. Hollis, which occurred on 1939 August 7. One of the original members of the Association, he seldom failed to attend the meetings, and when they are resumed he will certainly be missed.

Henry Park Hollis was born on 1858 January 9. He was educated at Westminster School and afterwards went to Jesus College, Cambridge. He sat for the Mathematical Tripos and took his degree in 1880.

In the year 1881 Christie became Astronomer Royal in succession to Airy, and, consequent upon a rearrangement of the staff, Hollis was appointed an assistant in that year. His association with the Royal Observatory may thus be said to go back to the days of Airy. On his appointment Hollis was given charge of the Circle reductions, and took his share of the routine observations made with the Transit Circle, Altazimuth and Equatorial. A little later he was given charge of the reduction of the observations made with the Altazimuth, but it was not long before he was chosen to assist Mr. E. W. Maunder with the spectroscopic and solar observations. His duties were multifarious, for, during the first ten years of his service, we find him also assisting in the preparation of the Greenwich Ten-Year Catalogue, superintending the reduction of some pendulum observations, and in charge of the library and old manuscripts of the observatory. His extensive knowledge of the history and work of the Royal Observatory was no doubt due to the variety of tasks which he undertook during these early years.

In 1892 Hollis was one of the Greenwich observers in the Greenwich-Paris longitude determination, and when this was repeated in 1901 he again took part. He superintended the reductions of both sets of observations, and was also in charge of the reductions of a number of subsequent longitude determinations. In 1898 he took part with Mr. (later Sir Frank) Dyson, then chief assistant, in the determination of the longitude of Killorglin, at the head of Dingle Bay, Ireland. The experience he gained in carrying out the reduction of these longitude observations gave him a very extensive knowledge of the theory and practice of the transit instrument, and many of the articles which he published in *The Observatory* dealt with the subject.

In 1896 Hollis was placed in charge of the work of the Astrographic Chart and Catalogue at the time when the routine measurement of the Catalogue plates commenced. From that date onward he devoted himself to the task of carrying out the programme of work

undertaken by Greenwich, and on his retirement in 1920 he could well say that the Greenwich portion was completed.

For many years Hollis contributed a fortnightly letter on astronomical subjects to the *English Mechanic*, a series of articles of the greatest interest and use to amateur astronomers; and from 1893 to 1912 he was one of the editors of *The Observatory*. He was astronomical correspondent to *The Times*, and for many years past was responsible for the astronomical data given in Whitaker's *Almanack*. He was the author of a very readable book, *Chats about Astronomy*, and wrote that section of the *History of the Royal Astronomical Society* covering the years 1870-80.

Hollis was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1884 and served on the Council from 1909 to 1912. For many years he was a valued member of the Council of the B.A.A. and served as President in 1908-9.

After his retirement Hollis remained as keenly interested in his science as ever, and although the infirmities which sometimes come with age dealt somewhat hardly with him, he seldom failed to attend the meetings of those Astronomical Societies with which he had been associated for so long a time. Members of the Association will remember him as a quiet and courteous gentleman who was ready at all times to assist those who might seek his help and advice in astronomical matters. In 1882 he married Clara Susanna Clark; Mrs. Hollis died in 1932, and they are survived by a daughter and two sons.—P. J. M.