

John William Durrad

By the passing of John William Durrad the City of Leicester has lost its best known amateur astronomer. He was born on 1854 October 28, and his death occurred suddenly on 1939 December 29. For seventy years he took the keenest interest in astronomical problems, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society as far back as 1876. At that time he had already given considerable attention to the Moon, and when Goodacre published his book on the Moon in 1931 he included several of Durrad's drawings which had been completed many years before. In the eighth report on the Moon issued by the British Astronomical Association there is a full-page print of Gassendi by him, which was one of the formations he was particularly interested in.

When a young man, Durrad purchased an 8½-in. reflecting telescope which he used up to the last years of his life. He joined the British Astronomical Association in 1917, and while he took the deepest interest in the publications he does not appear to have contributed to its activities. For many years he was Chairman of the Astronomical Section of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, and took the leading part in lecturing and discussions. He had a natural gift for understanding astronomical problems, and those who were fortunate enough to be brought in contact with him were delighted with his expositions on current matters concerning the heavens.

Practically the whole of his life was spent in Leicester. In business he was connected for many years with the leather trade, but he retired some years ago. He had other pursuits besides astronomy. He was a member of the Leicester Society of Artists, and for many years his watercolours were shown at the Annual Exhibition, and he exhibited there until the year of his death. He was also a lover of music, and for over twenty years played the 'cello in the Leicester Orchestral Union. These interests he shared for many years with his wife, who was an accomplished pianist. Their two sons and a daughter survive him.—T. G. HIRST.