

Obituary

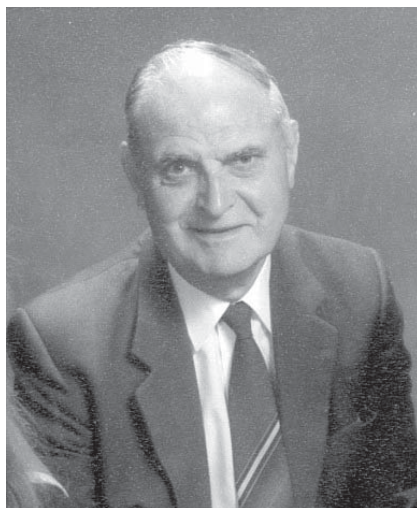
Lionel George Mayling, 1924-2004

Lionel Mayling, who died on 2004 January 4, was the Association's Treasurer from 1986 to 1989 and Assistant Treasurer from 1989 to 1999. Astronomy was not his hobby, although he came to be quite well versed in its language and customs during thirteen years of regular attendance at Council and other meetings.

Lionel was born in Fulham, London, on 1924 April 7. He was brought up in Fulham and duly attended primary and secondary schools in the borough. He enjoyed maths and commercial subjects, particularly book-keeping. He became a lifelong supporter of Fulham Football Club. In 1937, at the age of 13, he started his first job (outside school hours, of course) as a newspaper delivery boy and continued this until he was evacuated to Haslemere at the outbreak of the War. In 1939 he joined the Imperial Tobacco Company in its General Office. Here he first met his future wife, Peggy Rumbol, who worked in the adjacent Wages Office: they were married in September 1948. After service in the Home Guard he was called up in 1942. He wanted to join the RAF and fly but was found to be colour blind, so instead he took a flight mechanics course and reported to Padgate in Lancashire in August 1942. He ended the war on an overseas posting to India (Bombay and Madras), returning home in 1946.

In 1960 Lionel joined Lloyds Bank and worked mainly in branch banking in the City and West End, finishing at the Islington branch as Sub-Manager and retiring in 1984. Before joining the BAA he worked as Treasurer with the Newham Hospital League of Friends at Barts Hospital. As if all these duties were not enough, he found time to assist the Chingford Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society in various front-of-house posts and also ran its 'sweet shop'; he later took over as Box Office Manager. He was Treasurer of the Finsbury Circus Branch Investors Club, a group of Lloyds Bank staff who contributed a small sum of money on a regular basis which was invested in a portfolio of shares. He really enjoyed following the progress of the holdings in the financial press and updating the figures, almost entirely by hand with just a small calculator. In no way was he a computer buff though he was very 'computer friendly'. In addition to all these tasks, Lionel found the time to audit the accounts for a local church until quite recently.

In 1986 June the Association was looking for a new Treasurer. Candidates were thin on the ground (indeed, no-one out of some 2500 members volunteered for the post), and therefore a wider search was felt to be indicated. The Retired Executive Action Clearing House (REACH), which aims to place retired peo-



ple in charities on a voluntary basis, came up with Lionel's name. He was duly interviewed and appointed. Little did he know what he was letting himself in for. Up to that time, and following professional advice, no Value Added Tax had been paid on the Association's subscriptions. When they found this out the Customs and Excise immediately imposed a tax at 17% and a substantial fine. As a result the Association's accounts for the two years ending in 1988 July showed a loss of nearly £27,000. It was very largely due to Lionel's clear presentation of these and later accounts that this VAT was reduced on appeal to about 2% of subscriptions, at which level it still stands to this day.

Soon after this, and perhaps because of the publicity caused by these VAT negotiations, the Inland Revenue decided to 'inspect' the accounts. Lionel was once more in the forefront of the battle and it came as a great relief to me (I was President at the time) when the tax inspector went out of his way to tell me how well the accounts had been presented, and that they were completely acceptable. He was most impressed to find that Lionel could give complete details of all the covenant rebates that he had claimed.

Lionel found the rough and tumble of Council meetings, which

was fairly common in those days, less than enjoyable. As a result the *Newsletter* of 1989 February announced that he would be retiring as Treasurer in 1989 October. A new search was made and the successful candidate was duly appointed, but unfortunately he had to withdraw at the last moment. I had at this time just completed my term as President and I volunteered to take over as Treasurer. Imagine my relief when Lionel telephoned forthwith to say that he would like to continue with his previous duties but in the post of Assistant Treasurer, with the proviso that he would not have to endure the flak that sometimes enlivened Council meetings.

This arrangement worked well and Lionel continued to handle all the day to day accounts until he finally retired in 1999. Indeed, it is whispered in his intimate family circles that he was still involved in the banking of cheques when he was taken into hospital in December 2003. To say that he loved working with figures would be an understatement. During his period of office things happened with no fuss at all. Bills were paid on time; subs were collected in good time; bank statements and auditors' reports flowed in and out smoothly. In a nutshell, the Association's financial affairs were well managed. In recognition of all this hard work he was awarded the Association's Lydia Brown Medal in 1993.

Lionel was very much a family man, taking great care of his wife when she had periods of ill-health. He took great pride in his grandchildren William and Alice. He will be remembered with much love and affection by a great many people as being a real 'gentle man'.

I am greatly indebted to his only daughter Brenda Layzell-Smith for providing me with details of Lionel's life.

Henry R. Hatfield

**Sir Patrick Moore, President. Members on 5 continents
Publications & recordings re. the Herschel family.
Free admission to Herschel House Museum. Newsletter.
Public Lectures on astronomy/space**

JOIN

Herschel

**The William Herschel Society,
19, New King Street, Bath BA1 2BL U.K.
where William Herschel discovered Uranus in 1781.
Membership only £7.50 year UK, £10 overseas.
Society tie with '7ft. Herschel telescope' logo.
Write or ring 01225 311342 for details.**