

OBITUARY

WILLIAM MACINTYRE.

It is with great regret that we announce the death of William MacIntyre which took place on the 2nd May, 1947. Both the Council and the Ordinary Meetings of the Association will seem strange without his presence.

MacIntyre, a consulting engineer by profession, was born in Peebles in the year 1875. His early general engineering experience was gained in that hardest school of all—the workshop—and it will be shown later that this early training was the secret of his success in the accurate optical work accomplished during his leisure hours. After serving his apprenticeship he pursued his studies at Heriot Watt College, Edinburgh. A few years in the drawing office of D. Bruce Peebles and Co. Ltd., Electrical Engineers, during which he rose to the position of chief draughtsman of that concern, prepared him for an important post in electrical design work at British Westinghouse Co. Ltd., Manchester. In 1920 he became a consulting engineer in Victoria Street, London. He had lived at Harrow for the past 28 years. Called from his retirement during the war he was engaged in important government work for the Admiralty.

A good sportsman he played cricket in the Peebles eleven in his early days and gained no little renown as a swimmer. Golf was a favourite sport in later years and he was a life-member of the Northwich Park Golf Club. His vacations, spent mostly in Scotland, were largely devoted to fly-fishing.

Joining the Association in 1929 he became Treasurer during 1936-39 and Secretary 1939-45. Finally he served as Vice-President but it was during his term as Secretary that he made his most valuable contribution to the Association in that he, together with the other officers at that time, kept the Association going during the difficult years of the war.

MacIntyre's main interest in astronomy was in the design and manufacture of the optical components of telescopes and other observational instruments. It is recorded that, in his early twenties at Peebles, he constructed a 2-inch refractor and it is evident that his almost uncanny skill in "figuring" optical surfaces using sub-diameter tools was the outcome of years of experience and boundless patience. He made a 10-inch mirror for use in his own telescope—

a fine well-designed instrument which he had mounted in his garden at Harrow; and it was typical of him that, at the time of his death, he had a 15-inch mirror ready for mounting in a new telescope. His workshop, in the attics of his home, was well equipped with machine tools with which he had constructed some comprehensive optical testing gear, whilst space was allotted to glass grinding, polishing and testing equipment.

In addition to his extensive mirror work he had constructed a Shortt free pendulum clock and for several years had kept detailed records of its performance.

It was the experience and methods evolved in this same workshop which have been so freely passed on to members of the Association. He was always ready to give advice to the new member having trouble with his first mirror or to discuss, with the more advanced mirror-grinders, the best way to generate the curves of the latest Meniscus Catadioptric system telescopes. Many members must possess some of his neat, concise and well-reasoned letters giving advice on grinding, polishing and figuring mirrors, flats and prisms. Others may possess actual specimens of his art in the way of mirrors or flats. He presented a very fine 30° 4-inch flint prism to the Association for meteor spectra work. For testing this prism he prepared three 7-inch Pyrex glass flats $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick which were plane on both sides, showing straight fringes however the three were superimposed! For Greenwich Observatory he made the optical components—a 15-inch mirror and flat—for a specially designed telescope for use during a total solar eclipse.

MacIntyre leaves two sons and one daughter; Mrs. MacIntyre died in October, 1945. To those of us who were privileged to know him he will remain in our memories as a fine type of Scottish gentleman and a true amateur astronomer.

D.A.C.