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Henry Brown

MEMOIR

HENRY BROWN

To the names of Past Presidents whose loss the Institute has had to mourn in recent years must be added that of Henry Brown who passed away on 3 June 1943. Born in 1876, he showed an early aptitude for mathematics. He won a scholarship at the City of London School, and in his last year there he was awarded the Gold Medal for all-round proficiency. Thence he went to Cambridge, entering Trinity College as an Exhibitioner and in 1898 graduated as twenty-first Wrangler.

At that time he thought of becoming a schoolmaster, and on his tutor's advice stayed up a fourth year to take a science degree. On leaving Cambridge he was asked to go to Bedford College to examine the senior boys in mathematics, an experience which he enjoyed. By this time, however, he was considering taking up actuarial work and in 1899 entered the 'Hand-in-Hand' Office. Very soon after this he was offered the post of mathematical master at Bedford College, but he had become keen on the work of life insurance and decided to continue where he was, feeling that at last he had found work which would give full scope for his mathematical abilities.

He began his actuarial training under H. C. Thiselton alongside his predecessor in the President's Chair, the late C. R. V. Coutts. On the fusion of the 'Hand-in-Hand' with the Commercial Union in 1904 he (with many of his colleagues) was transferred to the life staff of the latter Company and remained there throughout the remainder of his business career, being appointed Assistant Actuary in 1912, Joint Actuary in 1928 and Actuary in 1933. His work was characterized throughout by thoroughness and by the soundness of his views. During his tenure of office the life business increased steadily and rapidly and when ill-health forced him to retire in 1938 he left his Company with its affairs in a highly satisfactory state and well able to face the approaching storm with confidence.

He became a member of the Institute in 1899 and qualified as a Fellow in 1904, but his office work, coupled with a natural diffidence, prevented him from taking any active part in its affairs until he became an examiner in 1914. From this time on his innate ability was evident, and on the resumption of the examinations after the war he was Secretary to the Board, in which capacity he served during the next four examinations. Election to the Council followed, and there he soon made his mark. He was an Honorary Secretary from 1923 to 1925, a Vice-President from 1925 to 1929 and Treasurer from 1932 to 1934. During this period one outstanding piece of work was that of Chairman of the Papers Committee for the first post-war International Congress of Actuaries which was held in London in 1927. The admirable manner in which he guided and stimulated his colleagues on this Committee and the excellent fruits of its work contributed in no small measure to the success of this Congress.

In 1936 he was elected to the President's Chair and delivered an address which was a model of its kind, indicating a richly stored mind and closing with a quotation which, read to-day, seems almost prophetic: 'Not the walls, but the men, make the city.' The references he made to the new system of tuition just about to be introduced show how keenly he was interested in the education and training of students. He always had this subject closely at heart, and it is significant that his first speech at the Institute was to open a discussion at a Students' Society meeting, and that on several subsequent occasions he occupied the Chair at these meetings.

At the Coronation it fell to his lot to represent the Institute at Westminster Abbey, an honour which he keenly appreciated. Other events which marked his term of office were the introduction of the Actuarial Tuition Service, the

new syllabus for the examinations, a revision of the by-laws and the eleventh International Congress of Actuaries which was held in Paris, and at which he proved a worthy representative of the Institute. Early in 1938, however, his health failed, and to the great regret of all who knew him he had to forgo presiding at the Institute dinner. Though he recovered sufficiently to take the Chair at the following Annual General Meeting he found it necessary to give up official life both at the Institute and in business. Characteristically he continued to help as much as possible and contributed to the *Journal* a series of reviews and a note on the Registrar-General's Reports on occupational mortality which are clear evidence of the high quality of his work. His last contribution was as recent as February last when he joined in the discussion on the Beveridge Report.

Particularly will he be remembered by the younger actuarial students with whom he came into contact, for he had an uncanny ability to sense when any of them were in difficulties over their studies, and many will remember with deep gratitude the friendly talks during which he drew on his wide mathematical and actuarial knowledge at the psychological moment when such help was most welcome and most effective. He faced ill-health with characteristic cheerfulness and courage, and his many friends will have the memory of a man of high principles and kindly ways, though never self-assertive, always most generous in his acknowledgement of any help he received from others, and one who gave his best always to the Institute and to the profession of which he was a greatly valued member.

G. G.

On Active Service

JOHN RICHARD MARTIN, Student, Sergeant Observer, R.A.F. Killed, 27 April 1942.

CHRISTOPHER EDWARD THOMAS BARTRAM, Fellow, Pilot Officer, Royal Australian Air Force. Officially presumed to have been killed, 31 July 1942.

STUART KENNEDY SCOTT, Student. Killed, 26 January 1943, while serving with the Royal Australian Air Force.

BRUCE HARRY LAXTON, Student. Died, February 1943, while on service with the Home Guard.

GORDON FRANCIS JONES, Associate, Pilot Officer, R.A.F. Killed on active service, April 1943.

FRANCIS WILLIAM MORRELL, Student. Presumed killed, 4 July 1943, while serving with the R.A.F.

JAMES PARKES, Student. Died as a result of enemy action while serving with the R.A.F. in Sicily in August 1943.

PAUL GILDER, Student, Lieut., R.A. Killed in action, September 1943.

CHARLES LIONEL MOODY, Student, Pilot Officer, R.A.F. Killed on active service, 7 October 1943.

GERALD DARLEY REDFERN, Student, Lieut., the Green Howards. Killed in action, March 1944.