

by

J. L. Jooste

John Henry Bentley was a warmhearted man with wide interests. He was born in Pretoria but had his school training in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London where his father was transferred, and part of his schooling in Pretoria. During the last war he was of member of the S. A. Air Force and after demobilization completed a course of training at the University of Cape Town. After graduating he served as engineer to a large concern in the Sugar Industry in Natal. Later he served as Maintenance Engineer of a concern producing powdered milk, at Luderitz, S.W.A. Thereafter he served a large creamery at Vryburg in the same capacity. Finally he settled in Pretoria where he accepted a post on the staff of the South African Bureau of Standards.

He was a keen amateur astronomer and was in close contact with the astronomers of Pretoria. He will be warmly remembered at the Radcliffe Observatory for the numerous occasions on which he assisted astronomers, either directly at the telescope or on the crowded public evenings.

As a Scoutmaster, a member of the Mountain Club of South Africa, a keen aqua-lung diver, and a loyal supporter of the Congregationalist Church, where he was a deacon, and also through the many activities concerned with social welfare, he enjoyed a wide circle of friends. By profession a scientist he worked for some eleven years at the South African Bureau of Standards, where he was Principal Technical Officer in charge of the Mechanical Laboratory.

His interests ranged right from the heavenly stars, symbolic of the spiritual life in which he believed, through the lofty mountains, symbolic of the high ideals he tried to make his daily life, through the valley of daily life where he always sought opportunities to do good, down to the beauties and interesting things of the lesser known realm below the surface of the waters. He was not a very talkative man, at times rather inclined to be a man of few words. Physically tall and strong, he never depended on that to influence others --- He was the lion that never roared. He was always happy when out in the veld or on the mountainside, where nature provided entertainment far different from human affairs. Even the snakes showed a marked respect for him. He had a way with them. Before his marriage he would often keep a snake in his hotel room before handing it to the Zoo or snake park.

He was a man who loved nature but above all human nature, and giving help to those who needed it. It was characteristic of him that he should have been helping an elderly friend, troubled by bees in the house, when he met the tragic accident that proved fatal after three weeks of anxiety. After being stung by a number of bees, (the doctors could find only five sting marks on his head and no more) he fell into a coma from which he never fully recovered, and on October 6, 1965 at the age of forty-four he passed on in the early hours of the morning.

He is survived by his widow and two very young children to whom the Society will wish to extend its deepest sympathy. He was a nephew of Mr. J. C. Bentley, a former President of the Society.

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Australia's Powerful New Radio Telescope

by

Patrick Davidson

On November 19 the Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies, officially "opened" one of the world's most powerful astronomical instruments.

This is the Mills Cross, a giant radio telescope that stands at the Molonglo Radio Observatory at Hoskinstown, near Canberra, national capital of Australia. It is a vital new research instrument in the service of the Cornell University (USA) - University of Sydney Astronomy Centre which made its debut in September 1964.

The Mill Cross consists of two horizontal arrays of antennae, one oriented on a north-south line, the other on an east-west. The north-south arm measures one mile by 42 ft. and the east-west one mile by 38 ft. They intersect at right angles at the centre to form a huge cross with an area of about 500,000 sq. ft.

Use of the telescope will greatly enlarge knowledge of the structure of the Milky Way and of distant radio galaxies. It will also play a