WILLIAM THOMPSON HAY, son of the late W. R. Hay of Aberdeen, was born on 1888 December 6 and died on 1949 April 18. Shortly after leaving school he joined a firm of engineers, but at the age of twenty-one he gave up engineering as a profession and went on the stage. He soon achieved world-wide popularity in the character he created as a comic schoolmaster, and during the period between the two wars he was one of the most successful and popular comedians on the variety stage. In 1934 he began to appear in films, and in succeeding years he played the leading role in many comedies on the screen. In his professional capacity he toured the world in 1923 to 1924, the United States in 1927 and South Africa in 1928 to 1929. In the first World War he served as an air-pilot and from that time on always maintained a keen interest in aviation, possessing and flying his own aeroplane. In the second World War he served in his professional capacity in the Special Branch of the R.N.V.R., but owing to a severe illness he had to resign his commission. However, in 1945, when he was sufficiently recovered, he became a Lieutenant in the Sea Cadet Corps, instructing the cadets in navigational astronomy. Shortly after the war, in 1946, he had a second serious illness from which he never fully recovered and was forced to give up all active work both in his profession and hobby. However, he continued to attend astronomical meetings whenever possible until a few months before his death.

From an early age he had been interested in astronomy, but it was not until 1932, when he joined the British Astronomical Association and became a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, that he began to meet other astronomers. Previously to this his astronomy had been confined to star-gazing; but now he realized that he himself might be able to contribute something to the science, both by direct observation and by designing new apparatus, for his original interest in engineering had never deserted him.

At this time he had a 12½-inch Calver reflector and a 6-inch refractor by Cooke, mounted in his home-made observatory at Norbury. On 1933 August 3 he announced the discovery with his refractor of a large white equatorial spot on Saturn. This discovery was in no sense due to luck, nor one which anyone might have made had he chanced to look at the planet. Many astronomers must have observed Saturn at the time without noticing it; its detection implied a thorough familiarity with the appearance of the planet as well as considerable observational ability. A great many observations of this spot were obtained and gave us one of the most reliable determinations of the rotation period of Saturn's equatorial zone. His main observational work, however, was the visual determination of cometary positions with an accurate cross-bar micrometer of his own making. These he contributed regularly to the Comet Section of the British Astronomical Association and they were used extensively in the determination of cometary orbits. He also did a certain amount of cometary photography. In 1932 he published a paper in the *B.A.A. Journal* on "A Simple Chronograph", which he made from Meccano parts and a gramophone motor; and two years later he produced a second paper on an improved model of the same instrument. He made several of these instruments, both for his own use in connection with his cross-bar micrometer, and as gifts to some of his astronomical friends. Shortly after this he designed and built a "blink microscope", which though of the simplest construction works perfectly and is easy to adjust and manipulate. Unfortunately he never published a description of this instrument,