

need to remove his considerable library to a smaller house, delayed matters until ill-health overtook him and the project became unfeasible. There remains, however, a useful paper in volume 47 of the *Journal of the British Astronomical Association* on the first recorded observations of a transit of Venus, which Horrox carried out in 1639 November.

Besides this work, Gaythorpe published other papers on the history of astronomy and, with his amiable personality, he kept up a considerable correspondence with others of like interest who included some past Astronomers Royal. A painstaking care and meticulous accuracy characterize all his work and if one is tempted to regret that the family business prevented his undertaking a more academic career, one can nevertheless be grateful for those useful contributions time and health permitted him to make: contributions that, in the end, are his best monument.

C. A. RONAN.

## WILLIAM PORTHOUSE

William Porthouse was born at Carlisle, Cumberland, on 1878 May 22, the son of William and Catherine Porthouse of Burgh-by-Sands, Cumberland.

Most of his business life was spent in the service of the Manchester Corporation, where for many years he was in charge of the administration of the local and general Acts covering river conservancy and sewage disposal. He was the author of *A General Commentary on the Practical Management of the Public Health (Drainage of Premises) Act, 1937*, which was generally acknowledged as the standard discussion of the Act and its relation to industrial processes.

His first love in astronomy was the study of the lunar surface, and many of his observations were utilized by the late Walter Goodacre when compiling his comprehensive map of the Moon. For many years he owned and used the 13-inch reflector with which the late N. E. Green made his classical observations of Mars in Madeira in 1877.

From 1905 until his death Mr Porthouse was a member of the Manchester Astronomical Society, occupying the presidential chair for three years, and addressing the Society on many occasions on subjects of lunar

and planetary interest. From 1913 until 1924 he edited the *Journal* of the Manchester Astronomical Society, and shortly after the outbreak of World War II, in an effort to hold the Society together at a time when meetings in public appeared likely to be curtailed, he founded and edited a Newsletter *Current Notes*. This has survived the passing of the years under several editors since Mr Porthouse retired in 1950 and it has, indeed, continued to spread light since the dark days of wartime, just as his well chosen motto "Post Tenebras Lux" foretold for the Journal.

After his retirement from Manchester Corporation in 1940 Mr Porthouse served for some years on the Borough Council and local committees in Stockport. He died suddenly at the home of his daughter, with whom he resided, on 1964 July 15. Mrs Porthouse pre-deceased him in 1949, and his only son died in 1959.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1920.

K. BRIERLEY.