

OBITUARY

Rear-Admiral RICHARD EVELYN BYRD died in Boston, Massachusetts, on 11 March 1957. An obituary will appear in a later number of the *Polar Record*.

MAXIME CHARLES LESTER was born on 25 September 1891, and died in London on 3 March 1957. He was trained for the Merchant Navy, and served in the Canadian and British Navies during the First World War, seeing service in the North Atlantic. In 1920 he accompanied J. L. Cope, T. W. Bagshawe, and G. H. Wilkins to Graham Land with the object of continuing the work of the Swedish South Polar Expedition, 1901–03, by mapping the western coast of the Weddell Sea. They were unable to get transport to the Weddell Sea coast, but were taken by whale catchers to the Danco Coast of west Graham Land, where a camp was set up. Cope returned to Europe to try and charter a vessel for the next season, which he failed to do, and Wilkins left the expedition. Bagshawe and Lester spent the winter of 1921 in a waterboat on the beach, the smallest party ever to winter in the Antarctic. They made useful meteorological, ornithological and tidal observations, and were relieved in January 1922 by a whale catcher. Lester joined the Merchant Navy, but visited the Antarctic again in 1926–27 on the *William Scoresby*.

Commander JOHN HUGH MATHER was born at Stroud Green in 1887 and died at Farnborough, Kent, on 10 April 1957. As a junior member of the R.N.V.R., John Mather was helping to load the *Terra Nova* in the London docks in 1910. He begged to become a member of the expedition in any capacity and Scott found room for him as a member of the crew, before the mast. He served as seaman for the three years, but his experience of clerical work led to his being frequently taken from that rank to help with secretarial work. This was continued at the end of the voyage and he spent much time assisting Lieut. Evans (now Lord Mountevans) in his lecture tours.

Mather served at sea in the First World War with distinction and not long afterwards he conceived the idea of an Antarctic Club, restricted at first to men who had wintered inside the Antarctic Circle, or who had the Polar Medal. The club took shape in 1929 with Mather as Honorary Secretary. From that time to the end of his life he was the presiding genius of the club, re-elected Secretary by acclamation every year, and devoting all his spare time from his own profession to its interests. He knew all its members personally and was in frequent correspondence with them all over the world. He was, I believe, responsible for all the simple but effective and moving items of ritual used at the annual dinner—the President taking wine successively with each expedition represented at the dinner, the health of absent members at the striking of two bells, and the silent toast to those “who adventured to the Antarctic and did not return”. For its coming-of-age dinner, the club unanimously elected him as its President, but the next year he characteristically slid back into the post of Honorary Secretary and continued to be its life and soul to within a week or so of his death.

F.D.