

At the Council meeting held in April, 1930, the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

“ The Council in recording in their Minutes that on April 21st, 1930, Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, a former President of the Society and for many years a member of Council, had been a member of the Society for fifty years, wish to extend their heartiest good wishes to him for the future, and to congratulate him upon the completion of a record unique in the Society's history.”

We are not concerned here with Major Baden-Powell's career outside aviation, only to say that he served on the Nile in 1884 and 1885, in the South African War 1899-1900, and the Great War 1914-1918. With his death, however, the world has lost one of its most lovable personalities, many have lost a close friend, and the Society has lost a member to whom it must ever owe the deepest debt of gratitude.

HERBERT CHARLES WILLIAM BREWER, *Associate Fellow*, 1904-1937.

Herbert Charles William Brewer was killed at the early age of 33 in a railway accident at Swanley Junction on June 27th. The son of the late Rev. H. P. Brewer, he was educated at Lancing College, and Queen's College, Cambridge, where he took an honours degree in engineering. In 1927 he joined the technical staff of the Fairey Aviation Company and showed outstanding ability. He was responsible for a great deal of the design of the Battle, and became an authority on stressed skin construction. Later, at Stockport, he became chief technical officer on the production of the Battle. He took every opportunity of flying on flying trials to obtain a practical insight of the machine with which he had been concerned.

A man who was personally immensely popular and able, the death of H. C. W. Brewer is a serious loss of one who would have risen high in his profession. He was elected an Associate Fellow of the Society in 1935.

REGINALD JOSEPH MITCHELL, *Fellow*, 1895-1937.

The death of Reginald Joseph Mitchell on June 11th, 1937, meant to British aviation the loss of one of its most brilliant designers.

Born at Stoke-on-Trent, he served his apprenticeship with Kerr, Stuart and Co., Ltd., of which he became assistant engineer. In 1916 he joined the Supermarine Aviation Works, Ltd., and became chief engineer and designer in 1920. In 1922 he helped to modify the A.D. flying boat which won the Schneider Trophy for Great Britain, and was concerned in the designs of an amphibian for the Martlesham competition, machines for various foreign governments and the Air Ministry.

In 1924 came Mitchell's first outstanding success with the S.4 which made a world's speed record of 226.76 miles per hour. In 1927 he produced the S.5 which won the Schneider Trophy at Venice, and in 1929 the S.6 which won the trophy at Southampton, and in 1931 the S.6b which finally won the trophy outright for Great Britain, achievements without parallel in aircraft design. The S.6b made a speed record of 407½ m.p.h. following the last Schneider Trophy race, and for his work Mr. Mitchell was made a C.B.E.

Despite the intense concentration during those years necessary to produce the fastest seaplanes in the world, Mr. Mitchell was able to design the flying boats Southampton, Scapa and Stranraer, which have been widely ordered by the Royal Air Force. He also designed the Seagull for coastal patrol for the Royal Australian Air Force and the Walrus amphibian for the Fleet Air Arm. A year before his death he produced the Spitfire, one of the fastest single-seater fighters in the service.

In the brief twenty-one years he was in aviation Mr. Mitchell became recognised as one of the leading designers of the world, and had he lived there is little doubt he would have continued to stand out head and shoulders among most of his contemporaries. He was a member of Council and was elected to the Society in 1918, and awarded its Silver Medal in 1927.

The following is an appreciation of Mr. Mitchell by one who worked in close association with him:—

“ I feel impelled as one who has worked for R.J. to express a few words of appreciation. All who have worked for him or under him have had a rare opportunity to see how careful consideration and genius can be perfectly applied. His was a quiet, subtle not obvious genius, and has often been mistaken for luck. ‘ Lucky Mitchell ’ he was called sometimes, but there wasn’t really much luck. His intuitive capacity for grasping the essentials, getting to the point and staying there, was one of his great characteristics. A corollary to this was his uncanny ability to detect errors in involved estimations or calculations by the application of simple common sense. His mind was difficult to follow when on a problem, partly because he was a man of few words and said nothing unless there was something worth saying, but mainly because most people’s minds tend to rush on and over obstacles, whereas he would stick at a snag day after day until every aspect of every solution was clear. Then instead of a snap decision he would make a considered compromise.

“ He once said in connection with aeroplane design: ‘ Don’t do to-day what you can put off until to-morrow,’ for premature decisions are often what have killed promising designs. R.J. mistrusted complex theory and involved calculations because in spite of their impressiveness they so easily lead one up the garden. He would say that unless an estimation can be done in a few minutes, it is not worth doing, or that practically any result can be obtained with sufficient accuracy by an approximation. R.J. brought a completely open mind to bear on each new design. He didn’t hamper himself by former ideas and decisions on new work. Every possible scheme would be investigated. In his opinion experience was more important than theory, and he would ask the advice and study the experience of many people, and not only of those in closest touch with him. Suggestions from any member of his staff were always welcomed, and he never turned down a suggestion because he had turned it down once before. Even proposals to which he reacted unfavourably would not be dismissed without thorough investigation. After gathering so many and varied opinions, his genius asserted itself by his ability to digest them and grasp the essential truth. His designs were thus brilliant compromises, showing little of the development of a single idea such as may be seen in other cases. This freedom from set ideas enabled him to produce outstanding designs of widely varying type, such as Southampton II, the Schneider Trophy seaplanes and the Spitfire, which in their times were or are the best of their kind in the world.”

*Brigadier-General Sir CAPEL HOLDEN, Fellow, 1856-1937.*

Brigadier Sir Capel Holden died on March 30th, 1937. The eldest son of the Rev. Dr. H. A. Holden, he joined the R.A. in 1875. He was a brilliant engineer and the inventor of many instruments and apparatus for artillery and electrical science. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1895, became Vice-Chairman of the Royal Aero Club, Vice-President of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and of the Royal Society of Arts. He was Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club in 1905, served on the board of the National Physical Laboratory from 1907 to 1911, read the James Forrest lecture before the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1908 and was President of the Radio Society of Great Britain in 1927.

Sir Capel Holden was elected to the Society in 1913.