

**Turner, Herbert Hall** (1861-1930), born and elementary education at Leeds, thence Clifton College and Trinity Cambridge, graduating second wrangler 1882. As Chief Assistant, ROG, 1884-93, he worked on the Carte du Ciel photographic survey and catalogue. He devised two essential means of enabling the 18 participating observatories to progress with the enormous task. He proposed a rectilinear coordinate system to convert any stars apparent to true position, combining laborious corrections in one simple linear equation. He also invented an eyepiece scale for plate measurements, which enabled observatories to employ semi-skilled labour for reduction and publication. These innovations made it possible for photography to replace much meridian work. After moving as Savilian professor at Oxford 1893-1930, he never flagged in helping failing observatories to bring their part of the great scheme to completion. He brought nearly a quarter of the entire catalogue to completion at Oxford. He subjected the data from different catalogue zones to statistical analyses, and in the 1920s was the first to suggest star streaming. He devised a new method of deducing stellar magnitudes from measured dimensions of their images, and thereby made a new data base available to stellar statisticians.

A large, convivial and extrovert individual with a gift for friendship, during his time at Oxford he was a key figure in the RAS, Foreign Secretary 1919-30, was internationally influential. Partly of financial necessity, he encouraged volunteers to work at the Oxford Observatory. Imbued with the ethos that no good research should be lost, he took in his friend John Milne's seismology, turned it in to a unique resource, and wrung two discoveries from it – the deep focus of earthquakes and inference of the Earth having a liquid core, and mapping the 'ring of fire', the volcanoes around the Pacific. Meanwhile he brought the work of four British variable star observers to publication.

No observer for the sake of it, his skills were as a mathematician, manager and analyst. By example and leading his small staff to enormous effort he kept his obsolescent Observatory relevant during a period of change. In 1929 when a large sum was offered for the Radcliffe Observatory site, his support of their move to South Africa and its benefit to British astronomy brought him under vituperative and clandestine attacks by Professor Frederick Lindemann (later Lord Cherwell). He died of a stroke in 1930, almost certainly caused by stress. Lindemann's case failed in 1935, the Radcliffe moved, and Turner's successor Harry Plaskett was enabled to found a school of astrophysics in Oxford.