

induction, (ordinary induction, not mathematical induction) from a number of measurements to results with a definite accuracy; for example, the angle sum of a triangle is  $180^\circ \pm 3^\circ$  from class results, and so may reasonably be taken as  $180^\circ$ . This kind of approach leads to the realisation of the need, at a later stage, for an axiomatic basis; and at the early stage it protects the pupils from the 8 by 8 dissection fallacy.

*The Academy,*  
*Dumfries.*

Yours sincerely,  
R. D. WALTON

[The 'reserve' of the Scot is well known. I am grateful to Mr. Walton for his detailed notes and for the friendly tone of the preliminary correspondence. E. A. M.]

## OBITUARIES

ARTHUR PERCY ROLLETT, M.S.C.

### I.

I first remember meeting Arthur Rollett when he gave a lecture to the London Branch of the Mathematical Association many years ago. His subject was Model Making in which he was of course an acknowledged expert. On that occasion, as on many occasions since, I was impressed by his wonderful fluency and his most remarkable memory. In those days I was able to attend meetings of the London Branch regularly, and I often enjoyed talking to him. It was, therefore, with very considerable pleasure that I learnt some years later that he was coming to inspect us as a mathematical member of a group of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Needless to say his visit was helpful, informative and most enjoyable. From that time onwards we seem to have met regularly at conferences and committee meetings all over the country but I suppose mainly in the London area. Occasionally, if he had business to keep him in London, he would spend a night with me before returning to his beloved Devon. On these occasions we always sat talking well into the small hours and I never ceased to be astonished by his extraordinarily good memory of people, his wide human and artistic interests, and his never failing sense of humour. I think it is probably true to say that I listened to him more than he to me, but this was due to a lazy selfishness on my part because I so much enjoyed his saga of people and events.

He often spoke of his interest in music, of which he had a deep knowledge, of his plans for his garden at home, and of his very original experiments in brewing and distilling. He spoke a great deal about his own family and showed a very keen interest in mine.

However, I suppose that the thing that I shall always remember most clearly about him was his absolute intellectual honesty. If he had doubts about the methods or motives that one employed, either in teaching or in writing, he made his opinions abundantly clear. I often found him outspoken, but never offensive, and I always respected his opinion because it was founded upon a wealth of experience that he had gathered not only throughout England but also abroad. Next in order I respected him for his devotion to the welfare of the Mathematical

Association. It is absolutely true to say that he never spared himself in his efforts to assist in every possible way that he could, and I have no doubt that the tremendous amount of work that he put in during his year as President unfortunately but inevitably hastened his death.

I think of him not only as a friend but as a scholar and great public servant, and I hope that the absorbing interest of his later years, his book on the life and works of George Boole, will somehow be brought to a successful conclusion.

*Moretons,  
Harrow-on-the-Hill*

J. B. MORGAN

Arthur Rollett, who died on July 28, was educated at Gainsborough Grammar School and left with a scholarship for Queen Marys College, London. He taught mathematics and some science from 1926 to 1945 at Sevenoaks School. Martin Roseveare saw him there and invited him into the ranks of her Majesty's inspectors of schools. In 1951 he became Staff Inspector of Mathematics and held this post with distinction until 1963, when he retired. In 1967 the Mathematical Association made him its president.

He was an essentially modest man and as a teacher was more likely to be found sitting beside a pupil and helping him personally than declaiming from the blackboard. It is said that Roseveare had to wait until the last day of the Full Inspection to see him taking a whole class. He had a keen, precise mind and had no use for vague all-embracing generalizations. The pamphlet "Teaching Mathematics in Secondary Schools" (H.M.S.O. 1958) bears witness to his abilities as a writer, his feeling for history, for the significant quotation and the apt and amusing phrase.

He produced with Dr. Martyn Cundy a book "Mathematical Models" which has become a classic—full of interesting mathematics, theoretical as well as practical. His lecture on "Experiential Mechanics" where heavy bars crashed (intentionally) to the floor, lead shot rose and corks descended in whirling test-tubes of water will be remembered by hundreds of teachers who heard and saw it on Ministry courses and at branch meetings of the Mathematical Association.

Although he regarded school mathematics as organized and symbolized common sense, and mathematical rigour as a variable dependent more on the pupil than on canons of axiomatic purity, he approved of some of the reforms which have been called in schools "modern mathematics". In recent years he had been engaged in writing a life of George Boole, also a Lincolnshire man.

Arthur Rollett had a great capacity for making friends and there was no part of the country where he did not know the mathematical scene. He loved music, gardening, cricket, and old cars. He hated pretentiousness. His erstwhile colleagues and his many friends will miss him greatly, and his work for mathematical education will bear fruit for many years.

*Singleton Lodge,  
Blackpool*

R. C. LYNES

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