OBITUARIES

Prof. W. B. R. King, O.B.E., F.R.S.

PROF. KING died on January 23, 1963, when he appeared to be recovering from an operation which had not been regarded as serious. All who knew his mental agility and physical energy at the age of seventy-three were shocked by his premature death.

Prof. King was a notable figure in British geology, through a combination of several circumstances. His researches were characterized by variety, for he was no narrow specialist, but throughout his life the stratigraphy of the Lower Palaeozoic and the Ordovician in particular were a major interest and gave rise to some of his most important papers. For this he was always ready to acknowledge the inspiration of his old teacher, Prof. J. E. Marr, and it was from the same source that he was given his introduction to the Pleistocene. He was deeply interested in the development and modification of drainage patterns, particularly in his native Yorkshire dales, and since the First World War had been recognized as an authority on hydrological geology. After the Second World War, following his participation in *Pluto*, the cross-channel oil pipeline project, he became deeply interested in submarine geology and published notable pioneer papers on the interpretation of the floor of the English Channel.

With such a research record, together with his outstanding ability as a teacher whether in the lecture room or in the field, it is not surprising that King achieved high academic honours. After graduating at Cambridge in 1912, he was on the Geological Survey, in part nominally, until 1920, and then returned to Cambridge under Marr. From 1931 until 1943 he was Yates-Goldschmidt professor at University College, London, and then succeeded Prof. O. T. Jones in the Woodwardian chair at Cambridge, from which he retired in 1955.

In the eyes of the geological world, Prof. King was linked, as no other man was, with the two World Wars. He served through the whole of the First World War, rendering notable service with the Royal Engineers in problems of water supply, mine-driving and the provision of constructional materials, and he was awarded the O.B.E. and twice mentioned in despatches. When the Second World War broke out, he was called up immediately and remained in uniform until 1943. Not only was he involved in the Dunkirk evacuation, when he was awarded the M.C. for gallantry, but he also played an important part in the early planning of the Normandy invasion. As geological adviser to the Army Council for several years after the War, he was responsible for establishing a pool of geologists within the Reserve of Officers.

King was president of the Yorkshire Geological Society during 1949–50, of Section C (Geology) of the British Association in 1951, and of the Geological Society of London during 1953–55. For five years he acted as secretary of the latter body and he also served on the Council of the Royal Society. Scientific honours were bestowed abundantly on him, and it must suffice merely to list them. He was a foreign correspondent of the Palaeontological Society of India, the Geological Society of America and the Geological Society of France; he received the Gosselet Medal from the Société Géologique du Nord, the Prestwich Medal from the Geological Society of France and the Murchison Medal from the Geological Society of London; and the Universities of Lille and Rennes conferred honorary doctorates on him.

King was deeply attached to his native Wensleydale. He was born there on November 12, 1889, with two and a half centuries of family association with the dale behind him, and throughout his professional life he retained a

dwelling there. When he retired from the Woodwardian chair, he and his wife went to live permanently at Worton, in Wensleydale. To Mrs. King as much as to him should be credited the reputation for quiet, warm-hearted hospitality and generous help to students and friends which characterized him at Cambridge, London or his cottage at Worton. His wife and two daughters survive him.

F. W. SHORTON

Dr. F. M. Brewer, C.B.E.

DR. FREDERICK MASON BREWER, who died suddenly in Oxford on February 11, was born in London on September 12, 1902. He was educated at Owen's School, and in 1920 won an Open Scholarship in Natural Science at Lincoln College, Oxford. His tutor there was Sidgwick and in 1924 he obtained a 'First'. In 1925 he went as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow to Cornell University, where he worked under Prof. Dennis. This was an experience which he greatly enjoyed, and many of his chemical interests, such as that in the element germanium, stemmed from this period. It was there that he met his wife, who was also working in the United States. On returning to England in 1927 he became a lecturer at Reading, but he returned to Oxford in 1928 as a University demonstrator in chemistry. He joined the staff of the Old Chemistry Department, now the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory, under Prof. Soddy. He remained in that Department for the next thirty-five years, being for the last fifteen years in charge of the laboratory. F. M. Brewer was a great champion of inorganic chemistry and of the laboratory in which he worked. In his early days he took a very active part in the practical teaching, and when, in 1934, he was appointed to be an examiner in the Final Honour School he startled the candidates by setting papers more genuinely inorganic than any for some years. He had a strong belief that chemists, whether graduates or undergraduates, should know how substances behaved and what they were like. Because of this he carried out many experiments in his lectures showing the properties of the less-common elements. Only a few weeks before his death he gave a Christmas Lecture for children on "Colour" and delighted his young audience by performing a large number of colourful experiments.

Dr. Brewer had a keen interest in geochemical problems and conducted a number of spectrographic studies of trace elements in rocks and minerals. Before the War, he carried out some investigations of divalent germanium compounds and in recent years he extended his interests to include the chemistry of gallium and indium in their lower oxidation states. His research group has made a number of contributions to our knowledge of gallium (I) compounds, including co-ordination compounds of gallium (I) tetrahalogallates and their behaviour in non-aqueous solvents.

When F. M. Brewer took charge of the Inorganic Chemistry Laboratory, plans had already been proposed for the building of a new department, but it was during the period he was in charge that the new building was erected. He made great contributions to the planning of this and was responsible for holding the department together when its research activities were scattered over a wide area. During this time the number of students engaged on research in the department increased manyfold. This increase was achieved smoothly, thanks to the guiding hand of F. M. Brewer. He led a department which grew in stature while he was there and all who

served under him are grateful for the happy atmosphere he provided and growth he encouraged. He was, for many years, tutor in chemistry at St. Catherine's Society, and when St. Catherine's College was formed he became one of the first Fellows. He showed great pride in the successes achieved by former students of the Society. He also contributed his knowledge and experience to the University as a member of the Hebdomadal Council and of the Board of Faculty of Physical Sciences.

His interest in past and present members of the Oxford Chemistry School was shown by the large amount of time he devoted to the Alembic Club and by the surprising knowledge he possessed of old members who revisited Oxford. During the years before his death, the annual dinner of the Alembic Club became, thanks to his efforts, an occasion attended by large numbers of old members, and it is to be hoped that it will continue to be a thriving occasion as a tribute to the efforts F. M. Brewer made. He was also the senior treasurer of the Oxford University Scientific Society and of the University Swimming Club. He had himself represented the University at swimming as an undergraduate.

During 1939-45, F. M. Brewer was chief warden of the City of Oxford. In 1944 he became city councillor and in 1959-60 was Mayor of Oxford. For the past two years

he had been an alderman. He devoted a great deal of time to the city and was active in many of the committees of the Council. On several of these he served as chairman. He also devoted much time to education at all levels. He was chairman of the Southern Region Council for Further Education and also of the governors of the Oxford College of Technology. In addition, he was actively engaged and concerned with the examining of boys and girls for the General Certificate of Education. For his many public services he was promoted from M.B.E., to which he had been appointed in 1944, to C.B.E. in the latest New Year's Honours List. He was invested at Buckingham Palace only a few days before he died.

F. M. Brewer gave too generously of his time and energy to a wide variety of university, civic and educational causes. As a result, we have lost too soon a most unselfish person whose willingness to take on the many unrewarding jobs, in addition to the more interesting ones, made such a great contribution to the many communities which he served. Many hands will be required to carry on the services which he rendered to so many organizations and societies and he will be missed by a wide circle of friends, both young and old.

J. W. LINNETT

NEWS and VIEWS

Electronic Engineering at Nottingham :

Prof. R. L. Beurle

DR. RAYMOND LOUIS BEURLE has been elected to be the first holder of the new chair of electronic engineering in the Department of Electrical Engineering in the University of Nottingham. Dr. Beurle is at present manager of the Camera Tube and Image Tube Research Department of the English Electric Valve Co., Ltd., a post which he has held since 1957. After gaining honours in engineering, he was employed during the Second World War on experimental work for the Royal Navy. At the end of the War he was in charge of research into the application of new techniques and devices for the benefit of blind people, and for his thesis on "Electronic Aids for Blind People" he was awarded the degree of Ph.D. He then transferred to the Royal Radar Establishment at Malvern for research in computing techniques but left in 1955 to take up a post in the Imperial College of Science and Technology as a Research Fellow and lecturer in physics. He resigned in 1957 to take up his present post.

Airborne Radar Group, Royal Radar Establishment:

Mr. S. B. Marsh

MR. S. B. MARSH has been promoted to deputy chief scientific officer and has been appointed head of the Airborne Radar Group at the Royal Radar Establishment, Malvern, in succession to Dr. E. V. D. Glazier. Mr. Marsh started his career in the Civil Service as a trainee at the G.P.O. Research Station at Dollis Hill in 1940. He gained an honours degree in engineering at the University of London in 1945 and remained with the G.P.O. at Dollis Hill until 1949, when he joined the Radar Research and Development Establishment, which was amalgamated with the Telecommunications Research Establishment to form the Royal Radar Establishment in 1953. For the past few years he has been a superintendent in the Guided Weapons Department of the Royal Radar Establishment.

Director, Guided Weapons (Explosives), Ministry of Aviation:

Mr. A. Brewin

MR. ALBERT BREWIN, formerly assistant director, materials and explosives, Ministry of Aviation, has been promoted to deputy chief scientific officer to fill a new

post of director, guided weapons (explosives). Mr. Brewin was educated at Wyggeston Grammar School, Leicester. He was a Draper scholar at East London (now Queen Mary) College, University of London, where he graduated with honours in chemistry. After spending two years in research in organic chemistry at the University and taking his M.Sc., he entered Government service in 1928. He joined the Research Department, Woolwich, where he remained until his transfer in 1946 to the Explosives Research and Development Establishment, Waltham Abbey, where he was for a time the acting director. Mr. Brewin's interests have remained in the field of high explosives and propellants, where he has made substantial contributions both in the laboratory and in the development of manufacturing processes. Since 1959 he has held posts at Headquarters.

The Joint Mathematical Council of the United Kingdom

A JOINT MATHEMATICAL COUNCIL has been formed in order to meet the growing need for joint consultation between mathematical societies themselves and provide a central organization for consultation by Government, industry and others in relation to questions of national concern, such as the supply of teachers of mathematics. Its chairman is Sir William Hodge, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and its secretary is Prof. J. G. Semple of King's College, London. The Council will not take over the functions of any of the existing mathematical societies. Its function will be to ensure that matters of national importance are considered by the most suitable groups, and that the efforts of different bodies to solve those problems are properly co-ordinated. The societies at present represented on the Council and the names of their representatives are: the British National Committee for Mathematics of the Royal Society (Prof. M. H. A. Newman); the London Mathematical Society (Dr. J. A. Todd); the Conference of Professors of Mathematics (Sir William Hodge); the Mathematical Association (Mr. J. T. Combridge); the Royal Statistical Society (Prof. M. S. Bartlett); the Edinburgh Mathematical Society (Prof. E. T. Copson); the Glasgow Mathematical Society (Mr. A. G. Sillitoe); the Association of Teachers of Mathematics (Mr. D. H. Wheeler); the Mathematical Section of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education (Mr. D. Paling). A limited