

## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### ADMIRAL SIR MOSTYN FIELD.

(1855-1950)

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On 3rd July, 1950, Admiral Sir Mostyn Field, K.C.B., F.R.S., died at his home near Salisbury, hardly a week after his ninety-fifth birthday.

For five years (1904-1909) he was Hydrographer of the Royal British Navy, and subsequently was Acting Conservator of the River Mersey, an Assessor for Appeals in the House of Lords, and Admiralty representative on the Port of London Authority.

Admiral Sir Mostyn Field was the youngest son of Captain J. B. Field, R. N.; he was born on 27th June, 1855. Educated at the Royal Naval School, he entered the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1868. By taking three "firsts" in his examinations and winning the Beaufort Testimonial, he gave early promise of his abilities and reached the rank of Lieutenant at the age of twenty, his service as Sub-Lieutenant being thus limited to only one year.

Having applied to specialise in Hydrography, he served from 1876 to 1881 in H. M. Surveying Ship *Fawn* on the east coast of Africa and in the Sea of Marmora. He took part in Admiralty surveying operations off the west coast of Africa and from 1882 to 1884 he was in the surveying vessel *Sylvia* in the Straits of Magellan and off the south-east coast of Africa. In 1885 he was appointed in command of the *Dart*, a composite yacht employed in the Naval surveying service and during his four years in her was responsible for surveys of the south-east coast of New Guinea and of the Tasmanian coasts. The Board of Admiralty expressed their satisfaction at the "very large amount of excellent surveying services performed in New Guinea". In 1889 he was promoted Commander. From 1890 to 1894 he commanded the screw surveying vessel *Egeria* operating along the north-east coast of Borneo, in the Anamba Islands, and Straits of Malacca, and in this connection received the "special approbation" of the Board of Admiralty.

On his return home, he proceeded to take a course at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, receiving on its conclusion a letter expressing their Lordships' satisfaction with his proficiency in study.

Promoted to the rank of Captain in 1895, for three years he commanded H. M. Surveying Vessel *Penguin* in Australian waters and in the

South Pacific, and for a longer period commanded the *Research*, formerly called the *Investigator*, on surveys in home waters.

In 1904 he was appointed Hydrographer of the Navy, and he held this office until 1909. It was during this period that selection and survey of Fleet anchorages were made, and in a report dated 1920, Admiral Field himself wrote a description of the circumstances which led to the choice of Scapa Flow as a principal anchorage and of how the Surveying Vessel *Triton* began in 1905 a survey of that vicinity, lasting nearly five years.

In May, 1906, he was promoted Rear-Admiral and in July, 1910, a month before he retired, Vice-Admiral, subsequently reaching the rank of Admiral in June, 1913. He received the honour of Knight Commander of the Bath in 1911. In the summer of 1910 he was a British delegate to the International Scientific Congress held at Buenos Aires.

In 1910, Admiral Field devised, in collaboration with Admiral Purey-Cust, a patent automatic tide-gauge on the air escapement principle, working under pneumatic pressure supplied by hand-pump or from a compressed-air tank. The apparatus includes an automatic recorder, replaceable by a *Bourdon* manometer for use on board ship.

He was the author of a large number of technical articles connected with hydrography and contributed to the *British Encyclopædia* its notices on surveying, sextants and sounding. Having been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1905, he published papers on similar subjects in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society" and in the monthly bulletins of the Royal Astronomic Society.

Among his best remembered work was the preparation in 1908 of the Third revised and enlarged Edition of *Hydrographic Surveying*, the first two editions of which were prepared by Captain (later Admiral Sir William) Wharton, his predecessor in the office of Hydrographer of the Navy.

Although published privately, this work was for many years recognised as the Text Book of the British Hydrographic Service. A Fourth Edition of this invaluable work was published under his guidance in 1920.

He married in 1894 Laura Mary, daughter of Captain G. H. Hale of the Bengal Army and is survived by his widow and a daughter.



## OBITUARY NOTICE

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**Commodore H. O. RAVN**  
**(1868-1949)**

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We regret to have to announce the death of the former Danish Hydrographer Commodore Ravn :

Henrik Olufsen Ravn was born on November 13th, 1868, and passed away October 21st, 1949.

As a son of a Naval Officer, it was quite natural that he should enter the Navy.

From his first years in the Navy he took a great interest in Navigation and Hydrography. He frequented the Geodetic Course at the Army College. 1893-1895 and took part in the Scientific *Ingolf* expedition, 1895 and 1896.

He conducted a land survey in the Southern part of Iceland, Reykjanes, in 1900.

Instructor of Navigation at the Naval College, 1900-1909.

Leader of maritime surveys in Danish waters 1909-1914. Head of the Survey-section of the Hydrographic Office, 1910-1919. Hydrographer 1919-1933.

Took part in Hydrographic Conferences, 1926, 1929, and 1932. The Danish Maritime Survey owes its present position to Commodore Ravn who introduced modern surveying methods.

At his initiation, the maritime survey of Greenland was taken up and a special ship *Hejmdal* was built for this work.

He introduced the Mercator Projection in Danish Survey work in 1910 and computed the tables for Denmark, the Farøes and Iceland.

He is the author of a manual of Surveying *H.O. Ravn Söopmåling* in two volumes with tables.





COMMODORE H. O. RAVN  
(1868-1949)

## OBITUARY NOTICE

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### Professor Martin KNUDSEN (1871-1949)

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Professor Martin Knudsen, who was born on 15th February 1871, died on 27th May 1949 at the age of 78

In the year 1899 he assisted in the foundation of the "International Permanent Council for the Exploration of the Sea" and for nearly fifty years had been active in the work of the Council.

From 1901 to 1912 he was a lecturer at the University of Copenhagen, and Professor of Physics from 1912 to 1941.

He took part as a physicist in the Danish *Ingolf* oceanographic expedition in Iceland and Greenland waters in 1895 and 1896 and during this period he improved the technique of observation and the method of chlorine determination, introducing the "Knudsen pipette" and *standard water* (eau normale) for titration of silver nitrate solution. He also improved the construction of the reversing thermometer, and designed a new apparatus for analysing the content of dissolved gases in sea-water.

Martin Knudsen was entrusted with the revision of the "Hydrographic Tables", a task which he accomplished with great efficiency (the whole being completed in 1901), on the basis of samples of sea-water collected from different parts of the world.


He remained in charge of the production of *Primary Standard Water* at the Central Laboratory from 1908 right up to the date of his death.

From 1902 to 1948, Martin Knudsen edited the *Bulletin Hydrographique*; was Vice-President of the Council from 1933 to 1947, and Chairman of the Hydrographic Committee for 22 years.

Through his influence Charlottenlund Slot was placed at the disposal of the Danish institutions for oceanographical study and of the Central Bureau of the Council.

He took an active part in the work of the "Association for Physical Oceanography" and was its President from 1930 to 1936.

In 1909 he became a member of "Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabskabernes Selskab" (Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters), holding the position of Secretary from 1917 to 1945.



He received an honorary doctor's degree at Lund University and the "Agassiz Medal". His country bestowed upon him the cross of Commander (first class) of the Order of Dannebrog.

The unassuming and friendly nature of this eminent scientist made it easy to collaborate with him and won him a large circle of friends, both at home and among the many scientists with whom he came in contact abroad.

