
OBITUARY

Standish Conn O'Grady, MC,
AFC, BA, BAI

who was born on 4 October, 1888,
died on 7 May, 1968.

The son of Standish O'Grady
(Irish writer and friend of W. B.
Yeats), he studied at Trinity College,
Dublin, and in 1910 received the
degrees of BA and BAI.

He was to specialize in hydraulics,
and after brief early experience on
engineering works with the Congested
Districts Board of Ireland, took up an
appointment with the Canadian De-
partment of the Interior (Dominion
Water Power and Reclamation Ser-
vice). Here until 1916 he was engaged in storage and field power investigations,
carrying out surveys in rough country.

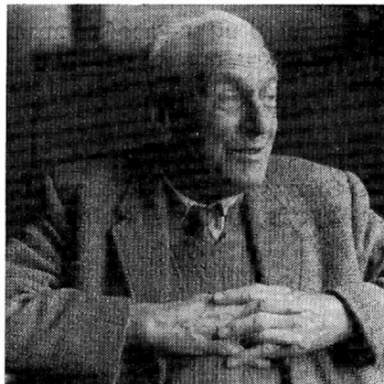
In World War I he joined the Royal Flying Corps in September 1916, and
by November was an instructor, noting casually in his log-book for one day
less than a year later, 'Aerial combats 3, crashes 1'. He served with the rank
of Captain until 1919 and was awarded the Military Cross.

After the war the Water Power Branch of the Canadian Government
pressed him to return to their service, but he chose to stay in England, engaged
on hydro-electric schemes and hydraulic installations, first with Boving &
Company Ltd, Engineers, then as a consulting engineer on his own account.

In 1931 he joined the staff of Armstrong College in the University of Durham
as a Lecturer in Civil Engineering. Again his work was interrupted by war
and he spent some years of World War II as a Flying Instructor in the Royal
Air Force, chiefly in South Africa. He was awarded the Air Force Cross and
resigned with the rank of Squadron-Leader.

In 1944 O'Grady returned to the University of Durham: when the grade of
Senior Lecturer was instituted there, he was one of the first to be promoted.
He retired in 1954 and thereafter spent his winters in the West Indies and
Canary Islands.

A man of abounding zest and enthusiasm, O'Grady led a full life quite
apart from engineering. He fenced at international level, was a leading
instructor in the University Fencing Club and a member of the Fédération
Internationale d'Escrime. Yachting and mountaineering also claimed much
of his spare time and he was a member of various mountaineering clubs,
including the Rock and Fell Club of the Lake District. While climbing in
Skye he fell, was badly injured and left partially lame, though this did not deter
him from his various activities. But his chief passion was gliding. Through-
out his university career and after his retirement, he was an active figure with
the gliding clubs of the North East. Well-known to both Yorkshire and
Newcastle Gliding Clubs, he joined the latter in 1936 (with over 2000 hours of
flying experience), and agreed to become their chief flying instructor provided



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he could pass his tests. Within half-an-hour he had gained his A, B and C gliding certificates! He also set up the first club-to-club gliding record in the country.

Cheerful friend and good companion, 'Conn' or 'O'G' was never known to lose his temper, nor was criticism of him ever heard. A colleague writes, 'To generations of civil engineers at Newcastle "O'G" and his two-foot slide rule will be remembered with affection . . . he died in his 80th year after a protracted illness, one of the memorable "characters" of the university and civil engineering worlds'.

O'Grady was elected to corporate membership in 1919 and was on the Roll for 42 years. He resigned from the Institution in 1961.

W. F. C.