

CLASSIFICATION

SUBJECT

SOURCE

DATE

Brannon, Philip

Southampton Daily Echo

12 . 1 . 40

A LIFETIME OF INVENTION

So'tonian Who Took Out
192 PatentsBRANNON'S ASSOCIATION
WITH SIR HIRAM MAXIM

SOUTHAMPTON has had two outstanding inventors. One was Mr. Walter Taylor, from whose foundry and iron works at Woodmill were turned out a number of new and useful appliances, many of which were particularly valued in the Navy and largely used in Portsmouth dockyard.

Mr. Taylor's work has already been dealt with to some extent in these columns, but I think the fact is new that amongst his many inventions is claimed the circular saw.

It is worthy of record that this invention attracted the attention of King George III, who went over to Woodmill to see it, with Queen Caroline and the Princesses, on one of the Royal journeys from Weymouth to Windsor.

The other outstanding inventor who did most of his work at Southampton was Philip Brannon, with whose aerial inventions I dealt last week. If Brannon had been responsible for nothing more than his researches into the theory and practicability of aerial navigation his inventive work would have been sufficiently remarkable, but in point of fact his activities in this direction represent but a tithe of what he accomplished in the inventive sphere. I find that he took out no less than 192 different patents, and there were few fields to which he did not apply his ingenious skill.

The 19th century was a golden age for the inventor. Providing he had the right kind of mind he could scarcely look round without seeing opportunities for his improving trait. Brannon had that

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WAR

RUSSIAN aircraft Spain were built material, and we fall to pieces in the air

This is the view of Grey, joint editor of *J the World's Aircraft*.

In his preface to the just published, he Russia, by buying air abroad and copying accumulated about 4,000 'planes by the beginning

Yet the fighting in Sp that "the Russian-built American fighters are were roughly built material, and were flab pieces when dived."

UNRELIABLE

The Russian-built American and French were, he says, also un the other hand, the F planes in Spain, nearly types, stood up well.

Mr. Grey declares machine and no aero any of the nations (Germany) which were their latest bombers in Spain surpassed t of the British aircraft

This is a conclusion ments, which "seems confirmed since the d war."

Mr. Grey says that known to have newer types in production

type of mind, and he was in the habit of looking round quite a lot. It is the prerogative of the inventor to believe infallibly in his own ideas; it is the prerogative of his critics to say "I told you so" when they fail to work.

We know from the present development of air navigation that some of Brannon's air theories could scarcely have been expected to stand up to practical tests. They would probably have met a fate once described by a famous scientist as the killing of a beautiful theory by an ugly fact.

for instance, that his work was much admired—some of it, indeed, seems to have been envied—by a fellow-inventor of no less eminence than Sir Hiram Maxim, who was very friendly with Brannon and frequently visited him, mostly at Brannon's office in Victoria-street, London.

This fact is doubly interesting because of the Maxim connection with Southampton which my late colleague, "Townsmen," sought to establish in an article written about two years ago. Sir Hiram Maxim's association with Brannon provides a link with an outstanding Southampton personality which may have some importance in connection with "Townsmen's" theory.

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Interested

AT the same time Brannon was an intensely practical person. One has only to examine his wide range of inventions in other spheres to realise not only how far ahead of his time he was, but how right he was also in his early application of theory.

It is a fact, too, that Brannon's inventions attracted the attention of some of the best brains of his time. It is interesting to discover, for instance, that his work was much admired—some of it, indeed, seems to have been envied—by a fellow-inventor of no less eminence than Sir Hiram Maxim, who was very friendly with Brannon and frequently visited him, mostly at Brannon's office in Victoria-street, London.

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In his preface just published, Russia, by buying aircraft abroad and copying accumulated about 4,000 'planes by the beginning

Yet the fighting in Spain that "the Russian-built American fighters are were roughly built material, and were flab pieces when dived."

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The Russian-built American and French were, he says, also unreliable. On the other hand, the French planes in Spain, nearly all types, stood up well.

Mr. Grey declares machine and no aeroplane any of the nations (Germany) which were their latest bombers in Spain surpassed that of the British aircraft

This is a conclusion, comments, which "seems confirmed since the war."

Mr. Grey says that known to have newer types in production.

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THE REV. E. E. S. UT

was at Yateley, Portsmouth,
ton, Shedfield and Woolton.
At Compton he succeeded
Cunningham, who retired
ill-health.

Many Shipping
Inventions

SEEING that Brannon lived so
long in Southampton, it is un-
derstandable that he took a special
interest in shipping, and many of
his inventions were designed as an
aid to sea navigation. One of them
was a propeller which could be
used for both sea and air naviga-
tion, and in the former case could
also be used for steering, as is
done by the modern Voith-
Schneider system of propulsion
used by at least two new vessels
well-known at Southampton.
Hiram Maxim was particularly in-
terested in this propeller. It
seems, however, that Brannon had
no success in getting his idea
adopted by shipowners.

Brannon also designed a fire-
proof ship, and H.M.S. Warspite,
constructed in the 70's, was "fire-
fitted" according to Brannon's ad-
vice. The danger of fire was
greatly feared during the latter
period of the wooden ships, par-
ticularly after steam had come
into use, and with this work Bran-
non was more successful.

One of his most remarkable sea
inventions was a "speaking and
singing steam whistle" for ships

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of institution and in the ceremonies, which were conducted by the Rural Dean (the Rev. Uppington), acting for the (the Ven. E. R. Morgan).

EVACUEE CHORUS

The male choir included evacuees from Portsmouth.

In his address the Bishop to the faithful services of 40 years by Canon Cunningham said Mr. Utterton's new real corporate life, real feeling a real spirit of liberal appeals from outside.

"In these days of war times ask 'What is doing?'" the Bishop said, forming its real purpose people to worship. That purpose. Sometimes it is and people imagine the society which is primarily people in a campaign for and philanthropy, and a school of ethics. The responsibilities in these matters and foremost it exists to to worship."

CANADA'S FIRST
LOAN

OTTAWA

Canada's first war loan of £50,000,000, will be offered next Monday.

The bonds will be offered at the rate of interest will be a quarter per cent. They will be "purely domestic," with terms as low as 50 dollars.

and lighthouses and for giving fog signals. This could be operated to give a wide variety of sound signals by means of a keyboard similar to that of a small piano. He invented no less than five different types of ships propellers, and also designed a safety lifeboat.

Maxim was also greatly interested in Brannon's design for his aerial Arcustat and the propellers with which it was to be fitted. At this time the use of aerial propellers was a new idea. When Brannon died, Maxim bought all the detailed drawings of the proposed airship and its propellers. It is a well-known fact that Maxim was

a strong advocate of the use of aerial propellers, and during the 'nineties he devoted a lot of his attention to designing airships. He actually built a large steam aeroplane which actually rose from the ground. The amount of fuel it had to carry was too heavy, however, and the machine crashed during experiments.

SOUTHAMPTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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"Footsure Roads"

BUT it was not only in regard to air research and sea inventions that Brannon exercised his ingenuity. He took out scores of patents incorporating all sorts of novel and practical ideas.

His "Footsure roads," designed to prevent the slipperiness of hard pavements, and to be made by a new kind of traction-engine of his own design, have a close resemblance to our modern "non-skid" surfaces.

He was a pioneer in the use of concrete. He conducted endless researches in the use of concrete for preventing coast erosion (at one time he actually rented a large tract of sea-coast for his experiments). In this connection, he used what he called "wire bags," which are very similar to some of the modern applications of reinforced concrete.

He invented a fireproof curtain for theatres, an idea now made compulsory. He took out a dozen different patents for new types of heavy fortifications.

Life Saving Plans

AN aspect of Brannon's work which reflects his natural benevolence is seen in the unremitting campaign which he conducted for many years to prevent loss of life and property through fire and flood on land, and by fire and storm at sea. He had an unshakable belief that many sea disasters of his time could have been prevented and he was always appalled by the results of a mine explosion—the prevention of fire in mines was one of his special studies.

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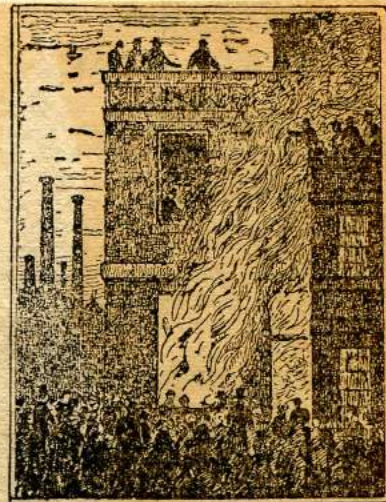
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A contemporary illustration showing a scene during the fire-proof experiments conducted by Brannon at Sunderland in 1874.



A Brannon sketch of his "Health Dwellings," with roof gardens, playgrounds and drying grounds. He proposed the construction in 1874 of a small township of these dwellings at Battersea, to be called Hygeiapolis.

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Eighty more have be
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For the past 12 days
has been sweltering in
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The heat has been m
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At Mar del Plata and
about 300 miles south
Aires, still higher temp
between 104 and 110
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**BAHIA BLA
END**

**Blockade Break
By Ice**

**34 DAYS W
SEEING I**

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The crew of the 8.

prove his theories and he was in
the habit of staging public demon-
strations to show how practical
were his ideas. On several occa-
sions he petitioned Parliament,
sometimes after a national disaster
had occurred, in an effort to bring
about the adoption of preventive
measures based on his own inven-
tions. He called for more than one
public inquiry in this connection.

Following a gun explosion on
board H.M.S. Thunderer, he in-
vented a type of "unbursting ord-
nance," in which were used tubes
of "Brannon cohesion metal,"
which he claimed would neutralise
bursting strains.

His investigations into the pre-
vention of fire resulted in a series
of interesting patents. In this con-
nection, Brannon claimed that
nearly every so called fire-proof
building in London would be utterly
destroyed if it were subjected to fire
tests of far less severity than those
"which only hardened Brannon's
fire-proof cottages in Middlesex and
Durham." This is an indication
that he actually constructed some
of his patent buildings.

In 1874 he conducted public fire
experiments, lasting three days, in
one of his buildings at Sunderland.

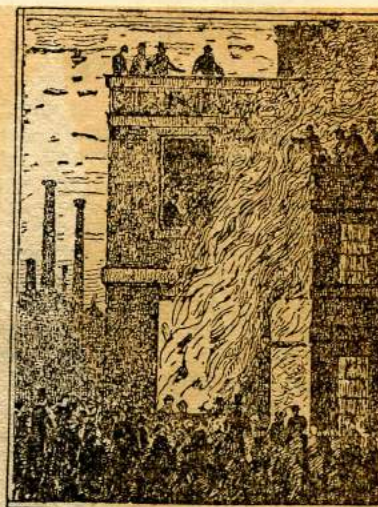
from which the soldier could fire
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invention, however, was a revol-
ving casemate for the operation of
heavy guns, such as is now in use
in the Maginot Line!

Truly a man with a remarkable
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A Brannon sketch of his "Health Dwellings," with roof gardens, playgrounds and drying grounds. He proposed the construction in 1874 of a small township of these dwellings at Battersea, to be called Hygeiapolis.

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**TWELVE
BUET**

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WHILE biting frosts
Central Europe
freezing great
the world—in South An
for thirty years, says Re

In Hungary 54 de
places, and the prospec
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Frozen rivers and
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**Blockade Break
By Ice**

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The crew of the 8.

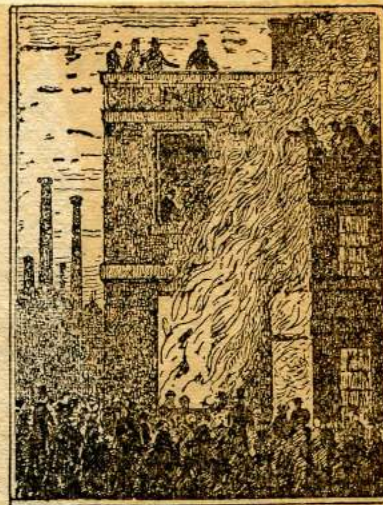
Neon Lighting Anticipated

BRANNON anticipated our neon lighting of to-day by inventing a system by which "coloured gas" could be used for lighting shops and places of entertainment. He was responsible for numerous acoustic inventions—his patent "intensiphone" was partly embodied in the canopy sounding-board in the Church of the Saviour in London-road, Southampton, of which he was the architect.

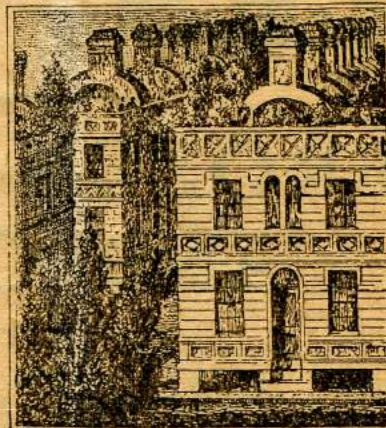
In 1860 he gave a demonstration at Southampton of an apparatus he had invented for amplifying the voice of a speaker, which is akin to our modern public address systems. He afterwards complained that the idea had been "pirated."

Brannon made a special study of the military significance of the Franco-German war, and took out a large number of patents for military use. One was a valise which could be converted in a few seconds into a shot-proof defence from which the soldier could fire at the enemy. His most striking invention, however, was a revolving casemate for the operation of heavy guns, such as is now in use in the Maginot Line!

Truly a man with a remarkable mind, as well as a great love for Southampton, whose interesting life is well worthy of a better record than has been possible in these columns.



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