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# THE FATHER OF ONE OF THE 'FEW'



*René A. Marchand.*

René Marchand, born in Biel in 1892, was the son of a renowned watchmaker. After schooling in his native town he was apprenticed in Geneva and afterwards spent some time in his father's factory in Biel. Being anxious to gain wider experience both in his trade and life in general, he travelled extensively in Serbia, then to Pfersheim (a centre of the watch and jewellery industry); after this he went to Karlsruhe for advance training in commerce.

In 1910 Mr. Marchand came to London and joined the firm of Wheeldon & Co. (Wholesalers in the watch trade). It was not long before he made his mark and was appointed Sales Representative covering England, Scotland and Ireland. It was during this time that he met Mr. Léon Jobin also well known in the Swiss Colony; in 1913 the two of them commenced a joint business, Marchand & Jobin Ltd., this was so successful that branches were opened in Birmingham, Glasgow and Liverpool.

During the First World War the Company was engaged in producing munitions and René himself was appointed by the Ministry to take charge of a Chiswick factory engaged in producing fuses. He was, at the conclusion of hostilities commended by the Ministry for his "unfailing courtesy and energetic assistance".

Also during the war years various business ventures were founded, Simplex Watch Cases Ltd., Birmingham, Marchand, Jobin & Chumas, London, General Stampings Ltd., Chiswick and Platinum Watch Cases, Hatton Garden.

After the war Mr. Marchand became very involved in numerous business projects which took him to America where he founded Marchand & Jobin Ltd. New York, in addition his interests in Switzerland were further extended.

Added to all his business interests connected with the watch industry, Mr.

Marchand became the proprietor of The Royal Bell Hotel, Bromley, Kent and in 1948 founded the René Marchand Wines Company, Bromley.

On the private side of Mr. Marchand's life, he met and in 1916 married Miss Connie Dean at the Eglise Suisse, Endell Street, London. In 1918 his wife presented him with a son, Roy Achille who originally intended entering the medical profession but in 1939 joined the Royal Air Force and became a pilot. Most unfortunately he was killed during the Battle of Britain.

Mr. Marchand is a staunch Freemason having attained London Grand Rank and is an Assistant Grand Standard Bearer in the United Grand Lodge of England. He is the only surviving Founder Member of the Helvetica Lodge No. 4894 in London of which he is an honorary member.

His further interests were with the various Swiss Societies and he was, no doubt, a highly respected member of the Colony; not only this but was held in great regard by all who had any dealings with him both in the business and private sides of his life.

Mr. Marchand is now back in his native town of Biel and it is sincerely hoped that he will have many more years to enjoy his well earned retirement in the place of his beginning.

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*The following is a reprint of an article written by LIZ CARTER for the South London Press, the proprietors of which have kindly given us permission to reproduce.*

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## MEMORIES OF HEROISM

Eighty-three-year-old René Marchand made a sentimental journey from Biel in Switzerland last week to become the first visitor at the new London Air Museum.

The reason behind his visit to the museum, which is expected to open next spring after eight years groundwork by the South London Aircraft Recovery Group, was to see the remains of the aircraft in which his son, Roy, was killed while fighting in the Battle of Britain.

Mr. Marchand was so impressed with the museum which is being set up to preserve the battered engines, bent propellers and other remains of the aircraft of crashed war heroes, that he has donated one of his most prized possessions — the tombstone of his son, who once lived with him in Bromley.

Engineer Tony Graves, of 34 Panmure Road, Sydenham, who has founded the museum with solicitor John Tickner in a stable block at John's home, North Cray Road, Bexley, said "This makes our whole project the more worthwhile.

"We always make a special point of tracing and contacting relatives of victims whose crashed aircraft we have located and retrieved parts from.

"Some of the pilots whose aircraft we find, survived the crashes and those we have so far been in touch with include a headmaster and others who always seem very thrilled at news of our finds and want to see them.

"When we tracked down and wrote to Mr. Marchand about his son — whose aircraft, a Hurricane, had crashed in a



*Mr. Marchand, standing beside his son's tombstone, is shown the relics from his son's fatal crash by John (left) and Tony, at the new London Air Museum.*

cherry orchard at Teynham, near Sittingbourne — he was very interested and wrote back.

"He sent us photographs and we were delighted when he decided to present us with the headstone of his son's grave at Bromley Hill cemetery. This has a place of honour in our museum."

#### Tombstone

The tombstone is of special interest to Tony and John since it bears the RAF wings on the top and the inscription describes how Roy, at only 22, was killed during the Battle of Britain on 15th September, 1940. At the bottom is written, "One of the Few to Whom So Much is Owed."

The tombstone — which is being replaced by another on Roy's grave by Tony and John — was hewn from marble specially brought from Scotland and designed by Roy's father.

#### Relics

Now it stands beside the relics Tony and John retrieved from the crashed plane, parts of the propeller and

mechanism which show that Roy was actually firing when his plane crashed.

It was an emotional moment for Mr. Marchand as he gazed at the relics, each neatly labelled, beside his son's tombstone.

Tears filled his eyes but he said, "It is a lovely museum and a fine memorial. I am very proud."

Guests with him included Mr. Royston Andrews, husband of his niece Beryl. Royston was on the beaches of Dunkirk "while Roy was one of the pilots battling to protect us from above".

#### Plea for records

Tony added, "We are very anxious to have any records, such as letters sent home by sons or husbands while fighting, any souvenirs or anything at all which people might care to send us."

Helped by friends, the boys have not yet organised any way of raising money to help finance their museum. For they retrieve all the relics they find, after being notified of their whereabouts, at their own expense.

LIZ CARTER

pollution. This project will later be made accessible to other firms facing the same problems and will result in considerable savings. (SODT)

#### BIG ORDERS FOR BUHLER

Buhler Bros. Co., Ltd., at Uzwil, was recently awarded, in the face of keen international competition, two big contracts abroad. The first came from Algeria, to which the Swiss firm will supply two grain milling units with a total grinding capacity of 800 tons of grain per 24 hours, each mill consisting of two separate units, one for grinding 200 tons of durum wheat and the other 200 tons of bread wheat per 24 hours.

The second order, which is the biggest ever received by Buhler for plants constructed on a single site, came from Saudi Arabia. It comprises three grain milling units, a plant for unloading and loading ships, a grain silo as well as an animal mixed feed plant.

This whole complex of plants, located in the harbour area of Jeddah on the Red Sea, is scheduled to start production in 1978.

## TECHNICAL ITEMS

### SOLAR POWER MADE ACCESSIBLE TO THE CONSUMER

For the first time in Switzerland, a solar energy water-heater has been made on the industrial scale and is thus accessible to the general public. This system, which has just been put on the market, is the result of the combined efforts of two Lausanne firms.

The water-heater comprises an extremely efficient selective surface captor, connected to a calory storage device. It is designed to supply, both winter and summer alike, a family's daily hot water needs. Thought has also been given to its appearance, so that it can be incorporated as unobtrusively as possible on a conventional roof, a flat roof, in a garden or next to a swimming pool.

In most cases this device will be connected up to an existing hot-water

heating system, which can then be brought into use in the event of a prolonged period without sunshine.

The two Swiss firms are also working on the prototype of a solar façade for heating buildings. In addition, one of them has worked out plans for the first industrial waste purification plant to be run exclusively on solar energy.

The technique used is galvanoplasty. Operating in a closed recycling circuit, the industrial waste purification plant will enable all raw materials used to be recuperated and thus avoid any risk of

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### Obituary

#### Mr. J. B. HABERSTICH

It is with deep regret that we have just learned of the death of Mr. J. B. Haberstich on 27th December at his home in Oxfordshire. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family. An obituary will be published in a later edition.

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