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Neurological stamp

Edmund Halley (1656-1742)

Edmund Halley, best known for his contributions to astronomy and particularly the calculation of the orbit of a comet, later named after him, was one of the first medical statisticians. In 1693, more than a century after the first modern life insurance policy (1583) was issued in England, he created a true actuarial table when he published the mortality tables for the city of Breslau, "to ascertain the prices of annuities upon lives." This was one of the first attempts to relate mortality and age in a population and influenced the further development of such tables in life insurance.

He was a friend of Isaac Newton and discussed with him the law of force under which planets move in elliptical orbits with the sun in one focus. As a result he persuaded Newton to prepare and publish his masterpiece *Principia*, which Halley himself financed. A man of remarkable versatility, working to the threshold of extreme old age he also wrote poetry, propounded a theory to account for changes in the earth's magnetism, was the first to use the barometer to measure heights, made important contributions to gunnery and ballistics, improved the diving bell and gave a critical discussion of the time and landing of Julius Caesar in Britain.

This stamp of the British Antarctic Territory was one of many issued in 1986 commemorating the appearance of Halley's Comet. (Stanley Gibbons 147, Scott 129).

L F HAAS