

upland of limestone plateau at about 800 ft., surmounted by four Old Red Sandstone hills, and the flat belt of alluvium, constituting the Levels, along the eastern side of the Severn Estuary. Exposed rocks range from the Devonian to the Jurassic systems, while the superficial deposits accumulated since the Pleistocene period include spreads of estuarine and riverine alluvium interbedded with peat. Distance from the coast and increases in altitude account for wide variations in local climate and length of growing season. For example, the average rainfall is about 32 in. on the coast and 50 in. on the highest ground; sunshine and temperature display similar tendencies, while moisture-deficient periods may exist during six months on the coast but only during June and July on the Mendips. There is a short discussion of the vegetation changes brought about by clearances of the oak-ash woodlands of the uplands, by agricultural improvements in the vales and by peat cutting on the moors. Six chapters are devoted to an explanation of soil formation and classification, and to details of the mapping units, including profile descriptions and analytical data. The soil conditions are then discussed in relation to land-use and types of farming, and there is a useful appendix dealing with the land-use limitations of the soil series. There is a list of references, a subject index, and two maps.

**Tropical Timbers**

FROM Belgium comes a very detailed account of the timbers of 67 tree species of the Congo (*Publications de l'Institut National pour l'Etude Agronomique du Congo. Bois du Mayumbe*. Par Joseph Fouarge et Georges Gerard. Pp. 579+57 planches. Bruxelles: Institut National pour l'Etude Agronomique du Congo, 1964). These are the principal timber species of Mayumbe, but not a few are to be found in the West African high forest and others are very closely related species. Each species is treated separately. The results of physical and mechanical tests are listed and notes are provided on the relative susceptibility of the timber to insect and fungal attacks. For many of the species a set of four micro-photographs illustrates anatomical characteristics, and these are accompanied by detailed descriptions. A final section to the volume is intended for timber merchants and others interested in the uses of timbers, but a word of warning is added directing attention to variations which may occur in the same species. Statistics of the

physical and mechanical properties and the relative durability are tabulated and sections are given recommending timbers for particular purposes such as cabinet work, furniture, mouldings, carpentry, turnery, shingles, pulleys, sleepers, paving-blocks, piles, sluice-gates, marine constructional work, small boats, barrel-making, matches, pulping and other uses. This is a most useful reference work and the authors deserve praise for what they have accomplished.

**Announcements**

PROF. J. C. WHEATLEY, University of Illinois, has been awarded the fourth Simon Memorial Prize in recognition of his outstanding work on the properties of liquid helium-3 at very low temperatures. The Prize of £250 was established as a memorial to Sir Francis Simon and is awarded by the Committee of the Low Temperature Group every two or three years for outstanding contributions in the field of low-temperature physics.

THE second conference on "The Countryside in 1970" will be held in London during November 10-12. Further information can be obtained from the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, London, W.C.2.

A SYMPOSIUM on "The Chemistry and Technology of Polyvinyl Chloride" will be held at the Bradford Institute of Technology during November 5-6. Further information can be obtained from the Registrar, Bradford Institute of Technology, Bradford 7.

A COLLOQUIUM on "Diet and Diabetes", arranged by the Scottish Group of the Nutrition Society, will be held at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, on October 30. Further information can be obtained from Dr. C. F. Mills, Rowett Research Institute, Bucksburn, Aberdeen.

A SEMINAR on "Formulating International Science Policy", arranged by the Science of Science Foundation, will be held at the Foundation on November 15. Further information can be obtained from the Science of Science Foundation, c/o the Ciba Foundation, 41 Portland Place, London, W.1.

A MEETING on "Nuclear and Engineering Ceramics", arranged by the Basic Science Section of the British Ceramic Society, will be held at Harwell during October 25-27. Further information can be obtained from Dr. J. P. Roberts, Houldsworth School of Applied Science, the University, Leeds 2.

**THE NIGHT SKY IN NOVEMBER**

All times are in Universal Time

MOON		CONJUNCTIONS WITH THE MOON	
New Moon	23d 04h	Venus	27d 06h, 0.7° N.
Full Moon	9d 04h	Mars	26d 05h, 2° N.
		Jupiter	12d 08h, 3° S.
		Saturn	3d 22h, 3° N.

**PLANETS**

Name	Times of Rising (R) and Setting (S) during the month				Mag.	D <sub>g</sub> (10 <sup>6</sup> miles)	Zodiacal position
	R/S	Beginning	Middle	End			
Mercury	—	Unfavourable for observation				91	—
Venus	S	18h 25m	18h 35m	18h 55m	-4.1	63	—
Mars	S	18h 20m	18h 10m	18h 05m	+1.4	190	Sagittarius
Jupiter	R	19h 05m	18h 00m	16h 55m	-2.2	399	Gemini→Taurus
Saturn	S	1h 20m	0h 25m	23h 30m	+1.1	865	Aquarius

D<sub>g</sub> is the distance of planet from the Earth on the 15th of the month

**OCCULTATIONS OF STARS BRIGHTER THAN MAGNITUDE +6 AT GREENWICH**

Star	R/D	Time	Mag.
69 Aqr	D	3d 18h 08.4m	+5.8
89 Psc	D	7d 02h 58.6m	+5.3
121 Tau	R	11d 20h 15.3m	+5.3
37 Gem	R	13d 04h 11.0m	+5.8
* Gem	R	13d 21h 44.4m	+3.7
ν Vir	D	18d 03h 25.6m	+4.2
ν Vir	R	18d 04h 29.2m	+4.2

(D, disappearance; R, reappearance)

**METEORS**

Name	Active period	Date of maximum	Radiant	Remarks
Taurids	Oct. 26d–Nov. 16d	1d–10d	54° R.A. +14° Dec.	Early stages favourable
Leonids	14d–17d	16d	152° R.A. +22° Dec.	Unfavourable because of moonlight