

by so doing keep all the vertebrate zoological collections in the same museum. If any move is to be made, it should be, in our opinion, some other branch of natural science and certainly not a branch of the vertebrata.

To build a new Bird Room on ground already available would, we understand, prove less costly than the Tring proposal, which Mr James Allason, MP, has declared as "bad economy".

We sincerely hope that the birds will remain at South Kensington in a new Bird Room.

As an important branch of vertebrate zoology, they should not be transferred from London, where they can be readily available to all who wish to study them, with the least amount of trouble and loss of time.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES M. HARRISON
JEFFERY G. HARRISON

Bowerwood House,
St Botolph's Road,
Sevenoaks, Kent.

SIR,—I learn that the authorities of the British Museum (Natural History) plan to transfer all the scientific ornithological collections of the British Museum from London to the old Rothschild Museum at Tring.

Knowing the interest that *Nature* has taken in the discussions aroused by this plan, I should like to associate myself with the feelings of my British colleagues regarding the possibility of such a transfer, as well as the regret most of them have expressed.

In fact, the collections are so important that no ornithologist anywhere can remain indifferent to the prospect of their removal from London, for this would certainly limit considerably the chances of working among the collections by the numerous European ornithologists who go each year to consult them and who often have only limited time and resources for their stay in the British capital.

Yours faithfully,

JACQUES BERLIOZ

Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle,
55 Rue de Buffon,
Paris.

Country Life

SIR,—I am chairman of the sub-committee of the Biochemical Society responsible for the planning and organization of the Harden conferences. I was delighted to read in *Nature* (222, 112; 1969) the section provocatively entitled "Country Life". We are very grateful to you for publicizing these conferences. I may mention *en passant* that, although the hedonistic level in Wye probably will not be quite up to that of the Greek Islands or the Swiss Alps, it will be by no means negligible.

There are two points that I want to take up with you. The first is the question of the organization of these conferences. My committee decided that we would select a chairman and give him a free hand in selecting the topics to be covered at the conference and the speakers. He could be as biased and specialized as he cared to be. It was entirely his responsibility. The programme has been planned by Professor Phillips. He has, of course, consulted a number of people, especially Dr B. S. Hartley, about the details. It is my intention—and I hope the other members of the sub-committee will agree with me—that future conferences will be organized along the same lines. Our aim is to choose an area in which biochemistry overlaps with a number of disciplines and in which we are strong in this country. We are anxious to emphasize the European nature of these conferences both in the choice

of speakers and in the members of the conference. I have already an idea of the topic and chairman of the second conference. I hope I shall be able to persuade the committee that this is a good one. Of course, there is nothing to prevent a conference deciding that it would be worthwhile to have a similar meeting within the next year or two. There is scope for a number of Harden conferences in any one year.

There is a second point. I am a little unhappy about "Some scientists of proven stature are paid to come while the rest pay". The implication of this is that those who have to pay the conference fee are not of proven stature. I am sure from the applications that we have already received that this will not, in fact, be the case.

Yours faithfully,

A. P. MATHIAS

The Biochemical Society,
London.

Naming the Units

SIR,—Despite the fact that I agree with honouring the memory of Hubble, Lord Rutherford and many other excellent scientists (*Nature*, 219, 765; 1968), I feel that further proliferation of illogical prefixes will undoubtedly be a source of the greatest confusion.

Apart from the fact that the French never did call 10⁹ "un trillion" but simply "un milliard", as others did in continental Europe, I am unable to find inconvenient the logical use of the old metric prefix system, which leaves the unit name comprehensive. The danger is, I think, that coining new names to designate simple multiples of existing units destroys "unified terminology which may help to remove ambiguity", as Professor Gamow puts it.

Yours faithfully,

B. PATAKY

Battelle Memorial Institute,
Geneva Laboratories,
Geneva.

University News

Dr W. V. McDermott, jun., has been appointed the first Cheever professor of surgery in the faculty of medicine at Harvard University.

Appointments

Sir Kenneth Hutchison, formerly deputy chairman of the Gas Council, has been elected president of the National Society for Clean Air, in succession to Sir John Charring-ton.

Mr M. W. Jensen has been named to serve as deputy director of the Institute for Applied Technology of the US Department of Commerce's National Bureau of Standards.

Announcements

The Symons Memorial Gold Medal of the Royal Meteorological Society has been awarded to Professor Sverre Petterssen, in recognition of his contributions to the science of meteorology and weather forecasting. The society's L. F. Richardson Prize has been awarded to Dr A. S. Thom, University of Edinburgh, as the author of the paper considered the most meritorious of those submitted by younger members and published in the society's quarterly journal during the past two years. The Darton Prize was awarded to Mr H. C. Shellard, Meteorological Office, Bracknell, for his article published in the society's magazine, *Weather*.

International Meetings

June 3-4, **Man's Changing Environment**, London (Secretary, Institute of Rural Life at Home and Overseas, 27 Northumberland Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire, UK).

September 23-25, **Industrial Ultrasonics**, Loughborough (Conference Registrar, The Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers, 8-9 Bedford Square, London WC1).

September 24-26, **Nuclear and Elementary Particle Physics**, Brighton (Meetings Officer, The Institute of Physics and the Physical Society, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1).

Sabbatical Itinerants

In the hope of providing some practical assistance in the good cause of mobility between laboratories, *Nature* advertises the needs for housing of families about to take up periods of sabbatical leave. To begin with, no charge will be made for advertisements like this. It is hoped that a period of experiment will show what form these advertisements could most usefully take and whether they are effective.

Wanted: Furnished house, 3 or 4 bedrooms, with central heating, within 7 miles of Cambridge and close to primary school. For 2 years from September 1, 1969. Write air mail to G. G. Gray, 4532 King Edward Avenue, Montreal 262, Quebec, Canada.

Wanted: Accommodation with three bedrooms and central heating for an American doctor in the Hampstead area from mid August 1969 to July 31, 1970. Please contact Dr B. Billing, Department of Medicine, Royal Free Hospital, London WC1.

Wanted: Furnished flat, two bedrooms, in London, beginning September 1, 1969, for 12 months. Central heating and preferably within easy reach of the University of London School of Pharmacy. Please contact Dr Elmore H. Taylor, Department of Pharmacognosy, University of Tennessee Medical Units, 874 Union Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee 38103, USA.

Wanted: Furnished house or flat in Headington or Oxford area for West Indian medical scientist, his wife and children (aged 8, 4 and 2) from mid July to mid October 1969. Please contact Dr D. Picou, Medical Research Council's Tropical Metabolism Research Unit, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, West Indies.

Wanted: From October 1969 to September 1970, a 2 or 3 bedroomed furnished flat or house in Baltimore, within easy reach of Department of Biophysics, University of Maryland School of Medicine. Please contact Dr A. G. Lowe, Department of Biological Chemistry, University of Manchester, Manchester 13, England.

Vacant: From October 1969 to September 1970, a 3 bedroomed furnished house in Bolton. Accessible to University of Salford and Manchester. Please contact Dr A. G. Lowe, Department of Biological Chemistry, University of Manchester, Manchester 13, England.

Vacant: Furnished apartment in Rome, two bedrooms, living-dining room, two bathrooms, maid's room, kitchen and usual conveniences including central heating. Twenty minutes from the centre. Free June 15 or later. Please contact Dr F. Perri, Istituto Matematico "Guido Castelnuovo", Università di Roma, Roma.

BRITISH DIARY

Monday, May 12

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, Mortimer Street, London, W1), at 5 p.m.—Sir Hector MacLennan: "Communication in Medicine".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at the Wright-Fleming Institute, St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Norfolk Place, London, W2), at 5 p.m.—Dr W. R. S. Doll: "Cancer and Ageing—the Epidemiological Evidence".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Dr R. H. Golde: "Protection of Structures against Lightning".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Dr W. Saraga: "Filters with Periodically Time-varying Parameters".

Tuesday, May 13

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON (at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London, NW1), at 5 p.m.—Dr R. McN. Alexander: "Mechanics of the Feeding Action of a Cyprinid Fish"; Dr M. R. Hardisty: "The Biology of Lampreys"; Film: "Why does the Flea Jump?".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at St Philip's Hospital, Sheffield Street, London, WC2), at 6 p.m.—Dr V. R. McCready: "Clinical Applications of Scintigraphy" (Seventh of eight lectures on "The Use of Radioisotopes in Renal Disease").

Wednesday, May 14

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2)—Colloquium on "Cathode Ray Tube Display".

SOCIETY FOR ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY, EAST ANGLIA SECTION (at the University of Essex, Colchester)—Meeting on "Applications of Spectroscopy".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at Chelsea College of Science and Technology, Manresa Road, London, SW3), at 11 a.m.—Dr M. Machover: "Selected Topics in Recursion Theory".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at Chelsea College of Science and Technology, Manresa Road, London, SW3), at 2.45 p.m.—Professor Arthur Fine: "Philosophical Problems of Quantum Physics".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr D. D. Jones: "Large Scale Integration—Why, Where and When?".

SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, FOOD GROUP (at 14 Belgrave Square, London, SW1), at 6.15 p.m.—Annual General Meeting and Chairman's Address.

Wednesday, May 14–Friday, May 16

BRITISH INTERPLANETARY SOCIETY (at the Royal Commonwealth Society, Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2)—Ninth European Space Symposium.

Thursday, May 15

ROYAL SOCIETY (at 6 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1), at 4.30 p.m.—Professor F. C. Steward, FRS: "From Cultured Cells to Whole Plants—the Induction and Control of their Growth and Morphogenesis" (Croonian Lecture).

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr F. J. Wilkins and Mr M. John Swann: "Recent Advances in Resistor Design".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr J. A. Treece: "A Bootstrap-gauss-soield Load Flow".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRONIC AND RADIO ENGINEERS, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL GROUP (at 9 Bedford Square, London, WC1), at 6 p.m.—Mr A. L. Whitwell: "Absolute Digital Displacement Transducers".

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF RADIOLOGY (at 32 Welbeck Street, London, W1), at 8 p.m.—Professor George Porter, FRS: "Molecules in Microtime" (Silvanus Thompson Memorial Lecture).

Friday, May 16

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2)—Colloquium on "The Effect of Electric Traction on the Permanent Way".

BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY (at the Shell Centre, South Bank, London, SE1), at 9.30 a.m.—Colloquium on "Naturally Occurring Materials of Potential Use for Control of Plants and Animals"; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.—Ordinary Meeting; 4.30 p.m.—Professor M. Eigen: "Molecular Control in Biology" (Third Keilin Memorial Lecture).

INSTITUTION OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERS (at the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly, London, W1), at 10.30 a.m.—Seventeenth Annual General Meeting. 12 noon—Presidential Address. 2.30 p.m.—Selected Papers.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Du Cane Road, London, W12), at 11 a.m.—Seminar on "Nutrition". Speakers: Mr A. G. Cox, Mr S. Wapnick and Mr M. Cooke.

ROYAL INSTITUTION, PHOTOCHEMISTRY DISCUSSION GROUP (at 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1), at 1 p.m.—Mr C. W. Ashpole: "Pressure Effects on Triplet Formation in the Vapour Phase".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON (at Westfield College, Kidderpore Avenue, London, NW3), at 5.30 p.m.—Professor T. D. Lee (Columbia University): "Symmetry Principles in Physics".

SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, FINE CHEMICALS GROUP (at 14 Belgrave Square, London, SW1), at 7 p.m.—Conversazione. Dr R. C. Chirnside: "Gemstones".

ROYAL INSTITUTION (at 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1), at 9 p.m.—Professor E. Laithwaite: "Teaching People to Invent".