

in outlook and probably also in staff, at least to start with. For it must be grasped that, much as the British prefer themselves to foreigners, foreigners, and particularly Americans, lead in this esoteric field. The expatriate British observers, who are prominent in the US and in South Africa, should be invited to become involved despite their almost universal dislike of the pettiness of English astronomical politics, and their strong attachment to clear skies, warm climates, and in some cases high salaries, and their perversity in wanting to investigate the universe rather than talk about it. The observatory should be built on the shortest possible time scale—five years is entirely possible—in Chile where the climate is guaranteed, or possibly in Southern Spain, the Canary Islands, Baja California or the south-west US. Many of us know that it is possible to collaborate and cooperate with the Americans, the Chileans, the Germans, the Spaniards or the Mexicans, and we relish the opportunity of trying. The major telescope should have an aperture ≥ 90 inches, should be built on a proven design and should contain no British, and hence unproven, astronomical innovations. Technical expertise should be encouraged.

Give a few young and active British astronomers, who want to find out, access to such an observatory, and in my opinion the attitudes will change overnight.

Margaret Burbidge, who has just arrived at Herstmonceux, is strongly behind such an idea, but she and others who would like to do this are terribly vulnerable. It will be so easy to talk this proposal to death or worse still to decide to build a telescope on a peculiarly British site (the Rock of Gibraltar?) and a British time scale (21 years for the INT) with a newly designed British mounting and even with a revolutionary mirror design. This is what we can expect if the old system of SRC planning committees, instrumental committees and never-ending consultations with everyone is adhered to. It has long been understood by those who successfully build major instruments, be they big accelerators or large optical or radio telescopes, that the only successful way to operate is by the appointment of a governing board or committee and of a project director (who may well be promised the observatory directorship) and who has authority delegated to him by the board over all phases of design, construction and site selection. He must be able to hire his own staff, again subject to approval by the board.

I have come a long way from the discussion of Hoyle's resignation. But it is clear to me that the circumstances of his departure from Cambridge

should signal the end of attempts to build on the old system. We can try something new like this, but if rapid progress along these lines does not take place, I for one would strongly advise the Science Research Council to save its money. Enough has been wasted already.

Yours faithfully,

GEOFFREY BURBIDGE

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Taxonomy in Distress

SIR,—It should perhaps be pointed out that it is not only insect taxonomy which is in trouble (*Nature*, 238, 475; 1972); the story can be repeated in other fields. A series of major ornithological collections have been allowed to go abroad—the Gould Collection in the last century, the Rothschild Collection before the war, most of the Hewitt Collection within the last few years, among others. The transfer of the birds in the national collection to Tring (*Nature*, 221, 1094 and 1177; 1969) proves not only to have rendered them inaccessible to most people, but to have brought all work on them to a halt indefinitely. Could we perhaps be informed when the collection is going to be available again, and what arrangements have been made to facilitate work on the fossil bird collection now that the recent comparative material has been transferred elsewhere? It seems time that more consideration was given to whether any work will be done behind the excessively expensive ornament adorning the entrance to the new department foisted on us in such an arbitrary manner.

Yours faithfully,

W. R. P. BOURNE

*The Seabird Group,
Zoology Department,
Tillydrome Avenue,
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Lugworm Wronged

SIR,—I would like to correct any impression given by your report on the recent Challenger Society Meeting at the University of East Anglia (News and Views, *Nature*, 238, 131; 1972) that lugworm (*Arenicola marinus*) prey on whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*). In fact the reverse is true. Moreover I claim only that whiting eat lugworm when the latter are used as bait, or are injured, as intact animals are seldom found in whiting stomachs.

Yours faithfully,

M. G. PAWSON

*Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Fisheries Laboratory,
Lowestof, Suffolk*

Announcements

University News

Professor Arthur Whiteman has been appointed to the chair of petroleum geology at the **University of Bergen**.

Professor H. A. F. Dudley, Monash University, has been appointed to the chair of surgery tenable at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, **University of London**, and **Dr R. Wilson, SRC**, has been appointed to the Perren chair of astronomy tenable at University College London.

Appointments

J. M. Buist of ICI Organics Division has been elected chairman of council of the **Institution of the Rubber Industry**.

Dr L. S. Renzoni, International Nickel Company of Canada, **R. Thompson**, Dominion Engineering Works, **W. G. Brissenden**, Noranda Mines, and **V. N. Mackiw**, Sherritt Gordon Mines, have been appointed sub-committee chairmen on the **National Advisory Committee on Mining and Metallurgical Research** of Canada.

The following appointments have been made in the **Science Research Council**: **Mr J. F. Hosie** as director, administration; **Dr A. W. Lines** as director with responsibility for nuclear physics and engineering; **Mr M. O. Robins** as director with responsibility for the Astronomy, Space and Radio and Science Divisions; **Mr A. J. Egginton** as head of the Engineering Division; **Dr H. H. Atkinson** as head of the Astronomy, Space and Radio Division; **Mr I. A. Learmouth** as head of the Nuclear Physics Division; **Mrs J. O. Paton** as head of the Science Division.

Miscellaneous

Professor Thomas K. Sherwood, University of California at Berkeley, has won the 1973 **E. V. Murphree award** in industrial and engineering chemistry, which is sponsored by the Esso Research and Engineering Company.

Professor Stanford Moore and **Professor W. H. Stein**, Rockefeller University, have been jointly awarded the third **Linderström-Lang gold medal** and prize of 15,000 Danish kroner, in recognition of their contributions to protein chemistry.

Erratum

IN the article "Circadian Variation of RNA in Human Leucocytes", by William C. Kohler, Ismet Karacan and Owen M. Rennert (*Nature*, 238, 94; 1972), the second sentence of paragraph 2 should read "A diurnal variation in the number of circulating leucocytes in man has

previously been reported, but up to this point there have been no reports of investigations dealing with periodic RNA changes in human leucocytes". In line 3 of paragraph 9, the word "tortula" should read "torula", and in line 3 of paragraph 11, "absorbance at 260 mn" should of course read "absorbance at 260 nm".

International Meetings

October 2, **Luminescence Methods in Physical Biochemistry**, Loughborough (Dr J. N. Miller, Department of Chemistry, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU).

October 2-4, **Distribution and Partition of Trace Elements and Origin of Volcanic Rocks**, Newport, RI (American Geophysical Union, 1707 L Street NW, Washington DC 20036, USA).

October 2-5, **Yeast Protoplasts**, Salamanca (Departamento de Microbiología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain).

October 2-6, **Environmental Health Aspects of Lead**, Amsterdam (Dr J. Smeets, Health Protection Directorate, Commission of the European Communities, 29 Rue Aldringen, Luxembourg).

October 2-6, **Remote Sensing of Environment**, Ann Arbor (J. J. Cook, Willow Run Laboratories, Institute of Science and Technology, University of Michigan, PO Box 618, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107, USA).

October 3, **Wear and Its Industrial Implications**, London (Meetings Officer, Institute of Physics, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QX).

October 3, **Filter Media**, Manchester (Hon. Secretary, Filtration Society, 1 Katharine Street, Croydon CR9 1LB).

October 3-4, **New Flexible Polymers and Cross Links**, London (The Assistant Secretary, Society of Chemical Industry, 14 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PS).

October 3-4, **The Aquatic Environment: Microbial Transformations and Water Quality Management Implications**, Washington DC (L. J. Guarraia, Fresh Water Pollution Control Section, Water Quality Protection Branch, Water Quality and Non-Point Sources Control Division OWP, EPA Washington DC 20460, USA).

October 3-5, **Dietary Lipids and Post-natal Development**, Milan (Miss Hasel J. Prain, Institute of Pharmacology and Pharmacognosy, University of Milan, Via A. Del Sarto 21, 20129 Milan, Italy).

October 3-5, **Choice of Ironfoundry Melting Plant**, Keele (L. J. Stewardson,

British Cast Iron Research Association, Alvechurch, Birmingham B48 7QB).

October 3-6, **Trends in Physics**, Wiesbaden (Secretariat EPS—Conference 1972, D-6000 Frankfurt (Main) 1, Robert-Mayer-Strasse 2-4, Federal Republic of Germany).

October 4, **Food Product Labels—How and Why**, London (Dr H. Fore, 5 Cumbrae Gardens, Ditton Hill, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 5EL).

October 4-6, **Society for Water Treatment and Examination Meeting**, Harrogate (Hon. Secretary, 69 Disraeli Crescent, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire).

October 5-6, **The Testing of Polymers for Service**, Buxton (Meetings Officer, Institute of Physics, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QX).

October 8-13, **Communication and Transport**, Genoa (Istituto Internazionale delle Comunicazioni, via Pertinace—Villa Piaggio, 16125, Genoa, Italy).

October 8-15, **Space for World Development**, Vienna (Michael Sartori, Österreichische Gesellschaft für Weltraumforschung und Flugkorpertechnik, Theresianumgasse 27, A-1040 Vienna IV, Austria).

October 9-13, **Marine Electrochemistry**, Miami Beach (Dr Joan Berkowitz, Arthur D. Little Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140, USA).

October 9-13, **Reactor Shielding**, Paris (Conference Secretariat, OECD European Nuclear Energy Agency, 38 Boulevard Suchet, Paris 16, France).

October 10-11, **Electrical Variable Speed Drives**, London (Manager, Conference Department, LEE, Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL).

October 10-13, **Chemiluminescence**, Athens, Georgia (Department of Chemistry, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30601, USA).

October 11-13, **Water Pollution Research Laboratory Open Days**, Stevenage (Director, Water Pollution Research Laboratory, Elder Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 1TH).

October 12-14, **The Ontogenic and Phylogenetic Study of the Immune Response and its Contribution to Immunological Theories**, Paris (Dr J. Panijel, See Physiopathologie de l'Immunité, Institut Pasteur, 25 rue du Dr Roux, Paris 15, France).

October 13-15, **From Ovule to Seed: Ultrastructural and Biochemical Aspects**, Siena (Professor G. Sarfatti, Istituto di Botanica, Università, 4 via Mattioli, 53100 Siena, Italy).

October 14-15, **The Histochemical Society Annual Meeting**, Boston (Dr S. I. Zacks, Department of Sick and Injured, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107, USA).

October 16-21, **International Fair and Technical Meetings of Nuclear Industries**, Basel (Secretary NUCLEX 72, PO Box, CH-4021 Basel, Switzerland).

October 17-19, **Cleaning Stainless Steel**, Cleveland (American Society for Testing and Materials, 1916 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19103, USA).

October 17-20, **Optical Society of America Annual Meeting**, San Francisco (Dr J. Quinn, Optical Society of America, 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20037, USA).

October 18, **Environmental Problems in the Food Industry**, London (Dr Robert Shaw, T. Wall and Sons (Meat and Handy Foods) Limited, Atlas Road, Willesden, London NW10).

October 19, **Institution of Mining and Metallurgy Meeting**, London (M. J. Jones, Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, 44 Portland Place, London W1N 4BR).

October 19, **Non-Prescription Antibiotics in Animal Food Stuffs: their Nature and Analysis**, London (Society for Analytical Chemistry, 9-10 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF).

October 19-20, **Microbial Food-Borne Infections and Intoxications**, Ottawa (Mrs E. A. Leduc, Health Protection Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0L2, Canada).

October 20-21, **Magnetospheric Substorms**, Houston (American Geophysical Union, 1707 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA).

October 22-25, **Electrical Insulation and Dielectric Phenomena**, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania (Colonel R. A. Cliffe, NAS, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington DC 20418, USA).

October 22-28, **CORESTA/TCRC Conference**, Williamsburg, Virginia (Dr Helmut Wakeham, PO Box 26583, Richmond, Virginia 23261, USA).

October 23-24, **Environment and the Skin**, Cincinnati (Committee on Cutaneous Health and Cosmetics, American Medical Association, 535 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, USA).

October 23-26, **A World of Information**, Washington DC (Robert McAfee jun., ASIS Headquarters, 1140 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 804, Washington DC 20036, USA).

October 23-27, **Medical Radioisotope Scintigraphy**, Monaco (IAEA, Kärntnering 11-13, 1010 Vienna, Austria).

October 23-28, **World Congress of Animal Nutrition**, Madrid (Secretaria General, Comandante Zorita 48 2-A, Madrid 20, Spain).

October 24-26, **Computers—Systems and Technology**, London (Conference Department, Institution of Electronic and Radio