obituary

John Morrison Barnes, CBE, Director of the MRC Toxicology Unit, Carshalton, died after a short illness on September 24 at the age of 62.

Dr Barnes studied medicine at the Universities of Cambridge and Sheffield and graduated in 1936. He received his early training in research in the laboratory of Howard Florey at Oxford, where he studied lymphocytes and also carried out very important initial toxicity tests on penicillin. He then collaborated with J. Trueta on work related to war injuries, including research on limb ischaemia, the absorption of bacterial toxins from tissues and the treatment of burns. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1942 and spent the next three years at the Defence Establishment at Porton, with which he remained closely associated as an adviser for the rest of his life. In 1947 he was responsible for setting up the MRC Toxicology Unit at Carshalton which, from very small beginnings, grew under his directorship to become one of the largest establishments of the MRC. The guiding principle of nearly all the research at the Toxicology Unit was derived from the concept of Claude Bernard that toxins could be used to elucidate physiological processes coupled with the ideas of the biochemical lesion and of lethal synthesis, due to Peters. Many toxic substances were studied, Barnes himself being particularly interested in the toxicology of beryllium, organophosphorus compounds, organotin compounds, nitrosamines, aflatoxin and carbon disulphide. Barnes was perhaps best known internationally for his work on organophosphorus and carbamate pesticides. The Unit became a World Health Organisation International Reference Centre for the Evaluation of the Toxicity of Pesticides in 1967 and Barnes advised the Ministry of Agriculture on medical aspects of pesticides for many years. He produced an invaluable guide, *Toxic Hazards of Certain Pesticides to Man* (WHO Monograph 16). Because of his impressive depth of scientific knowledge combined with his great practical common sense, Barnes was uniquely in demand as an advisor on all aspects of possible hazards from environmental and occupational exposure to toxic chemicals. He was a member of numerous Governmental and other advisory committees including the British National Committee for Problems of the Environment. He served on the editorial boards of several scientific journals and was made Visiting Professor of Pharmacology at King's College, London in 1967. Barnes had considerable skill as a laboratory bench worker but little opportunity to exercise it in his later years because of the punishing load of advisory and administrative work that he willingly undertook. His unobtrusive help and guidance was greatly valued by his colleagues and had he been less unselfish, his output of original published work could have been much greater. John Barnes contributed more to the establishment of toxicology as a scientific discipline than anyone in this country and perhaps in the world.

P. N. Magee

Professor J. C. Pócza, Head of the Department of Structure Research of the Research Institute for Technical Physics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, died on September 10. Born in 1915, he graduated from the University of Szeged in 1938 and obtained his Ph.D. at Budapest University in 1945.

Professor Pócza first worked on structure determination by X-ray diffraction and then, as assistant at the Institute of Nuclear Physics, took part in the first lunar-echo measurements, carried out under the direction of Professor Z. Bay.

He entered the field of thin film physics in 1954, studying the thin-film growth processes by electron microscopic *in situ* methods. He was a member of the International Committee on Thin Films, a member of the Editorial Board of Thin Solid Films, and was the Chairman of the 3rd International Thin Film Conference held in Budapest this summer.

For many years he was the deputy general secretary of the Hungarian Eötvös Loránd Physical Society and a member of the Hungarian National Committee of IUVSTA.

J. C. Anderson

announcements

Award

The 1975 **Premio Modesto Panetti** has been awarded to **R. S. Rivlin** for his work in the field of mechanics.

Appointments

J. L. Harper, J. S. Sawyer and **E. A. Vincent** have been appointed new members of the Natural Environment Research Council.

International meetings

November 12, **A new look at pollination,** Kent (The Principal's Secretary, Wye College, Ashford, Kent, UK).

November 12, **Life-games with glass beads and molecules,** Cambridge (The Secretary, Department of Chemistry, Lensfield Road, Cambridge, UK).

November 21, **The scientist as a leader,** London (The Industrial Society, PO Box 1BQ, Robert Hyde House, 48 Bryanston Square, London W1H 1BQ).

December 2–3, **Grass weeds,** Paris (European Weed Research Society, c/o ARC Weed Research Organisation, Begbroke Hill, Yarnton, Oxford OX5 1PF, UK).

Person to Person

London–Rio de Janeiro exchange. London house available for one year from about February 1976, in exchange for house or flat in Rio de Janeiro. Four bedrooms and garden (Dr C. J. Sanderson, 26 Olive Road, Cricklewood, London NW2 6TX, UK; (01) 452 8364).

There will be no charge for this service. Send items (not more than 60 words) to Holly Connell at the London office. The section will include exchanges of accommodation, personal announcements and scientific queries. We reserve the right to decline material submitted. No commercial transactions.