

Mr. G. W. Keeling has been appointed organising secretary to the committee which was formed during the conference to ensure the continued co-operation of the interests there represented. Active arrangements are being made for the holding of a second week-end conference at the end of September of this year, and for the preparation of a directory of special libraries and information bureaux for the United Kingdom.

The gold medal of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy has been awarded to Dr. Richard Pearce in recognition of his lifelong services in the advancement of metallurgical science and practice. Dr. Pearce was for many years engaged in metallurgical work in the United States, and since his return to England has been associated with the tin-smelting industry. The Council of the Institution has awarded "The Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa" premium of forty guineas to Mr. Thomas Pryor, for his paper on "The Underground Geology of the Kolar Gold Field," and the "Arthur C. Claudet" and "William Frecheville" students prizes of ten guineas each to Mr. F. H. Edwards (Birmingham) and Mr. D. W. Bishop, respectively

THE National Academy of Sciences having approved the recommendation of the Committee on Award of

the Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal for 1924, the medal and honorarium will be presented at the April meeting of the Academy to Abbé Henri Breuil for his work, in collaboration with MM. Capitan and Peyrony, on the volume "Les Combarelles des Eyzies," as the most outstanding contribution of 1924 in this field. Henri Breuil is the foremost living authority on the archaeology of the Old Stone Age. His chief contributions are the recognition of the great Aurignacian upper palæolithic stage and the monographing of the entire Stone Age art of France and Spain. He is a man of untiring endeavour, great personal courage, and deliberate and philosophic interpretative powers. He is the head of the Institut de Paléontologie Humaine, which was founded by the late Prince of Monaco. This is the eighth award of the Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the following appointments, on or before the dates mentioned: junior assistants at the National Physical Laboratory—The Director, National Physical Laboratory, Teddington (May 9); Superintendent of a Government Research Establishment in Lancashire—"S.U.," c/o Chas. Barker and Sons, Ltd., 31 Budge Row, E.C.4; a junior lecturer in science at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich—The Under-Secretary of State, the War Office (S.D.3), Whitehall, S.W.1 (May 30).

Our Astronomical Column.

THE BRILLIANT FIREBALL OF EASTER SUNDAY.—Mr. W. F. Denning writes: On the evening of Easter Sunday, April 12, at 21^h 40^m G.M.T., a fireball of large size and dazzling brilliancy was seen by hundreds of observers in the south-west of England. A great number of descriptions have been received from spectators in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Pembroke, Glamorgan, and other places. According to most of the estimates, the fireball moved rather slowly and passed over the sea between Cornwall and Pembroke. It concluded its path when about twenty-five miles west-north-west of Strumble Head, near Fishguard. The fireball may have fallen into the sea when it had traversed another twenty-five miles, but it is doubtful if it survived, and no reports have come in that it was actually seen to fall.

The object was one of the most brilliant that has appeared in recent years. The illumination of the atmosphere and landscape which it occasioned just before its disappearance was remarkably vivid and startled many observers. Two or three minutes afterwards a deafening noise, like a double explosion, was heard at Fishguard, and at other places in the neighbourhood.

The nucleus of the fireball is described as emitting a steel-blue colour, and it left a broad train of fiery sparks in its wake, but this vanished immediately. During its visible course the object descended from about sixty-nine to twenty-two miles at a very moderate speed, and was directed from a radiant point in Virgo, but the exact position of this is not defined by the observations available at the present time.

COMETS.—The three comets (Schain, Reid, and Orkisz) have all been observed recently in England. The two latter are fairly bright, about magnitude seven, but Reid's is getting too low for easy observation here.

Mr. Orkisz discovered his comet at the small observatory on the summit of Mt. Lusina in Poland, a few miles south of Krakow. It is rapidly moving north and will soon become circumpolar.

Mr. G. Merton (B.A.A. circular No. 5) has computed the following orbit from a combination of ten observations extending from April 5 to 14:

T	1925 April 1-2904 G.M.T. (new)
ω	35° 55' 17.3"
Ω	318 1 25.3
i	99 57 22.6
log q	0.045126

EPHEMERIS FOR 0^h G.M.T.

	R. A.	N. Decl.	log r .	log Δ .
Apr. 25	22 ^h 51 ^m 35 ^s	40° 13'	0.070	0.180
May 3	23 7 31	51 5	0.087	0.170
" 11	23 31 53	62 2	0.108	0.172
" 19	0 17 14	72 17	0.130	0.185

In May the comet will be observable throughout the night.

Schain's comet is still a difficult object, of about magnitude eleven. It is receding from the earth, and this more than offsets its slight approach to the sun. Perihelion passage will probably be about August, and the perihelion distance promises to exceed that of any known comet, being apparently somewhat greater than that of the comet of 1729 (4.05 astronomical units) which has held the record until now. The orbit was an extremely difficult one to compute from the early observations, and the dates found for perihelion passage ranged from November 1924 to February 1926.

The following approximate ephemeris should suffice for finding the comet:

	R. A.	N. Decl.
Apr. 28	10 ^h 50 ^m	4° 3'
May 6	10 41	4 17
" 14	10 32	4 27