

## The Royal Observatory, Greenwich.

### ANNUAL VISITATION.

THERE was a departure this year from the usual routine on the occasion of the annual visitation of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, on June 6; for the Board of Visitors met at Dorking and inspected the new magnetic station at Abinger, which has been completed during the year.

A large number of invited guests were, however, present at the Royal Observatory and inspected the instruments. The report of the Astronomer Royal was presented, dealing with the twelve months ended on May 10, 1925.

Fundamental observations have been continued as usual; the mean error of Brown's longitude of the moon in 1924 is  $-7.10''$ , practically identical with  $-7.12''$  in 1923. The altazimuth is being used for observation of fundamental stars in the prime vertical; the results are in close agreement with those of the transit circle, indicating a mean correction of  $+0.25''$  to Boss's Declinations between  $12^\circ$  and  $50^\circ$  N. The usual observations of variation of latitude were made with the Cookson floating zenith telescope. Application has been made to Cambridge Observatory for the renewal of the loan of this instrument for another seven years.

The 28-inch equatorial has been used for the measurement of 436 double stars, of which 37 were under  $0.5''$  separation. Dr. Steavenson observed Mars with this instrument last autumn; his drawings will be reproduced in the 1924 volume. 266 stellar parallaxes have now been determined with the Thompson 26-inch equatorial; details of all of them are ready for publication.

The 30-inch reflector is being used for the determination of stellar temperatures, using a prism crossed by a grating. Comparison is made with the positive crater of a carbon arc, which is mounted on the roof of the Octagon Room. The plates are measured in the micro-photometer; the results are stated to be encouraging. Four comets and two minor planets (including that of Baade) have also been observed both visually and photographically. New plates are being taken with the astrographic equatorial for the determination of proper motions in the Greenwich Zone (Decl.  $64^\circ$  to  $90^\circ$ ). Between Decl.  $64^\circ$  and  $66^\circ$  there are 54 proper motions greater than  $20''$  a century (of which 29 are new), and 231 between  $10''$  and  $20''$ ; there are 18,194 stars in the zone.

There has been a considerable increase in sunspot activity; a spot in lat.  $16^\circ$  N. (on central meridian on May 6) was visible to the naked eye. Three papers dealing with the movements of spots and faculae in longitude and latitude, and the rotation period given by long-lived spots, have appeared in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Magnetic observations are being taken in duplicate at Greenwich and Abinger to establish the relation between them. The values (at Greenwich) of Declension W., Horizontal Force, Vertical Force, and Dip for 1924 are  $13^\circ 22.8'$ ,  $0.18426$ ,  $0.43115$ , and  $66^\circ 51.7'$ ; the annual diminutions are  $11.5'$ ,  $0.00007$ ,  $0.00033$ , and  $0.5'$  respectively. The West Declension at Abinger is about  $12'$  greater than that at Greenwich; but this needs further investigation, as a defect was found in the Abinger instrument which has only recently been corrected.

The new standard sidereal clock, by Mr. W. H. Shortt, has been in use since January 1, and is very satisfactory; the master pendulum is in a vault under the Octagon Room, and the slave clock in the ordinary clock room.

Wireless time signals are received daily from Paris, Bordeaux, Annapolis, and Nauen. The first three are in the mean late on Greenwich by  $0.07$  sec.; Nauen is late by  $0.02$  sec.

The Astronomer Royal refers in his report to the astronomers who have visited the Observatory during the year. Prof. Lundmark and Mr. Asklöf stayed for two months, studying photographic and parallax work; Mr. G. Merton is making a prolonged stay, being engaged chiefly in researches on cometary orbits. Several others paid short visits.

## University and Educational Intelligence.

BIRMINGHAM.—Dr. W. N. Haworth, professor of organic chemistry in the University of Durham (Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne), has been appointed professor of chemistry, and director of the department of chemistry.

CAMBRIDGE.—Prof. A. C. Seward, Master of Downing College, has been re-elected Vice-Chancellor for the academic year 1925-6. Mr. H. Banister, St. John's College, has been appointed demonstrator in experimental psychology.

In connexion with the forthcoming meeting of the International Astronomical Union at Cambridge, it is proposed to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Science upon the president of the Union, President W. W. Campbell, of the University of California; also upon Prof. W. De Sitter, of the University of Leyden; Prof. B. Baillaud, Director of the Observatory of Paris; Prof. H. Nagaoka, of the Imperial University, Tokyo; and Prof. F. Schlesinger, Director of Yale University Observatory.

At Trinity College the following appointments for 1925-6 have been made: Mr. Bertrand Russell to be Tarner lecturer in the philosophy of the sciences, and Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice to be Lees Knowles lecturer in military science.

The Statutory Commissioners have notified the University that they propose to modify the recommendation of the Royal Commission with regard to the proposed House of Residents as follows: that if a Grace passed by this house involves a change of either statute or ordinance of the University, an appeal may be made to the Senate under certain conditions. If in the vote in the Senate—the body of graduate voters including residents and non-residents—there is a majority against the Grace, the Senate's vote shall stand good (and the Grace shall be rejected), if in this second vote the majority against the Grace is larger proportionately to all the votes cast than the majority of residents' votes cast on the second occasion is to the total vote cast by the residents. How this ingenious scheme, which restores the ultimate authority over statutes and ordinances to the whole Senate, will work out in practice, remains to be seen. It may be hoped that it will not often be brought into use.

Preliminary steps in the organisation of the proposed scheme of faculties are indicated by the Commissioners in a second memorandum on the subject of initial appointments under the scheme and the position of the present staffs of University and College lecturers. It is contemplated that the new scheme will come into force on October 1, 1926.

OXFORD.—On Tuesday, June 2, Convocation passed a decree conveying the thanks of the University to Dr. F. D. Drewitt, Christ Church, for his gift to the Hope Department of six volumes of the original water-colour drawings of lepidoptera made by William Jones of Chelsea, and known as "Jones' Icones." Jones' drawings and descriptions are of high value to students of systematic entomology.