

Prof. W. T. Astbury, F.R.S.

AT the recent celebrations of the liberation of the city of Strasbourg in 1918 and 1944, the solemn 're-entry' of the University was marked, on November 22, by its first honorary degree ceremony since the end of the War. Among other recipients, the degree of *Docteur honoris causa* was conferred on Prof. W. T. Astbury, of the Department of Bio-molecular Structure and Textile Physics Laboratory of the University of Leeds. Prof. Astbury was also recently elected a member of the Royal Society of Sciences of Uppsala.

L.M.S. Railway : Scientific Research

MR. F. C. JOHANSEN has been appointed deputy scientific research manager of the L.M.S. Railway. Mr. Johansen graduated with first-class honours from King's College, University of London, gaining the degree of B.Sc.(Eng.), and afterwards obtaining his M.Sc. On leaving the university, he took up an appointment with the Yorkshire Electric Power Co.; later he joined the National Physical Laboratory, where he did research into certain aspects of fluid motion, and carried out a comprehensive investigation into air resistance of trains. In 1932 he joined the Scientific Research Department of the L.M.S. Railway as engineering research officer.

University of Glasgow

DR. ERIC CLAR has arrived from Czechoslovakia to work in the Chemistry Department as an I.C.I. Fellow. After graduating at Dresden and working for a time at Cambridge, Dr. Clar became head of the Chemistry Department of the Istituto Ronzoni at Milan in 1930. Since 1933 he has been working mainly in his own laboratory at Herrnskretsch, but has also been part-time lecturer in the University of Prague and has had connexions with Rütgers A.G. at Niehray. For many years he has been especially interested in polycyclic hydrocarbons and their derivatives, and he is author of the monograph, "Aromatische Kohlenwasserstoffe" (1941).

Mr. Cyril A. Halstead has been appointed assistant in geography. The following resignations have been accepted: Dr. G. F. Asprey (botany) to become lecturer in plant physiology in the University of Aberdeen; Mr. E. Duffy (bacteriology) to become assistant pathologist at the Royal Cancer Hospital, Glasgow; Dr. Janet S. F. Niven (pathology) to join the staff of the National Institute of Medical Research, London.

The North Ferry Boats

LITTLE is known about the efforts of primitive man in northern Europe to overcome the inherent defects of the dugout boat and to develop a seaworthy planked vessel. The Scandinavian tradition was to use the clinker build; but apart from the Hjortspring canoe, really early examples of this kind are so incomplete that it is impossible to gather any clear idea of their shape or size. In all of them, however, the planks are secured by stitching. The remains of two large boats as primitive as any planked vessel from Northern Europe and, in one case, sufficiently complete to allow reconstruction of the original form to be made with fair certainty, have been found by Mr. E. V. Wright and his brother, the first in 1937, the second in 1941. They were between high and low water, buried in the old river clays on the north bank of the River Humber at North Ferry in east

Yorkshire. Much of the first boat was lost during the War by erosion; but records survive of what has disappeared. The end of the War made it possible to recover what was left. The enthusiastic support was secured of the late Sir Geoffrey Callender and the National Maritime Museum, who organised the salvage of the boats with the help of the Admiralty. Although the first boat was not extracted in one piece, as was hoped, no information or timber was lost, and a successful restoration is certain.

The boats were highly developed examples of a technique of sewing planks together to form a 'fabricated dugout'. They had a flat bottom made up of three composite planks, the centre one being turned up like the end of a punt at the end that was preserved complete, and probably at the other also. The centre plank was twice as thick as the others but was made of two lengths joined with an absurdly short scarf joint in the middle. The seams were grooved, caulked with moss, with a covering slat and sewn up with yew withes. The bottom planks were further secured by groups of cross-battens passing through cleats left standing on the upper surface of the planks. Part of the first strake survived on one side. It was cut on the curve from the solid wood. No form of framing was discovered, although there were probably at least some thwart to support the sides of the hull. The meagre archaeological evidence at present points to an Early Iron Age date for the deposits in which the boats were found. The botanical evidence may throw further light on their age. The work of recording is now very nearly completed and that of preservation will shortly begin. All being well, these splendid monuments of primitive craftsmanship will in due course be on exhibition at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

An Automatic Computing Engine for the National Physical Laboratory

FOLLOWING upon Lord Mountbatten's presidential address to the Institution of Radio Engineers, in which he referred to the E.N.I.A.C. (described in an article in *Nature* of October 12, p. 500), a statement was issued from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research stating that plans for a machine to be called the Automatic Computing Engine (A.C.E.) are being completed at the National Physical Laboratory. A short statement about this machine was broadcast by Sir Charles Darwin, director of the National Physical Laboratory, in the B.B.C. Home Service on November 9. While paper plans have made good progress, the technical design is only beginning, and it will be a year or two before any units are operating. The completion of the machine will take several years. The project is under the charge of Mr. J. R. Womersley, superintendent of the Mathematics Division, and the machine will form part of the Division's equipment. The team of mathematicians who are planning the machine is led by Dr. A. M. Turing, formerly a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, in whose paper "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem" (*Proc. Lond. Math. Soc.*, 1937), the possibility of such machines is foreseen, and methods of organising work on them are discussed.

Council for the Preservation of Rural England

IN the report of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England the first after the war years, the aims, objects and policy of the Council are re-stated. Briefly, these relate to the protection of rural scenery,

the preservation of amenities in country and town and the education of public opinion on these matters. This comprehensive report gives a clear impression of the many activities which engage the attention of the Council. The policy of the Council, which is discussed at some length, is based on the view that the development of agricultural resources, and the improvement of the social environment of the rural population, provide the best means of realizing the aims of the Council. National and regional planning of the land in the interest of the community is supported; genuine rural industries are to be encouraged, while rural housing and services should be improved. Other sections are devoted to the location of industry and the provision of new towns, road construction, the provision of National Parks and open spaces, afforestation, prohibition of outdoor advertisements in certain localities, and the release of areas from military occupation. In many of these and other matters, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England works in close co-operation with other bodies, for example, the National Trust.

Training Grants for Engineers

THE Ministry of Labour and National Service is now awarding grants under the Further Education and Training Scheme to assist young engineers who have been on military service to complete their practical training in industry. University graduates in engineering and others who have qualified as graduates of the Institutions of Civil, Mechanical or Electrical Engineers are entitled to apply for grants. The awards are intended to supplement the payments which employers normally make to engineering graduates. A plan of training must be drawn up by the employer and approved by the Ministry before a grant will be made. Three types of course are contemplated, lasting twenty-four, twelve and six months respectively. The longest course is intended for those who have had no previous industrial experience and only limited technical experience in the Services. The Institution of Electrical Engineers announces that young electrical engineers will be advised to take a twelve-months course if they have had little or no industrial training, but have served eighteen months or more on suitable workshop duties in technical units, or have had 12-18 months previous industrial training and only limited technical experience on military service. Those with more than nine months previous industrial training and more than eighteen months technical experience in the Services will generally be regarded as having completed their training, but some may be advised to take the six-months course. Further particulars may be obtained from the Regional Appointments Officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

Catalogue of Scientific Films in Britain

A CATALOGUE compiled by the Scientific Film Association lists alphabetically 595 films of general scientific interest at present available in Great Britain, ranging from films of technique and process to films relating science to society (London: Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux. 5s.) Most films entirely of use for juvenile teaching have been excluded, but some films on cooking and related topics, and selected films on international relations, national cultures, ways of life and tradition have been included to give that social background against which all human activities must be assessed

and studied. Of the films listed, 266 have been appraised and graded by special committees, and it is the intention of the Association to supply synopses, appraisals and gradings for every film and to keep the lists up to date in this respect. The graded films are marked recommended, suitable or unsuitable in three categories: for general audiences and audiences of mixed scientific workers; for more specialized audiences with a knowledge of the subject-matter of the film; and for adult teaching or training purposes. Silent films are indicated by printing the title in italic capitals, and sound films with silent versions by an asterisk. Films of which the distribution is restricted for any reason are also marked, and sponsor and production agency, where traced, are indicated. The name of the distributor is usually abbreviated and followed by a catalogue reference for use in ordering. A list of film distributors with these abbreviations is included, and there is a classified subject index.

Association of Scientific Workers: Social Sciences Committee

A MEETING to inaugurate a National Social Sciences Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers will be held in Gas Industries House, 1 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1, on December 14. The meeting will be held under the chairmanship of Mr. J. R. M. Brumwell. Prof. S. Zuckerman will speak on the outlook for the social sciences, Dr. G. Wagner will report on the work of the Social Sciences Committee, Mr. D. Chapman will discuss future work for social scientists in the Association of Scientific Workers, and Mr. R. Innes will discuss the constitution of a National Committee for Social Scientists. Further information can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Social Sciences Committee, Association of Scientific Workers, 15 Half Moon Street, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

Announcements

Sir Alexander Fleming and Sir Howard Florey have been awarded the Gold Medals in Therapeutics of the Society of Apothecaries of London, in recognition of their discovery and work on penicillin.

THE title of professor emeritus in the University of Durham has been conferred upon Prof. J. W. Heslop Harrison, formerly professor of botany, and Commander C. J. Hawkes, formerly professor of engineering, both at King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

RECENT appointments to the staff of the University of Leeds include the following: Dr. H. J. Rogers, to be Nuffield Research Fellow in oral biology; Dr. A. B. Moggy, to be Brotherton Research Lecturer in physical chemistry in the Department of Textile Industries; Dr. R. N. Tattersall, to be lecturer (full-time) in medicine.

DR. E. C. BARTON-WRIGHT has been appointed microbiologist to Whitbread and Co., Ltd., and has taken up his duties in the laboratories at Chiswell Street, London, E.C.1.

REFERRING to the notes under the title "Abnormal Solar Radiation on 75 Megacycles" in *Nature* of October 12, p. 511, Dr. S. E. Williams states that the phrase (par. 2, line 3) "visual changes on the sun's disk as recorded on spectrohelioscope observations . . ." should read, "visual changes on the sun, namely, the appearance of an eruptive prominence recorded in the spectrohelioscope observations . . ."