

to approved British expeditions for excavation or other research. For the information of would-be students, the following rough estimate of expenses may be useful: living in Turkey, average £T5 per day for 100 days (say, £50); travelling from Britain and back £120; incidental expenses during stay £30; balance for travel and expenses of research in Turkey £100 (total £300). The Institute is organised under a committee in London, on which there are representatives of the British Academy, the British Museum, the London Institute of Archaeology, the British School at Athens, the Society for Hellenic Studies, the School of Oriental Studies, the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Royal Anthropological Institute, as well as official representatives of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London and Edinburgh. The committee's honorary secretary in London is Miss K. Kenyon, c/o Institute of Archaeology, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London, N.W.1.

### Transit Circle for the Royal Observatory, Greenwich

WHEN the Royal Observatory moves from Greenwich to Herstmonceux, the Airy transit circle, which was installed in 1851 and which marks the zero meridian of longitude, will be left at Greenwich, along with a collection of older instruments dating back to the time of Halley. They will form an interesting historical exhibit. The Airy instrument has reached the end of its useful life; the objective has twice been repolished and refigured and is too thin for a further repolishing which is now needed; many of the circle graduations have been almost obliterated by repeated cleaning; the instrument is non-reversible and obsolete in various respects. The Observatory possesses a modern reversible 7-in. transit circle, made by Cooke, Troughton and Simms, and installed in 1936, which is required primarily for fundamental observations. A second transit circle is needed for differential zone observations.

When the Astronomer Royal, Sir Harold Spencer Jones, was in Australia last year, he visited the Melbourne Observatory, which was recently closed. Much of its work has been taken over by the Commonwealth Observatory at Mount Stromlo near Canberra. There he saw an 8-in. reversible transit circle, of 12-ft. focal length, with two circles of 3-ft. diameter. It was made by Troughton and Simms, and installed in 1884; an impersonal micrometer has since been provided for it. The instrument had been used with care and was in excellent condition. When the Government of Victoria was made aware of the requirement for such an instrument by the Royal Observatory, it generously decided to present the telescope. The instrument was dismantled and packed with the assistance of the Royal Australian Navy, and has recently arrived at Greenwich. It will be installed at Herstmonceux in due course.

### The Biometric Society: British Region

THE Biometric Society, a new international organisation the aim of which is the furtherance of quantitative biology in all its aspects, came into being at a conference held in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, during September 1947. Its president is Prof. R. A. Fisher, and its secretary, Dr. C. I. Bliss, of New Haven, Connecticut. It is hoped to hold international meetings every few years, and all members will receive the journal *Biometrics*. For the purpose of more local activities, the Society is organised into

regions, of which it is proposed that a British Region shall form one. A provisional committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. J. W. Trevan, vice-president for the Region, is now engaged in drafting proposals for the regional organisation and activities, which it is intended will primarily provide a means of bringing together all those biologists and biochemists who are interested in the application of quantitative methods, with the statisticians and mathematicians who can co-operate in developing these methods. It is hoped shortly to present these proposals to an inaugural meeting of the Region. Further information can be obtained from the Regional Secretary, Dr. K. Mather, of the John Innes Horticultural Institution, London, S.W.19.

### Breeding of Avocets in Britain

PRIOR to 1938, when two pairs of avocets were reported to have nested in Ireland, ornithological records contained no reference to the breeding of these birds in Britain for more than a century. During the summer of 1947, however, two small colonies of avocets (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) established themselves in East Anglia. According to P. E. Brown and E. Lynn-Allen (*British Birds*, 41, No. 1, January 1948), nine pairs of adult birds, of which at least seven pairs nested, were present during the breeding season. Altogether sixteen young birds were known to have reached the free-flying state. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has already taken measures to ensure that the birds will be adequately safeguarded should they return in 1948.

### School Ecological Studies: Blundell's Scientific Publication

THE second number (1947) of the *Magazine of the Blundell's School Science Society* is, like the first, worthy of special note since it has carefully avoided the usual mistake of becoming a rather extravagant, even useless, potpourri of miscellaneous information and has again developed a theme—that of ecology. In fact, it is a good though elementary collection of articles mainly of ecological interest. In an article on "Butterflies of the Tiverton Area", M. A. Lyne describes twenty-seven species found within a ten-mile radius of Blundell's School. P. R. Freeth's interest lies mainly in bird watching and bird ringing, and records that the British Birds Marking Scheme was revived at the School in 1947 after a lapse of eight years. Thirty-nine birds were ringed. O. H. D. Portsmouth describes the flora of a local marsh meadow. The marsh is divided into a wet area dominated by *Carex panicea* and a drier area dominated by *Juncus communis*. This article gives the floral ecology in detail and reveals an extraordinarily sound grasp of the principles of ecological study by such a young author.

R. Honey reports on a survey of the marine algae of Guernsey, giving a systematic list and dealing with ecological factors, distribution and relations between flora and habitat. G. O. Mackie confines himself to a more intensive ecological study of the flora and fauna of rain gutters. Other articles, all ecological in approach, are the animal ecology of a field drainage scheme by J. S. Miller, some factors affecting the distribution of the may-fly by R. H. Champion, fauna of a stream by E. W. Sturton, and observations in bird territory by J. A. Shepherd. The entire publication reveals a sound biological training, indicates that the young students are stimulated to a healthy enthusiasm (they are fortunate in that their