

The Irish Astronomical Journal

THE first meeting of the council of the Irish Astronomical Society was held on June 14, 1947, at Armagh Observatory, and this new Society has issued the first two numbers of a quarterly periodical, *The Irish Astronomical Journal* (1, No. 1, pp. 36 (March 1950), and No. 2, pp. 37-68 (June 1950); Armagh: the Observatory; 3s. each or 10s. annual subscription). These two numbers show a remarkable interest in astronomy, both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland, and it is worth recording that each government has given £5,000 towards the new planetarium which is to be installed at Armagh; this will be the first planetarium in the British Commonwealth. The issue for March 1950 contains a description of the programme and instruments at Armagh Observatory and is written by Dr. E. M. Lindsay, director of the Observatory, which is now closely connected with Queen's University, Belfast. Students taking the astronomy course make use of the facilities of the Observatory, and Dr. E. B. Armstrong, a member of the Armagh staff, is a lecturer in the Department of Astronomy. Among the contributions to the March 1950 issue are papers, among others, by the following: Dr. H. A. Brück, director of the Dunsink Observatory, giving a short history of the Observatory since it was founded in 1783 and an account of the present equipment and programme; E. M. Lindsay, "Exploring between the Stars"; A. P. Fitzgerald, "Mercury; an Historical Error"; James Paton, "The Aurora Borealis"; E. J. Öpik (also on the Armagh staff), "Mars and the Asteroids". There are also an "Astronomical Diary for 1950", "Reports of Meetings", "Queries and Answers", etc. The June issue contains equally interesting papers, the first of which, by E. J. Öpik, on "Dust and the Planets", provides, *inter alia*, an excellent survey of the most recent knowledge of the physical conditions on Venus and Mars. E. B. Armstrong has a paper with the title "Geometrical Optics, and the Schmidt Camera", which summarizes the progress in optics during the nineteenth century and then deals with a description of the Schmidt camera and with some of its ramifications. "News and Comments" covers a number of notes by Dr. Öpik on various current topics discussed in different astronomical publications, and there follows the usual "Queries and Answers". Dr. E. J. Öpik, the editor of this new publication, must be congratulated on the excellent standard of its contributions, and we wish it success in the future.

Films of Parasites of Man and Animals

THE medical committee of the International Scientific Film Association has issued a preliminary list of films on human and comparative parasitology which contains information received in response to a circular sent out last March. The list includes films made in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Yugoslavia, Portugal, the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Uruguay, Rhodesia and the U.S.S.R. The Protozoa are represented by films of *Trypanosoma gambiense* and sleeping sickness, *Shizotrypanum cruzi* and the disease it causes in South America (Chagas's disease), *Entamoeba histolytica* and amebic dysentery, malaria and its control in Sardinia and in general, and *Lankesterella* (listed as a Hæmogregarine) and *Balantidium coli*. Flukes are represented by *Opisthorchis felineus*, *Schistosoma*, *Fasciola hepatica* and

some other species. Tapeworms appear in films of the development of the human fish-tapeworm (*Diphyllobothrium latum*) and of hydatid cysts of the lung, and in one on the operation for the removal of hydatid cysts. The roundworms filmed are *Strongyloides*, hookworms, *Loa loa*, *Trichinella*, *Ascaris*, stomachworms of sheep, the human threadworm and filarial worms. Films on insects include the housefly and the blowfly, the control of these, and mosquitoes, and there is one on the biology of the tsetse fly, *Glossina palpalis*. Other insects filmed are the bed-bug, human lice (which also appear in films dealing with the control of typhus in Naples and elsewhere) and the Congo, and the floor maggot of *Auchmeromyia*. Arachnids are represented by *Sarcoptes scabiei* and the ticks concerned in the transmission of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, which appear in a film on the preparation of a vaccine against this fever. Other subjects dealt with are the technique of making blood films, the diagnosis of human threadworm infection, the development of the chick embryo, *Treponema pallidum*, syphilis, and avian and other spirochaetes. There are also films on dengue fever, the control of plague, the locomotor apparatus of bacteria and tissue culture. The committee hopes to receive additions to this preliminary list and corrections of it, so that it may compile a permanent catalogue and may issue periodical supplements to it. The address of the committee is 231 Péristyle Montpensier, Paris, 1, and the letter accompanying the list comes from Dr. Willem de Vogel, c/o Universitaire Film, Catharijnesingel 59, Utrecht.

Bird-migration across England

OBSERVATIONS by Eric Simms in 1948 and 1949 indicate the existence of an overland migration route across the South Midlands of England during the autumn months (*British Birds*, 43, No. 8; August 1950). The route runs in a south-westerly direction across Preston-on-Stour, near Stratford-on-Avon. In both years the peak of migration took place about the middle of October, the birds recorded including flocks of skylarks, meadow-pipits, wagtails, mixed flocks of finches and yellowhammers, redwings, geese, snipe, gulls and swifts; the commonest species in both years were skylarks, meadow-pipits and chaffinches. Most migration was seen during the second hour after dawn, although movement was sometimes observed earlier. Meadow-pipits often migrated right through the day. Although migration was noticed specially on clear, fine days, it still took place in some rain and in gusty weather; temperature appeared to have little or no effect. Most birds seen on the route were 50-300 ft. above the ground. This, and evidence from other observers, suggests the possibility of a migratory bird route across England from the Wash to the Severn; but much research remains to be done before this can be accepted.

Avian Systematics

A TWO-DAY course in "Avian Systematics", arranged by the Liverpool City Museums in conjunction with the British Trust for Ornithology, was held in Liverpool during December 29-30. Mr. J. H. Iliffe (director, Liverpool Museums) opened the course with an address of welcome, after which the first lecture by Mr. W. K. Ford (Liverpool Museums) dealt with systematic zoology in general. Mr. R. Wagstaffe (Liverpool Museums) followed with an introductory lecture on avian systematics. Sub-