

We are indebted to our Russian colleagues for computing the tracking data for the radio telescope.

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ON September 13, attempts were made to observe the impact of the Russian vehicle upon the Moon. The telescope used was the 12.5-in. reflector with which extensive lunar observation has been carried out since 1949.

The impact area had been indicated as that of the Maria Serenitatis, Tranquillitatis and Vaporum. Such an area would be impossible to cover adequately. Since it seemed reasonable to assume that the Russians intended to land the vehicle as close as possible to the apparent centre of the lunar disk, it was considered best to use a reasonably high power ($\times 300$ to 400) and concentrate solely upon the Mare Vaporum region.

Predicted impact time was 21h. 01m. U.T. Nothing was recorded at this time, but at 21h. 02m. 23s. U.T. (± 2 sec.) a minute pinpoint of light was recorded; it appeared suddenly, and faded out within half a second. The lunar co-ordinates are estimated as $+085 +195$. This places the position as in the Hyginus area, close to Schneckenberg.

Though seeing conditions were good, the phenomenon was so uncertain and so close to the limit of visibility that it seemed unwise to trust it. A report was at once sent to the Director of the Lunar Section of the British Astronomical Association, at Man-

chester, to await confirmation. Since it now seems that both time and position are in good agreement with other observations, there is a possibility that the phenomenon did in fact represent the impact.

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ON September 13, observations were made with the hope of observing the landing of the Russian *Lunik* on the Moon, using a reflecting telescope of 15½-in. aperture with a power of 300. The sky was very clear and surface details on the Moon clearly defined. The Russians had said it was aimed at the Mare Tranquillitatis, Serenitatis and Vaporum, that is, the region to the north-west of the geometrical centre. Last Sunday the Moon had sufficient libration to bring this region nearer to the centre as seen from the Earth than usual.

This area of hundreds of square miles was 'swept' regularly. The stated time for impact arrived and nothing was seen. I decided to continue for a short while and 1½ min. after the stated time, at 21h. 02m. 23s. U.T., I was looking at the Mare Vaporum, the nearest part to the centre. At this point, north of the Hyginus Cleft and close to Schneckenberg, I observed a pinpoint of light and a kind of dark ring just as though dust had been disturbed and heated. This lasted a few seconds.

I understand that this observation is in accordance with the work of other observers.

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NEWS and VIEWS

Engineering in the University of Birmingham :

Prof. G. F. Mucklow

PROF. G. F. MUCKLOW retired this summer from the Chance chair of mechanical engineering, University of Birmingham. He is succeeded by Dr. S. A. Tobias, assistant director of research in the Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge. Prof. Mucklow has held the chair since 1940. He was educated at Rugby, McGill University and the University of Manchester. He was for a short time a research associate of British Motor and Allied Manufacturers before taking up the post in 1923 as lecturer in engineering at the University of Manchester. He is well known for his work on compression-ignition engines: super-charging, exhaust pipe effects, wave-action in gases and related topics. During his tenure of the Chance chair, the Department of Mechanical Engineering has been greatly expanded. Prof. Mucklow has played a prominent part in the development of postgraduate courses of instruction for men returning from industry. The first course to be established was that in production engineering, and this was followed in 1950 by a most successful course in thermodynamics. He has seen the Department rehoused in excellent buildings which were officially opened in 1954.

Prof. S. A. Tobias

DR. S. A. TOBIAS, who succeeds Prof. Mucklow, was born in Vienna in 1930. He received his education at the University for Technological and Economic

Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, and graduated in 1943. For four years after that he worked in industry as a design engineer of machine tools. Tobias came to Britain in 1947 as a British Council Scholar, becoming a research student in the Department of Engineering, University of Edinburgh, where he received his Ph.D. in 1950. During 1951-54 he was an Imperial Chemical Industries research fellow at Edinburgh, working on problems of linear and non-linear vibrations, and received his D.Sc. Edinburgh in 1955. In that year he was appointed assistant director of research in the Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge, where he has built up a flourishing research school in the field of non-linear vibrations and in problems arising in metal-cutting processes.

Agricultural Botany at Bangor :

Prof. Alun Roberts

PROF. R. ALUN ROBERTS is retiring from the chair of agricultural botany at the University College of North Wales, Bangor. At Bangor the Departments of Agriculture, Agricultural Botany and Agricultural Chemistry are separate and independent, and, unlike most of the other universities where agriculture is taught, there are no subordinate professorships in those subjects. Prof. Alun Roberts was appointed professor at Bangor in 1945, where he had been independent lecturer in agricultural botany during 1921-40, when he was seconded as executive