

who is distinguished for his contributions in the field of plant ecology, particularly in Arnhem Land and in South Australia. The citation continues: "In the first-named area his work has provided essentially the first critical study of an important area of Australia. In South Australia he has contributed especially to the study of the detailed edaphic and microclimatic factors which determine the nature of the plant associations and the distribution of the dominant species. He has taken full advantage of the recent knowledge gained in geological surveys, in soil surveys and in rainfall studies, particularly in the Mount Lofty Ranges, to establish detailed edaphic and climatic correlations with native vegetation and so has built soundly on the early pioneering work of Osborn and of Wood".

New National Nature Reserves:

Shapwick Heath

THE Nature Conservancy recently declared Shapwick Heath as a National Nature Reserve. This Reserve contains some of the last remnants of the extensive raised bogs, about 15 ft. above sea-level, which once stretched from Glastonbury to within a few miles of the coast. These raised bogs were similar to those now covering a large part of the Central Irish Plain and were gently domed in shape and dominated by communities of *Sphagnum* moss, heather and cotton grass. The Reserve is set up under Nature Reserve Agreements with the Eclipse Peat Co. and the Eclipse Land Co. and covers 484 acres. Extensive peat-cutting has turned the area into a complex patchwork of marsh and scrub woodland. The peat is used mainly for horticultural purposes, and under the Nature Reserve Agreement the Eclipse Peat Co. will continue to extract it. There is a wide range of flora and fauna because of the diverse habitats produced by peat-cutting and because of variations of acidity. For example, heather and bog asphodel are characteristic of one part of the area and a species of sedge, *Cladium mariscus*, of another. The rare royal fern is also present. Peat diggings have uncovered many archaeological remains of neolithic, bronze age, iron age and Romano-British date, and Shapwick Heath has been the centre of these discoveries. The area was crossed by a number of timber trackways built towards the end of the bronze age to form a passage between the Polden Hills and the 'islands' in the valley when the climate grew wetter. Blade marks, the size and shape of which are typical of those made by late bronze age axes, can be seen on the larger timbers in several trackways. Within a mile or two of the Reserve neolithic trackways have likewise been identified. Access to the Reserve is by permit only. Applications to visit and for permission to collect specimens of animals and plants should be made to the Regional Officer for the South-West, the Nature Conservancy, Furzebrook Research Station, Wareham, Dorset.

Wye and Crundale Downs

Wye and Crundale Downs have also been declared as a National Nature Reserve. This Reserve forms part of the escarpment of the North Downs between Ashford and Canterbury. It is the first area of chalk downland to be declared as a National Nature Reserve in Kent and adds to the incomplete series stretching from Wiltshire and Hampshire to Bedfordshire and Sussex. To-day the chalk downlands are particularly vulnerable to destruction because of

increased mechanization of farming and it is urgent that the Nature Conservancy should acquire further chalk areas to preserve them for study. The present acquisition consists of 123 acres of chalk downland, scrub and mature woodland. The downland is basically a product of sheep-grazing which was practised as early as the Roman occupation, and became such an important feature in the English economy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The scrub and woodland are the result, at least in part, of the natural colonization of the downland by woody species (such as hawthorn and beech) and clearly demonstrate the necessity for grazing in order to maintain the downland character. The Reserve has a rich flora including the lady orchis, man orchis and fly orchis. One of the many notable insects is the feathered ear moth. The Devil's Kneading Trough, a natural steep-sided valley, cuts into the Downs on the Reserve, forming one of its most conspicuous features. On the crest of the Downs are several tumuli which indicate the antiquity of human influence in this type of country. Access to the Reserve along the public footpath is unchanged; elsewhere it is by permit only. Applications to visit and for permission to collect specimens of animals and plants should be made to the Regional Officer for the South-East, the Nature Conservancy, 19 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1.

Rehabilitating Lepers

OF an estimated world total of 10 million people suffering from leprosy, probably not more than 20 per cent are receiving treatment of any kind for the severe disabilities that the disease often causes. The World Health Organization scientific meeting on rehabilitation in leprosy, through an on-the-spot examination of leprosy patients with typical varieties of deformity at a research sanatorium in India, set out to determine the extent of the problem of disability, to advise on the best application of available knowledge in prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of disabled leprosy patients, and to recommend further research (Scientific Meeting on *Rehabilitation in Leprosy*. Report. World Health Organization: Technical Report Series, 1961. No. 221; Pp. 37. Price 3s. 6d. Published also in French and Spanish).

Teaching Psychiatry and Mental Health

THE need for reform of the medical curriculum in training doctors has been the subject of much controversy, and the place that psychiatry should occupy in the curriculum has often been at the centre of the controversy. The reason for this is twofold. Psychiatry as a medical speciality has now developed to the stage at which it can claim a place of its own in the company of other branches of medicine; it is considered by many to be a leaven permeating medicine as a whole and re-orientating medical practice and medical teaching from its present tendency to separate into compartments towards a better awareness of the human being. A publication (*Teaching of Psychiatry and Mental Health*. Various authors. World Health Organization. Public Health Papers No. 9, 1961. Pp. 186. Price 10s. Also published in French. Available through H.M.S.O.) brings together a group of papers by teachers of psychiatry from various parts of the world, describing how the teaching of psychiatry and mental health care can be organized, what problems of content and method are likely to