

## Science broadcasting statistics

The proportion of BBC radio time spent on science has never been lower, in spite of the fact that the proportion of time devoted to talks and discussions has been increasing over the past ten years. Yet television has shown that there is a market for science, with ten million viewers watching *The Burke Special*.

James Friday, an archivist on the staff of the Royal Institution has been collecting statistics on the BBC's use of programme time. In 1923 Reith, with his brief to educate, inform and entertain devoted  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  of radio time to

scientific programmes. Subsequently the emphasis shifted heavily to entertainment and science was relegated to schools programmes. In 1943 with science up to about 1%, the British Association, whose general secretary was then Richard Gregory, editor of *Nature*, sent a delegation to the BBC to suggest improvements in science broadcasting. The delegation recommended that the BBC should appoint a scientific advisory group and a scientific programme organiser. The BBC rejected both proposals. When similar proposals were made twenty years later by the Pilkington Commission they were accepted in part: a Science Consultative Group was appointed in 1964. But, its influence seems to have been negligible.

Television science has clearly not suffered from the BBC's dislike of having scientists in its midst. But radio producers seem to have become progressively more intimidated by the subject: science at present occupies  $\frac{1}{3}\%$  of BBC radio time. With television science included, the proportion rises to slightly over 1%—little more than in 1943. Yet surely science impinges on most peoples' lives considerably more than it did in 1943? The BBC—and scientists—should consider, said Friday in a recent RI lecture, how they can best transmit science and how many hours a week they need to do it before they are overtaken by the report of the Annan Commission and the timidity of the programme producers.

## Announcements

### Appointments

**Roy Gibson** has been appointed Acting Director General of The Council of the European Space Research Organisation.

### Erratum

In the article 'Nuclear fission as a general source of energy' by L. R. Shepherd (*Nature*, 249, 717; 1974) the two figures were inadvertently printed above the wrong figure legends. The legends themselves are correct and in the right places.

### International meetings

September 2–6, **International Symposium on Approaches to the Early Detection of Chemical Toxicity**, Guildford (Mrs J. King, Department of Biochemistry, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 5XH).

October, **International Symposium on Andean and Antarctic Volcanology Problems**, Chile (Professor O. Gonzales-Ferran, Department of Geology, University of Chile, Casilla 13518, Corroero 21, Santiago, Chile).

October 6–11 **Symposium of the International Society for Photogrammetry**, Banff, Canada (Dr L. Sayn-Wittgenstein, Canadian Forestry Service, Ottawa, Canada).

October 7–11, **First World Congress of Genetics Applied to Animal Production**, Madrid (Professor Dr Luis de Cuenca, Fac de Vet, University of Madrid, Ciudad University, Madrid, Spain).

October 10–12, **International Symposium on Thermogenesis and Depressed Metabolism**, Czechoslovakia (J. Meisner, MD, CSc, General Secretary, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Vinicna 7, 120 00 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia).

October 13–16, **Symposium on Temperature Regulation**, Israel (The Secretariat, POB 983, Jerusalem, Israel).

October 13–16, **Symposium on the Mechanisms of Synaptic Action**, Israel (The Secretariat, POB 983, Jerusalem, Israel).

October 13–17, **Symposium on Environmental Physiology** (The Secretariat, POB 983, Jerusalem, Israel).

October 13–19, **Fifth World Congress of Gastroenterology**, Mexico (V Congreso Mundial de Gastroenterología, Avenida Veracruz 93, Mexico 11 DF, Mexico).

October 14–18, **International Symposium on the Regulation of Growth and Differentiated Functions in Eukaryote Cells**, New Delhi (Professor G. P. Talwar, Department of Biochemistry, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, 11016, India).

October 20–22, **Sixth Meeting of the International Association for the Study of the Liver**, Acapulco (VI Reunion de la Asociacion Internacional para el Estudio del Higado, Avenida Veracruz 93, Mexico 11 DF, Mexico).

October 21–23, **3rd Conference on Application of Small Accelerators**, Texas (Dr Jerome L. Duggan, Department of Physics, N. Texas State University, Denton Texas 76203).

October 21–25, **Symposium of the International Atomic Energy Agency on the Thermodynamics of Nuclear Materials**, Vienna (International Atomic Energy Agency, PO Box 590, A-1011 Vienna, Austria).

October 21–25, **Second Conference of the Condensed Matter Division of the European Physical Society**, Budapest (EPS Condensed Matter Division, Conference Office, Research Institute for Technical Physics, 1325 Budapest, PO Box 76, Hungary).

### Reports and Publications

#### Great Britain

Department of Trade Industry, Warren Spring Laboratory—Annual Review, 1972/1973. Pp. 32. (Stevenage, Herts: Warren Spring Laboratory, 1974.) [116]

Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History), Historical Series, Vol. 4, No. 5: Sir Joseph Banks and the Plant Collection from Kew Sent to the Empress Catherine II of Russia, 1795. By H. B. Carter. Pp. 281–385 + 4 plates. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1974.) £5.45. [126]

British Museum (Natural History), Entomology Leaflets. No. 1: Insects. Pp. 6. 5p. No. 2: Insects and Man. Pp. 12. 9p. No. 3: Aquatic Insects. Pp. 6. 5p. No. 4: Insect Flight. Pp. 6. 5p. No. 5: Butterflies and Moths. Pp. 6. 5p. Zoology Leaflet No. 8: The Domestic Dog. Pp. 6. 5p. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1974.) [126]

Microbiological Research Establishment—Abstracts of Work published in 1973. Pp. 19. (Porton Down, Salisbury: Microbiological Research Establishment, 1974.) [126]

Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. B: Biological Sciences. Vol. 267, No. 889: Late Quaternary History of Vegetation and Climate of the Rajasthan Desert, India. By G. Singer, R. D. Joshi, S. K. Chopra and A. B. Singh. Pp. 467–501. (London: The Royal Society, 1974.) [136]

#### Other Countries

Australia: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. Division of Soils Technical Paper No. 21: The Computation of Optimal Rates of Application of Fertilizers from Quadratic Response Functions. By J. D. Colwell. Pp. 15. (Melbourne: CSIRO, 1974.) [106]

Canada: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Geological Survey of Canada. Bulletin 224: Carboniferous and Permian Stratigraphy of Axel Island and Western Ellesmere Island, Canadian Arctic Archipelago. By R. Thorsteinsson. Pp. 115 (27 plates). \$6. Memoir 368: Surficial Geology of Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland. By E. P. Henderson. Pp. 121. \$4. Paper 72-51: Surficial Geology of the Kananaskis Research Forest and Marmot Creek Vasin Region of Alberta. By A. MacS. Stakler. Pp. 25. \$2. (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972, 1973 and 1974.) [116]

World Health Organization. Technical Report Series. No. 541: Disposal of Community Wastewater—Report of a WHO Expert Committee. Pp. 72. Sw. fr. 6. No. 542: WHO Expert Committee on Filariasis—Third Report. Pp. 54. Sw. fr. 5. (Geneva: WHO; London: HMSO, 1974.) [116]

CERN—European Organization for Nuclear Research. CERN 74-8: Topical Meeting on Intermediate Energy Physics, Lyceum Alpinum, Zuzo, Engadin, Switzerland, 4–13 April 1973—Proceedings. Pp. ix + 220. (Geneva: CERN, 1974.) [116]

Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology, No. 164: Synopsis of the Families and Genera of Crayfishes (Crustacea: Decapoda). By Horton H. Hobbs, Jr. Pp. iii + 32. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974. For sale by US Government Printing Office.) 80 cents. [146]

Institut for Atomenergi. Kjeller. Kjeller Report 149: The Electrochemistry of Uniform Corrosion and Pitting of Aluminium. By K. Videm. Pp. 85. (Kjeller, Norway: Institut for Atomenergi, 1974.) [176]

Bulletin of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, No. 186: The Capelin (*Mallotus villosus*) Biology, Distribution, Exploitation, Utilisation, and Composition. By P. M. Jangaard. Pp. x + 70. (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974.) \$3.60. [176]