



Stopping time — Harold "Doc" Edgerton's stop-action stroboscopic flash photographs of the path of a bullet through an apple and the spiked coronet of a milk-drop are just two of the many famous images that poured out of MIT's "Strobe Alley", the hallway where he worked and taught. He is shown here with his friend Jacques Cousteau (right), the underwater explorer. An account of Edgerton's life and science is given in *Seeing the Unseen* edited by Roger R. Bruce, which, together with a photo CD, presents more than 250 images of the work of this inspiring inventor, teacher and entrepreneur. **George Eastman House, \$53.95, £35.95 (distributed by MIT Press).**

**Top prize for science writer**

The British-born cosmologist and popular science writer Paul Davies has won the £650,000 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, the world's largest annual monetary award. Davies, aged 48, is professor of natural philosophy at the University of Adelaide and has held academic appointments at the universities of London, Cambridge and Newcastle upon Tyne. He emigrated to Australia in 1990. As author of more than 20 books, among them *God and the New Physics*, *The Mind of God* and *The Last Three Minutes*, he has achieved an international reputation as a gifted popularizer of science.

Previous winners of the prize have included Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Mother Teresa, the evangelist Billy Graham, the Watergate burgler-turned-preacher Charles Colson and the scientists Alister Hardy, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Charles Birch. Founded in 1972 by the financier Sir John Templeton and administered in New York, the award is given to a living person who has shown "extraordinary originality" in advancing humankind's understanding of God and spirituality.

Davies says that "science cannot prove the existence of a design or designer [but] it can reveal the sheer depth of ingenuity that goes up to make this marvellous universe, our home. Scientific research will continue to illuminate theological issues, and no religion which ignores these advances can hope to remain credible".

He left the United Kingdom partly because of what he called "the Thatcher government's deliberate and systematic butchery of science". Ironically, one of the judges of this year's prize was Lady Thatcher. Davies intends to use the award to pay for his own new chair.

**New in paperback**

**The Refrigerator and the Universe: Understanding the Laws of Energy** by Martin Goldstein and Inge F. Goldstein. Harvard University Press, \$15.95, £12.75. See *Nature* **368**, 598 (1994).

**The Language Instinct** by Steven Pinker. Penguin, £8.99. See *Nature* **368**, 360 (1994).

**The Second Law: Energy, Chaos, and Form** by P. W. Atkins. Revised edition. Scientific American Library/W. H. Freeman, £14.95.

**Weather Cycles: Real or Imaginary?** by William James Burroughs. Cambridge University Press, £14.95, \$19.95.

**Guide to the Sun** by Kenneth J. H. Phillips. Cambridge University Press, £13.95, \$15.95.

**Animal Behaviour, Second Edition** by Mark Ridley. Blackwell Science, £16.50.

revealing in the process the very wide range that constitutes one of his special strengths. In his choice of extracts, too, he reveals himself as laudably catholic: few others, surely, would have thought of, or even known of, John Aubrey's jottings on English trees, for instance. At times, though, he goes too far: Cowper's observations on the behaviour of his cats belongs more rightly in an anthology of petkeeping.

Starting with Aesop and Aristotle and ending with a piece written just a decade ago by Primo Levi, there is something here for everyone, from Gilbert White (predictably) and Charles Darwin and Thoreau to such less likely people as Ruskin, Colette and Cyril Connolly. Botanists will be pleased to find gems by the too-little-known Andrew Young and Jocelyn Brooke, not just examples of the evergreen Anne Pratt and Flora Thompson. Similarly, for bird-watchers there are Edmund Selous and J. A. Baker to add some out-of-the-way spice to the familiar W. H. Hudson and Richard Jefferies. Natural history in the United Kingdom receives perhaps disproportionate attention, but the tropics are not entirely neglected and US readers will be reassured to some extent by the inclusion of

John Muir and George Perkins Marsh (though not, slightly surprisingly, Ernest Thompson Seton). The range of possibilities is enormous, but Mabey has passed over impressively few of the favourite authors that more immediately come to mind. Edward Newman is perhaps the most gaping omission.

If one were to criticize the selection at all, it might be on the ground that there is too little on the social side of fieldwork, on how the natural-history community actually ticks. Very rightly and properly, we are given an account of a fungus foray in 1869 from the *Transactions* of the Woolhope Club of Hereford, England, but I would have welcomed some excerpts from its near-contemporary, the *Entomologists' Intelligencer*, or from Loudon's *Magazine of Natural History*. In the pages of journals such as these one will not find jewelled prose, but they bubble with an ingenuous enthusiasm of a kind that is rarely otherwise captured on paper but which has always been of the subject's essence. There is more to natural history than nature itself. □

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