

R. S. R. S.

Newsletter

No. 53

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From Professor Llewellyn-Jones:-

I am grateful to the Editor for his invitation to write a few words in the Newsletter now that the time of my leaving the R.S.R.S. has arrived. For me the year has passed extremely quickly - all too quickly - and I leave with much regret. I have greatly enjoyed the many talks and discussions with those who have gone over their work with me and explained what they were doing. Although more particularly associated with the plasma group, I have greatly appreciated discussion on related problems of the outermost atmosphere. I have made many new friends as well as renewed former friendships.

Another aspect of my stay here has been the pleasure, for me, of being again in an atmosphere of sustained scientific work. There was a time when uninterrupted research was possible, and usual, in the universities. It is not so today, however, for other than perhaps Postgraduate Research Students or Research Fellows. The vitally important duties of teaching - whether as tuition or lecturing - naturally plays (or should play) a prominent part. It is not, however, generally realised that the post-war rapid expansion of British Universities, over and above their normal growth, has only been made possible by taking up much of the time and energy of a high proportion of University Staff. For them, continuous research is becoming increasingly difficult and, in some cases, almost impossible. For reasons such as these, together with the stimulation that a new scientific environment provides, a sabbatical year is very welcome. This is particularly the case when taken in an Establishment such as the R.S.R.S. where the scientific activity not only deals with fundamentals but also covers such a wide range in an important and fascinating field.

Further, the Editor's invitation is doubly welcome as it enables me to express some of my feelings on leaving and to thank all those who, for one reason or another, I may not be able to see personally before going. I want to thank everyone, the Director, the Deputy-Director and all their colleagues, for the many kindnesses I have received; and as I hope to be able to visit the Station again, may I just say - au Revoir?

F.Llewellyn-Jones

Cambodian Journey - Part 2

We travelled on eastwards through flat country similar to that seen earlier in Thailand though some low hills and forest were beginning to show now in the distance. By mid afternoon we arrived at a large market town where I discovered it was time to change buses. I was thankful to get down, stretch my legs for half an hour after the jarring journey, look around and take a few pictures. Whereas the people in the bus had taken little interest in their Western visitor, being more intent on hanging on to their goods, I found there was now much interest, particularly in my camera; but when it came to taking a picture were they shy! Something which had puzzled me earlier in the bus I was now able to confirm. The people here were short, stocky and dark-skinned, in some ways resembling the Malays, rather than becoming more Chinese-looking further east as I had for no good reason imagined.

Soon it was time to travel on, this time in a more comfortable bus, and the town of Siem Reap near to Ankor was reached by 7.20 p.m. It was now dark but I was fortunate in finding a suitable hotel straight away and after a quick meal turned in for the night. Next morning I was up early eager to get to Ankor, but first paid a visit to the Government tourist shop. This proved very worthwhile for I was able to buy essential maps and the classic guide book by Malcolm MacDonald. There were also fine examples of Cambodian silver and basketware for sale but I left these until later.

Ankor is about 4 miles from Siem Reap and the best way to get there is undoubtedly by trisha. These can be hired for about a pound a day or less if one can spare the time to haggle, and the rider will take you anywhere. There are many temples to be seen at Ankor, and one can go from one to another over a very pleasant woodland circuit. Originally the temples were built by the Kings of the Khmer Empire between about 800 and 1400 A.D. Over this period the Khmer culture and civilization developed rapidly and their Empire expanded to cover much of South East Asia at one time, until in 1431 the Thais sacked Ankor. After that the capital was abandoned and was quickly swallowed by the jungles to become lost to the world. Centuries later in 1860 it was discovered by the French explorers who have since cleared away the trees, and unravelled much of Ankor's history.

Ankor Wat is the first temple one comes to from Siem Reap, and to come upon this vast building amongst the woodland is a sight never to be forgotten. The temple is square in section and its huge outer walls are first seen across a moat about a mile long and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile across. Above the walls five central towers of the inner temple stand out on a jungle background. To go in one has to cross a wide stone causeway across the moat, and then go a further $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to reach the centre. However, that day I decided to carry on to the next temple, Ankor Thom. Here I crossed a causeway lined with grotesque statuettes, perhaps guards or religious demons, passed under a huge gateway in the south wall and walked on to the central temple called the Bayon. All around was jungle where once the wooden buildings of the inhabitants had stood. The Bayon proved extremely interesting, and as the sky was clear I was able to take some worthwhile pictures. The temple was again built on a square pattern with many towers capped by huge all-seeing Buddhas, so called because of the four faces looking in the directions of the four winds.

On the walls were very well preserved sculptures which have thrown much light on the Khmer civilization. Some of these bas-reliefs show the way of life of the ordinary people, and others show in great detail scenes of battles on land and on water between the Khmers and their enemies. Again other pictures depicted stories from the Ramayana epic. Wandering amongst these ruins, set in complete harmony with the jungle, I almost felt as though I had been taken back 1000 years in history.

I spent the whole day exploring the Bayon, and as dusk fell made my way back to the hotel for dinner. Here I found myself seated with three Swiss travellers going overland from Paris to Hong Kong, and a Forestry officer from Sarawak. Needless to say the company that evening proved very stimulating and we talked late into the night about our travels. The next day passed all too quickly, visiting Ankor and some other temples, taking photographs, and then it was time, reluctantly to arrange my return to civilization.

E. Golton

STAFF NEWS

The staff news for this month is being held over until the October issue.
(The Editor)

R.S.R.S. SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

The Tempest at Pendley Manor

There was a threat of a violent downpour, if not a tempest, when a coach of R.S.R.S. and A.C.O members were heading to Pendley Manor at Tring on 31st August for an open air Shakespearean evening. By the time they had arrived the threat had passed, though the evening was certainly cool and those with previous experience had wisely brought rugs and hot coffee.

The setting of the play was ideal. From the covered stands the audience looked on to a terraced lawn surrounded by an attractive bush and tree background with a small pond to one side. The whole was exploited fully by skilful lighting to produce as good a magic island as one could have.

The production itself was excellent. The cast did full justice to the play with the spectacular characters of Ariel and Caliban, the romance of Ferdinand and Miranda, the comedy of Stephano and Trinculo (whose sudden bathes seemed quite in keeping), and central to the whole play the magic of Prospero (played, incidentally, by the producer).

Twelve people went from R.S.R.S. and another four from the A.C.O. I for one will be most interested to hear about next years' productions at Pendley Manor.

Martin Hall

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Wet and Dry for Sports and Social

The A.C.O. vs R.S.R.S. Competition evening was held on the evening of Thursday 19th August at R.S.R.S., and though the evening was a damp one the cricket was played out to give a win to R.S.R.S. The tennis was more vulnerable, and only a few games could be played, though these suggested that again R.S.R.S. had the stronger side.

Once the outdoor games had finished, the indoor games teams were strengthened. The A.C.O. lead in the table tennis, but R.S.R.S. won both the billiards and the darts. These games were in the S.S.C. premises where, as you may know, the bar is centrally placed. The bar therefore became something of a focus for the evening, and did good business. An attractive refreshment buffet also made a profit for the club.

When the bar closed, the table tennis and billiards tables were still in use, and an A.C.O. member asked plaintively "do we have to go home now?" The Old Building eventually emptied at about 11 p.m. after a very successful evening in which about sixty people had taken part. It is planned to have a return evening at the A.C.O. in the near future which should be well worth attending.

Incidentally certain improvements have been made to the S.S.C. premises in the Old Building and more are planned. Although competition for table tennis and billiards is quite strong, it is usually possible to get a game during the lunch hour. Call in sometime !

Martin Hall

BRIDGE CLUB

The season will open with a club evening on Monday October 4th; players of all standards will be very welcome. Lunchtime bridge will be started again this week; Mr. Venables in Spur D will be arranging this. Anyone who would like to play should contact him or just turn up at his office after lunch. This is particularly useful for beginners and I hope some at least will go along. The first match of the season will be against the Road Research Laboratory at Harmondsworth on Wednesday 20th October.

Jean Fooks

Letter to the Outstations

Dear Colleagues,

As you see, Professor Llewellyn-Jones has completed his year with us and is about to return to university life. This is far from the old popular image of moderate task and moderate leisure in the groves of Academe. Nowadays, it seems many a chairman of companies would find his political and business acumen unequal to the task of modern research administration.

Perhaps your Editor may say, from the ranks, so to speak, that we have enjoyed having him here. Much has been learnt from him about many things; from the transport of electric charges, to the transport of rolling-stock on narrow-gauge Welsh railways.

The rain it raineth every day, nearly. Oddly enough the waters of Ditton Park moat do not seem to rise accordingly. What hydraulic mystery is behind this it's hard to say. It may at least show that the objective declarations of our

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meteorological contraptions are no guide to the subjective discomfort of a wet week-end, as if we didn't know.

A writer (Thurber?) once wrote a piece called 'The Night the Old Nostalgia Burnt Down'. There was, almost, 'The Night Pegasus Singed his Wings'. Arrivals at R.S.R.S. the other morning were greeted with a general cry of 'We've had to have the fire brigade to the computer'. It seems that a cooling unit so far forgot its purpose in life as to overheat and burst into smoke. The matter was speedily dealt with, and the errant equipment placed outside to cool its heels in the ever-present rain. There were no serious delays to work schedules, and there is no truth in the scurrilous rumour that the machine was deliberately set afire to provide this filler paragraph for,

Yours sincerely,

The Editor.
