

NEWSLETTER

Published Now & Then

Number 11a

Special Edition

January 22, 1970

EDITORS' NOTE

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NEWS OF THE STAFF

Arnold Lewis, having made all the possible changes, structural and otherwise, in his new home by the lake in Marlboro, is looking for new worlds to conquer. He has found a willing business partner in Charles Atlas, also expert with the hammer, and together they are busy acquiring extensive property. Mr. Lewis, as is well known, goes on to remodeling, to remodeling, to remodeling, and Mr. Atlas glories in the design of ever fancier bookcases.

Kenneth Boss, to the surprise of many of his admirers a devoted horticulturist, has succeeded, through experiments maintained on the roof of the Botanical Garden apartments, in achieving a really black - not just deep purple - tulip. Those interested in investing in the enterprise may see Mr. Boss. (OBU, we are told, is interested in establishing the authenticity of this - so far they do not have any national flower.)

Moonlighting, anyone? Frank Carpenter has a complete line of tools and skills related to the carpentry business and will be glad to give estimates - no job too small. Prof. Carpenter also has openings for qualified assistants.

Arthur Chickering is one of our most revered research associates; the spider department would have difficulty continuing without him. We can only urge that in winter he give trees a wide berth while ice storms are in progress.

Bill Clench has just returned from a collecting trip in the south with an almost unbelievable tale of narrow escape. Working alone in a desolate area he was surprised and caught by a fresh-water Tridacna. A chance native hunter found Bill and released him, using only bare hands. Too bad Bill was not able to bring the giant clam back with him, but it swam away and disappeared into the Okefenokee Swamp. What a loss to science and the MCZ. But we are happy to have our Bill safely back.

Ray Paynter reports finding a colony of 13 nesting ivory-billed woodpeckers on his homestead in New Hampshire. Identification of the birds, formerly thought to be completely extinct, was corroborated by that intrepid pair of MCZ ornithologists, Bill and Annette Cottrell.

Are you interested in comparative rapacity among the Crocodilia? Prof. Darlington will, for appropriate compensation, conduct experiments personally with gavials, spectacled, smooth-fronted or broad-snouted caimans, American or Chinese alligators, and a wide variety of crocodiles. If you ask for credentials, he may show you his scars.

Dr. Deichmann has been asked to address the Norwich Terriers Association at their annual meeting in St. Giles Cathedral, Norwich, with special reference to the suitability of the breed to the mini-car.

To Barry Fell:

Beware Gondwanaland, my son,
And lavas from deep-hidden fires.
Tuz Wilson and the silly coves
Have jumbled up the gyres.
All crazy are the compass points
And commonsense retires.

Steve Gould has just been appointed chairman of a university committee whose stated objective is the preservation of the Status Quo at Harvard.

Richard Johnson has regretfully decided that his scheme for a unionid food industry designed, in conjunction with the anti-poverty program, to alleviate protein shortage in Appalachia is, due to the

pollution of all southern rivers, not feasible.

Flash! Vicki Kohler breaks both legs this time while skiing with geological intent in Antarctica as a member of the Polar Research group of Ohio State. (Anybody from anywhere who goes to Antarctica is liable to end up as being from Ohio State.) Miss Kohler is contemplating taking up tiddly winks for the balance of the winter.

Due to recent discoveries, enthusiastically reported in the newspapers by Dr. Laurence Gould, of Triassic ammonoids in Antarctica, Prof. Bernhard Kummel is revising his prejudices concerning Continental Drift. Kummel doubts that Gould has discovered any, but he is prepared for any eventuality, however dire. Ever since the New York Times came out editorially for drift, he hasn't been quite his old self.

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Giles Mead has joined forces with Cesar Chavez to reform labor relations in the California grape industry.

Flash! Mr. Benjamin Shreve has promptly, and for the first time, answered a letter that ended "with sincere thanks in advance for your trouble, I am"

From Miami, via AP, Dr. Ruth Turner, MCZ's spectacular scuba diver has discovered a shallow water form of a hitherto exclusive deep-sea mollusc, a relative of Neopalina, found at 10 fathoms depth. "Remarkable modification of gill apparatus" says Turner. Reevaluation of distribution of primitive marine relicts is probable.

E. E. Williams is the unknown, unsung hero of the student protest movement. SDS and other organizations that deplore and decry the lack of communication between students and faculty have only to look at Williams, whose students seek every day a new excuse for a party in his honor. Among their recent inventions: the 25th anniversary of publication of his thesis, and celebration of the Russian Christmas (with appropriate beverages).

E. O. Wilson has purchased Kerguelen Island. He is interested in the development of strains of Atta adapted to the Kerguelen cabbage with a view to determining colonizing potential in face of this specialized (and almost only) plant food.

Barbara Lawrence rediscovers Canis dirus, supposedly extinct these 10,000 years, in Berkshires. Charles Lyman speculates animal unique in hibernating for 5-year stretches, appearing briefly to seize cattle (see press on periodic recent losses in New England states). Charles Mack prepares to depart for region with subterranean sounding equipment. (William Schevill reports present underwater detecting techniques inadequate for subterranean probing.)

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Our new lepidoptera expert, John Burns, has alarmed our nature-loving friends. What does he do with his beautiful butterflies? Admire them? No. He cuts off and mashes their rear ends to determine their relationships by how far their distinctive proteins dribble. It is proposed to buy him a Waring blender, so that his ghastly deeds may be performed in a shorter and more humane fashion.

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It is reported that Gretel Mayr has been seen shopping for luggage. When questioned, she reports the need for extra suitcases to carry off the considerable collection of Ernst's personal papers and records of his administration. Later, it is planned to house these, along with Mayr's extensive collection of scientific papers, in the new wing. These papers will be available to serious students, especially ardent advocates of numerical taxonomy.

Prof. B. Patterson extols computer as paleontological tool of the future, saying it now takes its place with radioactivity and carbon 14 dating. A small bit of bone, collected by Patterson was fed into the Harvard computer and out came the identification - Hominid for sure. (Question - was it the bone or its measurements which the computer devoured?)

THE DIRECTOR

Everybody is aware of the public Mayr - investigator, educator, administrator, author of "one damn thick book after another" (to misquote one of the Georges on the subject of Mr. Gibbon), sixth director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, advisor to government, etc., etc. - but the private Mayr, the very human Mayr, is perhaps not as well known. On this occasion, when we come together to honor the public figure, we are privileged to observe a few of the less familiar incidents in his career.

We see him first (fig. 1) in eager, charming, unformed innocence. At this stage he could have become almost anything: banker, statesman, journalist, pastor. None of these, and many other, occupations ever really had a chance. Evolutionary biology claimed him almost from the outset.



Fig. 1. Tabula rasa.

In a little-known work published in 1932 he remarked: "[although] barely 23 years old . . . I had had many years of experience in the study of European birds." Those of his colleagues capable of counting backwards on their fingers have tended to smile at this - quite wrongly as it turns out. There is indisputable, photographic evidence to substantiate the claim. Fortunately he was snapped (fig. 2, right) in the act of making one of his early field identifications: "Da ist ein Trauerfliegenschmäpper (Muscicapa atricapilla L.)." The determination was at once confirmed by the Honorary Secretary of the Bayrischer Staats Vogelbeobachter Verein who happened to be present at the time and remarked that the child should go far. He did; from beginnings such as this there is no turning back.



Fig. 2. The twig is early bent.

Throughout his boyhood and schooldays no European bird in his vicinity could be said to have enjoyed any privacy at all. Even in his moments of relaxation he was, however unconsciously, preparing for his life's work (fig. 3). Those familiar with the illustrations in Wallace's The Malay Archipelago will at once appreciate how useful conditioning of this sort can be if one is going to study birds of paradise in their natural tree-top habitats. As a university student he participated to the full in academic (fig. 4) and social (fig. 5) life. From it he emerged full fledged, well rounded and ready for whatever life might bring (fig. 6).

His Wanderjahre began almost at once. Hand-picked by Lord Rothschild to head an expedition to the East Indies he embarked upon explorations (fig. 7) that were to take him to places where no scientific foot had ever trod. While not neglecting such opportunities for relaxation as presented themselves along the way (fig. 8), he turned

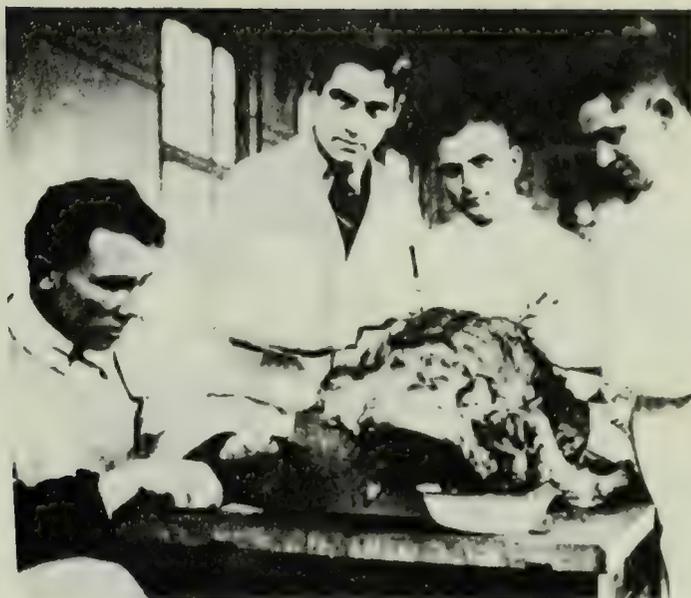


Fig.4. Every inch the section man.



Fig.5. Professor Stresemann, who seems to have been the Carroll Williams of the University of Berlin, entertains the students at tea.



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In 1931 he was faced with a momentous decision: to come or not to come to America. He came and to his delight (fig. 9) found this country almost everything that he had hoped for. It was here that he found romance.

* Watson was wrong here: literacy is a prerequisite for coping with The International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature.



Fig.8. La dolce vita in Macassar.



Fig.9. Exuberance upon discovering America.



Fig.7. Lord Rothschild's emissary to the farthest fringes of the far east.



Fig.10. The best bird yet.

Robbing Wheaton College of its fairest flower (fig. 10), he has experienced the joys and tribulations of fatherhood (figs. 11, 12). His work has gone from triumph to triumph, honors have been heaped upon him (figs. 13, 14), and he has guided us through eight critical years.

He's come a long way since that first Trauerfliegenschmöcker. Although we must now say "Farewell" to him as Director, we can still say "Hail" in September to the returning Agassiz Professor.



Fig.13. Another medal (adequate representation of \overline{MCZ} types is surely not fortuitous).



Fig.11. "Marriage gives that fullness to life which nothing else can give." Excellenz von Helmholtz in the course of a conversation recorded in 1888.



Fig.14. Professor Stresemann sees a former student make it big.

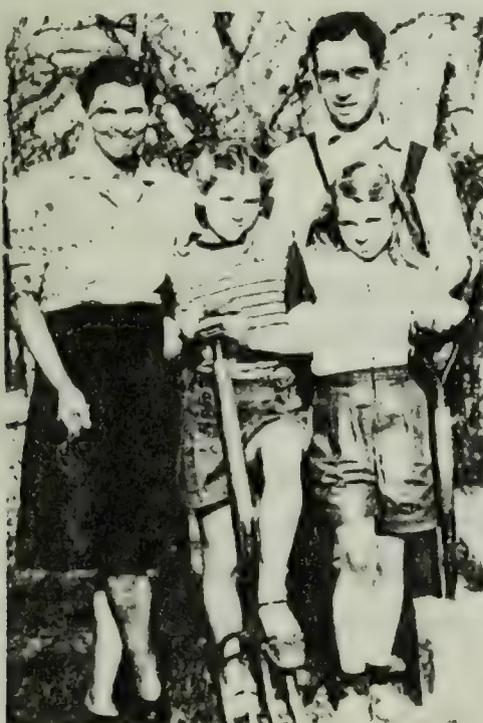
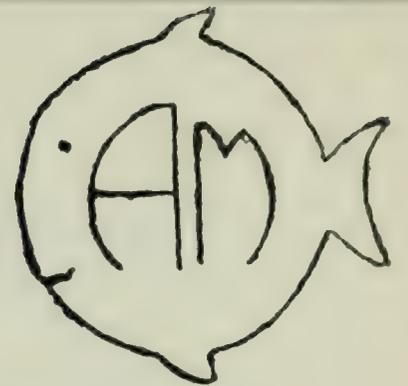


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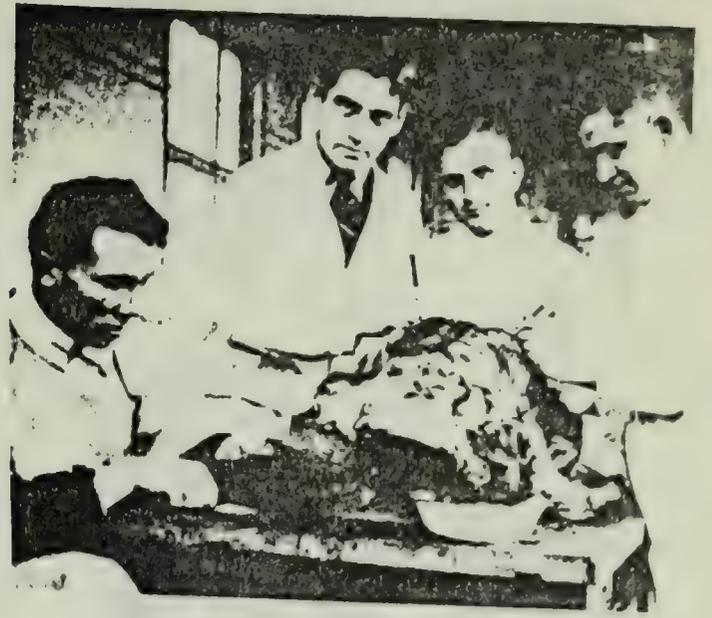


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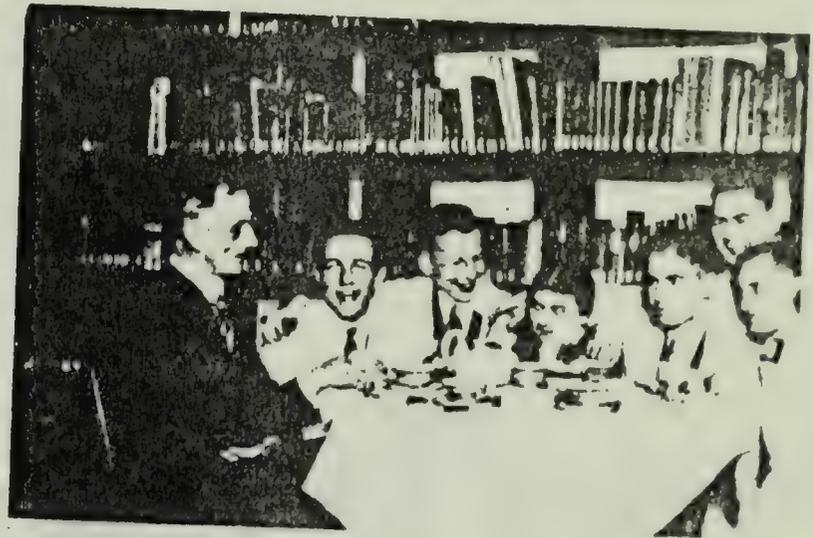


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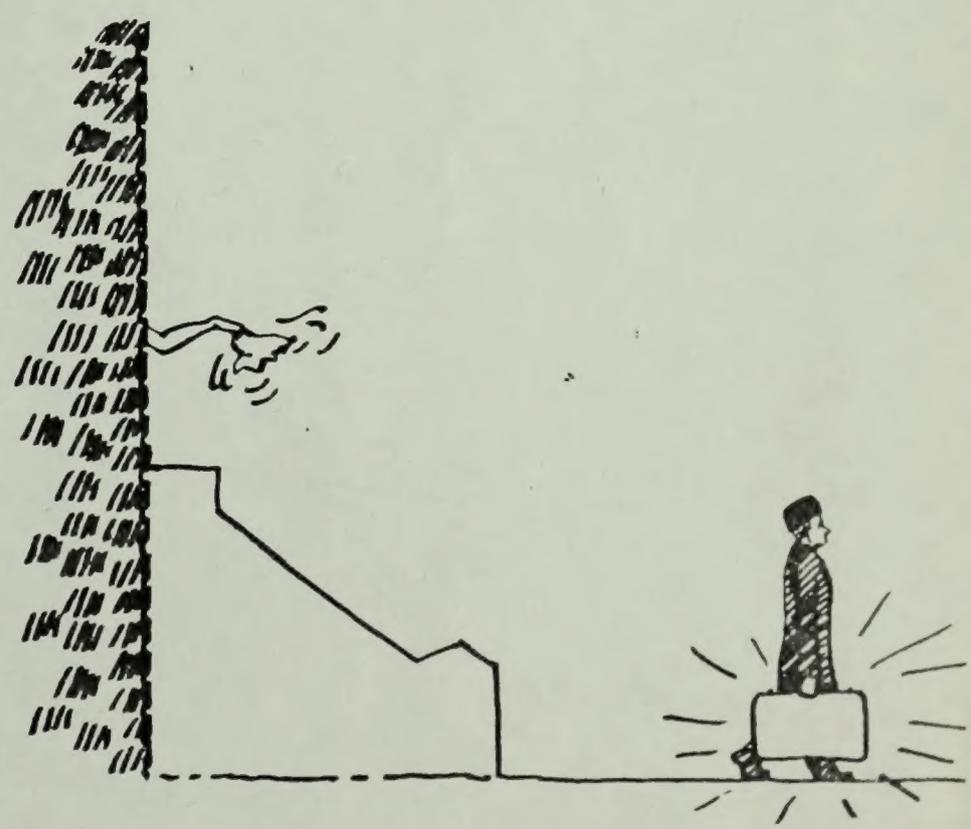
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