

HIGHLIGHTS OF BRITISH SCIENCE

'Britain has a great tradition in natural science. From the time of the so-called scientific revolution of the mid-seventeenth century with the foundation of the Royal Society at the heart of it, British scientists have been in the forefront of advances not merely in fundamental science but also in its application to the practical problems of everyday life. Science, of course, knows no national boundaries and it owes much of its progress and vitality to the free exchange of information and ideas between scientists in all countries. It is nevertheless true that, for a variety of reasons, some countries, of which Britain is one, have made contributions out of all proportion to their physical size and population. Today we are in the midst of a worldwide economic recession which has indeed affected Britain more severely than some other highly industrialized nations. Since economic progress and with it our living standards depend nowadays almost entirely on advances in science and in technology based upon it, it is perhaps not surprising that some members of the public should wonder whether we have fallen behind other nations and whether our expenditure on science and scientific research is being misdirected. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our record during the past twenty-five years is an enviable one and our scientific research is vigorous as ever, flushed with success and full of promise. Britain has made and continues to make outstanding contributions in many and diverse fields of science. Some of these are set out in this book and it is my hope that its contents will not only stimulate appreciation of some highlights in British science but will indicate also its promise for the future.'

Extract from Lord Todd's Preface

CONTENTS

Discoveries about the universe
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CONTENTS

BROADBENT, E. G. & MOORE, D. W.	<i>pages</i> 1–29
The two-dimensional oscillations of straight vortex filaments with a power-law distribution of vorticity	
CHANDLER, G. S., FIGGIS, B. N., PHILLIPS, R. A., REYNOLDS, P. A., MASON, SIR RONALD & WILLIAMS, G. A.	31–48
Spin density and bonding in the CoCl_4^{2-} ion in Cs_3CoCl_5 . III. The comparison of theory and experiment	
FIGGIS, B. N., REYNOLDS, P. A. & MASON, SIR RONALD	49–55
Spin density and bonding for the CoBr_4^{2-} ion in Cs_3CoBr_5 . A polarized neutron diffraction study	
DAVIS, C. L., MASLEN, E. N. & VARGHESE, J. N.	57–88
On exact analytical solutions for the few-particle Schrödinger equation. I. A perturbation study	
DAVIS, C. L. & MASLEN, E. N.	89–105
On exact analytical solutions for the few-particle Schrödinger equation. II. The ground state of helium	
ATKINSON, C.	107–133
The growth kinetics of ledges during phase transformations: multistep interactions	
BURSILL, L. A., BLANCHIN, M. G. & SMITH, DAVID J.	135–155
The nature and extent of disorder within rapidly cooled $\text{TiO}_{1.9985}$. [Plates 1–14]	
CATLOW, C. R. A. & JAMES, R.	157–173
Disorder in TiO_{2-x}	
GROSCH, C. E. & SALWEN, H.	175–190
Oscillating stagnation point flow	
HIRST, L. L. & RAY, T.	191–203
Symmetry analysis of states of ion pairs in crystals	
FOOT, C. J., STACEY, D. N., STACEY, V., KLOCH, R. & LEŚ, Z.	205–216
Isotope effects in the nuclear charge distribution in zinc	
SAITO, T. & GLASS, I. I.	217–231
Temperature measurements at an implosion focus	

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