

MARINE BIOLOGICAL AND OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE WORLD

1. THE PLYMOUTH LABORATORY OF THE MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE U.K.

By F. S. RUSSELL

Director, The Laboratory, Citadel Hill, Plymouth

THE Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom was founded in 1884 to promote accurate researches leading to the advancement of zoological and botanical science and to an increase in our knowledge of the food, life, conditions and habits of British fishes. The work of the Association is controlled by a council elected annually by its subscribing members.

The Plymouth laboratory was opened in June 1888, and since that date a new library and further laboratory accommodation have been added. The site was chosen on account of the rich and varied fauna and wide range of environments to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Plymouth.

The Association is maintained by subscriptions and donations from private members, universities, scientific societies and other public bodies; a generous annual grant has been made by the Fishmongers' Company since the Association began. From the beginning a Government grant in aid of the maintenance of the laboratory has been made. In recent years this grant has been greatly increased in view of the assistance which the Association has been able to render in fishery problems and in fundamental work on the environment of marine organisms.

The laboratory is open throughout the year and its work is carried out by a fully qualified research staff under the supervision of the Director. The permanent scientific research staff is seventeen, and during the course of a year about 150 visiting scientists work in the laboratory for periods varying from a fortnight to twelve months. The laboratories are now equipped for a very wide range of work and the researches of the staff cover the field of chemistry and physics of sea water, and the many aspects of the biology of marine plants and animals, including their physiology. Accommodation is available for British and foreign scientific workers who wish to carry out independent research in marine biology, physiology and other branches of science, and visitors find facilities for most types of research for which marine organisms are needed. Arrangements are made for courses for advanced students to be held at Easter and marine animals and plants are supplied to educational institutions. Work at sea is undertaken by two research vessels and by a motor boat, and these also collect the specimens required in the laboratory. The larger of the two vessels, R.V. 'SARSA', is fully equipped for research at sea and carries out hydrographical, biological or geological cruises in the English Channel and its western approaches, and in deep water over the continental slope and into the Bay

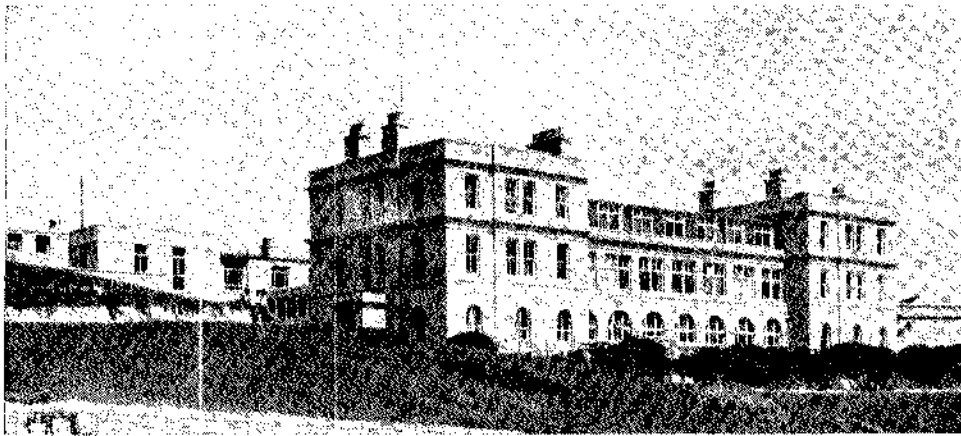
of Biscay. The smaller vessel, R.V. 'SULA', works daily within a radius of about twenty miles off Plymouth supplying the day-to-day requirements of the laboratory, while the motor boat 'GAMMARUS' is engaged in collecting in Plymouth Sound and in the estuaries.

The library, which contains the best collection of books and periodicals on marine science in this country, houses some 25,000 volumes. Apart from the marine biological literature a wide range of scientific periodicals is taken by the library to supply the needs of the many and varied research workers in the laboratory.

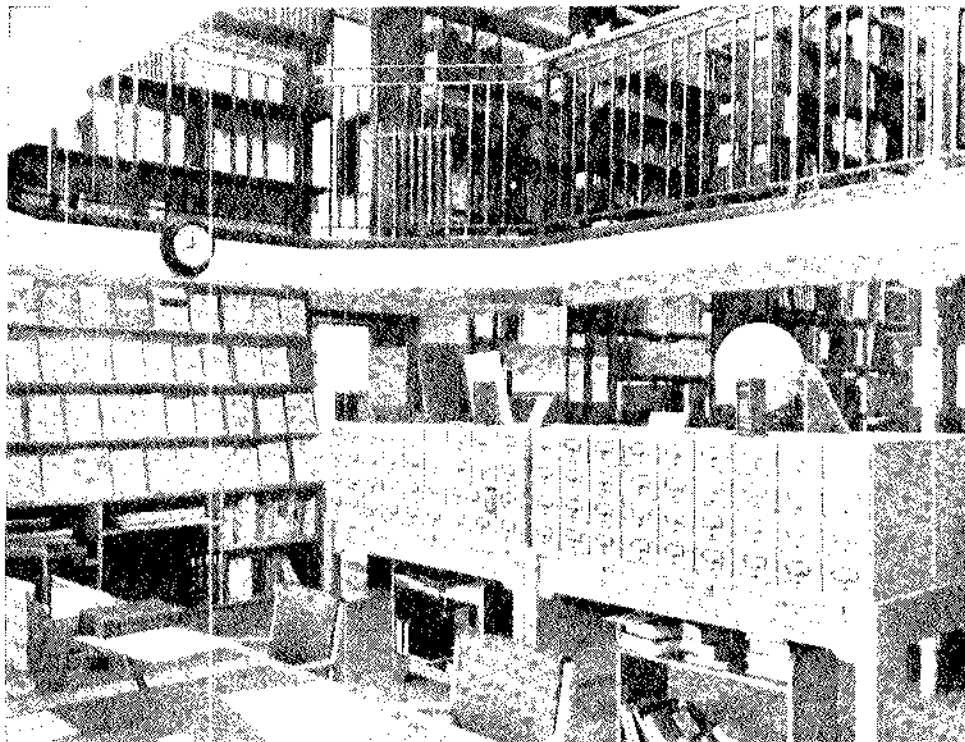
Attached to the laboratory is a public aquarium which contains a fine collection of living representatives of most of the fish fauna of the coasts of Devon and Cornwall.

For the publication of the results of researches carried out at the Plymouth laboratory the Association has its own Journal, three numbers of which are produced each year. The average size of an annual volume is 800 pages.

Apart from grants and subscriptions the Association derives a certain income from the sale of specimens for teaching purposes, collecting nets and from the aquarium entrance fees. The total maintenance expenditure during 1957-58 was about £100,000.



1. The Plymouth laboratory. The aquarium is on the ground floor of the main building. On the left at the back is the library, followed by the physiology laboratory.



2. Part of the library of the Marine Biological Association's Laboratory at Plymouth showing the main catalogue.