

# NATURE NOTES



Photo: W. H. King

RUGGED MIRTH THAT FLOODS THE BUSHLAND  
WITH THE JOY OF BROTHERHOOD, .....  
WHEN THE KOOKABURRAS BLESS THE WORLD  
BECAUSE THE WORLD IS GOOD.

JOHN O'BRIEN

*Ringwood Inspectorate vol 6 no 1; 1969. 5c.*  
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# Introducing

## PRIZE LETTERS

Beginning next month Nature Notes will present a prize to the best letter received up to the date of printing each issue.

The prize will consist of one of the books in the outstanding Periwinkle series by John Chuld, which eventually will cover the entire field of Australian Natural History.

Just take a look at some of these titles - Australian Rocks and Minerals, Sea Shells, Pond and Stream Life, Gemstones, Desert Life and many more.

Each one is a handy size, very moderately priced at \$1.25, simple text, suitable for children and adults, and most attractive full colour and black and white illustrations and diagrams.

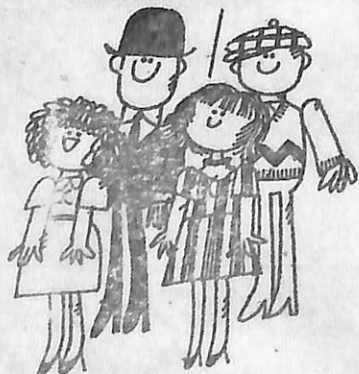
Yes a must for all school and home libraries. The name again PERIWINKLE, Published by Landsdowne Press Pty. Ltd.

## Announcing

### NATURE FAIR

Something For Everyone.

Nature Exhibition



- Nature Films inc. Harold Pollock's famous Koala, Menura and many others.
- Mini Flower Show.
- Historical Exhibition.
- Pictorial Exhibition.
- Native Plant Stall, Trainrides, White Elephant Stall, Stagecoach rides, Balloon man etc. plus usual stalls and refreshments.

Saturday 29th March

BLACKBURN LAKE STATE SCHOOL

..2

## CONTENTS

IN FLOWER	2.
F.J.C.Rogers	
ON TOUR WITH NATURE NOTES	5.
G. White	
OLD NAMES IN A NEW SETTING	8.
J.A.Baines	
THIS n THAT	10.
MAMMALS	12.
F.J.C.Rogers	
UNDER THE MICROSCOPE	13.
G. White	
NESTING	15.
PRIZE LETTER	2.
DROP A LINE	14.

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Ringwood  
Inspectorate

## From the Editor....

Dear Girls and Boys,

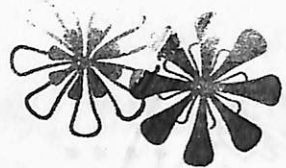
I hope you like our "new look" Nature Notes - not really so different as the message is still the same "Nature is where you find it!"

Whether your school is in a tree-lined outer suburb as at Nunawading or Ringwood, an inner area of mainly asphalt or a rural district, nature is all about you, waiting for the keen-eyed observer to discover it. You may just turn a stone, or lift a piece of bark or merely gaze into a pool of water left by the recent rains to find life in some form. On finding this life the mind is set in motion. Why is it there? How did it get there? What will it change into? So many problems! So much enjoyment in solving them and sharing your experiences with others!

Write to tell me about them so that we can let others read about your findings in our letter-box section.

Meanwhile, on with your watching, your listening and your sharing of experiences and I hope that Nature Notes will help you to enjoy and understand, in part at least, this fascinating science.

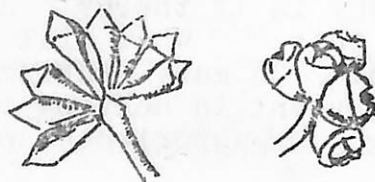
L. J. DELACCA.



# In Flower

Because we do not publish our magazine in January or February, I feel we have seen many plants for which we do not know their name and for this reason the plants mentioned may be ones you saw last month.

Mealy Stringybark (*Euc. cephalocarpa*) is now in flower. Look at the eucalypts in your area and learn to recognise them. Their bark may be different in addition to their gum nuts and flowering time. You should find honeyeaters at the blossom.



E. cephalocarpa

During the last few weeks many plants of *Bursaria* should have been seen in flower. This is usually a shrub 6 - 12 ft. high with masses of white flowers. If we have time to watch these plants we shall find that they are visited by a great many insects.

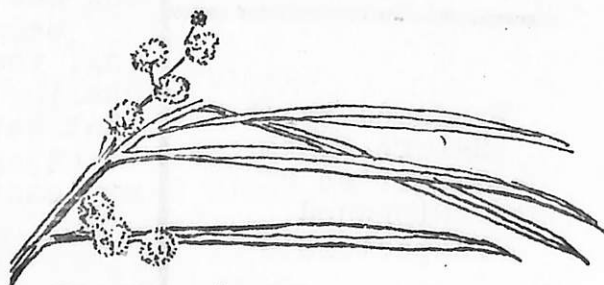
Nature Notes.

Cedar Wattle (*Acacia elata*) is a large tree with fern-like leaves (bipinnate) and large balls of pale yellow flowers in January and February. You may find it in gardens or along roads where the seed has been carried by birds.



Cedar Wattle  
(Acacia elata)

Another Wattle we may find in flower at this time of the year is *Wirilda* (*Acacia retinodes*). This is a shrub about 20 ft. high and is always in flower around Ringwood and elsewhere.



Wirilda (Acacia retinodes).

# ON TOUR *with Nature Notes*

## Introduction

MOST OF YOU travelled during the vacations. Some of you camped by the sea: others went "bush": while others holidayed at a big town or city.

Vacation-time gives you a chance to find many things you would not have a chance to see during the year. You can discover how the farmer lives: by chatting to the fishermen at the seaside you can learn of the rugged life of the sea: by reading and following tourist guides you can delve into the history of the area: and, by keeping your eyes wide open you can witness a colourful and varied pattern of nature.

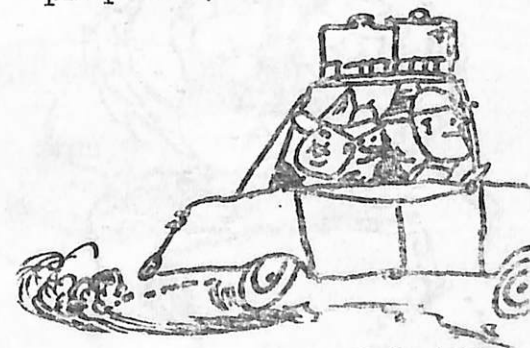
The purpose of this series of articles is to give you a guide as to what can be found in the world of nature as we 'visit' some of the popular holiday resorts in Victoria.

We will have a quick look at the mountainous area of the north-east of the State, the scrub country of the Mallee, the

rugged grandeur of Wilson's Promontory and the always popular seaside.

If you know what to look for in these areas it will always be easier to find; and, more than likely, you will see more. There is one main rule for successful observations and discoveries ... **KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN and YOUR MIND ACTIVE.** Never be satisfied with "I don't know what that is." Look, find, learn and remember - these tips will make that holiday even more worthwhile. If you cannot find your answer on the spot make a good record of your sighting so that when you return home you will be able to get useful information and assistance.

Now that you are fully prepared, let's go ON TOUR.

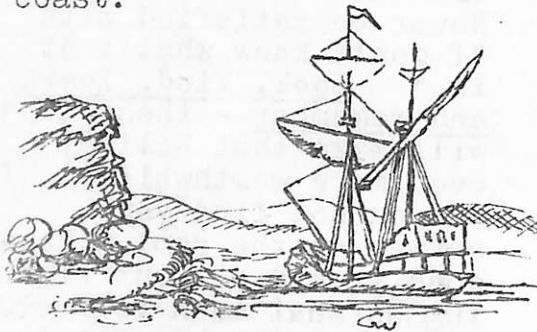




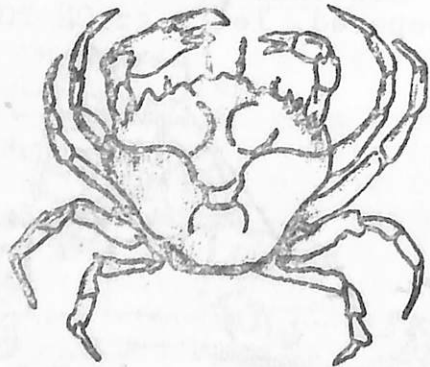
# Warrnambool & Port Fairy

Rich in historical interest and old as far as Australian towns go, Warrnambool and Port Fairy have had contact with white men since 1810 when seafarers, whalers and fishermen used the area for rest and watering stops.

The coastline varies from sweeping, wind-blown sands to rocky, turbulent shores. Many sailing ships have met their doom along this coast.



Along the shores many creatures will be found. What is this fellow?

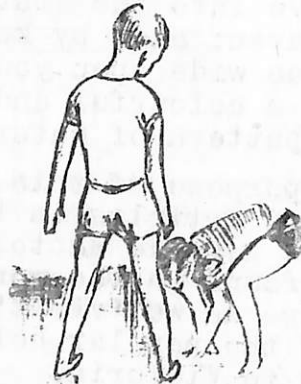


Nature Notes.

Lately, abalone divers, travelling from spot to spot in fast speedboats, are reaping rich rewards for their work by collecting the 'meat' of the ear shell.



Fishermen catch a large variety of fish - from deep sea shark to 'couta and salmon. Watch the wharves at Port Fairy for the return of the fishing boats.



Along some of the rockier parts of the coastline good rock pools can be found. If you want to see a good shell collection travel out about four miles towards Portland from Port Fairy.

..6

\*\*\*There the collection of Mr. John Clapp is open for inspection - well worth it!

Sea birds abound in the area in plenty. While, in the middle of a flock of scavenging seagulls you could easily spot magpies and starlings. The area is rich in wildlife - here you can find natural life of the country and sea-shore in the one area.

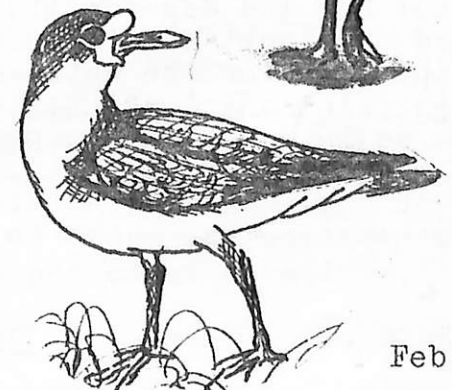
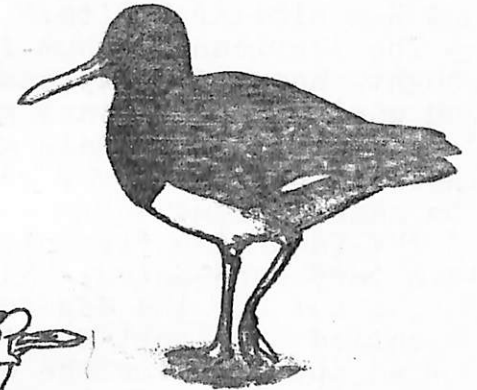
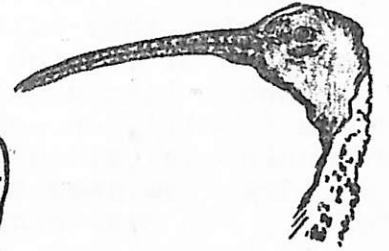
On the road between Warrnambool and Port Fairy is the famous landmark TOWER HILL. An active volcano only 4,000 years ago, the crater once provided a haven for wildlife. Destructive man has almost brought about complete devastation of the area, but active work by the Fisheries and Wildlife Department and other interested bodies is slowly restoring the reserve to some of its former interest. You should see large numbers of ducks and other water birds in the area.

Before planning your trips, visit the Warrnambool Tourist Centre. Informative sheets and maps are available for the use of the tourist.

There should never be a dull moment in this locality.

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SPOT THESE BIRDS and NAME THEM.



Feb. '69





# Old Names in a New Setting

## Part 1. Fauna.

\* The koala was called by the early colonists 'native bear', but, although rather like the nursery teddy bear in appearance, it is not even slightly related to the real bears.

\* Similarly, they called a small marsupial the 'native cat', which has a very uncatlike snout though like a cat otherwise. A better name is 'quoll', an old aboriginal name. Its cousin was called a 'tiger cat'.

\* Children now know the echidna as the spiny anteater, but many older people still use the name 'porcupine', meaning spiny pig (compare hedgehog), rightly belonging to the European animal of that name, and to Asian and South American relatives. Our animal, being a monotreme (egg-laying mammal) is not a porcupine.

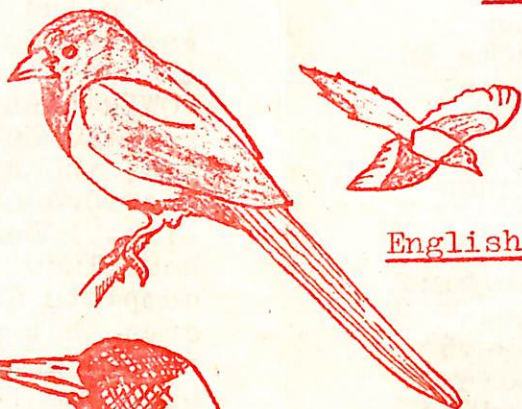
\* The marsupial 'mole' of Central Australia is not a mole, although it looks like one and has similar habits.

\* The American opossum feigns death when caught, hence the expression 'playing possum', and our phalangers were given the same name. As the American animals are also marsupials, there is no reason why we should not keep the name possum.

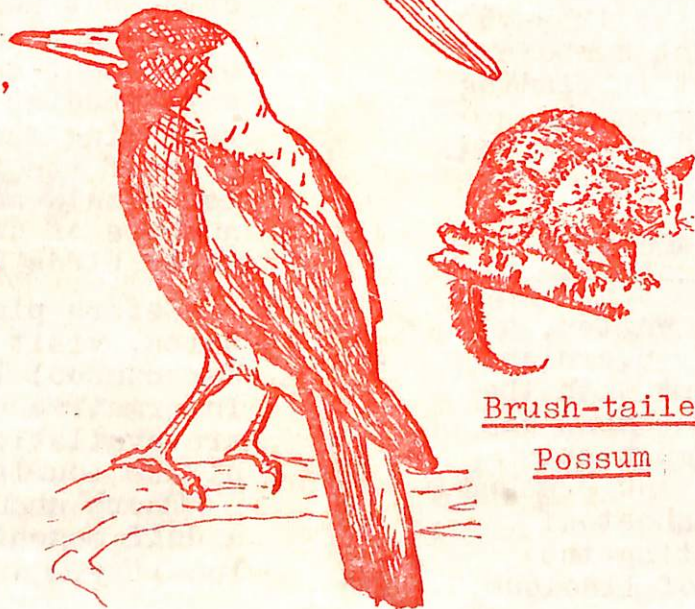
\* The Tasmanian 'tiger' or marsupial 'wolf' is a very rare animal that is related neither to the cat nor the dog families; it should be called the 'thylacine'. Sea 'lion' is not an apt name for the white-capped hair-seal, sea 'elephants' are better called elephant seals, and sea 'leopards' should be known always as leopard seals. They are found near the shores of Australia's Antarctic territories. The so called 'sea cow', believed to be the origin of



Tiger Cat



English Magpie



Brush-tailed

Possum

mermaid legends, is the dugong of our warmer seas. What kind of creature is a sea horse? Giant fruit bats are strangely called flying foxes.

\* Birds also were given names according to what familiar European birds they resembled. A black and white bird thus became a 'magpie', but the English magpie belongs to a different family - Corvidae (crows). Our magpie, although sometimes called a 'piping crow', belongs to the Craticidae (with butcher birds and currawongs), another old name being 'crow-shrike'. In the very early days lyrebirds were called 'native pheasants'. Neither the European nor the American jays are related to our black-faced cuckoo shrike (once wrongly called 'blue jay'), nor to our white-winged chough (once 'black jay'), which belongs to the same family as the mud-larks and apostle-birds.

\* The white-throated warbler was once called 'bush canary'. Australia's only true crane is the brolga, so you should not call the white-faced heron a 'blue crane'. Australia has no woodpeckers, but the brown tree creeper was once wrongly given this name, despite its different habits.

\* What's in a name?

Quite a lot, it seems!

\* How many other "old world" names can you find in our "new world" setting. Over to you!



# This n That



## FUN WITH PEANUTS

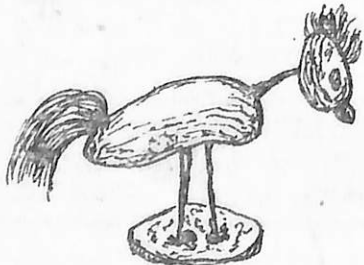
### Make Peanut Animals.

You will need unshelled peanuts, material scraps, pipe cleaners, cotton reels or styrofoam for bases, small dry branches, nail polish (for face features).

Let peanut shapes suggest animal forms - tails, ears, legs are pushed into tiny holes pierced in peanut shells with pin or needle. Perhaps a drop of glue will make them firm.

Glue "animals" to twigs and the base.

How many animals can you make?

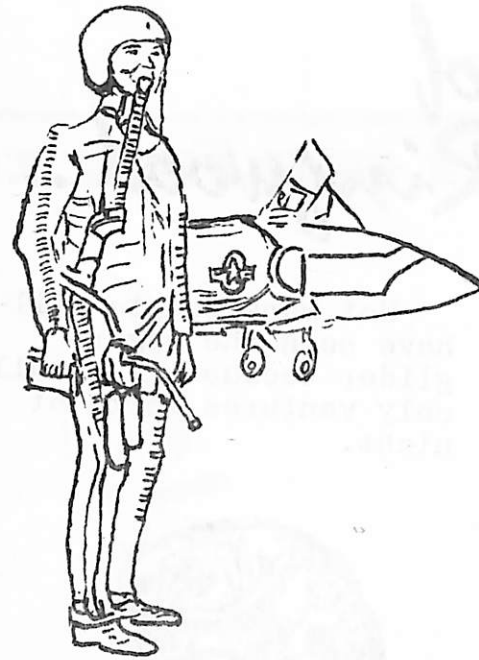


## TRY THIS ONE

Take some leaves of *Bursaria spinosa* and boil them for a minute in some water. When cool take to a bright window and look at the surface. Floating on the surface is a chemical which turns ultra-violet "light" into visible blue. This information was used during the 1939-45 war to prevent sunburn and to assist in finding airmen survivors who were stranded in the sea.

### A LUCKY ACCIDENT

Frederick Walton, a painter, left overnight a pot of paint with the lid off. The next day he found a tough skin on the top. He pressed this into a sheet of canvas inventing the first piece of linoleum.



A pilot who travels at high altitudes must wear a special protective suit which grips the body at points where the blood would tend to rush. Why? A jet pilot may accelerate so fast that his blood would rush to the lower part of his body rendering him unconscious.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Is A Shark A Fish?

Yes, a shark is a fish. It is a simple primitive fish. Instead of having a bony skeleton, a shark has a skeleton of cartilage (gristle). Its hide is tough with small round toothlike scales.

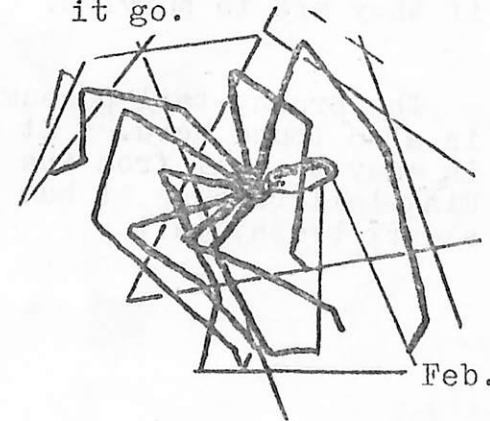
\* \* \* \* \*

Ole

Have you heard of the famous Mexican jumping bean? A moth lays its egg in the bean before it is formed. Later the meat of the pod grows around the egg which of course in time turns into a larva, which contracts its body every now and then so that the bean jumps. \* \* \* \* \*

### What is a Daddy-longlegs?

A daddy-longlegs is not an insect, for it has eight legs instead of six. It is a creature related to the spiders, and is easily recognized by its tiny body and extremely long thread-like legs. If it loses a leg, it will grow a new one! It is interesting to capture a daddy-longlegs, put it under a glass, give it sweetened water, and observe it a while before letting it go.



# MAMMALS of Ringwood..



Not many people will have seen the sugar-glider because it usually only ventures forth at night.



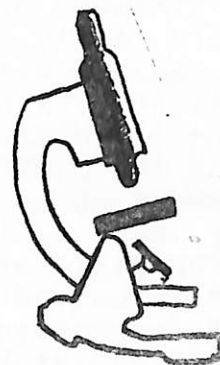
Some people are fortunate in having some ring-tail possums in the trees around them, that is, if there are any Australian trees left. The possums must have food and shelter if they are to survive.

The Brushy-tail possum is also found here. It is easy to tell from the Ring-tail because it has a dark brushy tail.

Two introduced mammals may be seen in some of the open areas still left. It is not uncommon to find an old vixen and some cubs.

One of the mammals that we don't appreciate in our area is the introduced rat. You can help reduce the number of these with cleanliness.

# under the Microscope



There are many types of MICROSCOPES, ranging from the simple hand lens to the complicated electron microscope which can spot the smallest of creatures.

Most people think of a microscope as being similar to the one illustrated. This one is called a compound microscope and has many lens arranged to get as large a magnification as possible.

During the year we will discover some of the many wonders to be found in "the hidden world".

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Here is one of the many tiny little fellows we will discover during the year. You will find him in pond water, but don't mistake him for the active Daphnia.

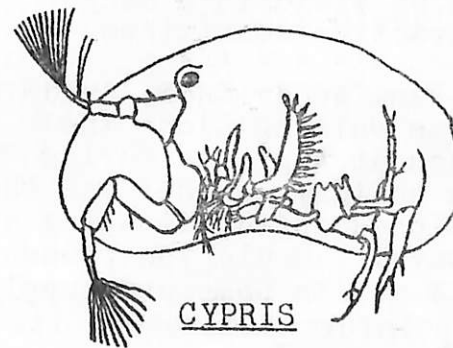
HIDDEN from our natural eyes is a world of wonder. Here life, both animal and vegetable, bustles on without any concern for the world of larger creatures and plants.

For here is the world revealed to us by the microscope.

Imagine this fullstop:

Shrink it to one hundredth of its present size. Could you still see it? I doubt it, but it would be larger than millions of different kinds of things that live in the everyday world.

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CYPRIS

# Drop a Line

Editor, 'Nature Notes',  
S.S. No. 4860, BLACKBURN LAKE  
Florence Street,  
NUNAWADING. 3131.

Dear Girls and Boys,

All letters this month have come from Blackburn Lake, so next month I hope I can print many from other schools. Don't forget Prize Letter, p.2.

\* Debbie McCurdy, Grade 4 writes...For our holidays we went to Port Fairy. When walking along the sand dunes suddenly we started falling down holes covered by flattened grass. We realised they were Mutton bird nests. Near to Port Campbell we saw Mutton Bird Island which is completely isolated from the mainland and about 100' high.

ED. Good work Debbie! It is interesting that your letter should arrive at a time when Nature Notes is "On Tour" in this area, one of Victoria's many attractive coastlines.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* From Wendy Inch, Grade 6, I was walking along the beach at Anglesea during the holidays when I saw the enclosed object floating on a wave. Could you please tell me its name and supply some information about it.

ED. The object Wendy is commonly called a Sea Urchin, a member of the Echinoderm family. This creature has an almost spherical body without arms, and is covered, except on the mouth side, with rows of spines. It moves by means of tube feet. The rigid external skeleton is called a TEST and that is what you have found. Find out how the tube feet help the sea urchins to move?

\*\*\*\*\*

\* From Karen McAndrew, Grade 6....A few weeks ago my brother received a letter and a matchbox containing 2 big flies from a friend of ours at Mallacoota. In a book called "Australian Insects" I found they were March flies. The book said there were 50 different species of March flies. Could you please identify these specimens?

ED. Yes Karen your insects were king size March flies. At present they are at the Melb. University for a positive identification. Let you know next month.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Nesting



Now you see "me", Now you don't! Who am I?

Girls and boys, particularly city dwellers probably call me "Greenie" but my correct name is White-plumed honeyeater (*Meliphaga penicillata*). Can you find out what my Latin name means? Do you think Greenie is a good name? Why?

You will have to search very hard to find my nest for it is usually suspended midst twigs and leaves from the drooping branches of a eucalypt and may be up to 40 feet from the ground. It is a work of art, being cup shaped and composed of grasses bound together with cobweb and lined with wool or hair.

\*\*\*\*\*

The normal time for nesting is from June to December but occasionally extends into the autumn as in the case of the nest seen by Mr. Ian Cook of Ringwood recently. This nest contained two or three fledgelings which were the third batch hatched in the one nest. Mr. Cook's garden contains many native plants.

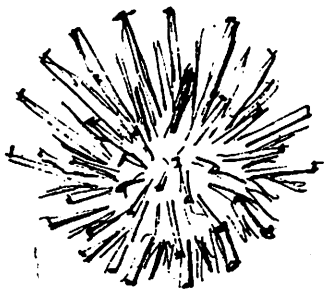
Greenie often comes to my garden too, to feed from the bottle of nectar which is placed there.

Look carefully for this cheeky and plentiful honeyeater. Find out how he obtains his food. Is it only nectar he eats? Listen for his call of Chick-oo-wee. Perhaps you would like to put out a feeding bottle of nectar for him so that you may study him more closely.

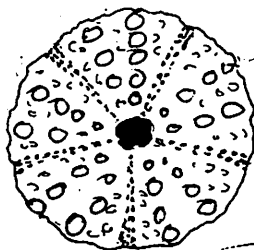


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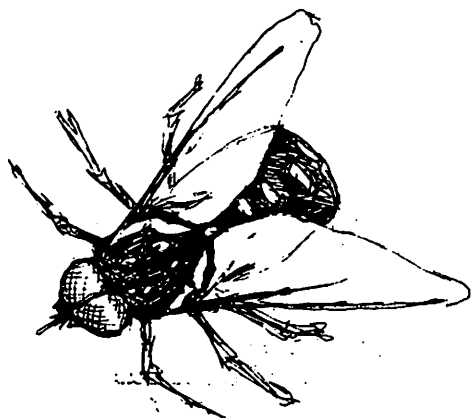




1. MARCH FLY



3. (a) SEA URCHIN COMPLETE.  
(b) SEA URCHIN TEST



2. MUTTON BIRD

NATURE NOTES COMMITTEE

MR. F.J.C. ROGERS  
MR. G. WHITE  
MR. L.J. DELACCA

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..

S.S. LILYDALE  
S.S. BLACKBURN EAST  
S.S. BLACKBURN LAKE

NEXT ISSUE WILL BE AT DEPOTS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2nd.