

NATURE NOTES

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**JUNE
1969**



Photo:
F.J.C. Rogers

SNOW GUMS

★ PRIZE LETTER

► Once again it was very difficult to choose our prize letter of the month, however after careful consideration the prize goes to Jenny Minogue of Blackburn Lake. Jenny's prize is another of the famous Periwinkle series, this time "Australian Insects" by John Child - an informative, well illustrated, compact handbook covering most aspects of Australian insect life. This book would make an excellent addition to any library.

Jenny writes

●● During the May holidays 30 members of grades 5 and 6 went on a six day tour of the Kiewa Valley region. At Mt. Beauty where we stayed we saw two interesting types of moth, these being the Goat moth and the Bogong moth. The larvae of the Goat moth feeds on wood for two or three years and do much damage to wattle trees. The Bogong moth sometimes invade houses in millions but do not do much damage indoors because they are not clothes-moths. Some of the places we visited on the trip were Falls Creek, McKay Creek power station, Albury, Beechworth and Harrietville. At Albury we saw many wasp nests hanging on the trees.

The scenery was lovely and we saw many different trees, plants and flowers. This trip was not only good fun but also educational.

* * * * *



Wattle Goat Moth



Pupa

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Committee of
Ringwood
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*From the
Editor ...*

Dear Girls and Boys,

Last month Elizabeth Collins wrote to me about her visit to Yellingbo on the Woori Yallock Creek near Seville. Yellingbo is noteworthy of course as the main remaining stronghold of the rare and famous Helmeted Honeyeater.

A couple of years ago I visited this area and was struck by the singular beauty of this hitherto, relatively quiet spot. Imagine my dismay when visiting Yellingbo in January of this year to find much of this area littered with empty rusting food and drink cans, paper and other rubbish. It is fine to think that this spot is so popular but surely it is not asking too much to expect that garbage can be treated as it is at home and put in the bin.

I'm sure that thoughtful girls and boys like you can do much to help keep our beauty spots the way nature intended them to be.

L. J. DELACCA
Editor.

Let's Look at Lilies

Now that we have learnt to look at flowers I wonder how many will be able to tell a lily when they see it.

Lilies, a distinctive plant group are recognised by their flowers.

In lilies the sepals are similar to the petals having six segments—usually two rows of three. Normally there are six stamens too.

Notice that the perianth segments (sepals and petals) arise from the flower stalk below the level of the ovary, a distinguishing feature of lilies.

Amongst lilies some plants only have a pistil and no stamens while others are complete flowers both stamens and pistil being present.

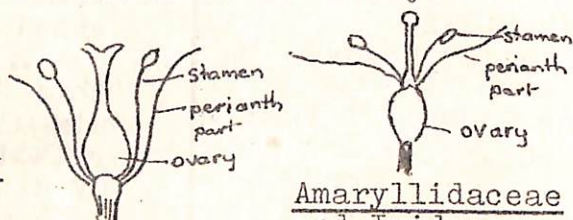
You need to know that all plants bearing the name "lily" do not necessarily belong to the lily family.

Nature Notes



Early Nancy

● Daffodils, jonquils Belladonna Lilies, Yellow Stars belong to the Amaryllis family. They look like lilies with 6 stamens and 6 perianth segments but these segments arise above the level of the ovary.



Liliaceae

Amaryllidaceae and Iridaceae

In the Iris family the perianth segments are similar but they only have three stamens.



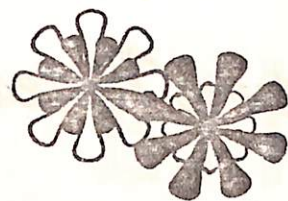
Yellow Autumn Lily

● Can you still find some flowers on the Yellow Autumn Lily? You will find that it isn't only autumn when it flowers.

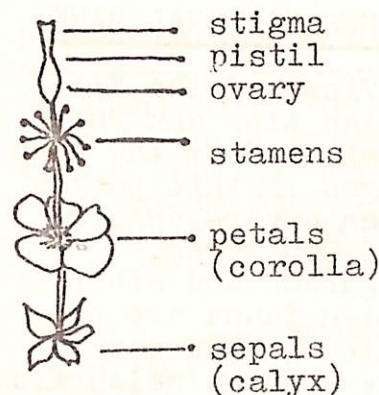
● Do not pick the wild flowers. Try to discover their names from books in your school library.

(*Tricoryne elatior*)

..4



In Flower



★ How well do you know the parts of a flower? The drawing shows us the various names we give to these parts, it is now up to you to look closely at some flowers and discover these parts for yourself.

● You will find that some plants do not have all these flower parts and it is best to study the examples given and learn them first then try some flowers of your own.

● The sepals usually cover the petals in the bud stage and are green in colour, but in some flowers they drop off as soon as the flower opens and we don't see them. In other flowers we may mistake them for petals as in the Early Nancy. What parts of a flower do you find in these flowers?

● The petals are usually the showy part, sometimes their shapes have been changed or they may be joined together as in the *Correa reflexa*.

● Now that you know what to look for it is up to you to find these things yourself.



○ Tea-tree



○ Correa reflexa

5..

June '69.

ON TOUR *with Nature Notes*

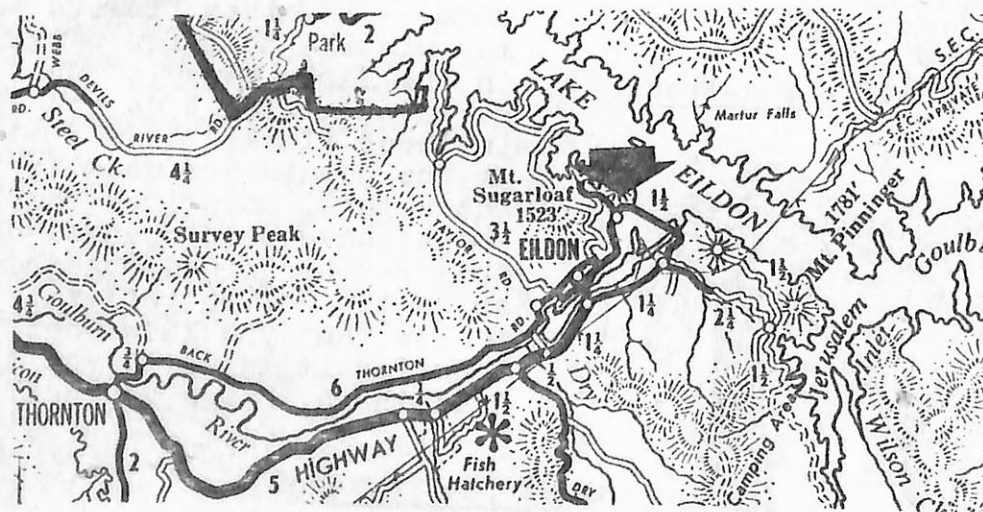
★ Only eighty-seven miles from Melbourne, the township of Eildon is situated on the banks of Lake Eildon. This area can be the base for many wonderful trips into the Victorian countryside.

LAKE EILDON dams the largest river in Victoria, the Goulburn. With a shoreline of over 320 miles, the lake provides a haven for boating enthusiasts and fishermen. The water of the lake is used for irrigation, power production, flood control and recreation. The map will show you the situation of the town.

FRASER NATIONAL PARK

● Views of the Victorian Alps can be obtained from the high ridges in this park which covers an area of 6,000 acres. Kangaroos and other native fauna are protected in the park, only about 5 miles from Eildon.

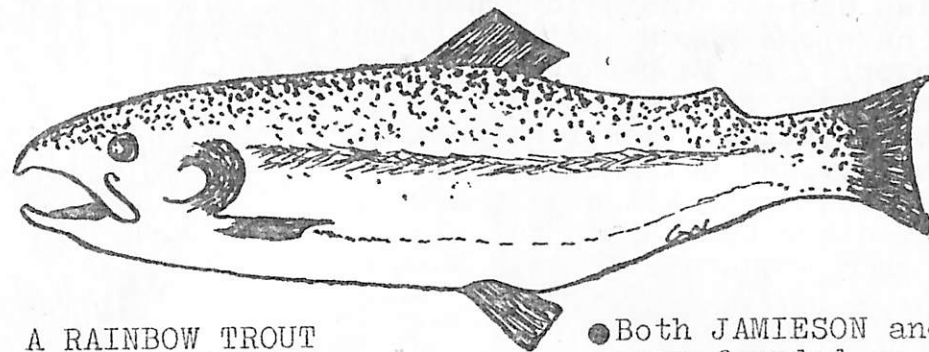
Ninety miles further on is the snow resort of Mt. Buller. Here all facilities are provided for a happy snow holiday.



Eildon

SNOBS CREEK FISH HATCHERY

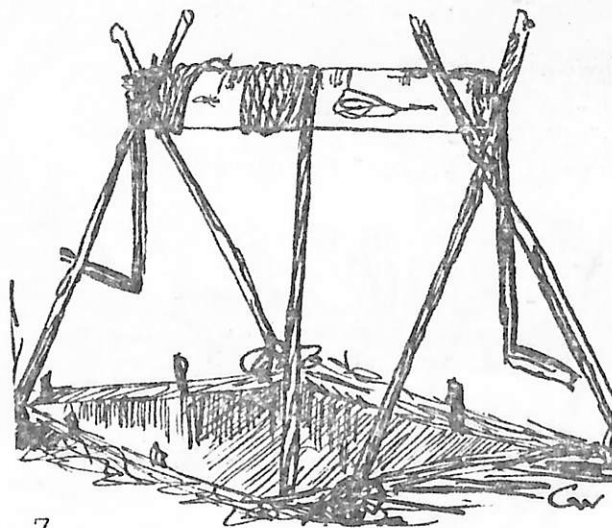
● About three miles from Eildon is the fascinating fish hatchery where fish are bred to be later freed in rivers and streams throughout Victoria. Daily inspections may be made - the best time being about 3.30 p.m. when the fish are fed.



A RAINBOW TROUT

● Both JAMIESON and ALEXANDRA were founded on gold. Today they are prosperous farming areas. In the Gold Rush days Jamieson had fourteen hotels. (Today only about 140 people live there). A five-day trip to Melbourne and back by Cobb and Co. coach would cost about \$5 in today's money. MANSFIELD is the area where the Kelly Gang began their road into serious crime.

A rough timber winch used by early gold-miners.



Nesting

MENURA — the Lyre-bird.

☛ For most birds the traditional nesting season is Spring but here in Australia where so many things seem to be upside down to those in "The Old World" we have one which nests and breeds in the winter. It is perhaps our most famous yet seldom seen bird - The Superb Lyrebird. Nesting in winter is not his only unusual habit. He has acquired a great reputation as a mimic, not only of other bush birds but also sounds resulting from acquaintance with human habitation.

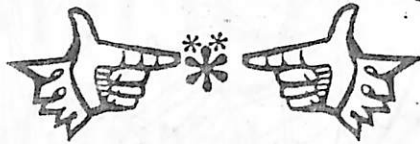
* FOR YOU TO DO *

1. Find his scientific name and its meaning. Does it suit?
2. Why was he called a Lyrebird?
3. Discover how the nest is made. Which bird does the work?
4. Find the areas of Australia where Lyrebirds are found.
5. Draw the male bird on the dancing mound.
6. How long is the incubation period?
7. Compare bird and egg to a domestic fowl and its egg.
8. Visit Sherbrooke Forest and see them for yourself.
9. Read : Menura the Lyrebird By Harold Pollock.
Bird Wonders of Australia by A.H.Chisholm
(Chapters 3 and 4).



SUPERB LYRE BIRD

This n That



FERAL CAT: The House Cat Gone Bush.

■ The domestic cat gone wild is a great destroyer of wild life. It can climb trees, stalk native animals, steal their young and take eggs in nests, both in trees and on the ground.

It multiplies at a phenomenal rate. It is without doubt a significant factor hindering wildlife conservation in some areas.

Soft-hearted cat owners frequently prefer to "dump" unwanted cats in the bush

rather than dispose of them in other ways. They believe it is cruel to destroy surplus cats and kittens.

The wildlife conservationist knows it is more cruel to release cats in the wild where they must destroy a great many native animals and birds in their fight for survival. A cat released in the bushland loses all the qualities of a domestic

cat and develops a very specialised muscular system. It becomes very cunning. Native animals are no match for it because they never had to compete with such an animal.

Some people believe that cats control pests such as rabbits. We are convinced there are far better ways to do this; far less hazardous for native fauna.

Strangely enough, most dumpers of cats choose National Parks and Nature Reserves for their dumping. This is naturally a bad thing.

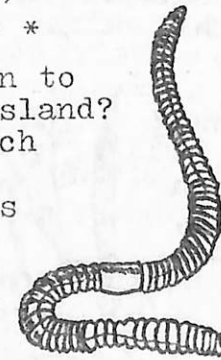
Think twice when you want to dispose of a cat and don't choose to release it in the bush.

Spread this information among your friends and contacts and, if you like cats, keep them at home. (Fauna Protection Panel - Sydney.)

* * * * *

■ Have you been to Poowong in Gippsland? It is a very rich dairying area.

Poowong means big worm in the aboriginal language of the area. It is supposed to resemble the sound of the worm entering its burrow.



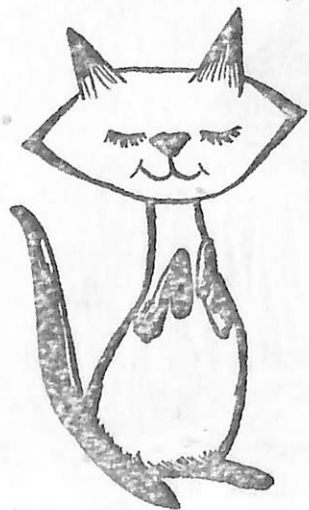
ANOTHER LUCKY ACCIDENT.

■ The man who invented blotting paper received the sack for his effort. A vat of paper pulp he had made refused to set so he was sacked on the spot. The spoilt paper was dumped outside where a workman noted that it absorbed spots of rain. The mill management dried the pulp and sold it as blotting paper to a public which acclaimed it as a splendid innovation.

* * * * *

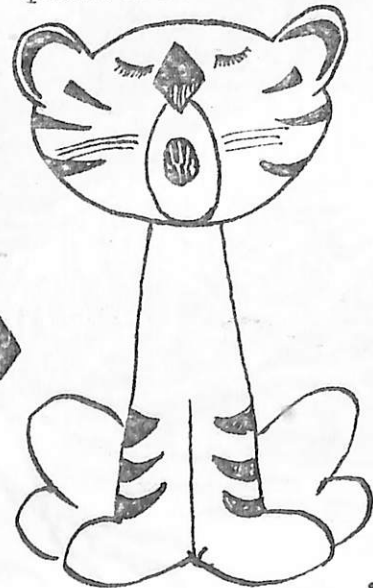


■ History has recorded many occasions when it has actually rained fish, which have been sucked out of the sea by a whirlwind. In 1933, fish fell during a heavy rain on the port of Cristobal, in the Panama Zone.



From this

to this



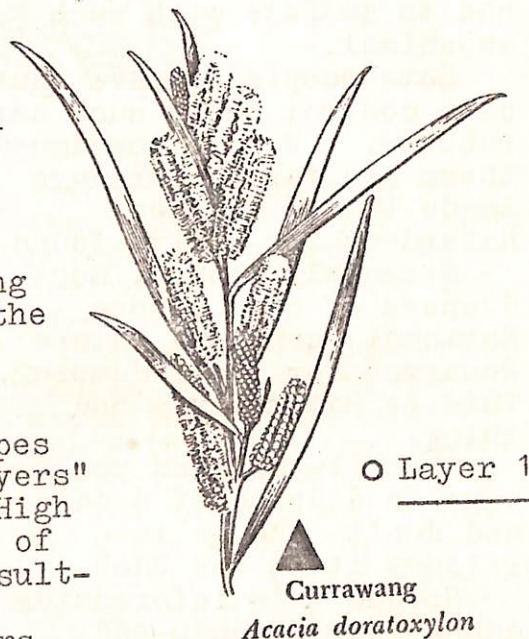
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* The Three Floras

Last month Mr. White took Nature Notes On Tour to the Victorian Alps. He mentioned changes in the vegetation at different altitudes. During the May holidays a party of thirty girls and boys from Blackburn Lake made an exciting tour of this area, taking in the Kiewa Valley and parts of the Bogong High Plains. Here we noticed that there are indeed three distinct types of vegetation occurring in "layers" from the Kiewa Valley to the High Plains. These were a result of changes in altitude with a resultant change in climate.

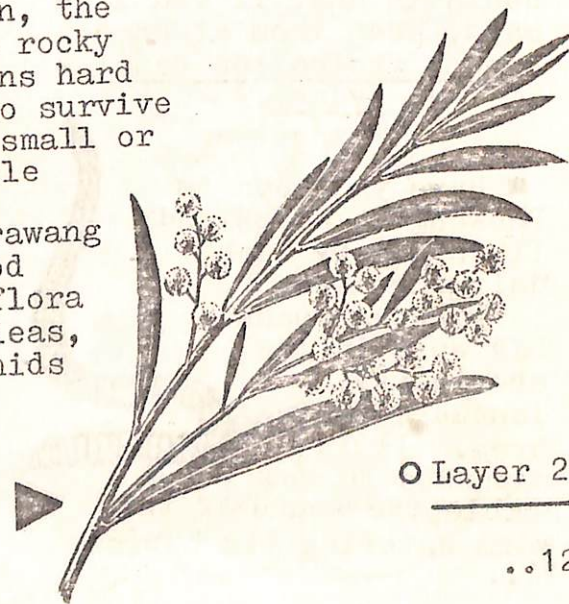
Just above Mt. Beauty occurs the first layer of vegetation, the dry sclerophyll flora of the rocky hillsides. Sclerophyll means hard leaves. Leaves that have to survive in dry air must be hard and small or placed so as to present little surface for evaporation.

The Blue Gum and the Currawang (*Acacia doratoxylon*) are good examples of this. Ground flora include bright peas, Grevilleas, vinea-flowers, lilies, orchids and daisies.



○ Layer 1

▲ Currawang
Acacia doratoxylon



○ Layer 2

▲ Buffalo Wattle
Acacia kettlewelliae

of the Bogongs *

The middle layer with Bogong Village at 2260' at its centre, and an annual rainfall of 73" is called the wet sclerophyll forest.

Here growth is dense and luxuriant, and generally leaves are larger. Many shrubs and small trees have bright flowers in October including the Buffalo Wattle (*Acacia kettlewelliae*) and the crimson Royal Grevillea (*victoriae*).

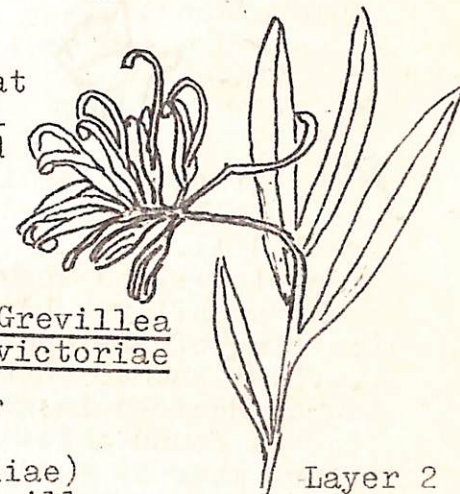
The third layer is the alpine area from Falls Creek upwards. Rainfall is high but cold winds and snow limit the growth. Plants must flower and seed between October and May. The two types of plants here are firstly the gnarled snowgum and hard-leaved shrubs and secondly the orchids and silky daisy type which winter underground and spring to life in the alpine spring.

Flora of this layer include pink trigger plants, daisies, everlasting, sky lilies, sun orchids, orange Goodenias and many others. What a colourful sight this area must be in October! I would like to visit there then. What about you?

(Grateful thanks to S.E.C. Kiewa for assistance with this article).

Trigger Plant.

Layer 3



Layer 2

Grevillea
victoriae



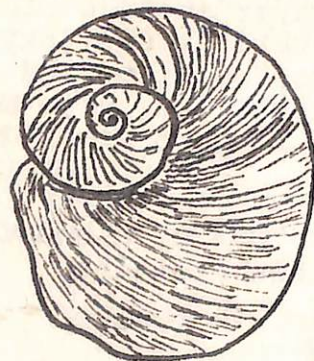
Drop a Line



★ Our first letter is from Angela Collie, Grade 3 of Forest Hill.

Angela writes about the beach, a chilly subject for this time of the year.

.....Last summer when swimming at Seaford in shallow water we found a lot of Egg Collars made by Sand Snails. These are strange collar shapes made by the shell when it lays its eggs in a slimy mixture with sand. They are rubbery, but if you take them out of water they dry and break easily. We like looking for shells at the beach, but we only keep shells if they have no fish in them.



Moon-Shell

Mollusc

Editor, 'Nature Notes',
State School,
Blackburn Lake,
P.O. Box 30,
NUNAWADING. 3131.

● ED. The name of your sand snail Angela is Moon-shell mollusc. Another one of their habits is to drill holes in the shells of bivalves in order to eat the animals inside, so if you see a tiny hole in a sea-shell you will know that a moon shell has had a meal there.

* * * * *

★ Keryn Gange, Grade 6, Blackburn Lake writes...
Once I was watching a spider on its web. What would happen if I threw a piece of leaf on the web? I tried it and the spider went to it, picked it up and on seeing it wasn't food, dropped the leaf. Again I tried this with the same result.

Next I caught a fly, put it in the web and the spider went away. Was it because I touched the fly?

● ED. Yes Keryn this was most likely the reason. Good observing.

* * * * *

★ Leanne Begg from Blackburn Lake writes..
● During the May holidays a group of thirty children from our school went on an educational tour to the Kiewa Valley. We stayed at the Mt. Beauty Chalet for six days. There we saw great numbers of moths called Wattle Goat Moths and Bogong Moths. We visited Falls Creek, Mt. Bogong, Albury, Beechworth, Harrietville, McKay Power Station and Woolshed Creek. At the Woolshed Creek we looked for gemstones but we were unlucky. Down at the Ovens River one of our party found a speck of gold. Two wallabies and a fox were seen from the bus. There were many leeches in the damp undergrowth. Altogether this was a very interesting tour and if anyone is trying to find something special for next holidays, this is the place.

● ED. I am in full agreement Leanne and hope you will be able to revisit this interesting area.

* * * * *

★ Wendy Smith, Grade 6, Springvale North writes...
On my way home from school once, I discovered on an old tree stump a type of "orange peel" fungi. When I looked closer I found out that it was not "orange peel". What kind of fungi is it?

● ED. Did your fungi look like this in the sketch Wendy? If so, it was a shelf fungi. These are very common and come in many colours. They live on the host tree and can cause damage to it.



Shelf

Fungi

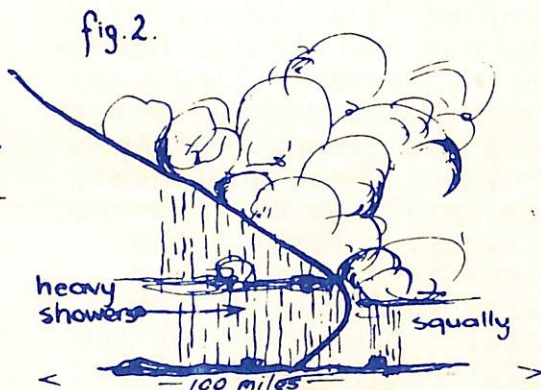
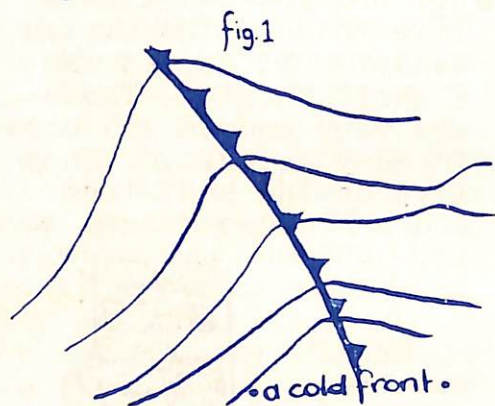
► Sorry that space does not allow us to print all the letters received. However keep them coming in. We would like particularly letters from those schools which have not yet contributed. Remember if you wish to have an object identified, please send it, a sketch of it, or a good description of it.

● ● ● ● Editor. GG

Looking at the Weather Map:

THOSE COLD FRONTS!

On the weather maps you see at this time of the year, you will probably notice a thick line, usually curved with small arrows on them (see Fig. 1). This is a cold front. A cold "wedge" of air pushes warm, moist air sharply upwards. As it rises, the air cools and thus cannot carry all the moisture. This, then, falls as rain (see Fig. 2).



* Watch for the arrival of a cold front. Try to name the types of cloud you see.

NATURE NOTES COMMITTEE

MR. F.J.C. ROGERS

..

S.S. LILYDALE

MR. G. WHITE

..

S.S. BLACKBURN EAST

MR. L.J. DELACCA

..

S.S. BLACKBURN LAKE

(Editor)

NEXT ISSUE WILL BE AT DEPOTS ON WEDNESDAY JULY 2nd.