

NATURE NOTES

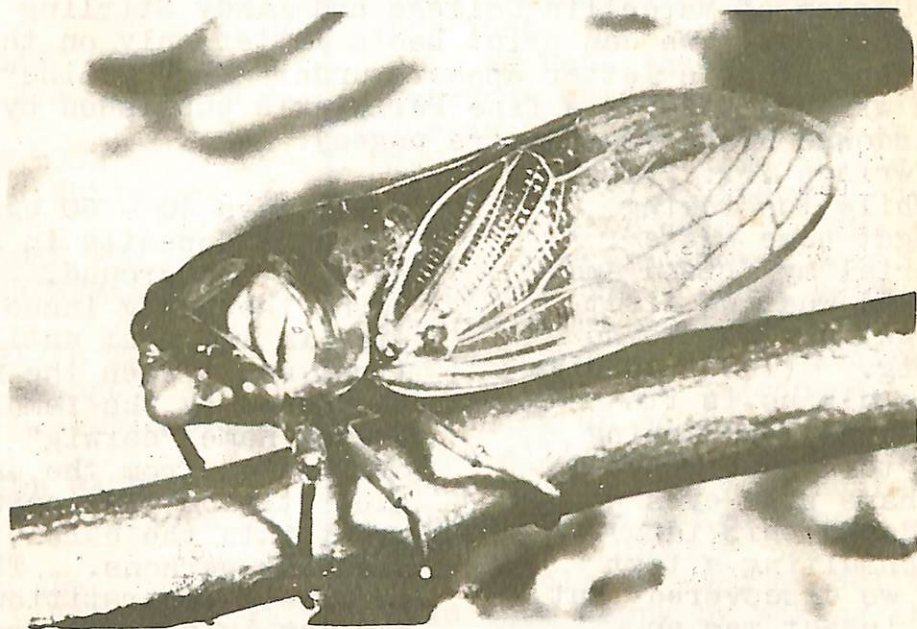


Photo. F.J.C.Rogers

"CICADA"

**DEC
1969**

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★ PRIZE LETTER

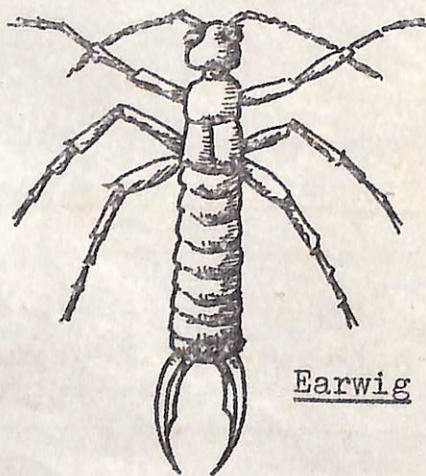
★ Well I suppose it had to happen sooner or later as during the year we have received many fine letters for "PRIZE LETTER". This month we have a tie between Leo Cussen of Marcellin College and Lindy Stirling of Montmorency. We can print Leo's letter only on this page and Lindy's letter appears under "Drop a Line". Both writers receive a fine Periwinkle published by Landsdowne Press (See centre pages).

Leo writes

● While fossicking amongst some waste material my friend and I found what we first thought was an albino earwig. (The true sign of an albino is its pink eyes, and seeing that this specimen did not have pink eyes we abandoned this idea). On consulting a text book we discovered that this insect was an earwig in one of its early growth stages, namely after one of the four to six moults which occur when the earwig is in the nymph stage. The body is inflated with swallowed air and appears white.

●● I believe that this specimen was a common European earwig (forficula Auricularia, order - Dermaptera).

- It lays 40 - 60 eggs which it deposits in a nest in the ground. When born, the young insects stay in the nest until the first moult when the nest is opened by the female.
- The name "earwig" originated from the ancient superstition that earwigs crept into the ears of sleeping persons. This is purely superstition however as earwigs are perfectly harmless.



Earwig

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From the
Editor....

Dear Girls and Boys,

With this issue we ring down the curtain on Nature Notes for 1969.

We hope that many of the messages which we brought to you during the year will remain and grow. Perhaps some of the interests and habits you have acquired will help to make your coming long holiday a more enjoyable one. Next year Nature Notes will again be in schools and we are including a special Science Segment to keep us really up to date. Our price will remain on 5c. per issue or \$1.00 a year posted. I hope you will again be a subscriber for 1970.

Finally a word on holidays - make them happy by making them safe. It is sad but true that many times more fatal "accidents" occur during holiday times, so make your slogan

- "BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE" -

Best wishes to all for an enjoyable and rewarding season.

Sincerely,

L.J.DELACCA

Editor.

Something To Do

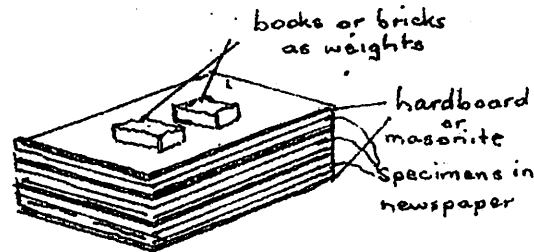
Many girls and boys are interested in trying to know the names of the plants they see. During the holidays may be a good time to start your collection but there are some points to remember. There are laws to protect some of our plants and you must not pick them even though you may see them being ploughed under or burnt by farmers and other persons. In selecting a piece of flower make sure there are plenty of plants so that without your small piece there will still be plenty to see.

To preserve your plant specimen it is necessary for it to dry out very flat. We can do this by placing the specimen in newspaper and putting between hardboard or masonite and keeping some weights on them till they dry.

It is necessary to dry the plants as quickly as possible. Do not leave them in damp papers as they will soon go mouldy. It may be necessary to change the paper after a day or two.

A good idea is to keep the flowers that look alike together. It is necessary to do this if you mount your dried specimen onto a loose-leaf page.

Fix your specimen neatly onto a page by using narrow strips of paper and "clag". Try to avoid "sellotape" etc. Once your specimen is dried keep it in a dry place and it should last many years - even hundreds of years.



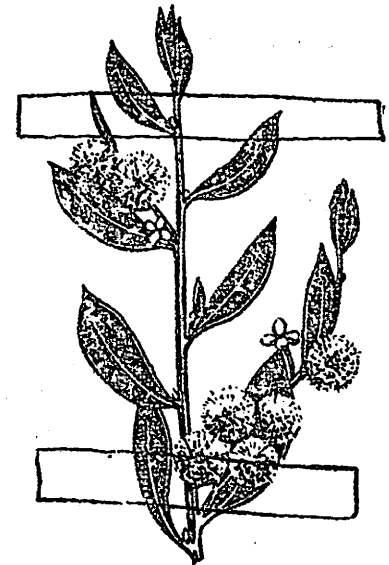
Making a Plant Collection

Try to find out the name of your plant

- ★1. by looking up reference books in your school library,
- ★2. by asking some grown up if they know the answer,
- ★3. by asking your teacher because the new science course is aimed at giving you a better understanding of the things around you.

You may be able to find an Australian Garden where you may, if you ask, be given permission to collect specimens of plants which grow in other states or in other parts of Victoria. You may even wish to grow some of these plants in your home or school garden so that you can study them better.

When you collect your plant write down such information as locality where you collected it and the date. You are keeping helpful directions in case someone else wishes to find the plant himself.



Acacia myrtifolia

Myrtle Wattle

1st. Sept. 1969
Oban Road,
Ringwood.



ON TOUR *with Nature Notes*

One hundred and fifty miles south-east of Melbourne is Wilson's Promontory, the southern-most tip of mainland Australia. Established as a National Park in 1898, this area is a wonderful holiday centre. There are facilities for good swimming, surfing, boating, fishing and hiking. During the summer season thousands of people spend their vacation at Tidal River which nestles 1845 ft. below Mt Oberon.

The area is rich in interesting plant life. In a relatively small area (102,000 acres) you can see vegetation ranging from coastal, mountain and swamp types.

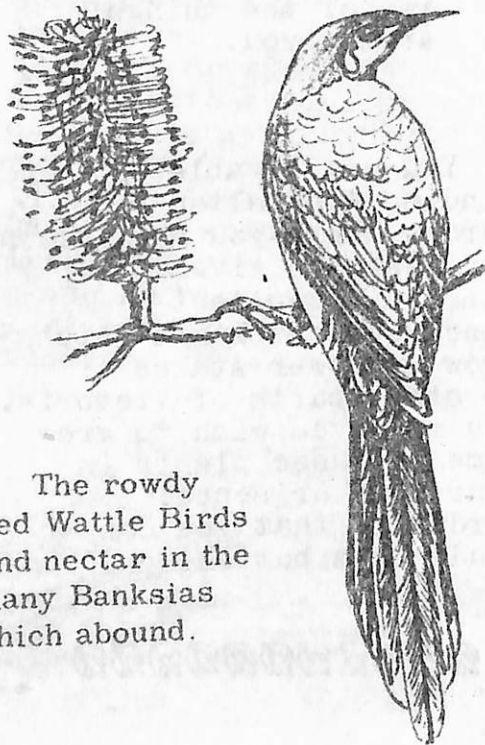
Any of the walks will show you this, but a visit to Lilly Pilly Gully and Mt. Oberon feature for the variety of plant life to be seen.

Many keen hikers take the long walk to Sealer's Cove, a distance of 9 miles away.

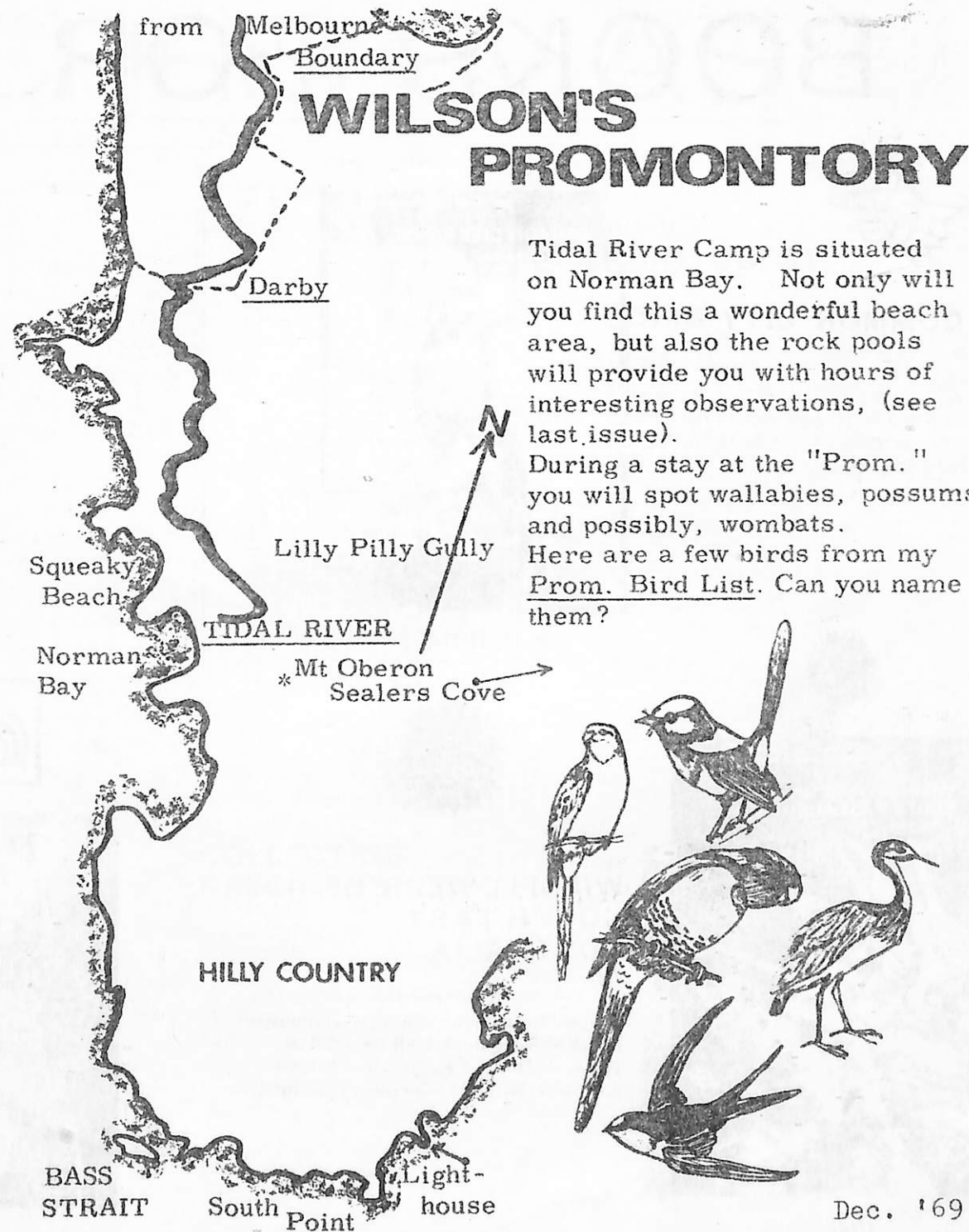
****Green hood Orchid**



****Helmet Orchid**



The rowdy Red Wattle Birds find nectar in the many Banksias which abound.





BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS



COMMON CITY BIRDS

Graeme Chapman

An identification guide to some of the common birds seen around the towns, cities and suburbs of Australia. With 64 full-colour photographs.



Good books are always a most welcome gift. What could be better than an inexpensive stiff-covered paperback from the beautiful Periwinkle Nature series in brilliant colour? This delightful series published by Londsdowne Press is available from all leading bookstalls and newagents at \$1.50. There are 16 titles to choose from so far and more to follow. Look for the sign of the Periwinkle below.

TROUT QUEST



DAVID SCHOLES

TROUT QUEST

David Scholes

An effective mixture of the lore of the sport with practical advice about the craft from a leading trout fisherman. There are chapters on the choice of tackle; casting; wading; striking; playing; netting; selection of flies, and much more. Mr. Scholes also gives some useful accounts of some of the best trout fishing locations.

Not a Periwinkle but just the thing for Dad from the family.



WILDFLOWERS OF SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIA

Jutta Hosel

A guide to the most common wildflowers found growing in parts of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. With 100 full-colour photographs.



COLLECTING SPECIMENS

John Child

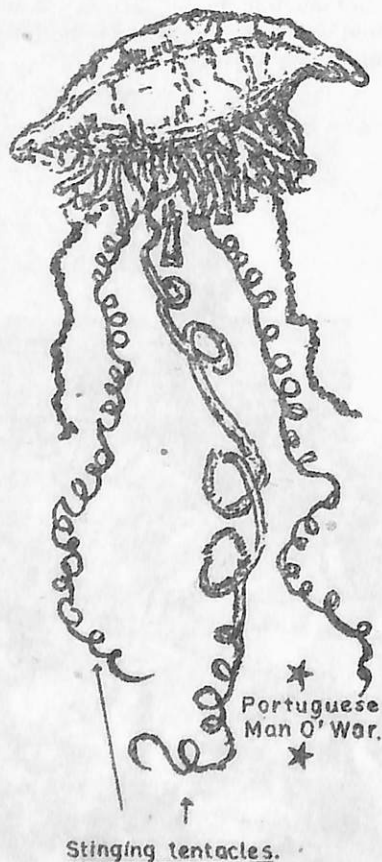
Dr. Child outlines some of the basic rules for starting a collection of natural history specimens. With sections on photography, microscopes etc. With 53 full-colour photographs.



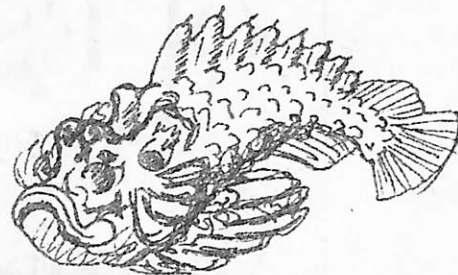
This n That

DANGER!!

⊕ Holidays are normally very happy times but sometimes danger lurks waiting to trap the unwary. This 'n That this month tells you of a few of the animals of which to be careful.



★ Portuguese Man O' War. ★



★ Stonefish ★

⊕ Last month we mentioned the Ringed Octopus. Equally deadly is the dreaded Stonefish. Watch out for it in more northern waters. It is most difficult to see and the most venomous fish known.

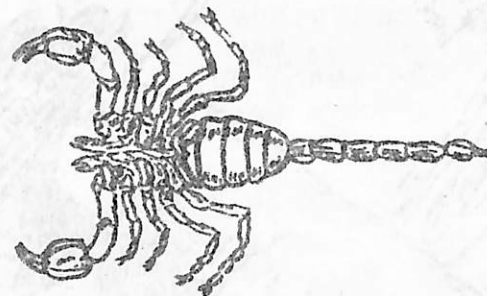
●●●●●
⊕ The Portuguese Man of War or Blue Bottle is a jelly fish also common in northern waters. The sting of its tentacles can cause great pain even when the jelly fish is dead.



⊕ Many people have died from the sting of the cone-shell. The poison is injected by a long pink tongue through the narrow end of the shell.

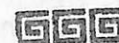


★ The Common Trap-door Spider ★
Male Female



⊕ The Scorpion too has a dangerous sting in the tail. Watch out when lifting stones or pieces of wood.

●●
Less dangerous injuries can be caused by sea anemones, marine worms, sea urchins, mussels, razor clams unless protective footwear is worn.



Dangerous port



★ Cone shell with live animal.

⊕ We have mentioned many times the danger of a bite from a red-back spider. More common but lesser known is the Trap-door Spider which should also be regarded as dangerous.

⊕ Remember too it can be dangerous to drink from a tap - an unpleasant animal or insect may be hiding up in the tap. A bite or sting inside the mouth could prove fatal.



●●
⊕ These are only a few of the many dangers. They can all be avoided if you use all of your six senses to the full, especially the sixth one - common sense.



Bird Banding in Australia

● The first recorded banding of birds was carried out by a Dane, Christian Mortensen, about 70 years ago. He was interested in following bird movements. In 1899 he began banding starlings by placing on the leg a light aluminium ring, stamped with a number and address.

* The idea spread slowly to Australia, reaching here in 1952. Now there are 250 banders who band over half a million birds annually. Of these 5000 are recaptured and released. Records are kept by the C.S.I.R.O. Scientists are able to trace the movements of the birds and their habits. This helps in our conservation of the species.

* Teal duck banded near Darwin have been found in the SW corner of W.A.; mutton birds from Bass Strait Islands have been found in the far north Pacific.



Nature Notes



Banding a Honeyeater.

* FOR YOU TO DO.

- ★ Find the names of species of birds that have been banded.
- ★ How are the birds caught?
- ★ If you find a banded bird alive, do not remove the band but send information stamped on it, plus notes on where, when and how caught to the address on the band.
- ★ If the bird is dead remove the band and send also.

..12

Cicada.



Adult



Nymph

● Our cover this month features The Cicada, probably the best known insect in literature. This interest absorbing insect family was featured in the poems of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, Homer, Virgil and so on.

● The Australian Cicada is essentially a summer insect and on hot days or nights may be heard to produce an intolerable din.

● In America there is the "seventeen year Cicada" which spends 17 years underground in the immature stage before emerging for a few brief weeks as the noisy adult.

● Soon it will be "Cicada Time" so here are some things to find out about this friendly fellow.

- ★ 1. From which kind of tree did your Cicada come? (The "peppermint variety" is the most popular host).
- ★ 2. How does the Cicada deposit the eggs in the tree?
- ★ 3. How does the Cicada make that terrific din? Which one makes the noise - male or female? and why?
- ★ 4. The Cicadas have some fascinating names such as Yellow Monday; Double Drummer. Any more?

Remember the best way to study this invertebrate is by first hand observation so go out and find your Cicada now.



Drop a Line



Lindy Stirling's prize letter begins.....

● On Nov. 1st we heard a scraping noise that was very faint. After searching for the culprit we found an extremely well camouflaged cocoon on our tea-tree fence. The insect was beginning to move out of its cocoon.

● ● We watched it carefully and estimated the emerging process to take approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour. When it had fully emerged the insect was approx. $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long and $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. It rested on the tea-tree fence for an hour and during the time it gave us a chance to observe a marvellous experience: the wings which were about one inch long when it first emerged gradually began to expand so that by the end of an hour the wings had grown to 3 times the original size. The markings on the moth

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began to reveal themselves making each minute just as fascinating as the last.

● ● The legs and feelers which were a chocolate brown had fine bristles or hairs on them, and the body which was very fat and soft, was grey and had a black spot on each segment of the abdomen on each side. At last we recognised it - an emperor gum moth.

● ● As it began to fly away, I caught it to observe it some more. That night it laid eggs, about 150 of them which were slightly yellow. This proves they mate before they enclose themselves in the cocoon. Can you tell me why, please?

▶ ED. No Lindy this does not prove that moths mate in the larval stage. Remember it is a caterpillar that goes into the cocoon. Insects and

birds lay eggs but are they always fertile? Eggs cannot be fertile without contact with the male of the species. If the moth's eggs were fertile caterpillars should hatch. Did they?

Your letter shows very good observing but also shows the danger of drawing conclusions on too little evidence.

* * * * *

★ Christine Wilcock of Surrey Hills has also sent an interesting letter about the gum emperor moth. Space does not allow the printing of it all but Christine does say that "after about two hours a grub-like creature came out of the cocoon. It was covered in moisture with wet crumpled wings squashed against its body. After drying it emerged as the most splendid creature I had ever seen - a Gum Emperor, a moth which sometimes attains a wing span of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches".

* * * * *

★ Heather Oatley, of Blackburn Lake writes about Lorikeets. -

One day our grade went out to see how many birds we could see.



The Gum Emperor Moth
the finest of all
Australian moths.

Up in the gum trees we saw many green lorikeets. They were small birds. They were pecking many small nuts. As they pecked, many nuts came down. They had little holes at the top where the birds had pecked.



Rainbow Lorikeet.



Christmas Beetle.



Grey Furrowed Rose Chafer



Fiddler.



Black Ground Beetle



Banksia Jewel.



Common Longicorn.

Nature Notes will again be published in 1970 and we look forward to your valued support next year. In view of the introduction of the new Science Course we have enlisted the aid of a top science writer who will prepare articles for the science segment to be incorporated in next year's Nature Notes.

The cover will again be in colour and in spite of rising paper costs the price will remain at 5c. per copy.

Order forms and other relevant information will be forwarded early in the New Year.

Sincere thanks to all of those who have supported Nature Notes in the past year - our writers, illustrators, production workers, principals, teachers and children. Season's greetings to you all.

L.J.DELACCA.

Sketches Mrs.G.Hensler.