









April is now with us and autumn is becoming advanced. You know, I think this is our most beautiful season - not only because of the falling leaves, but also because there is so much happening in nature.

Look around your gardens: do you see greater activity in the spider population ? Is there evidence of an increase in the number and variety of toad-stools and other fungi ? Does the warmth of the sun seem just a little softer than it did ?

Those of you who are fortunite enough to have banksia trees learby will notice many different species in bloom right now. Indeed, Australians should really think of autumn as 'Banksia time ' rather than 'Autumn leaf ime.' Have you ever noticed what eautiful and unusual flowers the anksia has ? Try to find as many arieties as you can - you will

...Banksia Time!

be surprised at the number there are. Readers in Western Australia will have an advantage in this, because their state has Australia's greatest variety of banksias.<sup>1</sup>

No article on autumn would be complete without at least one experiment on autumn leaves, so try this one and see if you can explain the result.

Take an ordinary green leaf and an autumn leaf and stand both in a solution of iodine as shown in the sketches. What happens ? Why is the result different for each leaf ? If you can't think of an answer, ask your teacher - but have a good think yourself first

> Yours sincerely, H. J. Lawry (Editor)

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A Contribution. Mrs. S. Turner.

Artists. Cover: Mrs. M. Sharpin. Other drawings:

Mrs.Turner. Mrs.Sharpin. H.J. Lawry.

Last Christmas holidays-I was lucky enough to go on one of those An Unusual Pastime. trips some people dream about and others regard as a nightmare. Whatever your view is, I hope to tell you, in this and following issues, of a natural heritage within this state which has to be seen to be believed. Unfortunately there are only three ways to visit these places as the tracks are very steep and are often blocked by fallen

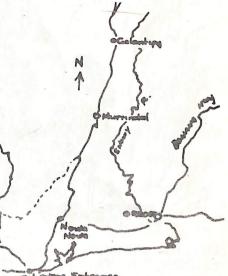
trees. You can go in by Land-rover. by powerful trail bike or by horseback, although the last method is limited in scope.

We took our Land-rovers from Melbourne, through Bruthen, Buchan and then on dirt roads to Gelantipy. about 30 km north of Buchan. From here we cut off along a misty forestry road. Our track wound down a very steep mountain side from which it had been bulldozed perhaps

## In The Mountains

ten years earlier by a group of miners who once worked antimony mines in the area. Camping on the Snowy River below Campbell's Knob was an interesting experience for a geologist in our party quickly turned a pebbly river beach into a gold-mine of experience as he described the makings and content of the fascinating rocks.

The area is composed mainly of volcanic rocks, some of which have been changed through the ages by forces of heat and pressure. There were beds of "thunder eggs" which enclosed beautiful crystals of



quartz if cracked open. Large lumps of reddish coloured granite were scattered in the river bed which were a mixture of rhyolite (ry-o-lite) and dacite (day-cite) known as rhyodacite.Much of the area was made up of other. porphyry (poor-free) varieties with odd lumps embedded in them, having been trapped by the molten rock as it hardened. These odd rocks are known as zenoliths which means "strange rock" in ancient Greek.

Perhaps the most breathtaking sight of this area was the incredible Little River Gorge. We reached this by returning to the main road, where by this time the mist had lifted to reveal dams teaming with wood duck and maned geese. Our expert in the party assessed the number of





vood duck on one small dam to be in excess of 200. Several falcon -s and wedge-tail eagles swooped and soared above us. We proceeded towards McKillop's Bridge, first built by depression labour in the 1930's and later to be lestroyed by one of the Snowy River's wild floods, before the Snowy was 'tamed' by the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Before reaching the bridge we turned in to a car park and walked to the edge of a magnificent gorge. Little River is a creek you can jump across, yet through the ages it has cut a gorge through porphyry rock 2,500 feet deep and perhaps 1.200 feet wide. The river runs

pelow, through a series of pools, like a twisted white ribbon, so far below that a stone will vanish from sight before it hits the bottom. One day I hope to walk the length of this gorge, following the river up to the road - about 3 km up its course.

That is all for now. Next month I will tell you more about this remarkable area.

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### Something To Do ···

1. Obtain a road map and trace Mr. Bakewell's journey from Melbourne to Gelantipy.

2. Why are Land-rovers so suitable for trips in this type of country?

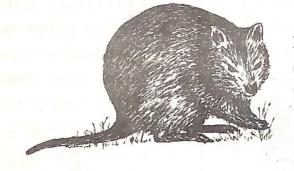
3. What is antimony ?

4. Find out all you can about the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

5. What is the main industry at Gelantipy ? ..... Editor.



Zuokka Country!



#### A Quokka

<u>Tim Heywood</u> Grade 6W. Blackburn Lake P.S.

During our stay in W.A. Dad's friend took us on a day trip to Rottnest Island. This island is seven miles long and two and a half miles wide and is eleven miles west -north-west of the mouth of the Swan River. It was discovered by Dutch mariners in

the 17th century and named by Vlamingh in 1696 after he saw what he thought was a nest of big rats, but they were actually a nest of small wallaby-like creatures called Quokkas. Today there is a small settlement there and you may hire bikes.

Quokkas are herbivorous nocturnal animals which also feed on rubbish. The head and body is grey-brown, the belly is grey. It has a stocky build, short ears and a round, very short tail. It grows to 11 inches. The Quokka is unique to Rottnest INDIAN Island and is one of the many marsupials of Australia. Cope Naturaliste

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# Things To Look For

Do you know where the oldest S.E.C. pole is within your school zone ? We can learn many things by looking at the small metal discs in the poles. When you look, you might find something that looks like our drawing.

The first number (40) tells the <u>length</u> of the pole. This is not the <u>height</u> of the pole because some of it is in the ground.

40

The letters are abbreviations of the name of the type of tree that was used to make the pole. M.M. stands for messmate. W.S.B. = white stringy bark. I.B. = ironbark. You try to work out the initials on the poles you examine.

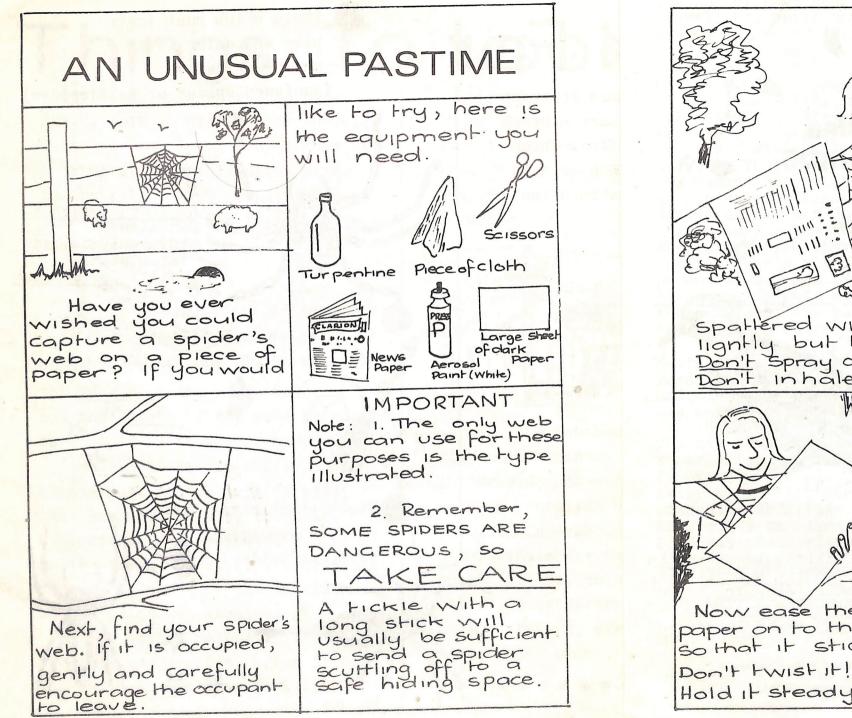
The bottom number is the date the pole was erected. Often it has the month of the year as well. Perhaps you could look for 20 or 30 poles and make a graph from the facts you find. Which tree is used most in your area ? Can you compare it with poles in other areas ?

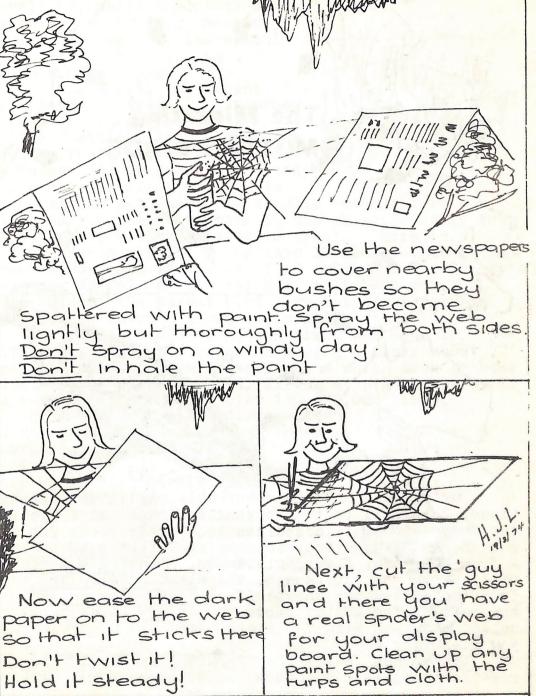
This is a month when we may find spiders in our gardens or in the bush. There are many kindsperhaps you might be able to put them into groups. Have a discussion about ways you might group spiders. There are, of course, many different ways. Look at the way I have grouped them on the right. Those which hunt their prey and catch it by moving quickly. (Huntsmen spider or Wolf spider)

> Huntsman spider Sometimes mistakenly called "Tarantula". Family: Sparrasidae

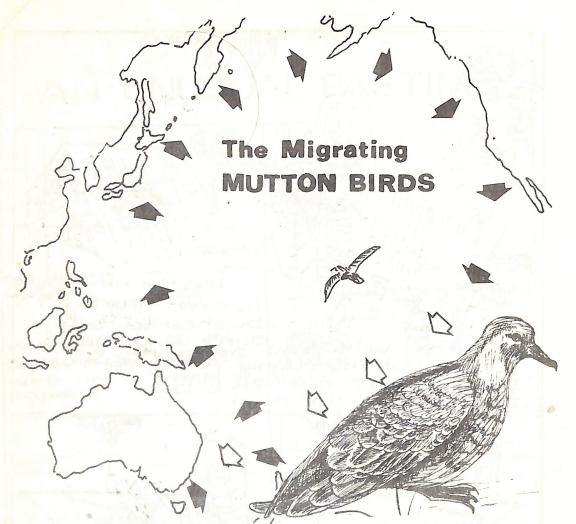
Those which set a web to catch their prey. (St.Andrew's Cross, Tailed spiders.)

Those which catch their prey by jumping. (Jumping spider)





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During this month a remarkable migration will take place. This will be the leaving for northern climes of the most famous of long distance travellers to visit our shores. His scientific name is Puffinus tenuirostris - from Puffinus, a puffin; tennis, slender; and rostrum, bill. He is the puffin with the slender bill, or, as he is often called the Short-tailed Shearwater or, even more often, the Mutton bird. Why do you think he is called a mutton bird ? Sailors named him Shearwater. Can you guess why ?

Let us now follow the migrating cycle of this remarkable small (14 inches) sooty brown bird. Six months of each year are spent on travelling, while the other six months is the breeding season spent in our waters. Where would you be most likely to see a mutton bird and when ?

In mid April, the parent birds leave on their long journey. Whilst the youngsters don't leave until a fortnight later, they are able, by instinct, to fly across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand and thence all the birds proceed to



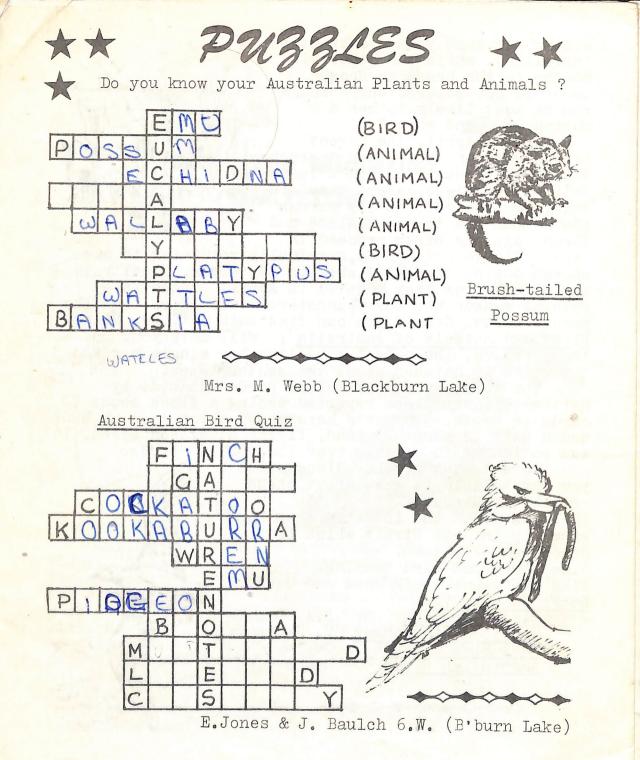
Japan, Alaska and Canada, eventually returning to our shores during the third week in September, usually to the same burrow they vacated in April. There is a special reason why the youngsters leave later than the parent birds. See if you can find this out. Mr. Pizzey's <u>Birds and Animals of Australia</u>, will help you. On their return, the parent bird lays her single egg and the chick is hatched about two months later.

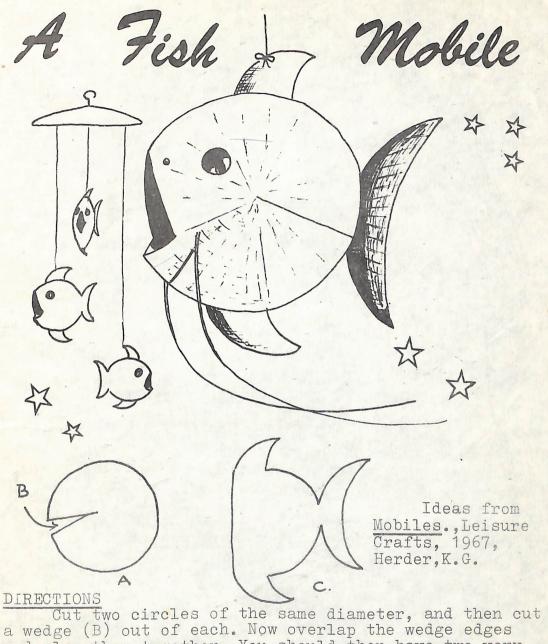
The first record of Mutton birds was made by Matthew Flinders, who reported seeing a flock about 70 yards in depth, 300 yards across and which took an hour and a half to pass overhead, flying at pigeon speed. It was estimated to contain over 130,000,000 birds.

Here are some other discoveries you may be able to make about these remarkable birds. Find out about the industry that has grown up in Bass Strait which is connected with them. Find out about bird banding. Find out about their food and nests. Books To Help You.

Bird Migration by	
Continent in Danger	
Vhat Bird is That ?	
Australian Birds	

P.A. Bourke V. Serventy Cayley Leach





a wedge (B) out of each. Now overlap the wedge edges and glue them together. You should then have two very shallow cones. Cut another circle with fins and tail attached as in diagram c. Next assemble the pieces, cut out the mouth, add cane "whiskers" and there you have your fish mobile ! Hang it up in your room.

April '74 Nature Notes.

#### INCH-WORM'S PROGRESS.

"I loop the loop, All blank in the middle But feet each end. S-bend, U-bend, I wend my little way .... A former day, I'd go by chin and toe Down leafy dells, past honey-wells (Now measured, I s'pose in Litres). I want to inch as I've always inched, NOT TRAVEL BY MILLI-METRES !"

S.Turner

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