

Ringwood - Inspectorate

Volume II.

Nature NOTES

No. 7

P O Box 28 Ringwood East 879 1263

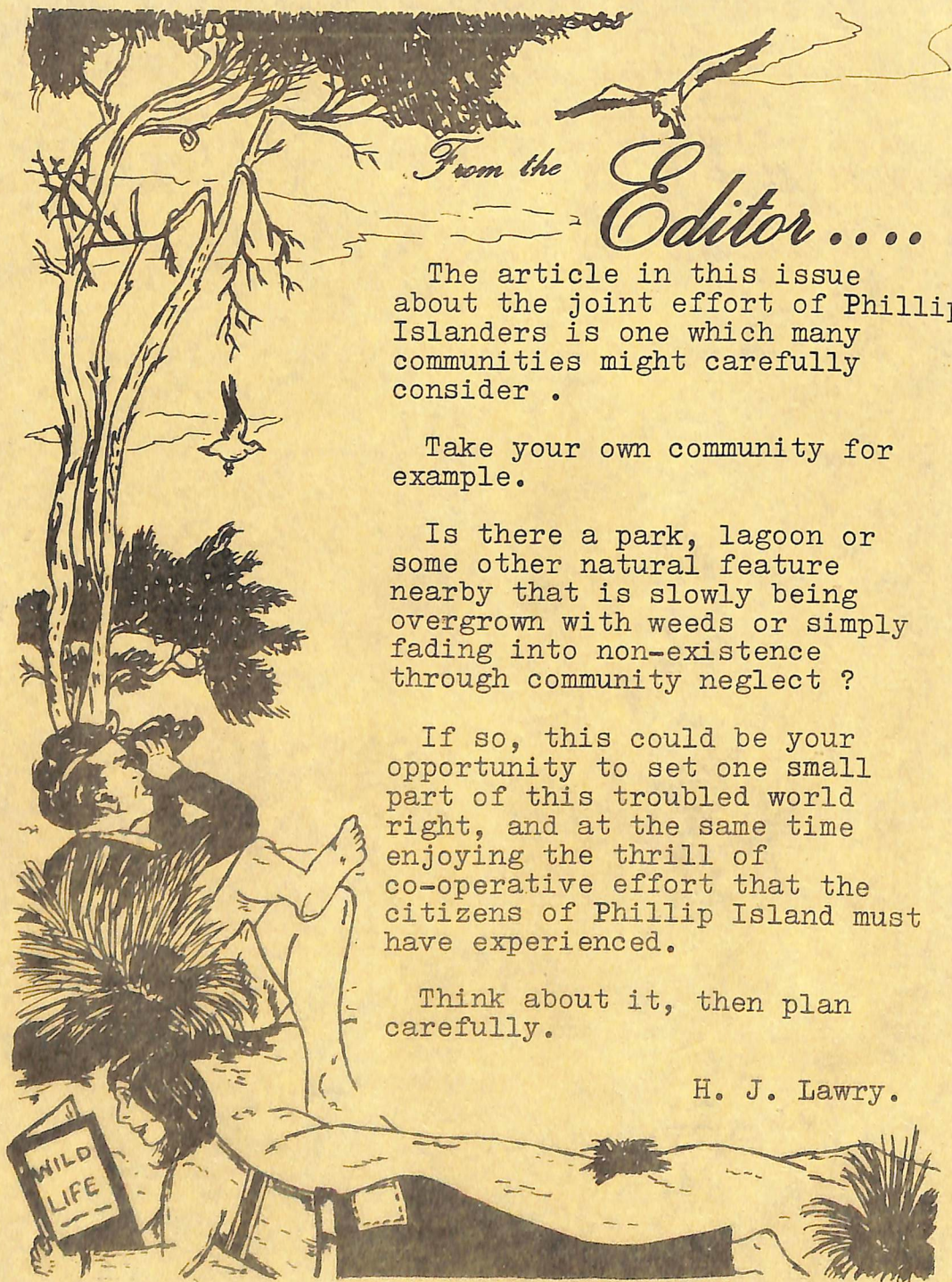


6 Cents

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

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From the Editor....

The article in this issue about the joint effort of Phillip Islanders is one which many communities might carefully consider .

Take your own community for example.

Is there a park, lagoon or some other natural feature nearby that is slowly being overgrown with weeds or simply fading into non-existence through community neglect ?

If so, this could be your opportunity to set one small part of this troubled world right, and at the same time enjoying the thrill of co-operative effort that the citizens of Phillip Island must have experienced.

Think about it, then plan carefully.

H. J. Lawry.

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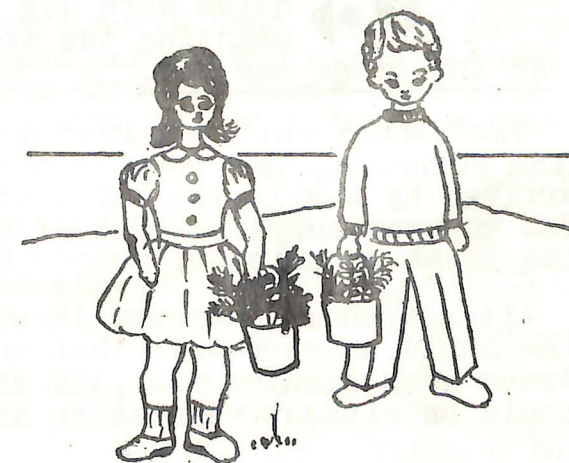
Mrs. C. Robertson.
Mrs. A. Dunstan.
Mrs. S. Morris.
Mrs. A. Morrison.
Mrs. M. Lees.
Mrs. S. Willsmore.

PHILLIP ISLAND CHILDREN ARE PRACTICAL CONSERVATIONISTS

All other communities could learn a lesson from an exercise in public co-operation which came to fruition near Cowes, on Thursday June 6th.

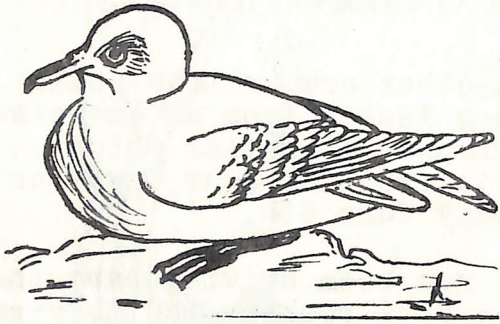
Had you been driving past the Mutton Bird rookery in the area known as Forrest Caves Reserve, Phillip Island, on this day, you would have wondered at the sight of about 70 school children scrambling up the sand dunes carrying buckets with them.

The children were planting trees. Why?



Here is the background to the story:

On the 12th October 1972, officers from the Lands Department, Fisheries and Wildlife Department, Soil Conservation Authority, Natural Resources Conservation League and the Shire of Phillip Island inspected the 22 acres of Forrest Caves Reserve about 6 miles from Cowes on Phillip Island. All the departments and authorities agreed that the area must be reclaimed and preserved; and all were prepared to co-operate in the necessary work.



-ations acted:

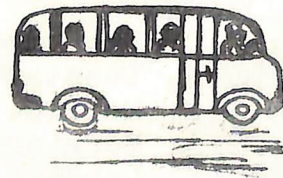
ACTION.

- ▶ The boxthorn bushes growing there were removed.
- ▶ The area was fenced off.
- ▶ Camping was forbidden.
- ▶ About 1 acre of Marram grass was planted to cover bare parts of the dunes.
- ▶ 5000 trees were supplied free of charge by one organisation along with an offer to assist with their planting.
- ▶ Holes were dug all over the area for planting the trees.....

So the stage was set.

The school children from Cowes Primary School with the Principal and other teachers arrived by bus in the early afternoon. The bus was supplied free of charge by the local proprietor.

After a short address, in which the children were told that unless trees were planted now, the area could be without vegetation and



Soon the various organis-

certainly without Mutton Birds in as short a period as ten years, the planting of trees commenced. Each two children were given a bucket containing about 20 trees and a small bag of fertilizer. A man was assigned to each group of 10 children and they all set to willingly.

By three o'clock when the children left, approximately 1800 trees had been planted for the day. Surely a significant contribution to the reclamation of the area, and lesson to all, that much can be achieved if only everyone will co-operate. Now, if visitors and locals alike will assist, by seeing that the young trees are not damaged or disturbed in any way, this area will be preserved for future generations.

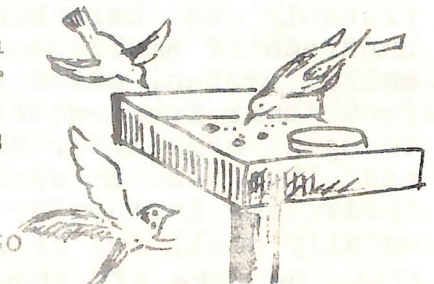


Our Bird Feeder

A few months ago I made a bird feeder and put it in the back yard. We've been feeding the birds on seed and bread and honey, but birds did not come around for about four days. The birds that feed there are mostly miners, sparrows, starlings, wattle birds and sometimes doves.

I saw a blue wren the other day and Mum saw one or two honey eaters pecking at the bread and honey. When the miners are on the feeder they won't let the other birds come and feed, but when the wattle birds want to eat the miners get away as fast as they can.

David Cox. G.5. Ringwood East



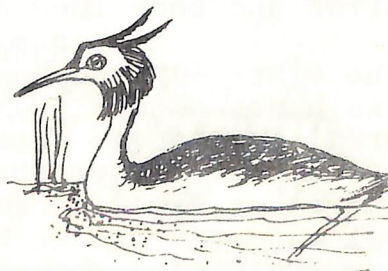
THIS'nTHAT

I wonder how many know which of our birds is featured on the cap badges of the Royal Australian Air Force. For over 40 years, since its inception in the early 1920's, this bird remained somewhat of a mystery. Some Air Force officials called it an eagle, others an albatross, but close



examination showed it to be a parrot. Members of the other services even called it a sick pigeon. About 8 years ago it was decided that something should be done about it and finally a design was chosen. Appropriately the bird chosen was our Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*). Of all our birds none is more majestic than the lordly wedge-tail.

During winter most of us land lubbers spend very little, if any, time around our beaches. If we did we would probably see there hundreds upon hundreds of small sea birds called grebes, which come down from their fresh water haunts to spend a month or two on the sea. They seem to spend most of their time diving for food—usually small fry of various fish. On take off they seem to

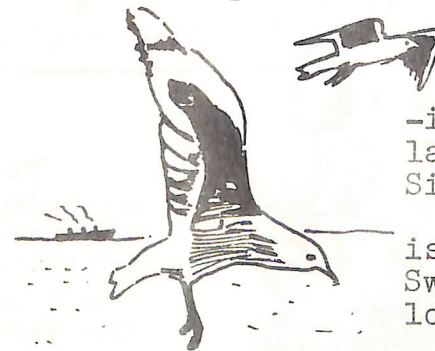


run frantically over the water before rapidly beating wings make them airborne.

Three species of grebe are found in Australia. See what you can discover about their peculiar mating dance and their raft-like nests. Did you know that the chicks ride pick-a-back on the parent birds back, even when diving? I guess that would be a first rate way to learn the art of food gathering.

While down around the beaches have you ever noticed shells which have a neatly countersunk hole right through the shell? These holes have been drilled by another shellfish—the carnivorous whelk.

As you know the shell of the bivalve shuts tight at the slightest sign of danger, but the whelk sets to work with a "rasping" drill on its "tongue" to drill a hole through the shell to the precise spot where it can reach the main nerve centre of the inmate. Once this happens the shell opens and the whelk enjoys his meal.



Some of us will have opportunities of visiting the sea or salt lakes. We usually recognise the Silver Gull and some others.

The white fronted tern, or as it is sometimes called the "Sea Swallow", is a dainty bird, looking immaculate in its plumage.

Look for it—perhaps you will be lucky enough to be able to sit and watch. Keep a record of the birds you see, and try to find out a little more about them, from the bird books in your school or local library.

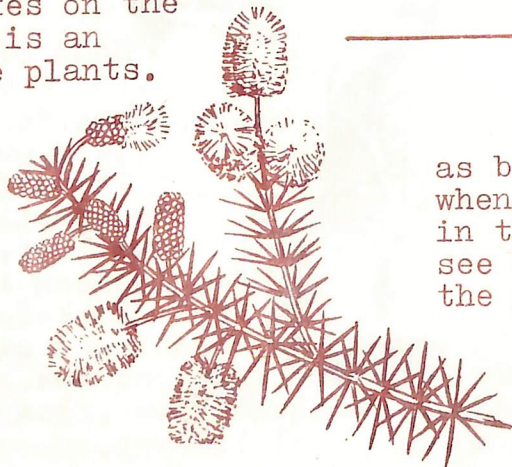
Wattles..... Things to watch for..... Wattles

There are about 20 species of wattle which we can find around Ringwood. If we include those recently planted by the council in the street it would be more than this.



Acacia myrtifolia

The name acacia means 'sharp points', and was given because many of the early species which came from Africa had thorns or spikes on the stems. The word 'wattle' is an Australian name for these plants.



Prickly Moses

Round Ringwood

WATTLES LIKELY TO BE FOUND AROUND THE RINGWOOD AREA

Feather leaf:

<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	.. Gootamundra W.
<i>dealbata</i>	.. Silver Wattle.
<i>mearnsii</i>	.. Black Wattle.
<i>decurrens</i>	.. Green Wattle.

With Phyllodes: (rod flowers)

<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	.. Sallow Wattle.
<i>mucronata</i>	.. Variable Sallow or Narrow-leaf Wattle.

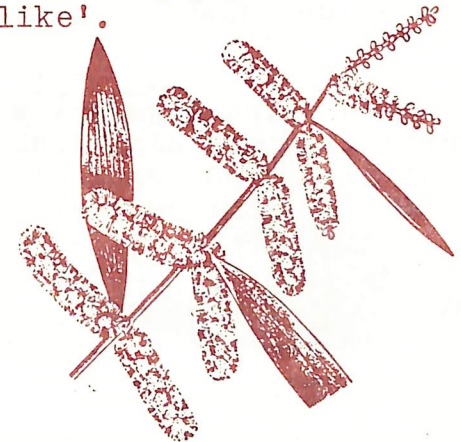
(ball flowers)

<i>Acacia armata</i>	.. Hedge wattle
<i>diffusa</i>	.. Spreading W.
<i>myrtifolia</i>	.. Myrtle-leaf W.

We usually think of wattle as being a spring flower, but when we look round we find that in the country it is possible to see blossoms in every month of the year.

The foliage of wattles varies considerably. Basically there are two types:

1. the feather or pinnate leaved species and
2. those having phyllodes - meaning 'leaf-like'.



The next two choices we have is in the shape of the flower:
1. those with rod flowers and
2. those with ball flowers.
Have a look at the wattles near you and see if you can spot these differences.

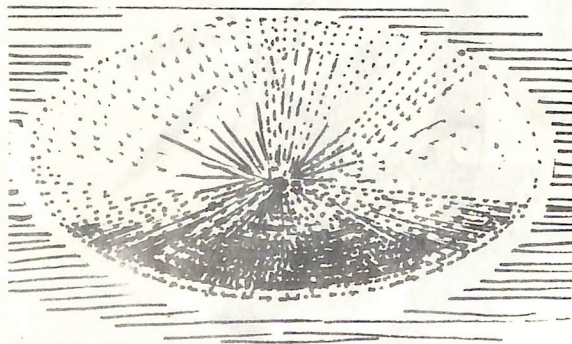


Silver Wattle
Acacia dealbata

ANT-LIONS:

SOME READERS' LETTERS

Ant Lions are also called 'Doodlebugs'. In their early life they usually live in dry, sandy places. Most of the 600 species build (or dig) funnel shaped holes in the sand. When an insect walks into the trap he slides down the sides and into the jaws of the waiting Ant Lion.



The Ant Lion, after catching the unfortunate, grabs his victim in his jaws (mandibles) and sucks the juice out of the victim. If the prey of the Ant Lion tries to escape by climbing the walls of the pit, he (or she) pulls sand out of place and slides

back down into the pit of the Ant Lion. The Ant Lion sometimes snaps its jaws at the sand causing sand to get thrown up at the escaping prey.

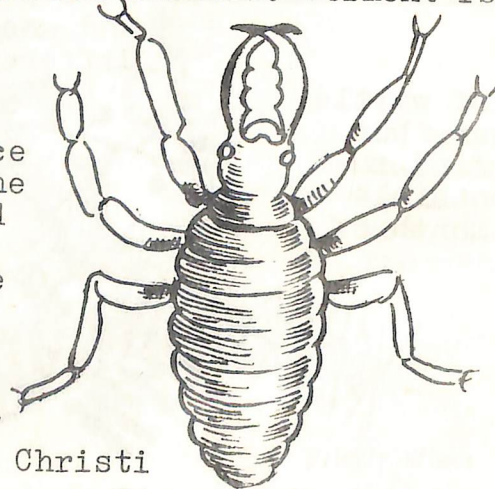
Michael Laidlow. Vermont P.S.

Extracts from other letters.

"The Ant Lion chooses a nice dry spot. It starts to dig the pit by moving round and round backwards, pushing back the sand behind it. Moving to the middle the Ant Lion forms a funnel shaped hole. This pit sometimes reaches two inches across and one or more inches deep."

Jeff Bye G.6 Corpus Christi

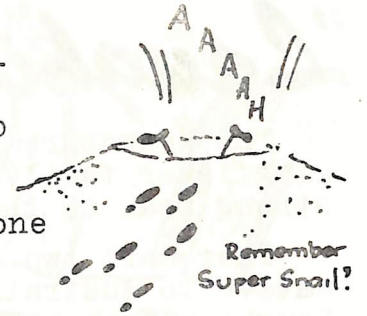
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Ringwood East P.S.

"Ants have a predator known as an ant-lion. The creature is no bigger than the ants it preys on but builds a very clever trap. This trap is shaped like a cone and dug in very fine dust or sand.

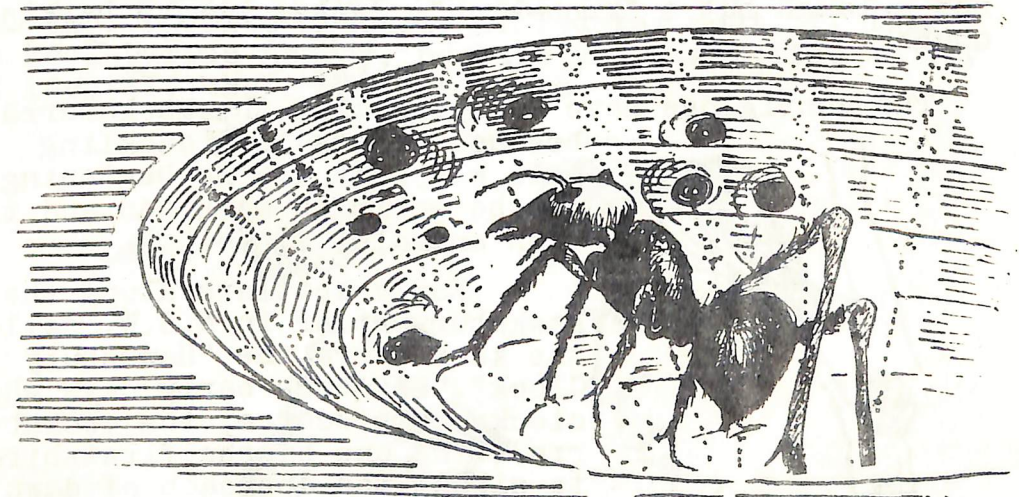
Any ant which falls into the cone cannot climb the steep sides and is quickly set on by the ant-lion."



Felicity Lawson 5B. Blackburn Lake P. S.

"The ant-lion digs a V shaped hole in the sand and waits for an ant to fall into his pit. (funnel shaped) When the ant falls into the pit it cannot get out because the ant offers no footing, so the ant cannot get out. The ant-lion then pulls his victim further into the pit and kills and eats it.

Grant Dinsmore, Research, Vic.



Thanks to all contributors to this interesting page. The winner of our competition is Michael Laidlow - well done Michael! A Periwinkle Book Prize will be forwarded to you shortly. Editor.

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"Laughing?" Kookas

The kookaburra is the largest member of the kingfisher family, and grows to a size of 16" from his strong beak to the tip of his tail.

There are two species of kookaburra native to Australia. The more common Laughing Kookaburra is found in Eastern Australia. This species has white feathers around the head, neck and body, with brown on the forehead, around the eyes and on the back. The long tail is white tipped with bars of black, while some pale blue feathers can be seen on the wings.



The Blue Winged Kookaburra is found in the northern half of Australia. Living up to its name, it has silvery blue wings and the male a dark blue tail. Their most distinctive feature is their call, which is not a laugh but a "krok-krok", rather like a barking cough.

The aborigines have a legend that the kookaburra, because of its loud cackling call, was sent at the beginning of the world to wake man and the bush animals.



Early settlers along the Hawksbury river in N.S.W. called the kookaburra the "Hawksbury Clock". In those early days when clocks were scarce, the kookaburra being one of the first birds to signal the approach of dawn, was useful to the settlers as an "alarm clock".

The Laughing Kookaburra sounds its high cackling call

Ringwood East P.S.

similar to rollicking laughter, usually at dawn and dusk. However, in 1963 - 1966 an American biologist, Veronica Parry discovered variations in the calls and their meanings. She listed them as follows:

laugh song - the kookaburra advertising its territory;

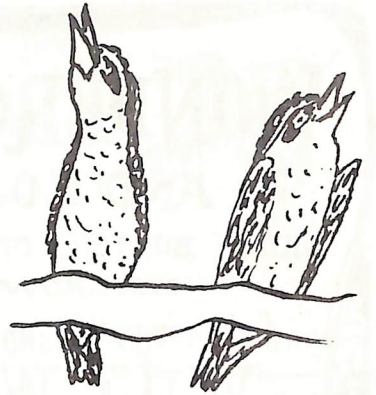
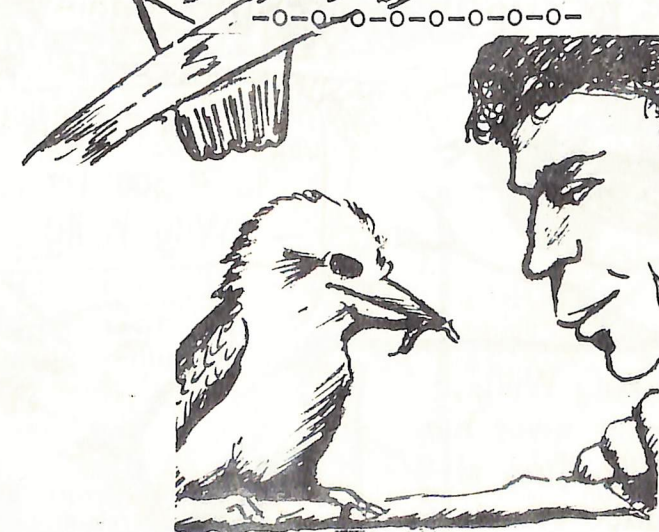
chuckle (commonest call) - used to contact other members of its own family: "Where are you?"

squawk - made by the young when begging for food and by adults during the breeding season to show they are not hostile;

cackle - the kookaburra's war-cry - he is ready to attack; and

kooaa - the call used as a warning signal to other members of the family group.

Have you seen a kookaburra near your home? They will become quite friendly if fed raw meat. If there are kookaburras nearby, perhaps you might like to try and identify their various calls.



WONDEROO AND CO.

CRIME BUSTERS OF THE
UNDERGROWTH
featuring this month...

WILY WILLY

ARTIST : Mrs. A. Dunstan
TEXT : H. J. Lawry

Mrs Robin rushes to
Wonderoo and tells
him all about it...

EEEEKK!
They're gone!
My babies are
gone!!

MR + MRS
ROBIN
RED BREAST

There's no hope for my babies
now Wonderoo, but I hope you will
be able to stop it happening again

Hmm... This is
a job for
Wily Willy

Summoning Wily Willy,
Wonderoo quickly gives him
the facts, Wily flies off
to investigate

not long afterwards...

What's that
Kookaburra up
to I wonder?

Wily Willy follows close behind

... and sees a dreadful sight!!!

HELP!

HELP!

Drop that baby!
you
Nest Robber
YOU!

AWK!
Lay off
Wily Willy
Lay off!!

Don't you show your beak
around here again - you
monster! Take that
and that!

Ha ha ha!
Well done
Wily Willy

My Hero

Sigh...

Sadly, our friendly
old kookaburra does
sometimes rob the nests
of small birds. Sounds
cruel doesn't it? How-
ever that is the way of
nature sometimes.

..... Editor.

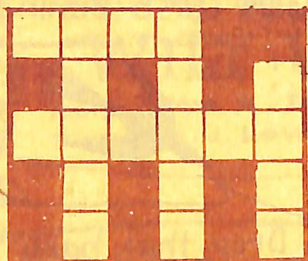
PUZZLES

by "JAMES"

ANSWERS ③
 6 LADYBIRD 7 PAPERWASP
 4 WOODGRUB 5 SAWFLY
 2 SILKWORM 3 CUPMOTH

②
 A centipede with his legs in the air!

① CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Large black bird.
5. Place where birds are kept.
6. Places where eggs are laid.

DOWN

2. Sometimes called a crow.
3. A spider its prey in silk.
4. Birds have sharp ones.

ANSWERS BELOW



②

What is long and brown and may lie a hundred feet up in the air?



③

See if you can add to these every day words to make the name of an insect (eg BUTTER + fly = butterfly)

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. BUTTER . . . | 5. SAW . . . |
| 2. SILK | 6. LADY |
| 3. CUP | 7. PAPER |
| 4. WOOD | (Answers in top right-hand corner) |

WHAT IS THIS LITTLE CREATURE CALLED?



(Feather-toiled glider)