nature notes

vol.12.no.9. RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE

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nature notes & PROBE

It would be a great help to us if you could order your next year's Nature Notes and Probe NOW - even if you're not exactly sure how many you want. Don't bother paying yet - we'll send a bill in March 1976. Subscriptions are the SAME as this year, except that there will be 10 Probes. Postage rates have gone up slightly. (See below.)

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PROBE 30c
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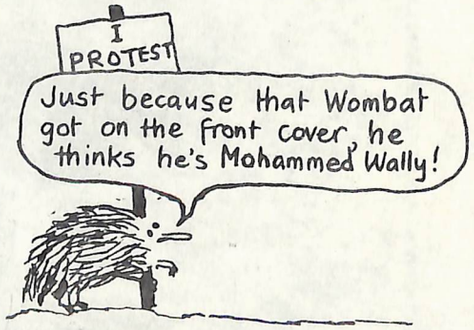


Sorry Ernie Echidna, but we can't find one good black and white photo of an Echidna — can any of our Readers help us out? Editor.

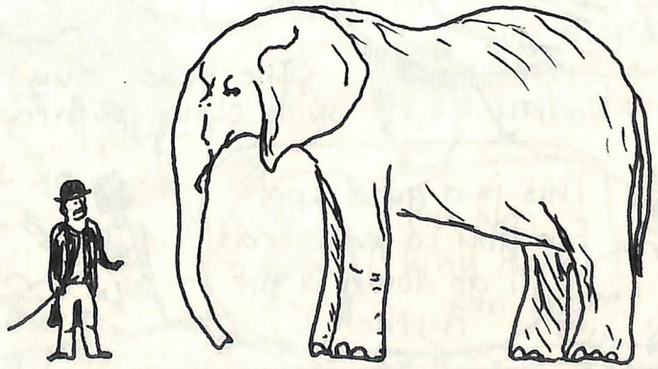
P.S. Last PROBE for this year will be out in December!

ORDER FORM FOR 1976 & DEPOT SCHOOLS INSIDE BACK COVER.

Famous Animals, no. 8. JUMBO - The Biggest!

Jumbo was the most famous elephant of all time. He arrived at the London Zoo in 1865 and was the first African elephant to appear there. By 1880, he had grown to the huge height of 11½ feet and weighed 6½ tons, (change that into metrics!) and was immensely popular with visitors - particularly the children. Elephants at this age are known to "do their block", and Jumbo smashed his tusks by charging the iron bars around his cage. The zoo thought he might become more dangerous as he grew older, so they sold him to Barnums - the American circus. Protests from all over England came flooding into the zoo and even Jumbo himself didn't seem to want to go - he refused to move into the crate built to carry him for 6 weeks! Eventually he did go and immediately became a huge success in America. Sadly, Jumbo stopped one night whilst being led by his keeper over a railway track, and was killed by a train. He was mourned by millions in England and the U.S.A. Of course, "Jumbo" is now used to describe anything of a huge size.

Jumbo and Trainer.



WONDEROO

– visits the Golden Gully Junior Prospectors Club near Bendigo. Fred and Tess are members of the gold panning club. Mr. Smith is the teacher and leader, Joe is the elected junior leader

What are you doing Joe?

I'm making a gold nugget out of welding rod to trick Fred!

Hee Hee! just wait till Fred finds this in his dish!

I dont like this

GOLD!

In the early days gold prospectors used to wash gravel from streams in tin pans. After carefully washing the gravel, the heavier pieces of gold were left in the bottom of the dish.

Next day...

The brass "nugget" covered with clay planted by Joe

This is a good spot for you to pan Fred. I'll go down a bit further...

OK JOE!

THE ANSWERS TO THE PUZZLES ARE NOT HIDDEN. HERE THIS MONTH – SO THERE!

WOW!

Look at that Nugget! I'm Rich! I'm Rich!

Soon after Fred discovers the "gold", Wonderoo hops over and looks closely at the "nugget" and frowns...

Hmmm.

A quick examination soon shows Wonderoo the nugget is a fake, so he quickly exchanges it for a real nugget he found some time before...

Just as we thought!!

That serves you right Joe!

Mr. Smith Mr. Smith!! I've found a gold nugget!

gold! gold! gold!

Tee Hee! Now we'll get a laugh.

We'll see about that!

You're right Fred it is pure gold! Come on boys have a look!

GLOOM!

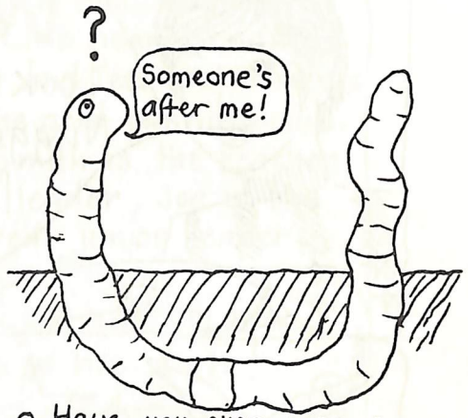
Oh No! Why didnt I pan there!

Hee hee

PRIZE LETTERS..

Worms eat soil as they burrow through it. In the soil are tiny bits of old plants. The worms digest these. The rest of the soil passes out of the worm's body. A worm is a leg-less rod-like creature. It spends most of the day in a burrow near the surface of the earth. It lays eggs which are covered with a hard cocoon and hatch out in a few weeks. Earth worms breathe through their skins and must therefore keep damp. They line their burrows with leaves for warmth.

Rebecca Askew, Grade 4.
Ringwood East P.S.



Q. Have you ever seen a worm's eye?

HAIKU

Bumble bees can sting.
Busy bees give us honey.
Busy bumble bees.

Rodney Maclean.

THE BEE: A bee is an insect with a slender waist, four wings, two small feelers and a painful sting. Many of these insects live in large nests so they are called "social insects". There is a queen that lays the eggs. She is cared for by the workers. They bring food and enlarge the nest for more new babies.

continued....

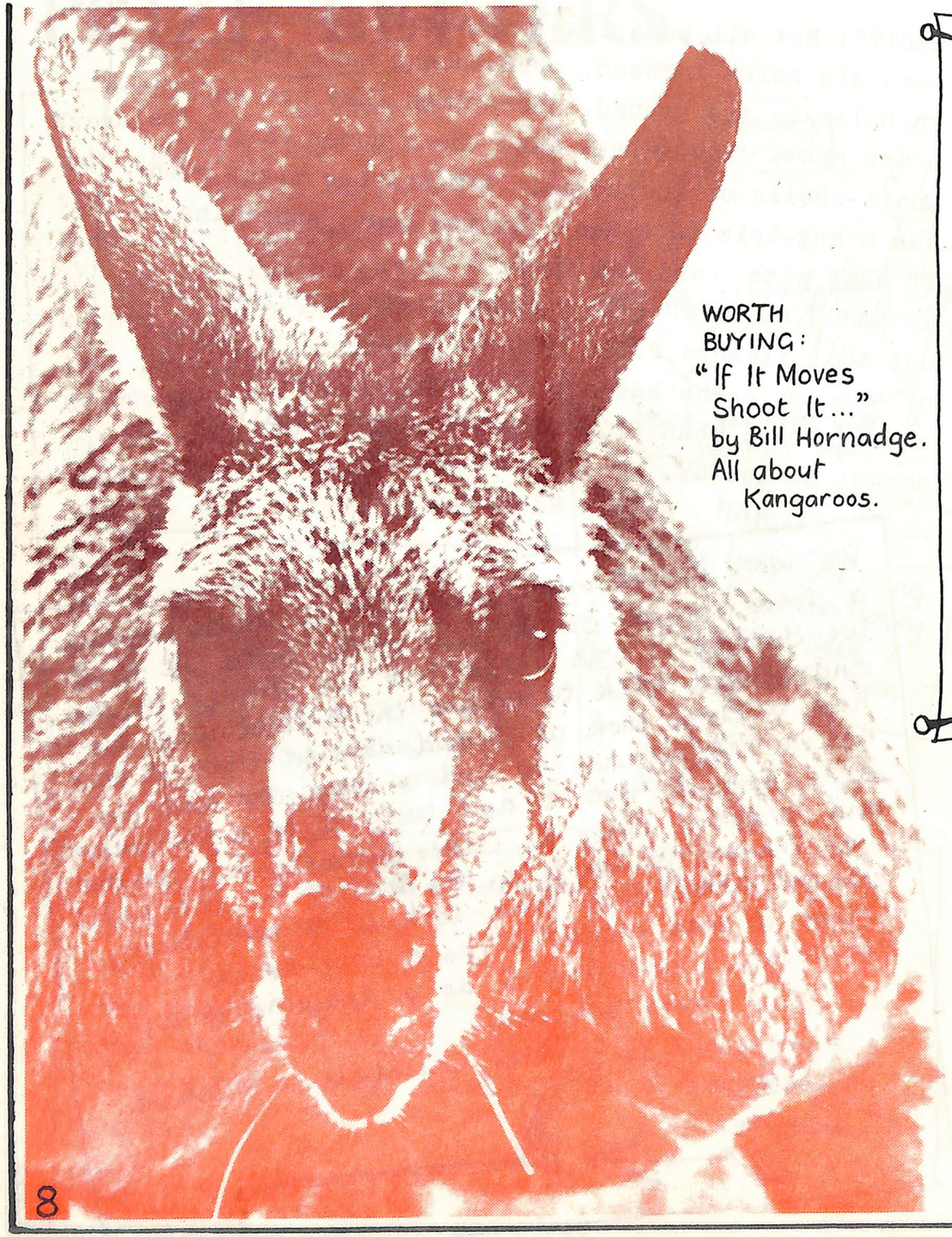
HABITS: Not all bees live in hives. Carpenter bees dig holes in wood. Bumblebees make their homes in holes in the ground. Sometimes they use an old mouse nest. Mason bees make their homes in old snail-shells or knotholes. A mason bee might even use a key-hole in a door for its home, cementing it shut with sand and clay.

RESEARCH AND STUDY: Many naturalists have pointed out that flowers offer nectar at particular times of the day. The bee's time sense can adapt to the short period when flowers provide the greatest amount of nectar.

Robert Robertson, Grade 5.

We were almost into Lakes Entrance when we saw a dead animal on the side of the road. At first we thought it was a rat, but we stopped the car and backed back to where the animal was. We had a close look at it and decided that it was not a rat because it had a long nose and big ears. So we got it and took it to a Fisheries and Wildlife Office in Lakes Entrance but no-one was there. We left it in the boot of the car until we got home, and Mum took it to her College, where it was identified as a long-nosed bandicoot. I will try to do a drawing of it,

Yours sincerely,
Peter Campbell. Mitcham.



WORTH BUYING:
"If It Moves Shoot It..."
by Bill Hornadge.
All about Kangaroos.

THE WONDERFUL

KANGUROO,

FROM

BOTANY BAY,

(The only One ever brought alive to Europe)

Removed from the HAY-MARKET, and now exhibited at the LYCEUM, in the STRAND, from 8 o'Clock in the Morning, till 8 in the Evening.

THIS amazing, beautiful, and tame Animal, is about five Feet in Height, of a Fawn Colour, and diſtinguiſhes itſelf in Shape, Make, and true Symmetry of Parts, *different from all other* QUADRUPEDS. Its Swiftneſs, when purſued, is ſuperior to the Greyhound: to enumerate its extraordinary Qualities would far exceed the common Limits of a Public Notice. Let it ſuffice to obſerve, that the Public in general are pleaſed, and beſtow their Plaudits; the Ingenious are delighted; the Virtuoſo, and Connoiſſeur, are taught to admire! impreſſing the Beholder with Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, at the Sight of this unparalleled Animal from the Southern Hemiſphere, that almoſt ſurpaſſes Belief; therefore Ocular Demonſtration will exceed all that Words can deſcribe, or Pencil delineate.....Admittance, ONE SHILLING each.

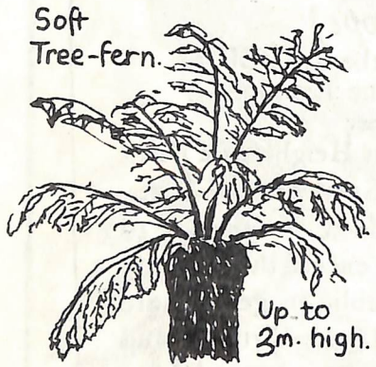
Can you work out what the poster above is saying? (Clue: ſ = s !) It was a poster displayed in London around 1790, and the admission charge of 1 shilling was worth quite a lot in those days. (It probably would have been enough to buy about 10 lunches!) Notice the funny spelling of Kangaroo. Other ways of spelling it were: kangaru or kanguru (by Captain Cook), kangooroos (by Collins), kangaros (by Cunningham the explorer) and kongouru (by the artist George Stubbs). Kangaroo, the way we spell it now, is the way that Joseph Banks spelt it.

LET'S LOOK AT VICTORIAN FERNS.

By F.J.C.Rogers.

(See also N.N. Vol.12,no.7,p.10&11.)

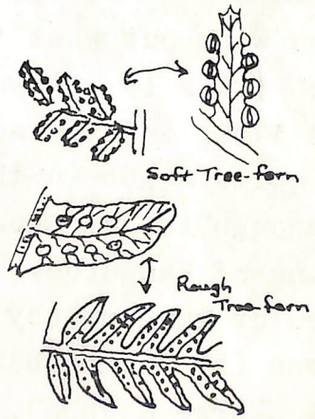
Ferns are plants which reproduce by means of spores. The size, shape and position of these help to separate species. In Victoria there are about 70 kinds of ferns.



Some ferns are easy to recognize because of the large trunk they grow. We call these tree-ferns. There are 3 kinds which have large trunks and are widespread. These are the Soft Tree-fern, Rough Tree-fern and King-fern.

If we look at the back of the leaves during autumn and winter we should see the spores developing. In King-ferns these cover most of the back of the leaf, while on the tree-ferns the spores form a series of small dots.

If we feel the base of a tree-fern frond, we find the Soft Tree-fern is smooth while the Rough Tree-fern is rough.

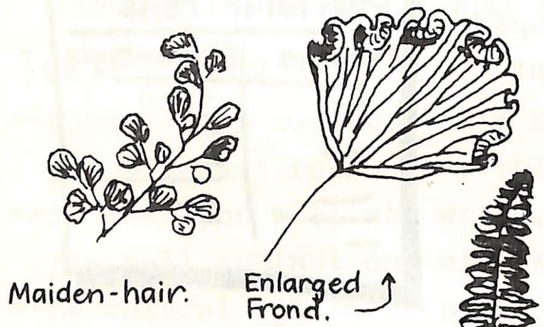


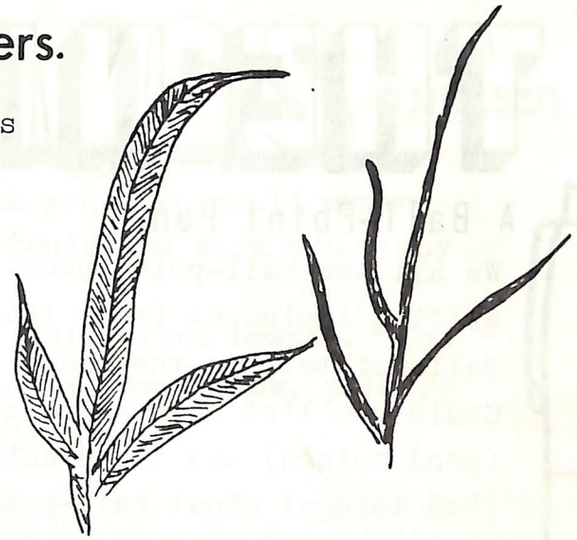
Bracken fern is the only fern not protected by law. It is very widespread and at times can be a nuisance on farms.

Some of the other ferns have a special frond on which the spores are produced.

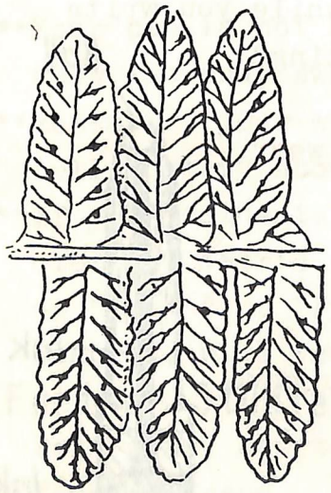
These include the water-ferns which may be seen in forests not far from a stream.

Maiden-hair ferns are plants of shaded places. The leaf has no midrib and the veins radiate from the stalk.

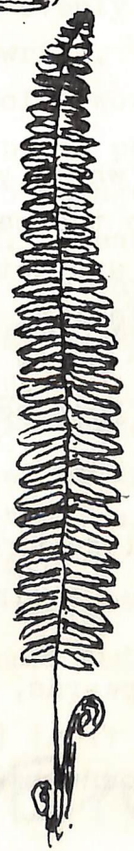




Water fern (Blechnum sp) fronds.



(close up)



Fishbone Fern.

The Filmy ferns are the fairies of the fern world. Their perfectly formed fronds are only a few inches long and some of their fronds are only one cell thick. They often grow on tree-fern trunks.

The three ferns we are likely to see in school pot plants or in fern baskets are:

Fishbone Fern
(Nephrolepis cordifolia).
Mother Shield-fern
(Polystichum proliferum)
Mother Spleenwort
(Asplenium bulbiferum)

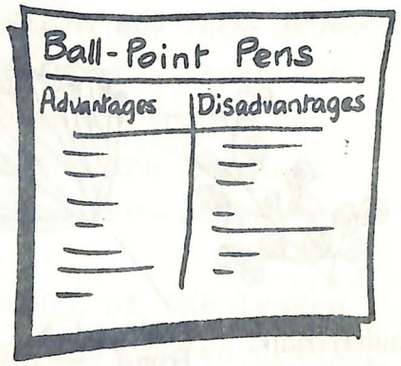
* Gippsland is great fern country! Try Bulga and Tarra Valley National Parks.

THE NATURE OF THINGS

by G.Nielsen.

A Ball-Point Pen.

We all use ball-point pens. They are our most popular writing implement (more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of all pens sold are ball-points), so they must have some special advantages. Could you list some advantages (good things) and disadvantages (bad things) about ball-point pens?



How Does A Ball-Point Work?

Does the ball roll around while you write?
Why does the ball roll around while you write yet not leak out when you are not writing?
What stops the ball from falling out?
Oil protects moving engine parts from wear.
What protects the ball of your pen?

Let's Test A Pen.

* Write on a mirror slowly.
* Describe what you see the ball doing?
* Examine with a magnifying glass a line you have drawn. Describe what you see.
* Write with the pen pointing upwards, with it straight out in front (horizontal)
* Does it need to be pointing downwards to work at its best?
* How long a line do you think your pen would write before it ran out of ink? Could you work out a way of testing this?
* Perhaps you could test three different brands. You could take into account comfort, even flow, price, amount of ink.....what else?

Taking Care.

**Hard, rough surfaces chip and damage the ball so that the ink will not roll out evenly.

**If your pen will not write, try to start it by rolling its ball against one of a working pen.

**Be careful not to drop the pen or leave the top off - as this allows grit to damage the ball.

**Your pen is not a toy. Please don't pull it to bits, chew the end, swallow the cap or pull the ink tube out.

**Remember, your writing and neatness tell a story about you.

**If you accidentally get ink on your clothes, fabric cleaner or spray cans of "Preen" or "Friend", if used before washing, will remove it.

Further Studies.

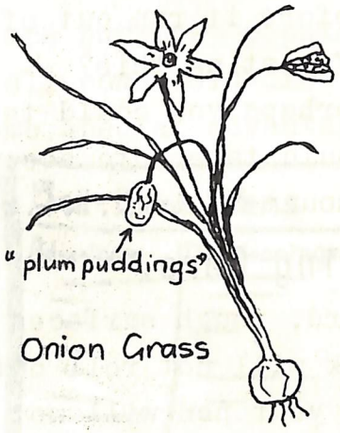
Felt pens, sports ground line-markers, engravers & fountain pens.

The End

Dear Ass. Ed.

? 'QUERIES' ?

Justin Higgs from Camden in N.S.W. sent in a plant to be identified. He wrote :" I have seen this plant very often and although it covers some areas it is not as common as grass. It lives in groups of three and I often wonder what the name is ?"

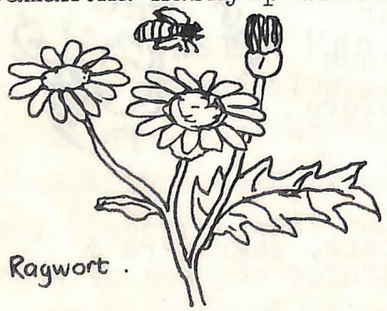


Onion Grass

Justin's plant is ONION GRASS which was introduced into Australia from Africa. Onion grass can be recognised by its reddish flowers and the two grooves on each side of the leaves. White cockatoos love to dig up onion grass and eat the corm or bulb. Because there are now less white cockatoos around, this introduced pest is spreading fast.

Can you find out the difference between onion grass and onion weed ?

Samantha Kashyap wrote :" Why do plants have flowers ?"


Ragwort.

The flower is the part of the plant which the seed comes from, which will grow into a new plant. Before seeds can be formed the flower has to be brushed with pollen from another flower. Birds and insects carry pollen on their bodies from flower to flower. Some ,however, are pollinated by the wind. Why?

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Order Form for 1976.

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RINGWOOD EAST,
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I would like to place a tentative/firm order for 1976 for [ ] Nature Notes and [ ] Probes.

* I will collect them from _____ depot.

* I will pay postage.

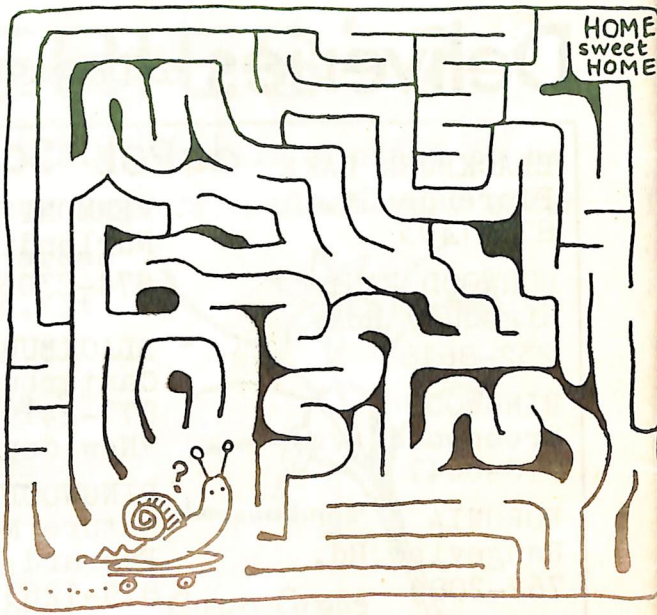
* Strike out that which is not applicable.

Tentative orders may be confirmed or altered early next year. No money required until accounts are sent out.

PUZZLES

Coded Fern Names
(See p.10&11.)
CLUE: A=1, B=2, etc.

2	18	1	3	11	5	14								
							11	9	14	7	6	5	18	4
6	9	12	13	25	6	5	18	14						



another
mystery message!
The numbers tell you where to put each letter in the square.....

Poor old James Snail went out skate-boarding and got lost. Can you help him get home?

Game played with small bat and tennis ball = _ _ U _ _ _ _ _
34 39 25 3 9

Difficult to solve. _ _ _ _ L _ M
33 2 26 36 15

Large horned animals used for pulling ploughs = _ _ _ _
35 12 31

365¼ days = 1 _ _ _ _
6 24 30 17

A small rock = _ _ _ _ _
29 27 1 19 4

A spider spins a _ _ _
40 11

Abominable snowman = _ _ _ _
(see last Nature Notes) 14 37 21 41

Biggest (not longest) word on page 12 = _ _ _ _ _ _
10 16 13 8 5 28

Large, prehistoric animal = _ _ _ _ _ _ _
32 38 7 18 20 22 23

1	2	3	4	5		6
7	8	9		10	11	12
13		14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31	32		33	34	35
36	37		38	39	40	41

GET THE MESSAGE?