NATURE NOTES

WINTER 1976

Mt. Bogong

Nature Notes VOL 13 NO 5

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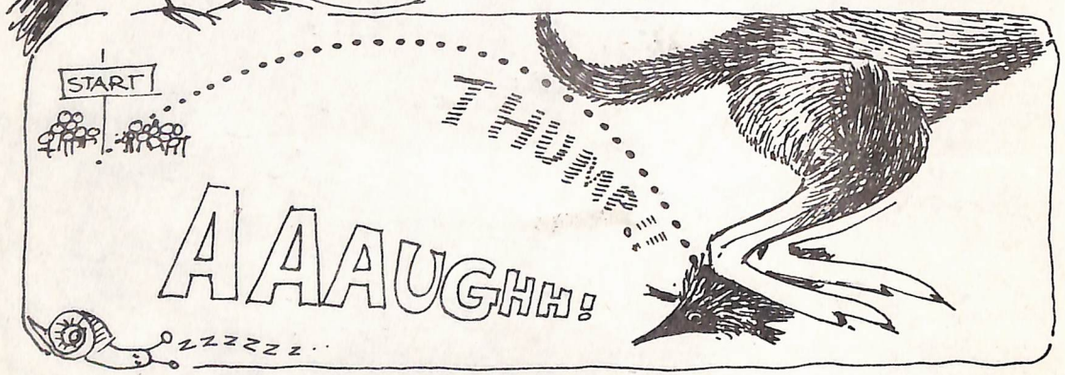
AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR ANIMAL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

OLYMPIC TRIALS (&ERRORS!)

Hi Folks! C.C. Crow here at the time trials to choose Australia's team for the Animal Olympic Games... over to the track for some results...*

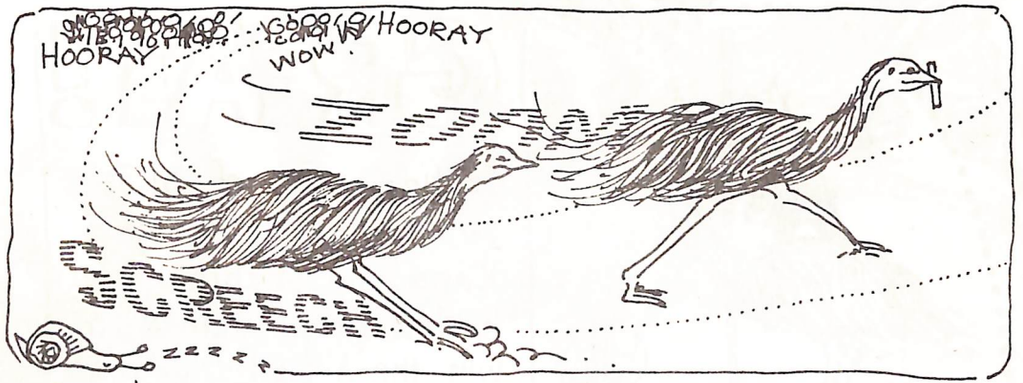


Fantastic Folks! A long jump measuring 13 metres!

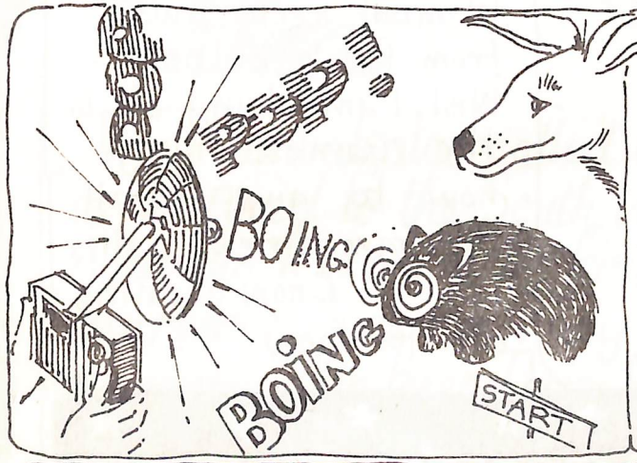
It looks like every one is in the Tug-o-War!

*All measurements given are accurate indications of the abilities of the various animals involved.

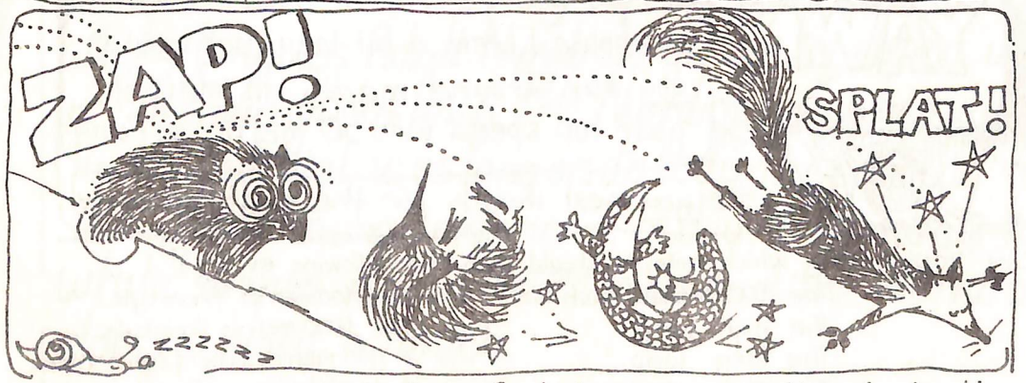
Across: 3. toad; 4. chameleon; 5. turtle; 8. viper; 9. lizard; 10. cobra; 11. snake.



WOW! what a great baton change by the Emus!

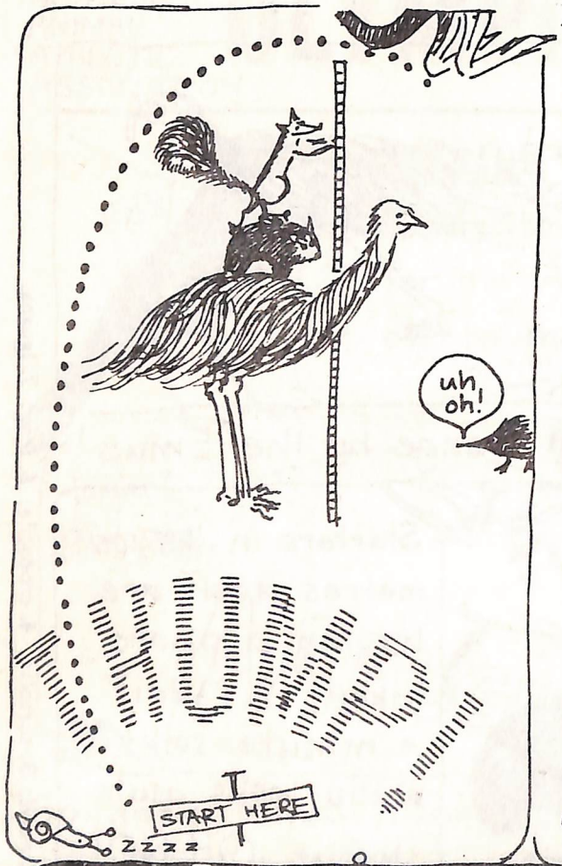


Starters in the 100 metres dash are having a photo taken ... Wait a minute folks! Wally looks quite strange.. OH NO!



Wally has caught his foot in a hurdle hole!!

Down: 1. rattle; 2. newt; 3. tortoise; 4. crocodile; 6. frog; 7. iguana.



GREAT!

a High jump of 315 centimetres by our Red Kangaroo. I think we have a great chance to win the Animal-Olympics. Especially if Wally Wombat keeps away from flash bulbs !!! Well, I am flying off to the Games Village now to give you all the Games news .. this is C.C. Crow signing off for now!

I suppose I seem a bit lazy, but would you run around madly all day if your top speed was 50 metres an hour?

... see you next month for the exciting results!

CAN YOU predict which animals should win the following events?

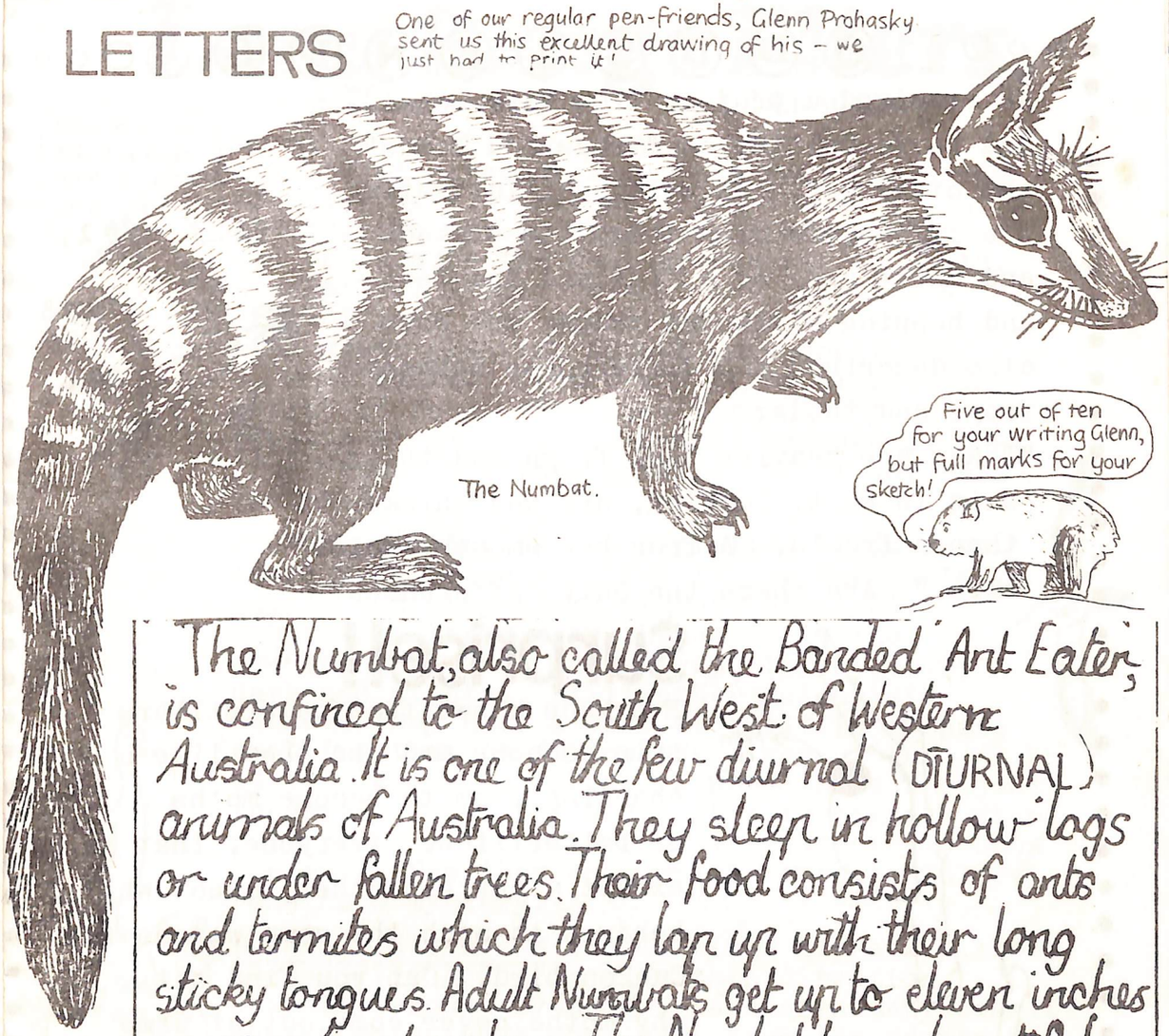
The 100 metre dash.
The high jump.
The long jump.
The 1500 metres.
The marathon.
The 100metres freestyle.
The 1500 metres Freestyle.
A 100 metres free-flying race.
A 100 kilometres flying race.

* Discuss your answers with your grade.

IF you think you're going to find the answers to the puzzles here, then bad luck — you're wrong!

LETTERS

One of our regular pen-friends, Glenn Prohasky sent us this excellent drawing of his – we just had to print it!



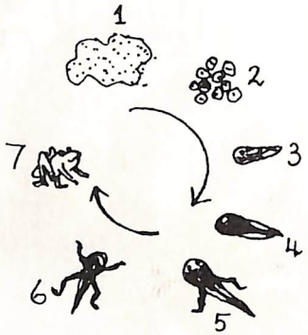
The Numbat.

The Numbat, also called the Banded Ant Eater, is confined to the South West of Western Australia. It is one of the few diurnal (DIURNAL) animals of Australia. They sleep in hollow logs or under fallen trees. Their food consists of ants and termites which they lap up with their long sticky tongues. Adult Numbats get up to eleven inches or 28 centimetres long. The Numbat has a beautiful furry tail that is as long as its body. The coloring of the fur is tawny with some red in it. Numbats have white stripes down their back and the Numbat doesn't have a pouch.

Glenn Prohasky.

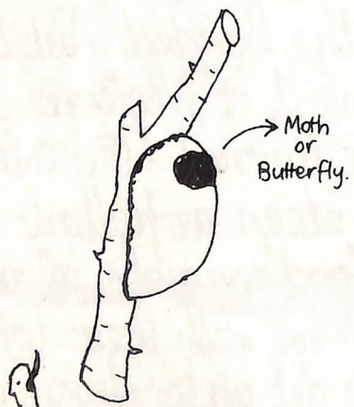
ODDS & ENDS

We received a project from Mark Donaldson and David Collins on "Frogs and Toads" the other day. As well as illustrating the life-cycle of a frog, the stomach and chest area of a frog and the feet and hopping styles of frogs, the boys also described the differences between frogs and toads:

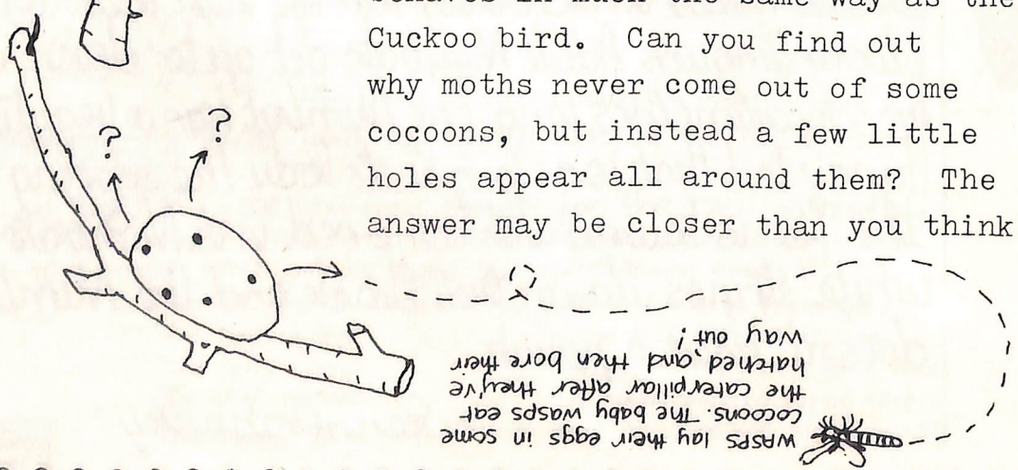


"Toads are heavier than frogs and their skin is warty-looking, dry and thicker than a frog's. A frog has smooth, moist skin." Are these the only differences?

Surprise!!



Everyone knows that caterpillars spin cocoons and use them like a changing room to become moths or butterflies. Everyone, that is, except a certain other insect who behaves in much the same way as the Cuckoo bird. Can you find out why moths never come out of some cocoons, but instead a few little holes appear all around them? The answer may be closer than you think!



Long Range Fliers.

By L DELACCA.

We all know that many species of birds migrate to other areas - some many thousands of miles away. What we are not sure of is why they do this. Some scientists say it may be because the weather becomes too cold. Others feel it may be that the bird has a sort of left over memory of the Ice Age when great glaciers forced many creatures to move south. Others say birds migrate in search of food. But some birds don't migrate at all. So we cannot be sure of the true reason and this remains one of Nature's mysteries.

Another mystery is how migrating birds find their way. Some say they follow the sun's rays - but many birds migrate at night. Others say theyfly by the stars in the evening sky - but many birds fly on cloudy days and nights. Still other scientists believe they have a sort of built in compass enabling them to follow the lines of the earth's magnetic force. All of these are just theories. Some birds are able to migrate when very young with neither of the parents to show the way. How they know which route to follow remains a mystery.

DOWNHILL MIGRATION : Some birds migrate without necessarily going in a certain direction. Recently around my home I have seen many Scarlet Robins which have come down from the mountains for winter. This downhill migration allows the birds to find food until the spring when they return to the high country. Currawongs do a similar thing.

TRANS-OCEAN MIGRATION : Many birds cross oceans in their migratory flights. This sometimes takes weeks and often is achieved by the birds feeding and resting during the day and flying by night. Let us take a closer look at some of these long distance travellers.

(CONTINUED OVER PAGE)

Long Range Travellers

RUSSIA
ARCTIC
GREEN LAND
ALASKA
CANADA
SCANDINAVIA
CHINA
JAPAN
U.K.
EUROPE
AFRICA
SOUTH AMERICA
AUSTRALIA
BASS STRAIT
ANTARCTICA

Close to home we have the tremendous flight of the Short-tailed Shearwater (or Muttonbird.) From the third week in September look for him on Phillip Island or on any of the many islands in Bass Strait. (Eg. Muttonbird Is. near Port Campbell). These birds make burrows in the sand, breed there and by the end of October a single egg has been produced by each pair. These hatch in January and the young grow rapidly. In mid-April the old birds leave for the north to be followed by the youngsters a fortnight later. Their route takes them on a 24,000 km figure of eight around the Pacific.

The champion traveller of all is the Arctic Tern. A graceful white bird with a black cap, it nests in the Arctic north. After about two months when its young can fly it takes them on a fantastic journey. From the Arctic, across the Atlantic to Africa, down the coast then back across the Atlantic to South America and on to Antarctica. Here they spend a few weeks of winter then it's off north to the Arctic again. Because they spend their summers in both the Arctic and Antarctic they see more daylight than any other creature.

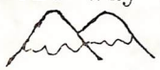
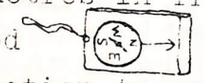
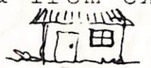
Their two homes are 17,700 kms apart and they travel zig-zag 40,225 kms each year to reach them!

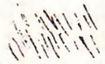
Perhaps you can fill in the migratory routes of some more birds on this map. Look up birds like the Petrel, Shearwater, White Stork, Curlew and Swans.

One of the best known Ocean birds is the Wandering Albatross - a bird that doesn't migrate north/south but just keeps circling the Globe several times a year - about 30,000 km each time!

SURVIVING IN SNOW

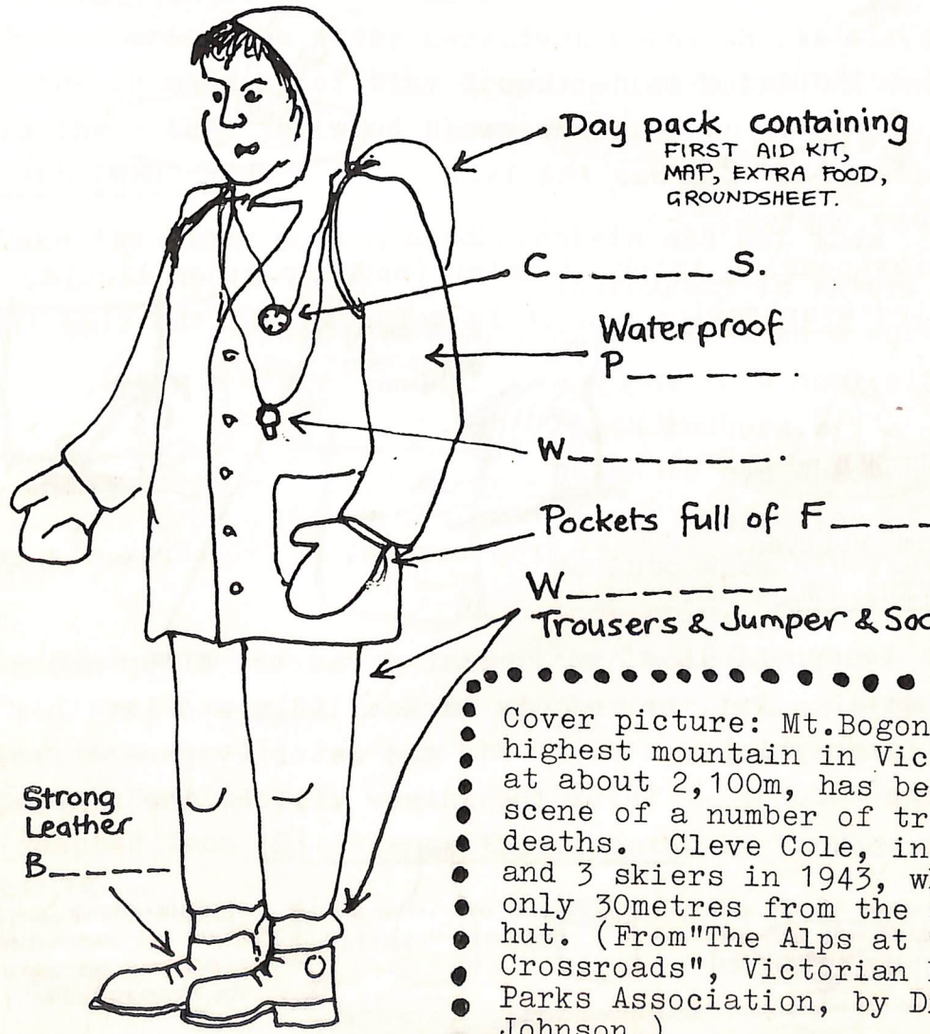
(A PICTURE PUZZLE – fill in the right word for each picture!)

At this time every year we hear reports of people losing their way in the bush - and often in areas above the  . Many of us don't realise how easy it is to get lost, but just imagine yourself in a snow storm or a thick fog and unable to  more that two metres in front of your  ! Unless you have a good  there is no way of knowing which direction to go. People have walked in circles and eventually died from exposure (hypothermia) only metres away from a  because they could not see which way to go and did not have a compasss.

Others go out in snow or cold weather without proper clothing on. Jeans, T-shirts and Gym boots are NO USE when you get caught in the rain or snow.  and cold winds go straight through them. Woollen clothing (because it stays warm even when wet), a waterproof parka and leather  are ESSENTIAL if you want to survive in the snow - or do any sort of bushwalking at all.

It is also important to carry some energy-giving food with you - even if you don't expect to be out for a meal. Small pocket-sized packs of barley-sugar, chocolate, health-bars, peanuts, raisins are useful. If you are going on a day walk then it is worth taking a small day-pack with you, including food (although each person should carry a bit), waterproof clothes,  .  kit and  .

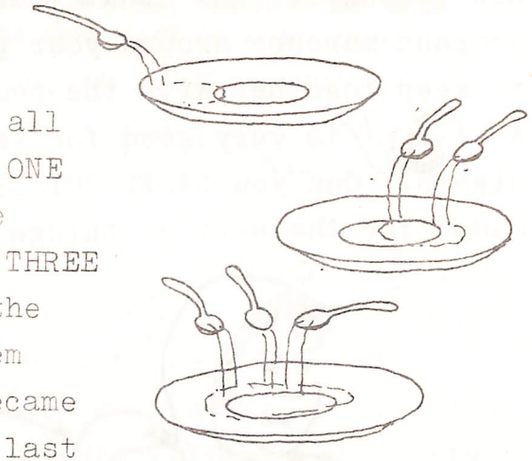
As well as taking all the right gear and knowing how to use it (how about your grade practice doing compass marches around your playground?), it is important to keep together with the people in your family or group. A  is very good for this on foggy days or dark nights. Can you LABEL THIS PICTURE with the correct names for the sort of things you need in the bush?



Cover picture: Mt.Bogong, the highest mountain in Victoria at about 2,100m, has been the scene of a number of tragic deaths. Cleve Cole, in 1936, and 3 skiers in 1943, who died only 30metres from the summit hut. (From"The Alps at the Crossroads", Victorian National Parks Association, by Dick Johnson.)

SOME EXPERIMENTS WITH Water

by H.J.Lawry.



EXPERIMENT ONE :

Find three saucers that are all the same. In the first put ONE teaspoonful of water, in the second TWO and in the third THREE teaspoonfuls. Put them on the window-ledge and examine them every hour. Which saucer became empty first? Which was the last to become empty?

This disappearing trick of water (and any other liquid, is called evaporation and it is going on all the time in nature:

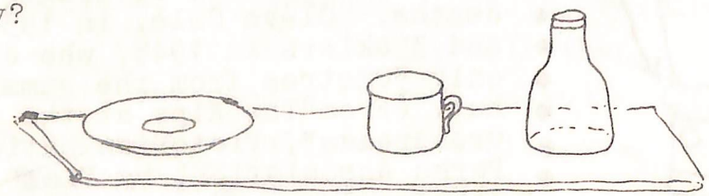
From puddles.

From rivers.

From the sea.

EXPERIMENT TWO :

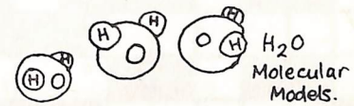
Put two teaspoonfuls of water into a saucer, a cup and a clear bottle. Put them on the window ledge and let them stand. From which container did the water evaporate first? Which one second? I think the saucer will be the winner. Why?



ANSWER: Because the more air that touches the water, the quicker it evaporates.

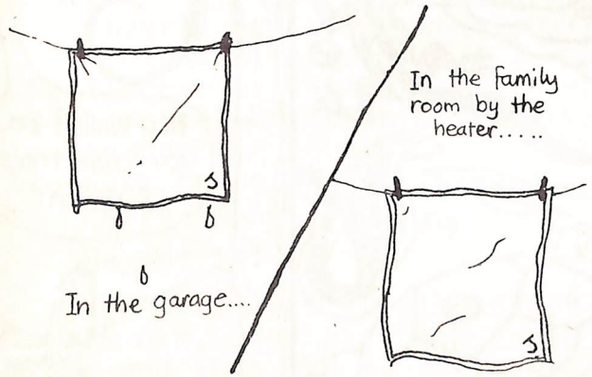
EXPERIMENT THREE :

Draw two squares on a blackboard and wet both of them lightly with a damp cloth. Fan one of them, but not the other. Which dries first? Wind carries the water away faster than still air does. Water is made up of tiny drops called MOLECULES and it is these that the wind blows away.



EXPERIMENT FOUR :

Take two clean cotton handkerchiefs and wet them thoroughly in water. Hang one of them in a warm place and one in a cool place. (Both indoors.) Watch to see which one dries first. Molecules of water go into warm air faster than into cold. This is because warm air moves faster than cold air.



Next month we will look at another experiment with water and then we will see how the five experiments tell us something about our weather.

(Adapted from 101 Science Experiments, by I. Podendorf.)

ALSO, TRY....

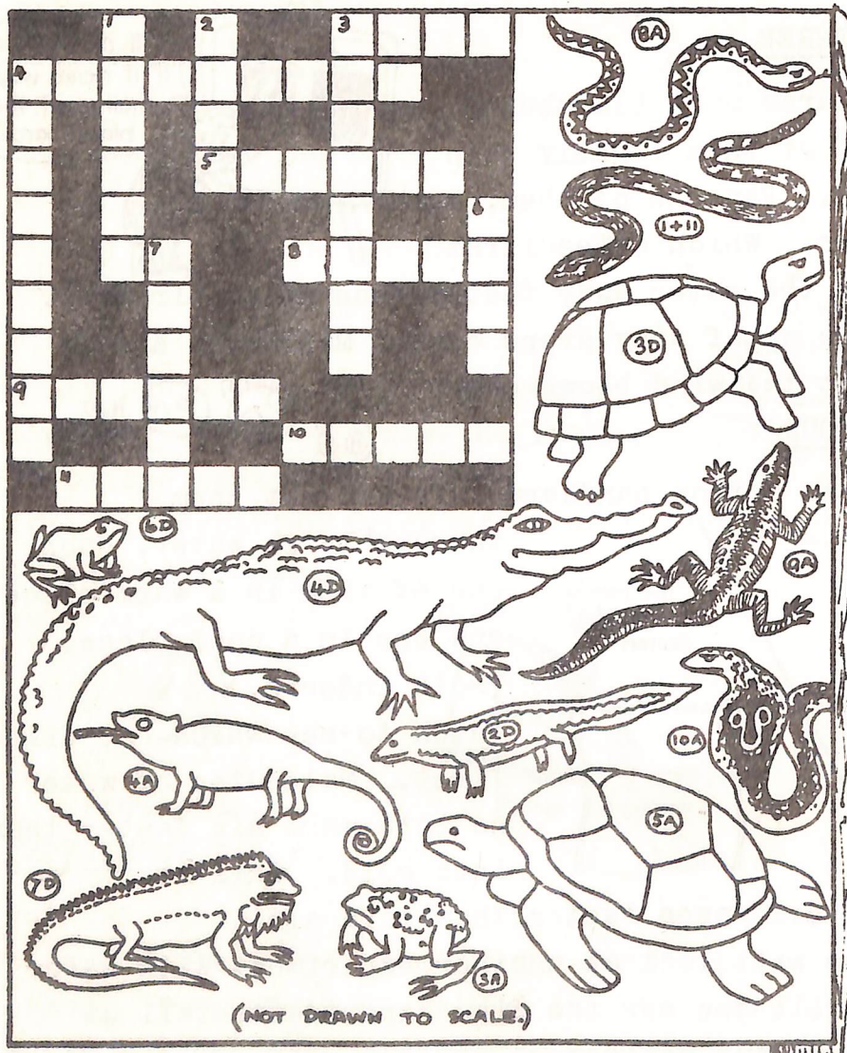
Filling a cup exactly to the brim.....

...tip the water into a saucepan and bring it to the boil.....

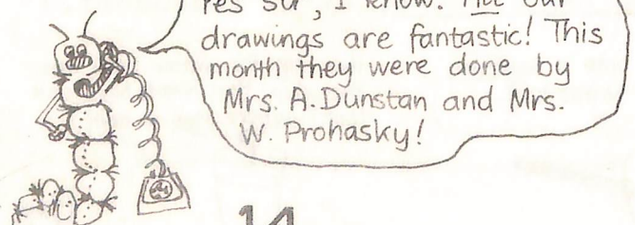
...then tip the water back into the cup. How much have you lost? Where has it gone?

REPTILES of the WORLD CROSSWORD

(From PEAL'S PICTURE CROSSWORDS, Book 2.)



(NOT DRAWN TO SCALE.)



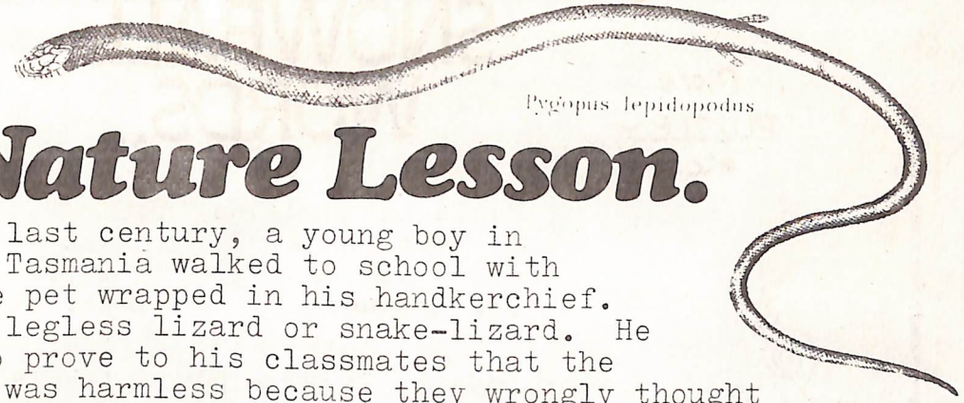
Yes sir, I know. All our drawings are fantastic! This month they were done by Mrs. A. Dunstan and Mrs. W. Prohasky!

Hey Wally! Do you know trees are green?

Oh boy! How dumb can you get!?

No. Theresa Green.... who's she?

EDITORIAL.



Pygopus lepidopodus

A Nature Lesson.

Late last century, a young boy in Northern Tasmania walked to school with a strange pet wrapped in his handkerchief. It was a legless lizard or snake-lizard. He wished to prove to his classmates that the creature was harmless because they wrongly thought that such lizards were "death adders" and poisonous. He wanted to show them that if they only looked closely they could see the tiny legs and also that the tongue was not forked like a snake's fangs.

Having finished his maths, the boy took out the lizard to see if it was still alright. The teacher looked up at this moment and sternly called out:

"Dyer! You bring what you're fiddling with out here to me!"

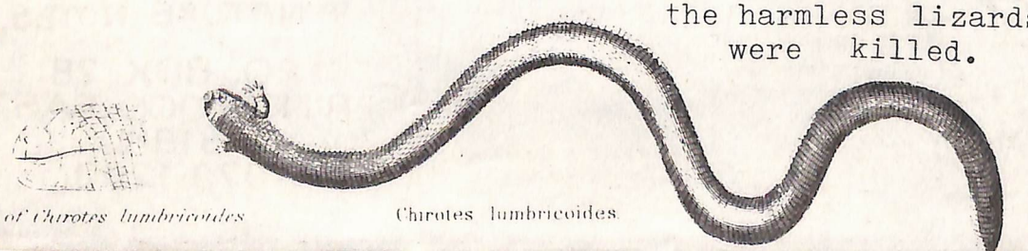
The teacher expected to again confiscate the boy's sharp pocket-knife which he liked to do occasionally to sharpen his pencils. So without looking up from his work he held out his hand and said,

"Give it to me!"

He got it!

One so-called "Death Adder" ran up his arm, over his neck, onto the floor and into the fire-place!

Well I'll leave you to imagine the scene which followed. For his efforts to introduce Nature Study into the School Curriculum my grandfather, Mr. U. Y. Dyer received "ten of the best" from the teacher's cane, and unfortunately, to this very day, legless lizards are seldom seen in Tasmania. Ignorance won, and many of the harmless lizards were killed.



Head of Chirotes lumbricoides

Chirotes lumbricoides

SNOWBALL WORDS..

More PUZZLES etc...

What do you get when a male cow swallows a stick of dynamite in a snowstorm!? A bomb-in-a-bull Snowman!

Build on these beginnings to make the word that fits the clue (use your dictionary!)

Eg. he Lium = a gas.
+ 4 letters

1. mo = kind of animal with
+ 5 letters a soft body and a hard shell.

2. her = herb-eating.
+ 8 letters

3. vi = found in food and
+ 5 letters necessary for health.

4. ab = to drink in.
+ 4 letters

5. eva = turn into vapour.
+ 6 letters

6. glu = fruit-sugar, good
+ 4 letters energy food.

7. ske = a framework of
+ 5 letters bones.

8. pla = heavenly body
+ 3 letters revolving around the sun.

MAKE UP MORE OF YOUR OWN.

*We apologize for the poor quality of the printing on this page — it must be that caterpillar eating into the letters again!

Send all your letters, pictures and puzzles to NATURE NOTES,

P.O. BOX 28.
RINGWOOD EAST.
3135.
879·1263.