

# nature notes

P.O. BOX 28. RINGWOOD EAST, 3135. 879-1263.





# Editorial.

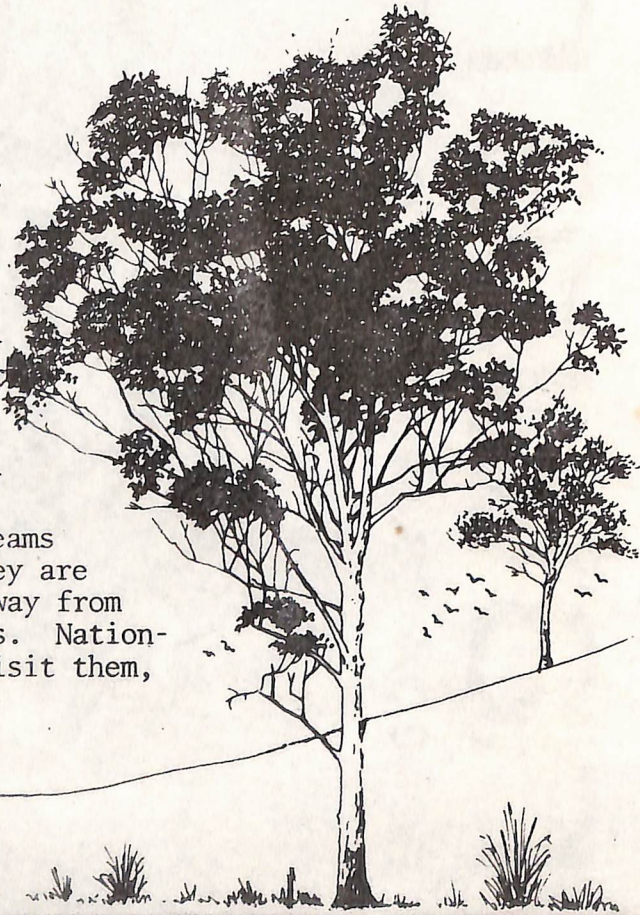
Have you ever been to a national park? Maybe you've visited several in Victoria and perhaps even some in other states too. I don't suppose any of you will have visited all of Victoria's national parks because there are 25 of them -- 11 state parks and 3 coastal parks as well, all looked after by the National Parks service of Victoria. Why are some places made national parks? What are national parks for? To answer these questions, think of what Victoria was like before white men came. It was all bush or grassland or swamp, well populated with animals and birds. There were not many aborigines, and they didn't change the land very much.

Once white settlers came, big changes occurred. Forests were cut down, scrub was cleared, swamps drained, houses, factories and roads were built. New animals, birds and plants were also introduced.

(Can you think of 10 animals and plants not native to Victoria?) These changes were progress in a way, but the original Victoria was disappearing. Fortunately, a few people believed that parts of our bush should be kept unchanged. They managed to persuade the government to make Wilson's Promontory and Mount Buffalo national parks in 1898. Since then many other national parks have been established, and this is still going on.

At present only 1.5% of Victoria's total area is in National or other parks, but Mr Hamer has said he wants 5% for parks eventually.

These parks have two main purposes. They protect plants and animals (and rocks, soils, streams and other features too) and they are places where people can 'get away from it all' in natural surroundings. National parks, and the people who visit them, are looked after by rangers.



I'll have to think about giving Mr Howes this month's book prize!



In later articles I'll tell you about some of our national parks: (I'm writing this article while on holiday near Lower Glenelg National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park - we're staying in Nelson) and about what you can and can't do in them - also about what rangers do. Meanwhile, please think about national parks and why they are so important.

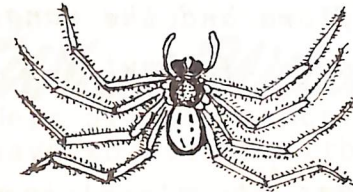
Michael Howes.  
Education Officer,  
National Parks.

Looks like we're branded again!



## Watch Out!

You will most likely come across this handsome specimen now the weather is warming up. Huntsman Spiders are my favorite spider and nothing saddens me more than seeing people stamping on these marvelous fly stalkers and destroyers. Wrongly called Tarantulas (or 'Triantelopes' or 'Trianchelas') they are not even as poisonous as mosquitoes, although they will give you a nip if you mistreat them.



HUNTSMAN.

The female Red-back Spider is one of three poisonous Australian spiders and the only one likely to be found in Victoria. She has a red stripe down her back and is 10mm long. The male is only 4mm long, he has 4 black bars on a white body, and is completely harmless.

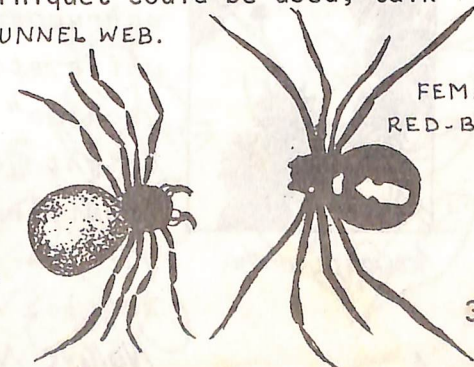
The red-back likes to breed in dark corners-- particularly in boxes and old tins on rubbish heaps.

Remember: if you are bitten, that the treatment is the same as for snake bite. 1 Keep as still, calm and as warm as possible. Moving around or running only makes the blood pump the poison around your body more quickly. 2 Send for a doctor. 3 A tourniquet could be used, talk this over with your teacher.

FUNNEL WEB.

According to Ramon Mascord in his book, Australian Spiders in Color, Sydney's Funnel Web Spider, *Atrax robustus* is probably the world's deadliest spider. The venom of the male is more toxic than that of the female and being 'vagrants' you are more likely to find the male. The female seldom ventures far from her burrow.

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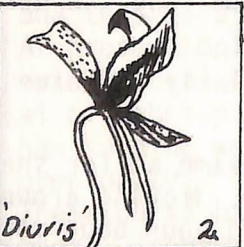
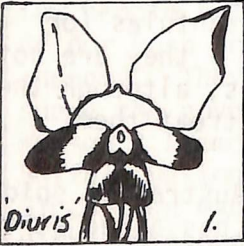
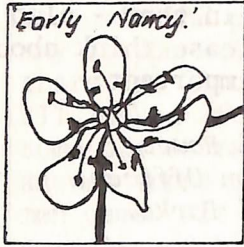


FEMALE  
RED-BACK



# Wildflowers

D. Dobson.



*Acacia pycnantha.*

During the holidays I went to Bendigo. Throughout the goldrush era the forests for kilometres around Bendigo were cut down to feed the boilers at the mines. You can see where the trees have been cut down and have, with the passing of time, regrown. The eucalypts were in flower and the honey-eaters were much in evidence, feeding.

Spring is the flowering and reproducing time of much of the Australian flora and the range of plants in flower in an area of about 2 hectares was amazing.

The "Early Nancies" (*Anguillaria dioca*) one of the native bulbs were everywhere. The Goldfields Grevillea" (*Grevillea alpina*) was in flower and this was interesting because this plant has many forms. In this area there were two forms: one with a beautiful gold coloured flower and the other a pale red and white. "The Bendigo Wax Plant" (*Eriostemon verrucosus*) was in flower, a lovely pink and white star shaped flower. The "Donkey-Orchids" (*Diuris*) were in flower too: a clear bright yellow amongst the dull green of the *Grevillea* foliage. There were four different Wattles in flower: *Acacia armata* - Hedge Wattle; *Acacia diffusa* - Spreading Wattle;

*Nature Notes ~ October, 1977.*



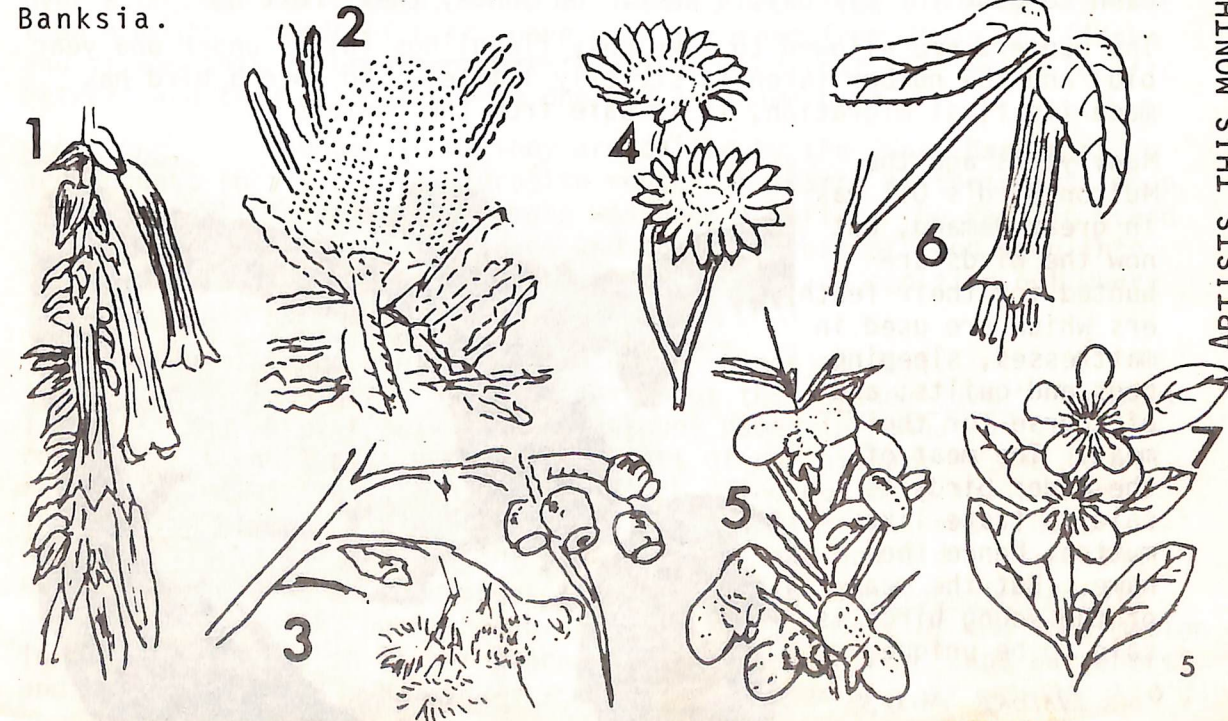
Is this wildflower found primarily in Victoria?

was hard to imagine what this area would have been like when the miners were panning for gold and sinking their shafts a hundred years ago. Certainly most of the plants would have been killed in the areas where the miners were working, but enough must have been left to regenerate and recolonize over the period since the gold rush.

## What Wildflower is That..?

Here are the names... see if you can match them. You may have to use the library if you have too much trouble..

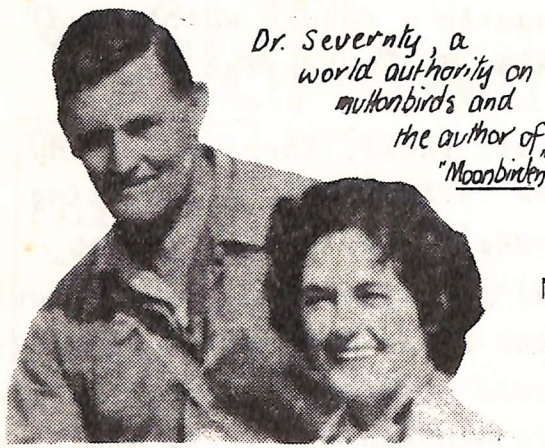
Tea-tree, Everlasting, Pea Flower, Eucalypt, Heath, Correa Banksia.



*Acacia pycnantha* - Golden Wattle and  
*Acacia verniciflua* - Varnish Wattle.

As well as all these, there were many other plants in bud or just finishing flowering. The "Dagger Hakea" (*Hakea teretifolia*) just finished and you could see where the seeds were developing. It





Dr. Severnty, a world authority on muttonbirds and the author of "Moonbirds"

## "Mutton"

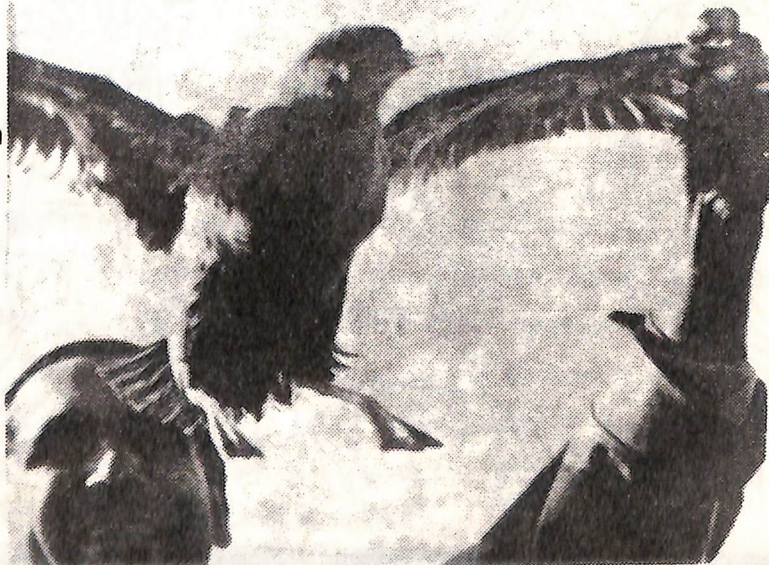
Earlier in the year, Nature Notes featured an article on the Muttonbirds. One of the questions left for you to find out was about the Muttonbird industry. This is conducted on the islands of the Furneaux Group off the coast of Tasmania. On these islands of which there are forty-two, thousands of muttonbirds make their homes. Here in the early

Nineteenth Century, after the sealing industry ended, 10 sealers and their wives remained to establish another industry. They made Cape Barren Island their home and hunted the muttonbirds on the nearby islands.

Today their ancestors continue the industry, for they are the only people allowed to hunt this now protected bird. These people live a 'madcap' but harsh life on these rugged but historic islands. Each year in late March, they move all their families and most of their possessions to one of the five islands; Big Dog, Babel, Little Dog, Green and Chappel, where 'birding' is allowed for a short season. Here they live among the birds for nearly two months, working from dawn to dusk for six days a week. On Sunday they 'rest up'.

The hunters are allowed to take only fledglings (birds under one year old) and the number taken is strictly limited. So once a bird has made its first migration, it is safe from the hunters.

Many years ago the Mutton Bird's Oil was in great demand, but now the birds are hunted for their feathers which are used in mattresses, sleeping bags and quilts; and of course for their meat. The meat of the older birds is said to taste like mutton, hence the name. But the meat of the young birds is said to be unique,



## Birding."

~ C.Bull.



being neither fish nor fowl to taste.

After killing, the birds are dry plucked, then scalded to remove all feathers. The body is then cleaned, salted and placed in barrels to be transported to market. Some 'fresh' muttonbird meat is flown to Tasmania to a ready market, but health regulations severely limit this nowadays.

Since Dr. Serventy of the C.S.I.R.O. began banding in 1947, only about one third of the banded fledglings have

been taken by the hunters. Each year after the season the birders have to report to the Lady Barron Police Station, returning any bands taken and reporting the exact numbers of their catch.

Mutton birds are more at home in the air, and have been found to travel over 8,000 km. in 75 days, while a fledgling once flew 8,800 kms in less than a month. Bands of birds have been returned from Japan and Alaska and it was this information that finally proved that the 'North Pacific Petrel' and the Muttonbird were one and the same bird.

MOONBIRDS. "Moonbirds" as they are called by the "Cape Barreners" are thought to fly their "migration route" in search of their lost moon. (Some scientists believe the moon was once a part of the Pacific Ocean many, many thousands of years ago and that it broke off and spun into the Solar System where it has remained. See if you can find out where the moon could have come from.)

The Furneaux Islands are famous for other things as well.

SHIPWRECKS. See if you can find out about the "Sydney Cove." Flinders Island is the largest island of the group, named in honour of its discoverer. It was the site of a black part of our history--- the final resting place of the Tasmanian Aborigine. Find out more about them.

THE HONKING BIRD. This bird made the news earlier this year (Nature Notes vol.14.No.1. What is the honking bird, and how did it make the news? A good book to read about this subject is "The Moonbird People" by Patsy Adam Smith, published by Rigby Limited. Most of the information in this article is in it but there is a lot more on the "Cape Barreners" and the "Muttonbird". (Photographs reproduced by permission of the publisher.)



Most girls and boys will know that in Victoria October is bird month so This 'n That this month will take a look at some 'bird stories'. If you have ever visited Rottnest Island you will have seen huge colonies of the Banded Stilt-- a small wading bird that seems to be all legs and beak.

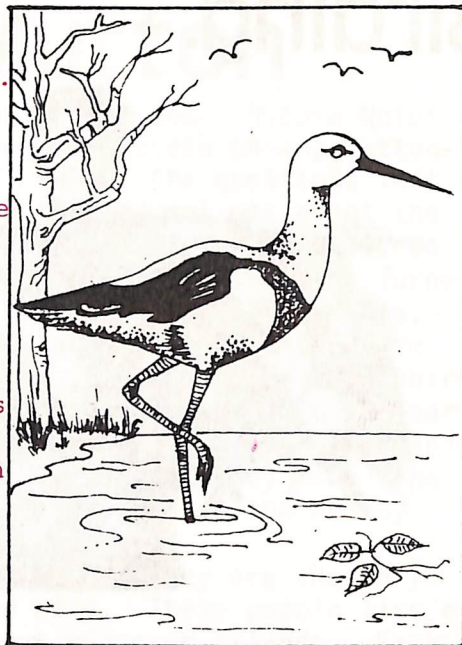


Its main food is the Brine Shrimp, tiny creatures that live in salt water. The shrimps also live on the inland lakes which

usually dry right up in the summer. How then do the shrimps survive? They don't. The adults die but before doing so they lay their eggs in the dry mud, where they may lie for many months, until the rains come and out hatches the shrimps to serve once again as food for the Banded Stilt which has now flown inland after spending the summer in more permanent watering spots.

Yes Nature has many wonderful methods of survival. Another interesting bird of Rottnest is the Osprey a not so well known bird of prey. The interesting thing about the osprey is that he is one of the few hawks to feed on fish. I haven't seen one in action but I believe it is an exciting sight to see one plunge 2 feet first into the sea and then rise with a large fish securely held in its talons. The habitat of this none too plentiful bird is the coastline of all states except ours and Tasman-

## BANDED STILT



OSPREY



## MAGPIE



GALAH

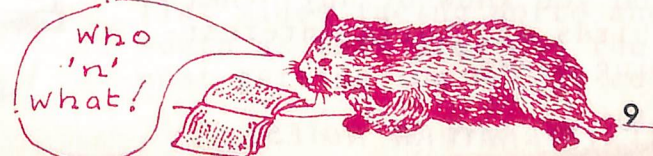
GANG GANG



ia. So to see him we must travel interstate.

I have been doing some gardening at home since the better weather has arrived. This has delighted the magpies which are rearing their young in a nearby tree. In my digging I have been uncovering hundreds of white grubs in a semi-circle. Because of this habit we call them 'curl-grubs' although their true identity is the larvae of the cockchafer beetles. They feed upon the roots of grass and shrubs and just love to live under your lawn. Anyway they provided many meals for my magpies.

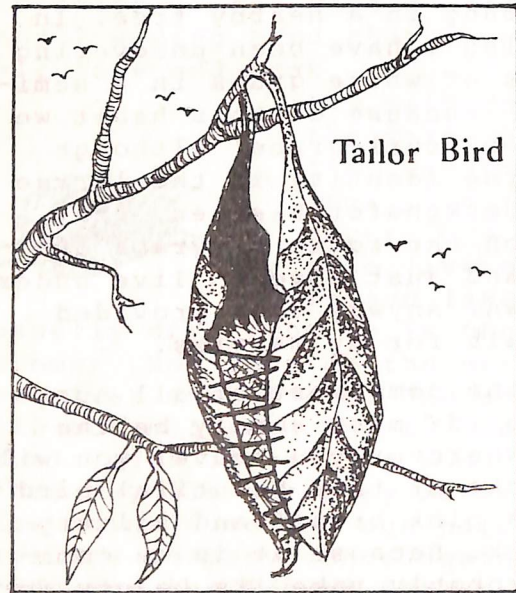
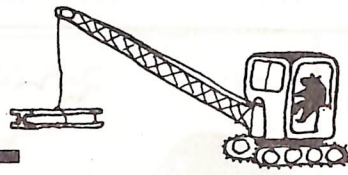
One of the commonest of all Australian birds must surely be the Galah. Wherever you travel you will see flocks of this beautiful bird with its pink breast and silvery-grey back. Because it is so common we probably take its beauty for granted. Do you know that the bird was first described in 1817 when a specimen was sent to the Paris Museum? Early pioneers used the galah as food when they made their 'parrot pies.' However I understand the meat is very tough. Did you know also that until recently galahs were used by gun clubs as targets for the shooters. Horrified bird lovers protested so strongly that the practice has ceased. Yesterday I heard some outrageous shrieking in some gums near home and I knew the galahs cousin the 'Gang Gang Cockatoo' had arrived. See if you can discover the difference.



by. L. Delacca.



# ANIMAL



Tailor Bird

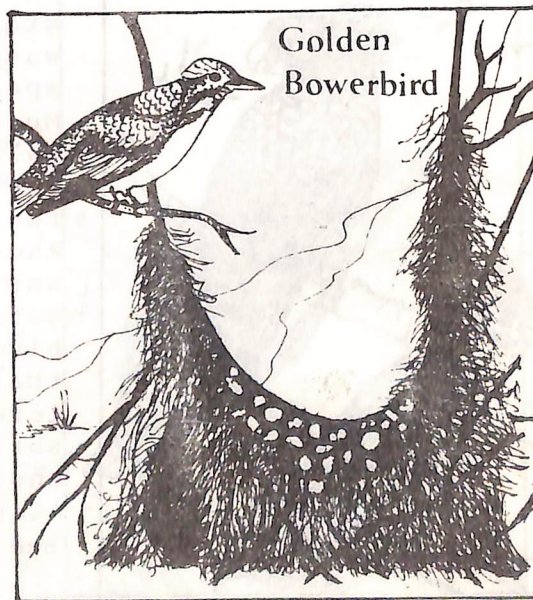
## Sleeping Bags!

The Tailor Bird is noted for its habit of sewing two long leaves together, for its nest, leaving an opening near the top. It lines the inside with feathers and other soft materials for the eggs to lay on. It occasionally twists and joins the vegetable fibres, which it uses for thread. It has even been credited with making a knot!

Do you know of any other birds who build interesting nests?

In Vol.13.No.10,Nature Notes showed you some of the unique animal engineers that work at unusual crafts in nature. This month we take another look at this fascinating aspect of nature.

The Golden Bowerbird unlike the Satin Bowerbird, builds a 'maypole' type of nest. This bird weaves twigs and leaves around a small sapling, decorating it with flowers, fruits, and brightly coloured beetle's wings. It resembles the shape of a baby's cradle.

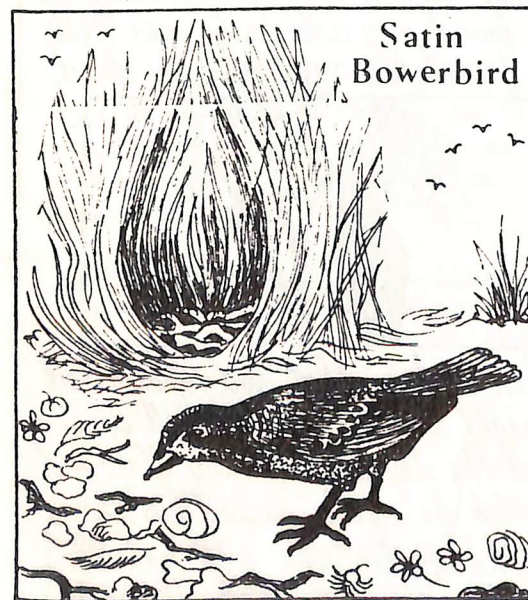


Golden Bowerbird

## Portable Tents!

# ENGINEERS

Satin Bowerbirds The male bird makes a complicated nest, collecting and decorating it with objects such as flowers, fruits, bits of glass, feathers, bone, paper, shells and lichens. These objects are either yellow or blue in colour. They are tossed around, placed and replaced endlessly, until he is satisfied with the result. It is thought that these colours are chosen because they are the same colours as the eyes and bill of rival males.



Satin Bowerbird

## Home Decorating!



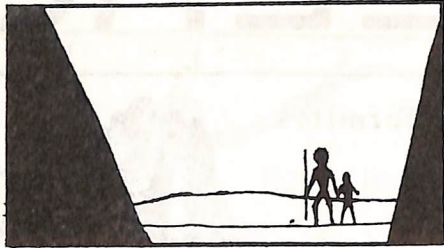
Termites

## Castle Builders!

Termites are often called 'white ants' in Australia. This is not true as termites are actually members of a different order of insects, the Isoptera. Their nests are made of earth, worked into a very hard clay by the insects. The nests are so strong that it is very hard to dig into them with a spade. Sometimes they build them up to 6 metres high. They always have the flat sides facing north and south as this prevents the nest getting too hot or cold



## A Legend of the Caterpillar.



A long time ago a man and his son found themselves without food while on a long journey.



So the anxious father built a little hut for his sick son and hurried away to hunt for food.



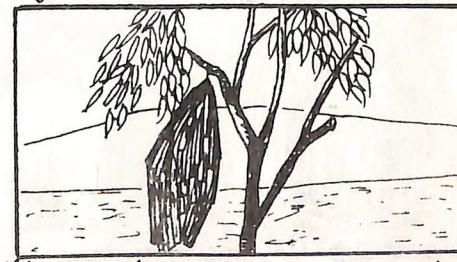
His fears increased when he reached the place where his son had been, for both the boy and the hut were now gone; but he saw in a tree a curious case of sticks and bark in which was a caterpillar.



Then the boy became ill and it seemed he would soon die unless he were given something to eat.



But several days passed before he found any, and as he ran back he feared his son would be dead.



Then he knew that good spirits had changed the hut into a small case and the boy into a caterpillar, and though he sadly missed his son, he knew that the good spirits would always care for him.

## Write On! LETTERS

This month's letter comes from Mark Woods, Gr. 6, Manchester P.S. He writes to us about two of our larger hunting birds. He also has a message for us about protecting wildlife.



**Wedge-tailed Eagles** are fairly common in Australia. They are fairly large and eat mice, rats and carrion. The Wedge-tailed Eagle builds its nest up high in trees or cliffs. The nest itself is made of heaps of grass and sticks. The eagle's color is dark brown; its neck is a golden brown color. Its tail is wedge shaped. Farmers do not like this eagle because it attacks and eats young lambs.

**Whistling Eagles.** The Whistling Eagle is smaller than the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Nesting and eating habits are similar to the larger bird, although as a result of living close to salt and fresh water, he enjoys fish. A feature of this bird is its very noisy whistle.

People each year shoot these birds. Many people steal and break the eggs of the eagles and therefore the embryos are killed. People who do these things are cruel. On weekend trips to Anglesea I have seen these birds in traps. We must care for our wildlife.

Your book will arrive soon eventually Mark. Thanks for your letter.


Psst... MORE LETTERS. PLEASE. !!!?

C'mon the Roos !!



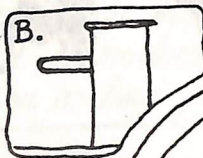
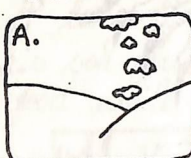


## FAMOUS MUSICIANS QUIZ!

1. He wears big glasses, plays a piano and drips all over the floor.
2. His favorite fruit was banana-na.
3. 
4. He sits on top of a car and writes songs.

\*All answers hidden on THIS page.

## MYSTERY OBJECTS QUIZ!



## Wally's PUZZLES & RIDDLES



The flowers you unjumbled on this page can now be colored in on this WOBBLEWORD. No letter is used more than once. The 14 letters left spell a certain VFL footy team!

B	O	T	N	O	V	I	O
L	I	T	D	A	I	S	L
Y	L	E	B	R	Y	E	
H	C	W	A	R	T	H	T
E	O	E	T	U	M	E	S
A	R	L	T	S	H	E	L
T	R	E	A	B	O	L	U
H	R	N	M	Y	R	T	E

Here is a jumbled list of Wild-Flowers. See if you can unscramble them and then find them in the Wobbleword below. (Nearly all of them can be found on the back of this N.Notes!)

1. LETWAT = \_\_\_\_\_
2. TRYMEL = \_\_\_\_\_
3. YASID = \_\_\_\_\_
4. STILOVE = \_\_\_\_\_
5. RACEOR = \_\_\_\_\_
6. YILL = \_\_\_\_\_
7. HATEH = \_\_\_\_\_
8. SHRUBLETOTB = \_\_\_\_\_

What happened when the cow swallowed a case of apples?



That's enough to give me the pip!



Beats me!

It made cider inside 'er insides!

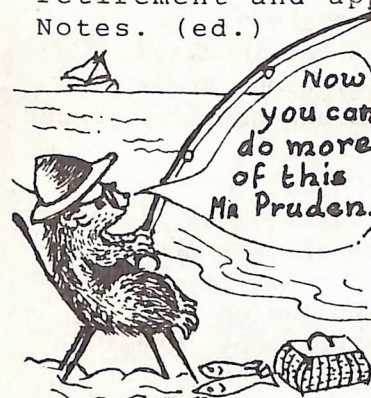
Core!

4. Bert Packarack. A. Black-mail.

## Mr. Pruden retires..

Nature Notes recently learned of the retirement of the Ringwood Inspectorate District Inspector, Mr. J.N. Pruden. Mr. Pruden had served on the Committee of Nature Notes from its early days and had been a staunch supporter of the efforts of teachers involved with the production of the magazine in ensuring that it continued and was given every chance to thrive.

On behalf of the Committee of Nature Notes and indeed I'm sure that I can speak for all past editors and contributors to Nature Notes, I extend to Mr. Pruden good wishes for his retirement and appreciation for all his efforts with Nature Notes. (ed.)



**DID YOU KNOW...** that Nature Notes is in its 14th. year of production? It began publication in 1964 at the Burwood East Primary School which was at that time part of the Ringwood Inspectorate. In that year 250 magazines were printed each month. This year we are printing 7,200 copies per month which are distributed throughout Australia. Be apart of Nature Notes and don't miss out on your 1978 issues. Order now..

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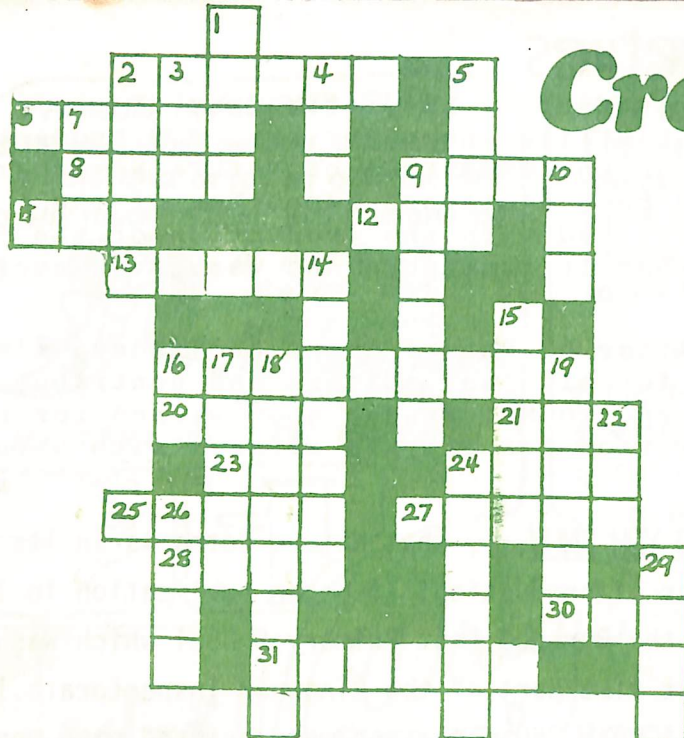
Please send ☐ Nature Notes & ☐ Probes.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

10 issues of each magazine again in 1978. 15

3. Banana Mouskourt. B. A man playing a trombone in a telephone booth.





# CrossWord

## ACROSS.

2. Sounds made by the birds.
6. .... the dog.
8. Serpents.
9. Found on most plants.
11. Era.
12. Mid.
13. Backbone.
16. Moths in cases.
20. Precious stone.
21. Brand name for peanut paste.
23. Colour.
24. Garlands of flowers.
25. A spider does this.
27. Type of boat.
28. Builds on.

30. Fibre made by caterpillars. 31. Some casemoths may be this.

## DOWN.

1. To put paste in.
2. Containers.
3. Bone to which legs are attached.
4. You might ... a dog.
5. Germ of life.
7. Ugly old which.
9. Name of a casemoth.
10. Birds do this.
14. Female casemoths are wingless, legless and...
15. Form of lighting.
16. Commanding Officer. (init.)
17. Sucking pest. (gardens)
18. Another name for a case-moth.
19. Some casemoth's cover their cases with these.
22. Remains of a fire.
24. Tree foliage is made up of them.
26. Tree found in hot places.
29. Snowy mountain chain.

SOLUTION ...NEXT MONTH...

## Can You Find These?

Our cover this month features  
a collection of Victorian Wildflowers. How many of them can you identify?

Bush Heath Myrtle, Yellow Paper Daisy, Ivy-leaved Violet, Thick-leaved Trigger Plant, Red Correa, Bottle Brush, Fringed Violet, Blue Tinsel Lily, Common Heath, Milk Maids, Handsome Flat Pea, Twining Guinea Flower, Giant Tea-tree.

16. NATURE NOTES IS A RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE PUBLICATION.