

Readers' Letters

Fan Mail

Dear Sir,—Why can't we have articles about Association Football in the CN? Although I am a girl I like football and I am a fan of Leicester City. I would like to hear other CN readers' views on this.

Julia Wright,
Glenfield, Leicester.

I imagine you were well pleased with last week's Sports Page! Ed.

Bird-watching in Bed

Dear Sir,—When I was ill in bed, on looking out of the window I had a great surprise! I saw a bullfinch sitting on a twig. It was lovely, because I have never seen a bullfinch so close up before!

Susan Whittington (10),
Tadworth, Surrey.

Here are some news and views from CN readers. Why not write to me this week, at Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.—The Editor.

Sir Walter Scott's Country

Dear Sir,—For two years, 1960-61, I was at a boarding school. It was called St. Columba's and was near St. Boswells in the heart of the Scott country.

On a clear day you could see the Cheviot Hills in England, but much nearer than that, just across the Tweed, is the famous Dryburgh Abbey where Scott is buried.

It did not take long to get to Scott's View; it was there that Scott wrote his poems. This was his favourite view of the Border landscape, and from it you get a marvellous view of the Eildon Hills. I have climbed them all.

P. Jennings,
Edgbaston, Birmingham 16.

Chateau d'If

Dear Sir,—I wonder if any CN readers would be interested in a place I visited on holiday.

We were staying in a little town in the South of France, and one day we went in to Marseilles. On arriving we saw a boat going to the famous Chateau d'If, the island where the Count of Monte Cristo was supposed to have been imprisoned.

We caught the boat, and after a very rough two kilometres, we arrived on a barren island with a stronghold perched on top.

We came first to a small square courtyard with many prison cells leading off it. One of them was that of the Count of Monte Cristo and another that of the Abbé who had helped him.

The cells were merely stone rooms, each with one tiny source of light, a barred window. It made the story in the book seem so much more realistic.

Kathryn Chambers, Acton, W.3.

More Moore

Dear Sir,—I would like to say how I enjoy Patrick Moore's series.

I am very interested in Astronomy and I hope he will carry this on in the future, as it has taught me a lot.

Gerard de Botton (13),
Eastbourne.

Hobbies

Dear Sir,—I have been reading CN for about two years, and have enjoyed it a great deal, especially when the extra pages and the Readers' Letters were added.

There is, however, one more article I would like to see added . . . a hobby section, which would give plans and instructions for making things in wood, metal, salt, etc.

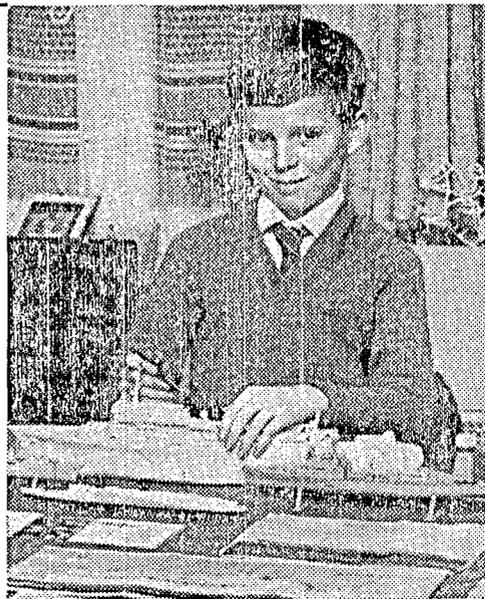
Alvin Gold (13),
Bournemouth.

CN Shipping expert?

Dear Sir,—I have a great interest in collecting information about ships. I have them from all over the world—so many in fact that I am making a Shipping Information Bureau.

The evening newspaper came to see me and I had a photograph in it.

Sharon Rice (13),
Lancing, Sussex.



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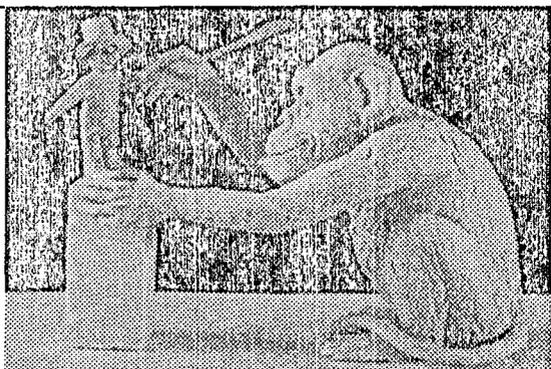
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TRACKS IN THE SNOW

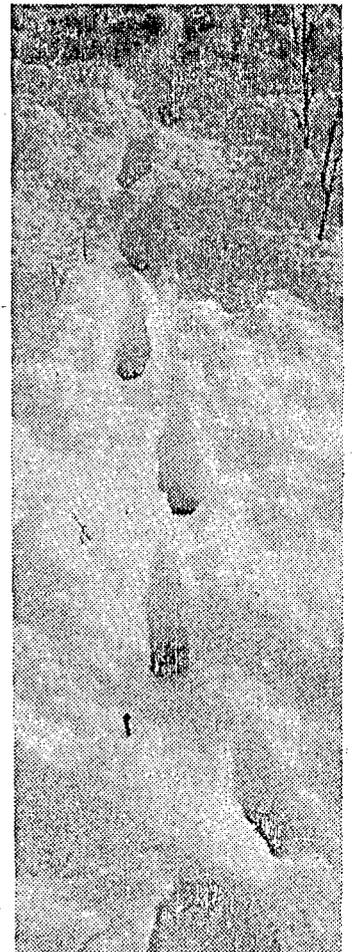
Last winter Pat and Jane, my two young budding naturalists, asked me to show them some tracks made by animals after a fall of snow.

FIRST of all I took them round their garden and pointed out the footprints of several birds. We found them around the bird-table and also by a hedge which the birds used for cover during the day. We could identify those of the starlings, because these birds do not hop, but walk or waddle; and also those of blackbirds which both walk and hop. We also found the tracks of a grey squirrel which had come in the early morning to pick up any food dropped from the bird-table or left on the ground.

Signs of badgers

Having had a look in the garden we went to a nearby path which ran beside a piece of woodland. Here we were lucky, because in the wood there was a badgers' sett—the proper name for their home. The badgers had been out foraging during the night for we saw the large tracks, with the toes and claw-marks showing, and we traced them from the path, where we first spotted them, to the sett itself.

This showed us we were right in thinking that the tracks were



Footprints of a fox

indeed those of a badger. Had it been a fox which had left them they would have been smaller and dog-like; and we should have noticed that they were peculiar because they did not really look as if they had been made by a four-footed creature at all. This is because, when walking, a fox puts its hind feet down almost exactly in the place where it has placed its fore feet.

Jane got excited when she found some footprints that turned out to be those of a rabbit. These, too, looked peculiar because a rabbit, when lolloping along, brings its hind feet down in front of its fore feet, so that it almost looks as if it had been travelling backwards.

Remains of a feast

Another interesting find turned up on the flattened stump of a felled tree. Here we saw some scales from a pine cone and a few fragments of acorn shells. This was a squirrel's dining-table.

Of course it is not possible in a short note to tell you how to identify all the traces and tracks you will see; but if you want to find out more about this kind of thing you must buy or borrow an excellent little book called *Tracks, Trails, and Signs*, by F. J. Speakman. It is published by G. Bell and costs 10s. 6d.



Squirrel's meal on a tree stump

Pictures by John Markham