

7mag

2009 Year 7 — Literacy preparation

Contents

Digging for Clues.....	2
Amazing Penguins	3
Journey to the river sea.....	4

Digging For Clues

We talked with an archaeologist to find out what his job was about.

What exactly do archaeologists do?

Well, a clue is in the word "archaeology" itself. This is a combination of two Greek words — *archaios*, meaning old, and *logos*, meaning knowledge. So archaeologists study old things.

But how old is old?

That depends. It might be just a few hundred years, for example, from the time of the first European settlement of Australia. Most often, it's several thousand years, from the time of the Egyptians and Romans, say, or the Maya Indians of Central America. Sometimes it can be tens of thousands of years old, like the early Australian Aborigines or the ice age hunters of Europe.

Some people think that archaeology is about digging up dinosaur bones. But it's not. That's done by people called palaeontologists (*palaeo-* meaning most ancient); they study ancient animals.

Archaeology is mainly about people who lived long ago, and especially about all the things they made. In other words it's about their material culture.

Where do archaeologists find all this old stuff?

In the ground, mostly. In ancient times, generations of people lived in the same spot often for centuries. At times they would knock their houses down to the foundations and build new houses on top, or the town might be destroyed by an invader and have to be totally rebuilt. As new towns were built on top of older ones, settlements built up like layer cakes, sometimes forming mounds up to 20 metres high.

Within and around their houses the people would throw away used or broken objects like pots, beads and food scraps, or they might lose precious things like coins and jewellery. These morsels of material culture became trapped in the dirt as later houses were built over them. They are the clues that help us learn about the past. By carefully "peeling away" the layers from top to bottom, the archaeologist digs back through time to the earliest settlements, and builds up an understanding of how the people lived and how their culture evolved. Sometimes, when objects like coins are found, they help to date a layer to a particular time.



Amazing Penguins



The largest colony of Little Penguins in Australia lives on Phillip Island, south-east of Melbourne. Situated on this island is the Phillip Island Nature Park which is dedicated to the protection of Little Penguins and their habitat.

Little Penguins are the smallest of the 17 species of penguins. They are only about 33cm tall. This is in contrast to the Emperor Penguin, their largest Antarctic cousin, which stands up to 130cm tall. Little Penguins used to be called Fairy Penguins. Now the name Little Penguin is used because it is a more accurate translation of their scientific name, *Eudyptula minor*.

Little Penguins' dark feathers are not black like other penguins but a deep, iridescent blue. They are only about 33cm tall. This is in contrast to the Emperor Penguin, their largest Antarctic cousin, which stands up to 130cm tall. Little Penguins used to be called Fairy Penguins. Now the name Little Penguin is used because it is a more accurate translation of their scientific name, *Eudyptula minor*.

Little Penguins usually swim at sea for weeks searching for fish to eat. They are powerful swimmers and can travel even greater distances than this. One bird had travelled 100 kilometres in its lifetime usually dive to about 15 metres deep. The deepest dive recorded at a depth of 65 metres.

Little Penguins are preyed upon by sharks, birds of prey, rough weather and fish shortages. The biggest threat to Little Penguins is from humans. At sea, penguins die from our plastic pollution. Phillip Island Nature Park cares for the victims of oil spills. They provide knit jumpers for the penguins to keep them warm during their molting. Little Penguins are killed by cars and by introduced animals such as foxes which are penguins' main predator. A fox can kill as many as 30 or 40 Little Penguins in a year.



Journey to the river sea

When Maia, an orphan, is sent to live with her relatives in Manaus, a port on the Amazon River, she can't wait to begin exploring the river sea. Maia meets and befriends two boys — Clovis, an actor, and Finn, the lost heir to an aristocratic title. When two private detectives — the children called them 'The Crows' — arrive to take Finn back to England, the children devise a plot in which Clovis takes Finn's place and returns to England.

Maia was looking definitely green. "How long do I have to be in the cellar?" he asked.

It was a whole night. "The Crows" are due back on Friday afternoon; they'll come straight away. You'll see it will work."

"That's the best thing, honestly," said Maia. "The Goodleys and their troupe have been at the border. They've been locked up until they can sell their assets and get out. They think you're staying with me so they won't bother about you any more."

"I could stay here," said Clovis doubtfully, looking around the hut.

"I wouldn't," said Finn. "I won't be here, I told you. I'm setting off in the *Arabella*." He looked at Maia. "Come and see her," he said. "We've done quite a bit to her."

Maia led him onto the launch. The rain had stopped. Finn had painted the floor of the launch to match the awning. "She's almost ready," he said.

"You're not taking you anyway?" he said, reading her like a book. "I don't even know if you're going and you're a —"

"I'm going," said Maia angrily. "Don't you dare say I'm a girl."



From *Journey to the River Sea* — Eva Ibbotson

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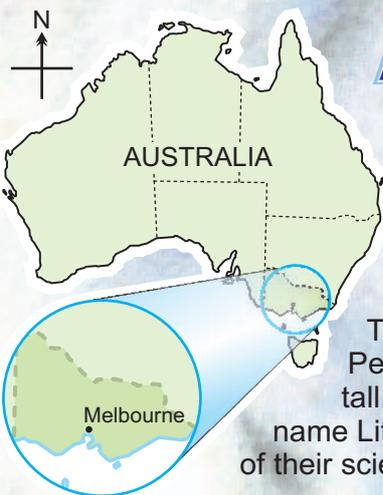
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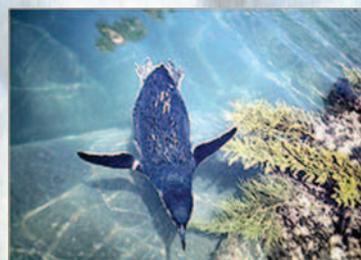
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The Little Penguins' dark feathers are not black like other penguins but a deep, rich blue. This colour camouflages them from predators whether they hunt the penguins from above or below the ocean surface. Like other penguins, Little Penguins have thick waterproof feathers. These keep their skin absolutely dry and warm, even after days at sea. While at sea, Little Penguins can sleep by dozing as they float on the surface. Together these characteristics allow Little Penguins to stay at sea for weeks searching for fish.

In their search for small fish to eat, Little Penguins usually swim about 15–20 kilometres a day. They are powerful swimmers and occasionally may travel even greater distances than this. Scientists recorded that one bird had travelled 100 kilometres in a single day! Little Penguins usually dive to about 15 metres chasing fish but one has been recorded at a depth of 65 metres!



Natural hazards for penguins are sharks, birds of prey, rough weather and fish shortages. However, their biggest threat comes from humans. At sea, penguins die from our plastic rubbish and oil spills. The Phillip Island Nature Park cares for the victims of oil spills. They even have volunteers who knit jumpers for the penguins to keep them warm during their rehabilitation. On land, penguins are killed by cars and by introduced animals such as foxes and dogs. Foxes are the penguins' main predator. A fox can kill as many as 30 or 40 penguins in one night. As a result, the rangers at Phillip Island Nature Park are kept busy protecting the penguins from these predators.



Over half a million visitors each year visit Phillip Island to see the Little Penguins in their natural habitat.



Adapted photos and text from Phillip Island Nature Park <www.penguins.org.au>. Used with permission.



Journey to the river sea



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5 Clovis takes Finn's place and returns to England.

Clovis came out of the hut, very pleased to see Maia.

“She's done it,” said Finn. “The hiding place is set up, she's got the keys. The boat goes at dawn on Saturday, so on Friday we'll get you settled in the cellar. We'll need blankets, a lamp, some food. I'm going to let everyone think it's me hiding there, even the Indians: 10 that will make it safer. I'll tell them that ‘The Crows’ have heard about the lagoon.”

But Clovis was looking definitely green. “How long do I have to be in the cellar?” he asked fearfully.

“Not even the whole night. ‘The Crows’ are due back on Friday afternoon; they'll come looking for you straight away. You'll see it will work.”

15 “Clovis, it's the best thing, honestly,” said Maia. “The Goodleys and their troupe have been turned back at the border. They've been locked up until they can sell their assets and clear their debts. They think you're staying with me so they won't bother about you any more.”

“I suppose I could stay here,” said Clovis doubtfully, looking around the hut.

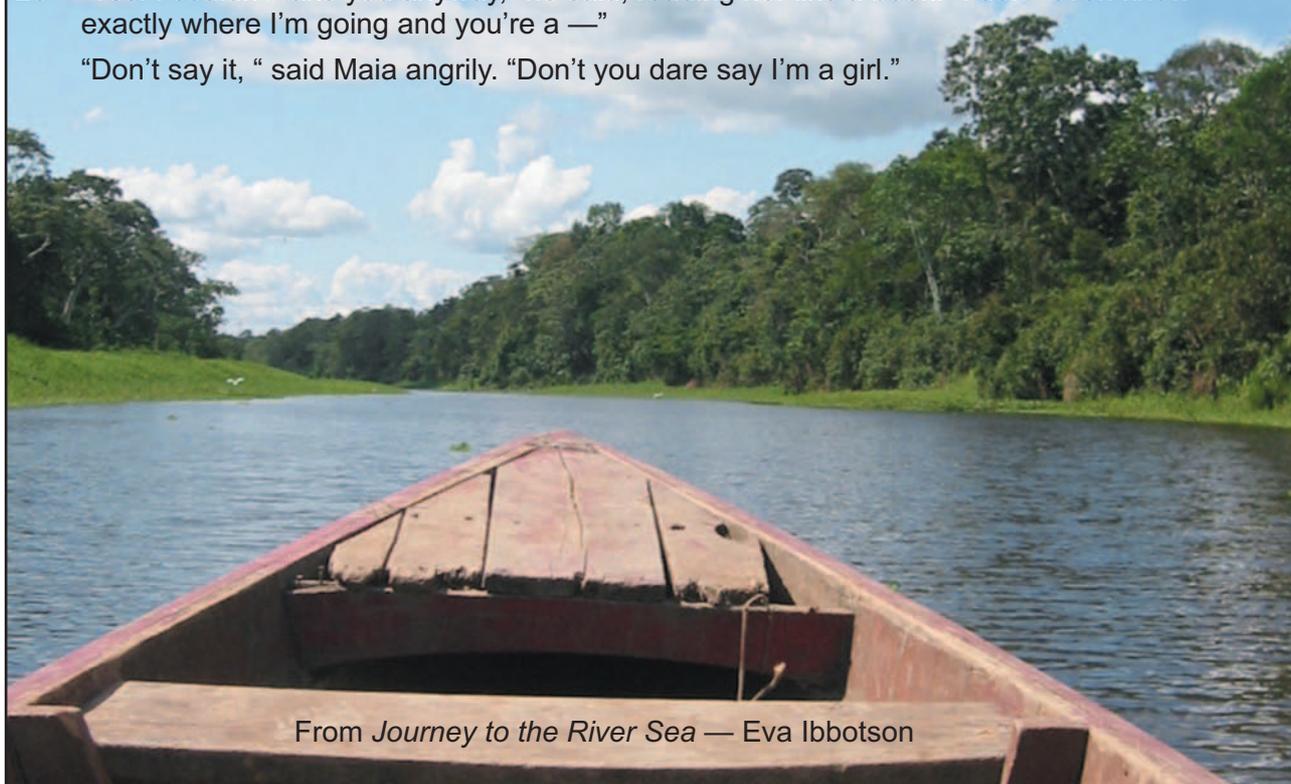
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Maia followed him onto the launch. The rain had stopped. Finn had painted the floor boards and mended the awning. “She's almost ready,” he said.

“Are you sure you could sail her alone? With having to get the wood and everything?”

25 “Yes. I couldn't take you anyway,” he said, reading her like a book. “I don't even know exactly where I'm going and you're a —”

“Don't say it,” said Maia angrily. “Don't you dare say I'm a girl.”



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