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STRANGE SOCIETY

Snail-watchers' Aims and Objects

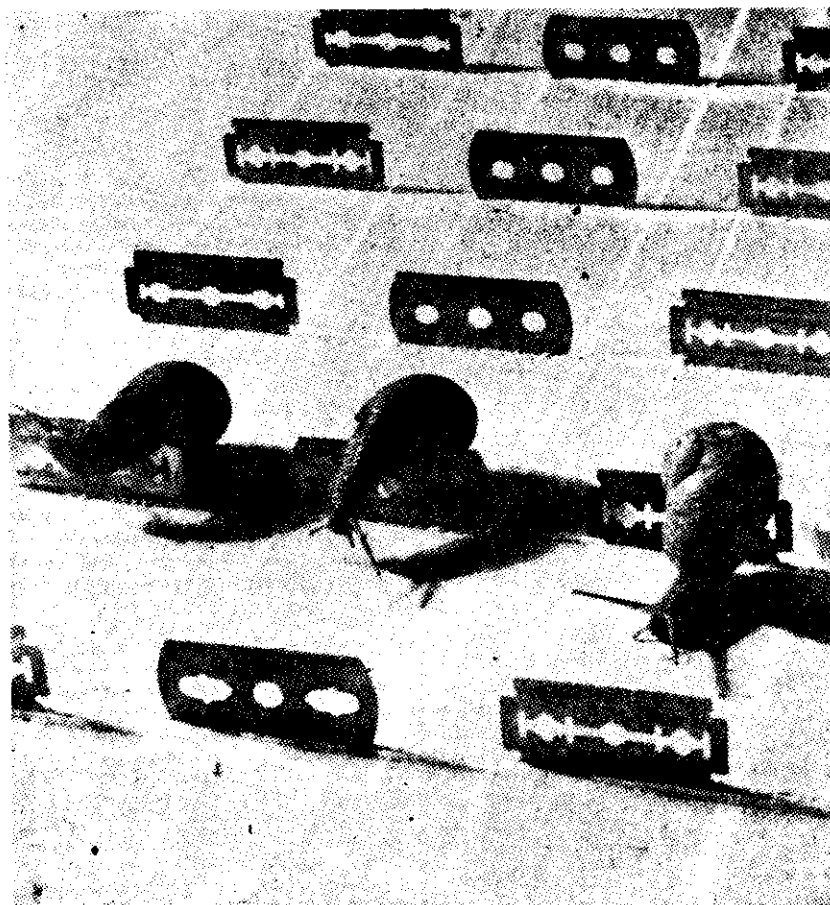
"WHAT snail-watchers want," said Henniker Heaton, in a talk broadcast by the BBC last December, "is a fair deal for the snail. The first object of the Snail-Watching Society, which I founded with my wife just over a year ago, is 'to promote interest in and appreciation of the snail for its own sake.'"

The Society is an organisation dedicated to the theory that man, harassed by the mounting tempo of modern life,

for the snail, the snails showed their intelligence by taking a hand in the campaign themselves. They hit the headlines of nearly all the principal newspapers by entering a pillarbox and feeding on the letters in it.

Growth of Snail-Consciousness

"In order to carry out my campaign on behalf of the snail with the greatest possible effect, I collect and collate all the information I can about the snail, whether about the snail in nature, or about the snail as an emblem or symbol or metaphor in literature, art or any



Gardeners will note, from this photograph of snails hurdling blunt razor-blades, that it takes a lot to stop a snail when he gets going—but they probably know that already.

has something to learn from contemplating the snail. Its whimsical propaganda has fascinated England and even led to an editorial in *The Times*. It was founded as an elaborate family joke by Mr. Heaton (a former employee of the Admiralty) after he had extravagantly admired a roadside bank that had been silvered by snails after rain.

Its members are approaching 100 in number, and it owns a book full of press clippings and correspondence from all over the world.

Whenever Henniker Heaton hears or reads an unfair reference to the snail, he takes action. He says:

"People often ask me for proof of the snail's intelligence. The snail carries its own house on its back and lays its own road in front of itself. Last April, just one month after I had opened my campaign to obtain public recognition

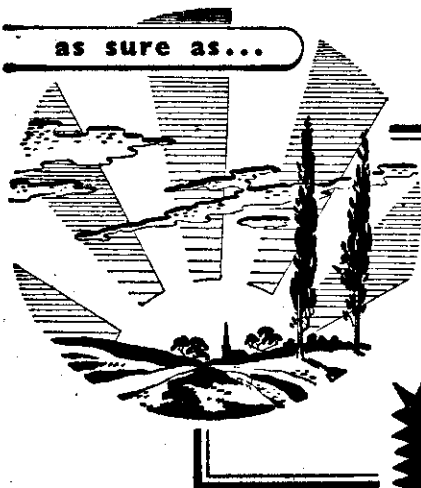
other sphere. The only entrance fee to my Snail-Watching Society is the contribution of a new piece of information about the snail. In this way, I have assembled over eighty references to the snail in poetry, many appearances of the snail in painting, architecture, heraldry and music, posters depicting the snail, proverbs about the snail, old embroidery showing the snail and snail-trail stitch, and even a local halfpenny issued in Worcestershire in the year 1709 with a snail on it.

"Since last March, I have had over forty letters published in the British press on behalf of the snail. And not only the British press, but foreign papers too, have given generous publicity to snail-watching. As a result of this, I get letters from all over the world, bringing

(continued on next page)

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