

## Paperclips to Silicon Chips



Reprinted from the Valiant User Group Magazine

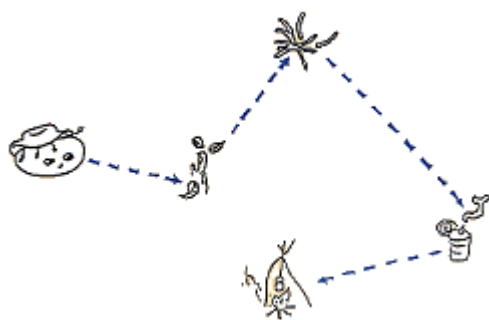
An article in the last issue of "GO", about Penny Gay's work with visually-impaired children at the National Mobility Centre in Birmingham, prompted a response from Mrs H N Syn, who has been using the Roamer with a mixed class of normal and partially-sighted children in Melbourne, Australia.

Mrs Syn presented a paper entitled "Roamer in an Integrated Setting and its Application for Young Visually-Impaired Children" at a conference focusing on technology and disability issues called "Paperclips to Silicon Chips", held November 1990 in Hobarth, Tasmania. She has been using the Roamer at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind School in Melbourne. The children's Roamer activities had a distinctly "Aussie" flavour.

The Roamer collects gum leaves and twigs to boil tea in a billycan. Wally Wombat and Skippy the Kangaroo teach the Roamer their song about a Bush Kangaroo. Mrs Syn's only criticism of the Roamer was that she was unable to save music programs at the end of a lesson. This problem can be solved by using the Roamer Interface which allows Roamer programs to be saved on a computer's floppy disk.

Mrs Syn states "... your article on Roamer and information of its trial with visually impaired students seems to corroborate with what I am doing ...." Mrs Syn concludes, "Roamer has come to stay at our school. It is not just another robotic toy. There are a multitude of excellent toys that are unsuitable for visually-impaired children. Roamer is one toy that appears to be well adapted for both sighted and visually-impaired children alike. Roamer has been a valuable learning tool which has had the 'personality' that has encouraged our students to display some of their latent skills. Their enthusiasm to play with Roamer has fostered their willingness to work independently".

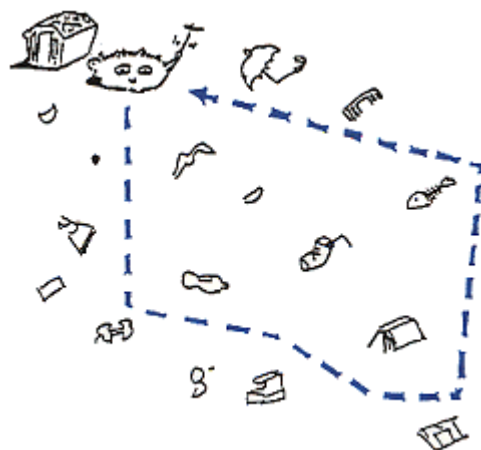
Copies of Mrs Syn's paper are available from: Mrs Syn, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, 557 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia.



**Billy Tea for Roamer:** Roamer has heard of Billy Tea and has decided to have a go at making it. First some gum leaves and sticks need gathering. Show the Roamer what to do. Would you teach the Roamer the Billy Tea Song too?

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**Roamer the Cleaner:** Slinx and the forgetful Fuzzbuzzes have left in a great hurry after the party. Guess what? They left a great big mess of rubbish around. Kind Roamer is going to help clean up. Can the Roamer find its way around the mess?



**Roamer at the Zoo:** Not long ago Roamer decided to visit the Melbourne Zoo. Roamer met Wally Wombat, Skippy the Kangaroo and some other animals were there too. Find out which other animals the Roamer met. Skippy took a liking to the strange-looking Roamer so he taught it his favourite song, "Skippy the Bush Kangaroo".

