

Paul and the snake

Regarding the article by Brother Ed Wright [“Paul’s attack by a snake on Malta” \(May 2008, p. 81\)](#), there is an interesting undesigned coincidence in this incident. The record tells us that the storm and subsequent shipwreck happened when *winter* was approaching (Acts 27:12), and that on the island it was cold and wet (28:2). Snakes always hibernate about that time of year, and a heap of brushwood would be a likely place for hibernation. Evidently, in scooping up his bundle of sticks, Paul unknowingly carried with him a snake, which was suddenly awakened out of its sleep. As the bundle reached the heat and brightness of the fire, the snake more likely used Paul’s arm as an escape route rather than something to attack. Having disturbed three snakes at different times myself, it was noticeable that their first concern was getting away quickly, and this snake was escaping from fire. Nevertheless it is true that most snake bites here in Australia happen in the creature’s self-defence, in which case Paul may well have been bitten. However, I am also informed that immediately after hibernation venomous snakes have no venom. But, as Luke comments, the islanders understandably thought this one had.

Malcolm Edwards
Boronia, Australia