



Patron Mr Allen A. Strom  
Advisor in Conservation  
Department of Education N.S.W.

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done against custom than against  
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-Plutarch.

### OUR SOCIETY

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Arbour Day: Those members of the Society who assisted in the planting of trees in support of Arbour Day must be congratulated, especially as they did so on one very wet afternoon in August. (11 th.)

Bushfire Prevention Sub-Committee: Members have been at work and have now produced a leaflet entitled, "Householders Bushfire Guide--What To Do". This leaflet will soon be published jointly with the B.M.C.C., and it is hoped to have it distributed by the Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.

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We sympathise with the relatives of Miss Olga Smith & Miss Vera Smith who died since our last edition.

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On September 8 a large party walked along Linden Ridge, well into the Blue Mountains National Park. The weather was glorious and the most outstanding feature of the day was the wildflowers, there being many species in this area and most of them in full bloom. Birds were scarce but Wilson Alcorn spotted three Spotted Quail Thrushes, and some of us heard, .../clear

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\* Nora Dillon \*

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'Labiatae' comes from the Latin word Labia, meaning 'lips'. It is the name for a family of plants with flowers which have a calyx or corolla divided into two parts, one projecting over the other like lips of a mouth.

It is an interesting family because of the many useful herbs belonging to it. To name a few:-

Thyme. Used sparingly, is good in vegetable and oyster soups. When used as a tea, it helps to clear the mind, remove headaches: especially *Thymus serpyllum*.

Sage is a tasty addition when blended with cheese, or stewed with tomatoes or string beans. It can be made into a gargle to ease a sore throat. Sage grown among cabbages is said to protect them from the cabbage butterfly.

Lavender. Every garden should have one of these pleasant, scented plants. Besides this, the herb will repel moths that attack woollen clothing and carpets.

Other members of the family include the various Mints, *Prunella* (Self-Heal), *Nepeta cataria* Catmint, *Ajuga* (Bugle) *Monarda punctata* (horsemint), *Satureia* (Savoury), *Teucrium* (Germanda), Rosemary, Hyssop, Balm, Basil and Chinese artichoke. All these have various uses.

Australian members include the various *Prostranthera* shrubs, *Hemigenia*, *Westringia* and *Plectranthus*.

There being such a wide range of uses for these introduced species, I would be interested to hear from anyone who may have found, or heard of ways in which Australian members of the Labiatae family could be used.

They may be recognised by the quadrangular stem. The leaves are opposite or in groups of three or more. The calyx and corolla are tubular, usually with the upper lip of 2 segments, the lower 3, in the corolla.

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All Mr. A. George's very interesting old settlers' tools and aboriginal artifacts are now around the fireplace (artistically arranged by Mrs. C. Van Der Held).

As visitors often ask for details of nearby beauty spots, the wall space immediately on your left as you come into the Hut, will have photographs of some local views, with a map giving approximate location. If readers have any suitable photos of these they could give (or lend for a few months) it would be a great help. They should be at least postcard size-- but preferably larger.

\*\*\*\*\*Winsome Gregory.\*\*\*\*\*



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The display has been commented on with appreciation very many times.

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A bird we watched last Spring had a most interesting way of disguising the nest's whereabouts. This is the Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, better known in these parts as the Blue Jay,. It is a handsome, medium sized grey bird with a black face.

It builds a small, saucer-shaped nest of twigs and bark, bound with cobwebs, in the fork of a horizontal branch of a tree, 20 or 40 feet up. The nest blends with the tree bark and is most difficult to see.

My brother found such a nest in a Eucalypt in the Katoomba Falls picnic ground last spring. Several times we both observed the following interesting behaviour when one bird relieved the other at the nest: The relieving bird would call from a tree some distance away, then fly straight to the nest. As it arrived the sitting bird left the nest and flew straight on in the same line of flight as the approaching bird; The impression was of a single Cuckoo Shrike flying straight through the tree.

Alas, there was a tremendous thunder-storm one night and in the morning the nest had completely disappeared. Another nest was found near Lyre Bird Dell. This contained half grown young, covered with grey fluff. They kept their heads down and looked like a growth of lichen on the Eucalypt branch.

From time to time a parent bird would land on the branch beside The nest with food. With many species, this would be a sign for little heads to shoot up, mouths gaping wide. But not a movement in the patch of 'lichen'.

Then the parent apparently satisfied all was safe, would utter a short, musical call. Immediately, up would shoot three long necks, three yawning gapes to be fed! When the parent leaves, down go the heads again.

Cuckoo Shrikes have apparently evolved these behaviour patterns to conform with their choice of a nest sight on a bare branch with no leaves or other cover to hide the nest.

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We understand that the Consultants were most impressed with Mrs. Douglass's submissions, and we are most grateful to her for dropping everything to compile her report in time to meet the deadline, set.

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### SUGGESTIONS WANTED FOR CITY PLAN

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EDITOR: GRAHAM ALCORN, P.O. BOX 39. BLACKHEATH ..BLUE MOUNTAINS. 2785

*This version of the Newsletter was re-typed from the original by Phoebe Coster in October 2020 to enable search engines to 'see' the text. Minor changes have been made to correct typographical errors and to add clarity.*

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## KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

### NEWSLETTER No.14 SEPTEMBER 1973 Price 10 cents

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