



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

"We are more sensible of what is
done against custom than against
nature"

-Plutarch.

OUR SOCIETY

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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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clear and sweet, the song of the elusive Chestnut
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The October outing, on Saturday 6th, is down Pearce's
Pass to the Grose River, with shorter walks for those
who decline the big one. Meet at Mt Victoria Shopping
Centre 9.45a.m.

* Nora Dillon *

LABIATAE

'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.

---Kevin Smith

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the exhibits are being rearranged. You may be interested in the
general plan.

The local items (those from the Blue Mountains' region) will
be kept together along the south and west walls, and put under
the following groupings:- Geology. Plants. Arthropods.
Reptiles. Birds. Mammals.

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the flap boards on the eastern side of the Hut.

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. *****Wynsme Gregory. *****

INTERSTATE & OVERSEAS VISITORS

It is interesting to note the interstate & overseas visitors to the Conservation Hut since the beginning of July. Visitors from all the Australian States & the A.C.T. have called at this quiet corner.. From overseas came people from the U.S.A., U.K., Tahiti, New Zealand, Canada, New Guinea, Germany, Ireland, & Holland.

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

***** Isobel Bowden *****

CUCKOO SHRIKES' NEST BEHAVIOUR

***Spring is a very interesting time for bird watchers, particularly Those who study nesting behaviour. Birds have many different ways of disguising their nests and of misleading predators as to their position, and well they need to, as studies have shown that there is a far higher degree of failure of nests than of success, whilst weather conditions, food supply, etc., play a part, predators are undoubtedly the main cause of failure.

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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SUGGESTIONS WANTED FOR CITY PLAN

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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.

KATOOMBA & DISTRICT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No.14 SEPTEMBER 1973 Price 10 cents

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