



## The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia

### The experience of a young aviculturist

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Presented by Dean Latham (age: 15 years)

My first aviary was prefabricated and measured 2m x 1.8m. It was built on a concrete slab and was fully roofed and the sides were half covered. Having no experience and not taking the time to research the birds I was interested in buying, I went headfirst into an overcrowding, ill-equipped disaster. Having suffered this disappointment, I set out to build a new aviary the right way. My first steps were the library, surf the web and join an avicultural society. I was not prepared for the amount of assistance I was offered. The frame measured 6m x 3m x 2m, constructed of galvanized steel and having a cousin who was in welding was of great assistance at this stage.

Payment for the frame greatly depleted the finances and construction slowed to a halt. The following bird club meeting found me being questioned on the progress of my new aviary and having discussed my plight and lack of finances (my only income so far had been the sale of [King Quail](#), which, as you know, wasn't going to make me rich) a number of members came forward with donations of breeding boxes, cheap birds and wire.

With the wire safely in the yard, we were advised that the A-frame house next door was to be demolished, so with jigsaw and angle grinder in hand, we stripped the zincalume sheeting off one side. Our aviary was looking good. With the wire and sheeting in place we commenced planting with rejected [bottlebrush](#), [melaleuca](#), [tea tree](#) and [tussocks](#) from the local nursery. We then installed the watering system. It was now the time I had been waiting for. I installed [Red-Faced Parrot finches](#), [Silver Headed Nuns](#), [Painted Longtails](#) and [Bourkes](#).

During the following months we had numerous successes, particularly with the Nuns. All went smoothly until one day we noticed some quail eggs missing and lack of experience meant the warning bells didn't ring. Two weeks later disaster struck, seven birds dead in one night with all the mutilated bodies placed in the one nest box. Bewildered, shocked and amazed, were just some of the emotions I felt that day. I had no idea of the carnage that could be wreaked by a rat in one night. A design flaw had allowed easy access to vermin.

Again advice was sought from bird club members and a cement footing with wire sunk 30cm into the ground now surrounded our aviary. Baits and traps are laid every night. As most pairs of birds had been broken up and my interest in [Gouldians](#) had grown, I decided to start over and concentrate my efforts on this magnificent Australian finch.

Having experienced firsthand help given to young bird club members and knowing my aviary would not have been completed without their assistance, I would like to stress the importance of encouraging young aviculturists wherever possible.



Dean was guest speaker at our club's Sept 2000 meeting. He was presented with hand painted Gouldian finches on a Mulga wood plaque.

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