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National Parks Association ACT

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NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY INC.

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AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery and natural features in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.

Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.

Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena by organized field outings, meetings or any other means.

Co-operation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.

Promotion of, and education for, nature conservation and the planning of land-use to achieve conservation.

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

With the advance of warm weather and the coming holiday season, the Kosciusko National Park will again receive its annual deluge of summer visitors. Members of our Association will be among those enjoying the natural wonders of Australia's major alpine area. On our organised walks, or in a private capacity, it's a good time to consider the problems of the park.

Over the last year, KNP received 2.5 million visitors – the highest number of visitors for any national park in the country.

Given adequate management services, this huge visitation is not too much. However, because of an overall reduction in staff of the N.S.W. National Parks and Wildlife Service throughout the State, in your Committee's opinion, KNP is now severely under-staffed. Staff levels in the park at present are at the same level as 1967 when the Service first took over responsibility for management and when annual visitation was only 600,000.

The problems of decreasing management services became apparent last summer and we wrote several times to the Park Superintendent and the Director of the South-East Region. In most cases their response was to cite lack of staff and financial resources as the reason for declining services.

This lack of resources means that:

- Yarrongobilly Caves are closed because of lack of a ranger and power
- ranger-guided walks and other education and interpretation programs have been curtailed
- no ranger can be provided for Thredbo in summer
- there has been reduction in the general visitor facilities
- there is not adequate staff to prevent 4WD intrusions, prevent vandalism, or carry out urgent conservation programs such as the stabilisation of Coolamine Homestead.

A new Plan of Management for KNP was adopted this year; while this plan is, in most respects, a good philosophical guide to the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the park, it exposes even further the lack of practical resources to implement the Plan. We were disappointed also to find that changes were made at the last minute to the Plan of Management which remove the upper bed limit. We previously believed an upper bed limit would be incorporated in the new plan. We support the management strategy that the greater volume of visitors should be accommodated outside the park and will oppose any lifting of the levels set out in the 1974 plan.

By the time this Bulletin is printed the N.P.A. will have spent another weekend with Andy Spate in the Cave Creek area of the park, both exploring the area and considering some of the management problems. Mr Spate is the N.P.W.S. Investigations Officer (Karsts) for the Coolman area. We welcome opportunities such as this to have discussions with N.P.W.S. in the South-East Region and we hope this will continue. As well as approaching the Service at all levels to express our viewpoints, we would hope to be involved at a practical level undertaking projects and assisting Service officers both within the KNP and other parks in the S.East.

The N.S.W. N.P.W.S. has a very creditable record in the management of KNP; the park is in many ways a fine example of what can be done in resolving conflicts between development pressure (which has been both heavy and sustained) and conserving the natural values of the park. As evidence of this, we cite the recovery of the park from former over-grazing and regular burning of the alpine pastures, and from some of the scars of hydro-electric development. The noted alpine ecologist, Mr Dane Wimbush, recently described some of these recovery patterns in more detail in a talk to the Association. On the other side of the ledger are the intensive developments of Thredbo and Perisher to cater for downhill skiing. These certainly do not enhance the natural values of the park. Concerned conservationists must seek at every available opportunity to put their viewpoint to minimise further developments such as these. I have already commented on one aspect of the new management plan which seems to allow unrestricted expansion of overnight accommodation in the park. The Association has recently written to the responsible Minister, the N.S.W. Minister for Planning and Environment, the Hon. Eric Bedford, MP, seeking revision of this aspect of the plan. I hope you will do the same.

I feel that we must continue to strongly support the concept of the KNP as an outstanding natural area and offer our support for the N.P.W.S. to achieve this goal. Our use of the park for walks and camps can set an example for the appreciation of the natural features of the park. We must, however, continue to press both State and Commonwealth Governments for more funding for KNP. Only in this way can the appropriate services be provided to secure the future of the KNP as a natural area. Funding for KNP was one of the issues we raised at the recent conference of the Australian National Parks Council and in this way we have gained the support of N.P.A.s around Australia in our efforts to conserve the park.

DONATIONS TO N.P.A. NOW TAX FREE

The Minister for Home Affairs and Environment has advised "that as part of the 1982/83 Budget, the Government has decided to allow donations to the National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory to be claimed as tax deductions under Section 78 (1) (a) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.

The Government is aware of the valuable work being carried out by your organisation in the promotion of national parks and reserves and the conservation of flora, fauna and natural resources.

I am confident that the taxation concession will assist your organisation in its future fund raising programs as well as encouraging more active public participation and concern for nature conservation.

I wish the National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory continuing success in the promotion of its very necessary and worthwhile objectives."

CONSERVATION 'LOG OF CLAIMS'

A small late evening meeting in Canberra in September heralded the beginning of an important development within Australia's voluntary conservation movement.

The meeting was between representatives of Australia's 'peak' conservation organisations who came together for the first time to present a united approach to the Commonwealth Government on conservation issues.

They resolved to prepare for submission to the Government a 'log of claims' for the protection of the Australian environment and to join forces regularly to lobby the Government pre-Budget and pre-elections on conservation issues. Apparently comparable organisations in the United States have adopted, with considerable success, a similar lobbying strategy in recent years.

The organisations involved are the Australian Council of National Trusts, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Committee for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the Australian National Parks Council. Together they represent an active membership throughout the country of well over 100,000.

The National Parks Association of the ACT is a member of the latter body (ANPC) and our President, Neville Esau, represented the Council at the historic meeting.

The press statement said the 'log of claims' would cover the major items of funding, legislation and resources for Government agencies, as well as specific issues such as:

- An immediate supplementary grant for the Commonwealth National Estate Grants Program and a commitment to restore the program to at least the \$8 million allocated in the 1974/75 Budget.
- The establishment of a separate Federal Environment Department headed by a Minister of Cabinet rank.
- A commitment to give effect to national and international obligations under various conventions and treaties.
- A more expeditious declaration of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
- An extension of the northern and southern boundaries of the Kakadu National Park.
- A commitment to protect Australia's rainforests.

THIS ISSUE. Permission to use the delightful pen drawing of Australian wildflowers on the cover was graciously given by the artist, Nancy Carriage O'Connor. Her drawing of the Royal Bluebell, *Wahlenbergia gloriosa* appeared in the last issue. The change to typesetting has produced a clearer and more readable type as well as giving greater flexibility in arrangement. The Committee has decided to continue with this format. I would like to thank those members who have complimented me on the new style and arrangement and also the contributors who are making the Bulletin an effective expression of our policies and activities.

Editor

PARK PERSONALITY PROFILES

MOLLY O'NEILL

Molly O'Neill was born in England, and spent most of her life before coming to Australia living in or near the historic city of St. Albans, just north of London. She was always interested in wild life, and particularly wild flowers, though at that time there was not much scope for joining organised societies. On leaving school she began studying art, afterwards doing office work, and work in a photographic studio. At the beginning of World War 11 she began the study of radiography, and spent most of the war time working in or near London. One of her most vivid memories is that of the bombed sites in London in the summer after the blitz. They were covered with two flowering plants, the deep pink rosebay willow herb and the golden ragwort, (both native English plants). The area round St. Paul's Cathedral was a flat open space, all the buildings having been demolished, and this was a sea of pink and gold.

On coming to Australia, she spent some years working in different places all round Australia, finally coming to Wollongong to work in 1959. Here she joined the Illawarra Natural History Society, and this was where her interest in Australian Wildlife and the Conservation movement really developed. This was also where she did her first bush-walking, and for some time she was on the Council of the Society. She also became an Honorary Ranger. She is still a member of the INHS, and regularly attends their meetings.

In 1962 she came to work in Goulburn, in charge of the Hospital X-ray Department, and found no natural history or conservation activity at all in the city. As an Honorary Ranger she felt that she ought to do something, so she and a friend, John Lane, held a meeting to assess what interest there might be. The numbers seemed promising, so a Society was formed, with John as President and Molly as Secretary. She has remained Secretary ever since, while John has now left Goulburn. She felt that perhaps the "Goulburn Field Naturalist Society" might have been an unfortunate choice of name, as at first quite a number of people thought it was a nudist society!

As time went on, the conservation movement gathered momentum, and the Goulburn Society became involved in all the prominent conservation issues. Local exploration by many members gradually developed a fairly detailed knowledge of the Goulburn district, and as Molly is the only member who has been in it since the beginning, she inherits and passes on the knowledge. She also keeps a careful eye on the local paper, to find out if any moves are proposed which might be detrimental to conservation in the district. In 1976 the Goulburn Field Naturalist Society brought out its book, "An Outline of the Natural History of the Goulburn District". The knowledge of all the members of the Society was pooled in this book, and Molly acted as editor, typist and illustrator. In this way her early experience became extremely useful.

In 1980, owing to the representations of the Society, the Alison Hone Reserve for the Protection of Native Flora and Fauna was declared near Goulburn, and Molly is one of the Trustees, and secretary of the Trust. She is also a Trustee of the Bungonia State Recreation Area, and at present is engaged in recording and photographing all the flora of the SRA. She hopes to develop a system by which ordinary members of the public can identify any plant to be found there. She is also recording regeneration of flora after the disastrous bush fire of 1977, and advises the Trust with regard to fire policy as it affects the flora. She is also on the Publicity Sub-Committee of the SRA. If she lives long enough, she would like to make a photographic record of all the flora of the Goulburn district.

Molly is a committed Christian, and feels that this conservation work is the work that she has been given to do.

(The above article is the first in a series on people, past and present, with a concern for the environment and the drive for the creation of national parks. Members are asked for assistance in continuing the series by contributing articles, research or writing from supplied research material.)

JUST BRIEFLY...

Our favourite item this time is Fiona Brand's election to Hon. Life Membership. Fiona was a foundation member of N.P.A., has been Hon. Secretary, Editor, and Committee Member from genesis to the present with two minor lapses while overseas. More could be said, but not briefly.

Glorious August weather, a large roll-up, and the Presidential scones made the President's Winter Barbecue at Pierces Creek one of our happiest outings. Thanks to the characteristic foresight and energy of our Secretary and her family, the welcome sign was out, the fires glowing and the hot plates sizzling when 75 members rolled up with their bangers and snags.

Old Natparkers never say die. Julie Henry, N.P.A.Q., N.P.A.A.C.T., N.P.A.N.S.W., of Sydney, is lending her best endeavours to our Orroral history search by worming her way through old records at the Mitchell Library, Lands Office and Registrar-General's. Whatever the state of Freedom of Information, if there's anything relevant there, Julie will unearth it.

And we hear that she (Julie of course) welcomed our delegates to the A.N.P.C., A.G.M. with open arms and baked meats. Talking of A.N.P.C., we like the story of the official dinner, at which Max Bourke, Heritage Commission Director and old friend of N.P.A., was guest speaker. Now I ask you, can anyone, dining in a large Chinese restaurant, hear what even their neighbours are saying? The dismayed Secretary, sensing disaster, swept the entire delegation off to her Killara home and served coffee and guest speaker in a relaxed and receptive atmosphere.

Our botanists preparing material for N.P.A.'s Field Guide to the Trees of the A.C.T. are John Hook (Eucalyptus), Peter Ormay (acacias) and Laurie Adams (the rest) with Warren Nicholls casting a co-ordinating eye over the text. Jenny Cusbert is handling maps, Sheila Kruse is committee convener, while the title that fits Babette Scougall is Project Manager.

It's not often that one is called upon to remove armfuls of hay from the lounge room, sweep out the rat skeletons and bottles of poison, snip away at the long grass and be rewarded by the disinterment of the makings of three iron beds but these and other joys were experienced by the 20-odd Orroral Homestead restoration work party. Under instruction from the C.C.A.E. architectural survey team, grass was mown, pre-1914 Vinca minor gently removed from under and around fallen iron and timber, with care to leave undisturbed clues valuable to the researchers. And we learned, while picking the barley grass seeds from our socks and jumpers, that the building was a craftsman's job, most of it in surprisingly good condition and well worthy of restoration.

You will have read the press notices, seen the pictures, and know that Life Be In It the Senior Way was a gentle, N.P.A.-led walk along Black Mt's flattest tracks on a sunny morning in October. What you may not know is that LBI approached Olive Buckman personally to lead this walk, that she agreed on condition that it be advertised as an N.P.A. event, that she plotted the course and logistics with precision, enlisted the support of co-members, five-sixths of them sufficiently Senior, and provided cool drinks, biscuits and even some chairs for the refreshment of 23 walkers who thought all this far better than doing the Monday washing.

YEAR OF THE TREE PROJECT

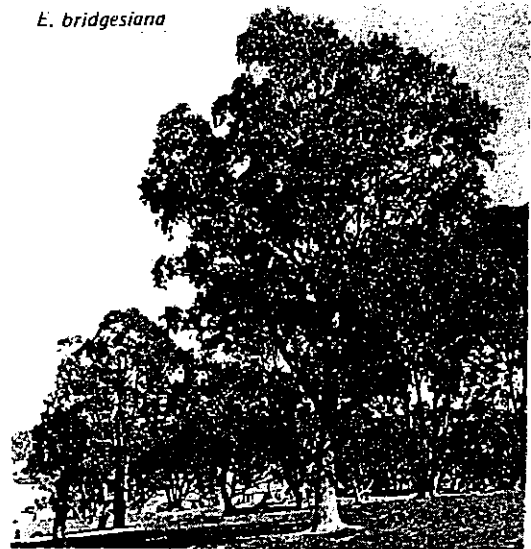
Near the Glendale Crossing of the Gudgenby River, on the road between Tharwa and Adaminaby and adjacent to the new Information Centre there was a depot which had been used by the contractors on the recent road widening and surfacing project. As this area is within the Gudgenby Nature Reserve, the National Parks Association of the A.C.T. is making a project for the Year of the Tree, of helping to revegetate the area by planting seedlings of tree species which are native in the area. John Hook, John Banks, Robert Story and Charles Hill surveyed nearby country, and among the species selected for propagation are Apple Box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*), Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora* subspecies *pauciflora*), Candle Bark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) and Black Sallee (*Eucalyptus stellulata*).

Some notes about these species may be of interest:

Apple Box (*Euc. bridgesiana*) is a fibrous-barked tree which grows to 12-20m high and about 1m in diameter. It has large spreading branches but a comparatively short main trunk. Useful identifying features are the soft fibrous bark, narrow leaves and the buds occurring in 7s with short individual stalks. Apple Box grows naturally from south-eastern Queensland through New England and down into Victoria. The botanical name honours F. Bridges who was the Chief Inspector of Education in N.S.W. in the late 19th Century.

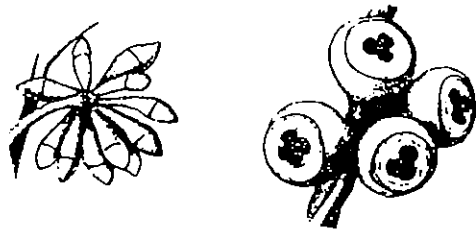


E. bridgesiana

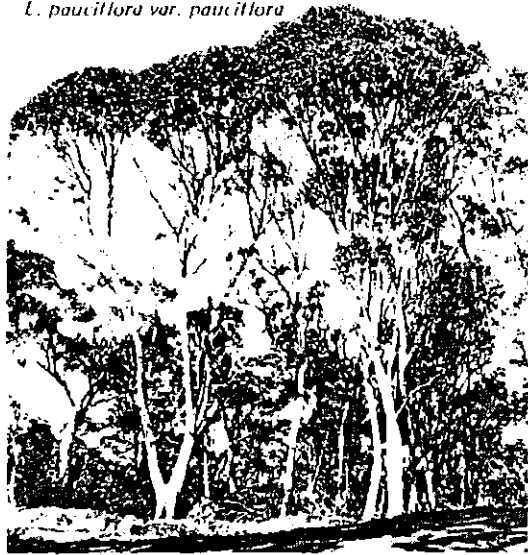


Snow Gum (*Euc. pauciflora* subspecies *pauciflora*) is a common tree in the A.C.T., but it occurs from south-eastern Queensland through the N.S.W. and Victorian mountain areas, a very small occurrence near Mt Gambier in South Australia, and it also grows in Tasmania. It grows 10-20m high, with smooth bark which is usually coloured irregularly with patches of white, grey, brown and red-brown. The bark is also usually marked with scribbles caused by insects. A feature of Snow Gum is the leathery leaves with veins which are almost parallel with the midrib. The buds occur in groups of 7-15. It is curious that the botanical name means "few-flowered", when in fact the trees are noted for being very prolific in blossoms. Possibly this apparent contradiction was because it was described

and named originally by Kurt Sprengel in 1827 from specimens and notes by Franz Sieber who collected plants in N.S.W. for only seven months in 1823.



L. pauciflora var. *pauciflora*



Black Sallee (*Euc. stellulata*) is smaller than the other species mentioned, growing up to about 15m, but is usually seen smaller than this. It grows from near the Queensland border along the high country to Victoria. The bark is smooth, usually olive-green, but can be very dark with age giving rise to the common name. The leaves are small with the veins almost parallel with the midrib. The pointed buds have no individual stalks and occur in clusters of up to 20 or more. The arrangement of the buds is somewhat star-like, and this feature is reflected in the botanical name *stellulata* which means little stars.



E. stellulata



Candle Bark (*Euc. rubida*) grows from the New England area down into Victoria, and it has two small occurrences in the Mt Lofty Ranges of South Australia and in the central plateau of Tasmania. The buds and fruits occur in 3s, with very short or no individual stalks. The name *rubida* means red, referring to the seasonally red smooth bark; often there is a rough scaly base of up to 1m on the trunk. The shedding bark often hangs from the branches and trunk, giving rise to the common name of Candle Bark, and sometimes Ribbon Bark.



E. rubida



These four eucalypts are part of the mountain flora of the A.C.T. and when grown in the site mentioned should help to return the gravel dump area to a more natural bushland.

GEORGE CHIPPENDALE

A 'BREAK AWAY' WITH A DIFFERENCE

Do you sometimes feel like two or three days away from the daily 'rat race' – but with activity, fresh air and beautiful scenery? I reached this pitch recently, and on the spur of the moment, booked for a three day raft trip down the Tumut river.

Away from Canberra around 7.00a.m., on a Saturday we started our 'water' trip in 13 foot rafts (six persons to each) around 11.00a.m., in the cold, clear, rushing water straight from the Blowering Dam. I had canoed the Tumut and its tributaries some four years ago – but rafting is much more leisurely! – the current and the skipper do most of the work, leaving you to sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery, and begin to feel there is no one else anywhere in the world! While we dodged the beautiful weeping willows, and equally lovely Casuarinas, stopped for lunch (a waterproof container carries this and anything you might need – sweater – camera etc.) – the 'land party' in the small bus, 4 wheel drive plus trailer – had been busy shopping, and get all ready for our arrival at camp. Around 3.00p.m., we drew into the bank, and attacked the ice cold beer and soft drinks – then put up our tents – before enjoying the evening meal and relaxing evening.

Both nights camps were on private property, and while we enjoyed a much longer day rafting on the Sunday, we reached another property lunch time Monday, to 'take out' have lunch, and start our drive back to Canberra. The last day was not without its excitement (although that is not MY description) – when raft 'Pilot' (which I was on) shot ahead of 'Jagungal' – Trying to avoid the inevitable 'water battle' – thinking that at least we had an advantage in sneaking off with a plastic bowl. However, the others collected an old bucket from among the tree roots, with the

result that we were at a great disadvantage when the battle began, and I swear / received every bucketful!

In spite of some drastic results (the water comes direct from the snow, then out from the BOTTOM of the dam, and so is seldom above 5 deg.) – I would not have missed the trip for anything, and settled back to daily life refreshed and rejuvenated from the utter peace and beauty; the interest of the wild life – especially the birds and water-fowl; the joy of being well looked after (!) and the pleasure of being with a grand group of people – even though I was the 'Granny' of the party by more years than I care to think about!

OLIVE BUCKMAN

BOOLIGAL – THE BIRDS AND THEIR HABITAT

Most of my time spent in southwest N.S.W. has been at Toms Lake Station, 18km northwest of Booligal. The country is flat, averages 250mm (10in) o. rain a year. The seasonal changes are amazing and the abundance of birds changes accordingly. In a good year one can have fun making 'body patterns' in the lush medic and barley grass which cover what was unyielding, hard, cracked, bare ground six months earlier. The Marrowie Creek, which runs through the property is fed from the Lachlan River and usually water is let into the creek twice a year. Weirs at various points on the station retain the water. Channels have been dug to allow water to be distributed to ground tanks around the property, and low-lying areas may be temporarily flooded. As the water is used the Marrowie is reduced to waterholes which dry up in the extreme summer.

The patchy availability of water has led to the formation of different habitats from the dry plains covered with low bushes, black box *Eucalyptus largiflorens* woodland, the occasionally flooded areas containing bushes *Chenopodium nitrariaceum* which is about 1.5 high, prickly and may grow quite densely to stretches of water.

Old man saltbush *Atriplex nummularia* grows in scattered patches on the plains which support a variety of chenopod and annual composites. Other features of this flat, 360° landscape, broken occasionally by a distant windmill, are large claypans and the occurrence of low, rounded dillon bushes which grow in heavily-used areas such as around the watering points. The diversity and abundance of birds on these plains are lower than the others. More desert-adapted species such as orange and crimson chats, Australian pratincoles, singing bushlarks and white-winged fairy-wrens occur as well as brown songlarks, emus and Richard's pipit. Both red and grey kangaroos may form large groups, the grey having invaded relatively recently. The versatile rodent *Mus musculus*, occurs in these as well as other areas and the most common reptiles are shingle-backs, blue-tongued lizards, and smaller skinks, brown and tiger snakes.

The woodland areas usually have an understorey of *Chenopodium* bushes which are replaced by dense wiry lignum around lakes or along the creek. This is the area of greatest bird diversity and includes a variety of parrots, cuckoos, nocturnal birds such as the boobook owl, owl-nightjar and tawny frogmouth, honeyeaters, warblers, flycatchers, woodswallows and many of the others in the list below.

Large stretches of water occur at weirs on Toms Lake and other stations and provide food and nesting sites for a variety of grebes, ducks, cormorants, ibis and pelicans. In 1979, for the first time in many years, straw-necked ibis nested on Toms Lake, on islands of lignum which the birds trampled down. Unfortunately, the nesting sites are not islands for the whole of the nesting season because water is pumped out of the Marrowie into channels. It is to be hoped that rain falls in the Lachlan at times right to enable this breeding to persist.

My own fascination with this area has grown over the last few years, since my daughter and I have spent many tent-living months so that I could study the fairy-wren

that live there. I became interested when I found three species of fairy-wrens, the Superb, Variegated and White-winged co-existing in a shrub-steep area dominated by *Chenopodium* but with scattered black box and old man saltbush occurring in the higher, drier parts.

More than a hundred years ago it was first suggested that closely related species will not occur together because the better adapted will compete for food, nesting sites and other resources and gradually exclude the other species. It is unusual to find three species of fairy-wrens co-existing, we only get one species in Canberra, and so I set out to see if I could determine the strategies of these little birds that enabled them to co-exist.

The particular aspects I studied were breeding selection of nest sites, and feeding behaviour as well as morphological features such as bill dimensions and leg lengths. To investigate feeding behaviour I observed where the birds were feeding, that is, what species of bush, how high and how far into the bush, and durations, and recorded it directly onto a tape-recorder. Hours were then spent transcribing the data, measuring durations using a stop-watch, coding the information onto data sheets so that it could be sorted out using a computer, and analysing the results.

Preliminary results are exciting and suggest that the birds avoid competing with each other by actually selecting different parts of a bush in which to feed. The White-winged spend 50% of their time on the outside of the bushes, Variegated spend 57% of their time more than 0.5m into the bush while the Superb feed in both outer and inner regions to a lesser extent but spend more time feeding on the ground. Superb have the longest legs and so are more suited to hopping on the ground; White-winged have the shortest and spend least time on the ground. Interestingly, Superb move about in the bushes the fastest, while Variegated move the slowest, spending the longest times of the three species at each feeding position. The bill dimensions of the three species differ and so could be expected to handle different sized insects but that story isn't yet complete.

Set out below are the birds I have seen on Toms Lake Station over the last few years.

Lecture by Sonia Tidemann of the Zoology Department, ANU, to the Association on the 15th July, 1982.

| TOM'S LAKE CHECKLIST | 1977 – 1981 |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| emu | bluewinged parrot |
| great crested grebe | budgerigar |
| Australasian grebe | cockatiel |
| hoary headed grebe | pallid cuckoo |
| Australian pelican | fantailed cuckoo |
| piebald cormorant | blackeared cuckoo |
| little pied cormorant | Horsfield's bronzecuckoo |
| great cormorant | southern boobook |
| little black cormorant | barn owl |
| Pacific heron | tawny frogmouth |
| whitefaced heron | Australian owl-nightjar |
| great egret | laughing kookaburra |
| rufous night-heron | redbacked kingfisher |
| glossy ibis | sacred kingfisher |
| sacred ibis | rainbow bee-eater |
| straw-necked ibis | dollar bird |
| royal spoonbill | welcome swallow |
| yellow-billed spoonbill | fairy martin |
| black swan | tree martin |
| plumed whistling duck | Richard's pipit |
| freckled duck | blackfaced cuckoo-shrike |
| Australian shelduck | ground cuckoo-shrike |
| Pacific black duck | whitewinged triller |
| grey teal | redcapped robin |
| chestnut teal | rufous whistler |
| Australasian shoveler | grey shrikethrush |
| maned duck | restless flycatcher |
| pink-eared duck | grey fantail |
| hardhead | willie wagtail |
| blue-billed duck | greycrowned babbler |
| musk duck | little grassbird |

marsh harrier
 collared sparrowhawk
 spotted harrier
 whistling kite
 brown goshawk
 black kite
 little eagle
 wedge-tailed eagle
 black-shouldered kite
 Australian hobby
 peregrine falcon
 brown falcon
 black falcon
 Australian kestrel
 stubble quail
 Australian crane
 blacktailed native-hen
 dusky moorhen
 purple swamphen
 Eurasian coot
 masked lapwing
 banded lapwing
 red-kneed dotterel
 blackfronted plover
 inland dotterel
 white headed stilt
 red-necked avocet
 greenshank
 silver gull
 whiskered tern
 gull-billed tern
 Caspian tern
 Australian pratincole
 peaceful dove
 diamond dove
 common bronzewing
 crested pigeon
 little corella
 galah
 ringneck
 red-rumped parrot
 bluebonnet

goldenheaded cisticola
 clamorous reed warbler
 brown songlark
 rufous songlark
 superb fairy-wren
 variegated fairy-wren
 redthroat
 weebill
 western gerygone
 chestnut-rumped thornbill
 yellow-rumped thornbill
 yellow thornbill
 southern whiteface
 brown treecreeper
 spiny-cheeked honeyeater
 striped honeyeater
 little friarbird
 yellowthroated miner
 whiteplumed honeyeater
 singing honeyeater
 painted honeyeater
 white-fronted honeyeater
 orange chat
 whitefronted chat
 crimson chat
 mistletoebird
 striated pardalote
 silvereye
 European goldfinch
 house sparrow
 zebra finch
 common starling
 white-winged chough
 Australian magpielark
 whitebreasted woodswallow
 masked woodswallow
 whitebrowed woodswallow
 blackfaced woodswallow
 pied butcherbird
 Australian magpie
 Australian raven
 little raven

A SUNDAY AT LAKE GEORGE

On 22 August some 35 of us ranging in age from 70-plus to 19 weeks (carried in a sling by father or mother) enjoyed an unseasonably warm Sunday at Lake George, under the friendly guidance of leader Betty Campbell.

We assembled at the Airport parking area at the civilized hour of 10.30 and sorted ourselves into a smaller number of cars. The reason for this, apart from fuel conservation, became apparent at Geary's Gap, where there was very limited parking space beside the feverish Federal Highway.

Through the gate we went and (by permission) into private property, down to the Lake bed and along what would have been the shore, had there been a full body of water. Your reporter has been in Canberra, on and off, for over 50 years, and though she has many times seen Lake George 'dry' she has never looked across the Lake bed when there has not been at least a pool on the Bungendore side; now there is nothing. There were some mysterious mirages, one at the northern or Collector end, one on the eastern side between Bungendore and the piled slag heaps of the Woodlawn mine. The latter had an island with what looked like a white castle upon it. We examined it with glasses, and it looked substantial enough, but it had vanished by the time we had climbed to the ridge. Quite close, some of us saw a pair of spur-winged plovers which one expert felt had no business to be there on those waterless flats. During the day our bird expert sighted a total of 20 different kinds of birds, mainly in the dry sclerophyll forest of the ridge.

Our botanical experts were seen at one point in the afternoon huddled around a small/low-growing flowering shrub. We did not see too many trees or shrubs in flower apart from early *Acacia baileyana*, so this one was a find. Various botanical books were produced from a rucksack and after much cogitation the little shrub was pronounced to be *Acacia gunnii*.

Down on the flats we heard again the sad story of the drowning of the five RMC cadets in 1956. In those days the College had a boatshed below the Gap (site pointed out) and part of the lads' training was boat-handling.¹

The only marks on the baked earth of the Lake bed were motor bicycle skid marks, and the only discordant note on the whole wide expanse was the roar of three machines which headed downhill from the ridge and made off along the flat leaving trails of dust and fumes in their wake. Chacun à son goût, or every man to his own poison.

Up from the shore line we clambered to the timbered ridge where fine specimens of *Eucalyptus rossii* and *E. mannifera* flourished. We lunched on a high slope pungent with sheep droppings, just below the rounded head of Purrorumba, or so our cartographer informed us. 'What does that mean, Ian?' someone enquired of that aboriginal authority I.A.G. Currie. Quick as a flash, he replied, 'Purr-rumba? Cat dancing of course!'

Pat and young Andrew discovered a fascinating hide-out, on a ledge 200m above the Lake bed. There was a shelving rock providing a kind of shelter for a rather sloping bed of leaves and litter, so the occupants had built a low dry-stone wall to prevent anyone from rolling over the edge. Scouting round for the fireplace we felt must be there, Andrew found it, on the other side of the fence: a fire-box and a beautifully made little chimney, in loosely fitted stones. If we had known the date the fence was put up we should have been able to date the camp, because surely the campers would not have climbed the fence and back again with billy and barbecue? One visitor said he felt sure the camp was at least 10 years old because all trace of carbonization from the smoke had vanished.

Unlike that June day on Mt Tennant, when lunch was eaten in falling snow in double-quick time, no one was in a hurry to move from Purrorumba, but we did wander along the ridge southwards, looking at Mts Majura and Ainslie and the Black Mountain needle from a distant and unfamiliar angle. Then back at a leisurely pace out of the forest and into the sheep property again, pausing at the site of the Hang Gliding Club's assembly place which is marked by a board giving dire warnings about what may become of hot-headed hang-gliders if they do not observe various precepts such as not imbibing alcohol before take-off. We were told that the Club had discontinued its activities when, with the withdrawal of the Lake waters, the air turbulence became too unpredictable. Could it also have been, we wondered, that the graceful gliders, swooping and soaring above the Lake, constituted a hazard to drivers along the Highway? Not because of any possibility of collision, but because they distracted drivers' attention?

Back to the roar of traffic at Geary's Gap, we had snacks from baskets and thermoses in the waiting cars and took off for home as infrequent gaps in the hurtling stream afforded opportunity. A delightful day during which sweaters and parkas were discarded in the almost hot sunshine.

1. The Canberra & District Historical Society's record for 8 July 1956 reads:

Five RMC cadets drowned

A party of eight cadets went to the club boatshed to carry out routine maintenance on the boats. Late in the afternoon two cadets took out a VJ which capsized 200 yards from the shore. Three of their comrades manned an assault craft which was improperly assembled and came to pieces in the choppy sea. Two other cadets put on life-jackets and paddled an unrigged VJ out by hand, while the remaining cadet went for help. Only the two in the third craft survived, Staff Cadets Gosling and Ford. Of the others, three came from Queensland, R.R. Pritchard, J.L. Reilly and D.F. Noble, I.D. Colquhoun from Victoria, B.W. Jorgensen from W.A. Although search was continued on land and water until 16 August, Navy frogmen even being called in to help, only the body of Jorgensen was recovered.



Leaving the heath section on the shoulder of the ridge, the new track from The Big Hole enters the lower forested area before crossing the Shoalhaven River. Photo Reg Alder

NEW ROUTE TO THE BIG HOLE

Members of the Association may be interested to learn that the National Parks and Wildlife Service of New South Wales has recently completed a new access route to the Big Hole. The Big Hole is included in a small enclave of the Deua National Park and a narrow strip of land complete with access road has been established to connect it to the Shoalhaven Valley Road.

For the benefit of those who have not yet seen this astonishing natural feature it may be said that it is a roughly circular hole with perpendicular walls about 45 metres in diameter and 115 metres deep. It lies on the slopes of a small hill east of the Shoalhaven some 16 kms south of Ballalaba where the Captains Flat – Braidwood road meets the road running up the Shoalhaven Valley. There is an excellent 1:100 000 map of the area, Araluen sheet 8826 and also one in the 1:25 000 series Kain 8826-IV-S.

Surrounded by woodland the Big Hole is a startling, indeed frightening place, when its enormous crater suddenly yawns in view in front of one. It has apparently been formed by the collapse of a subterranean limestone cavern to which the sandstone of the hill has fallen.

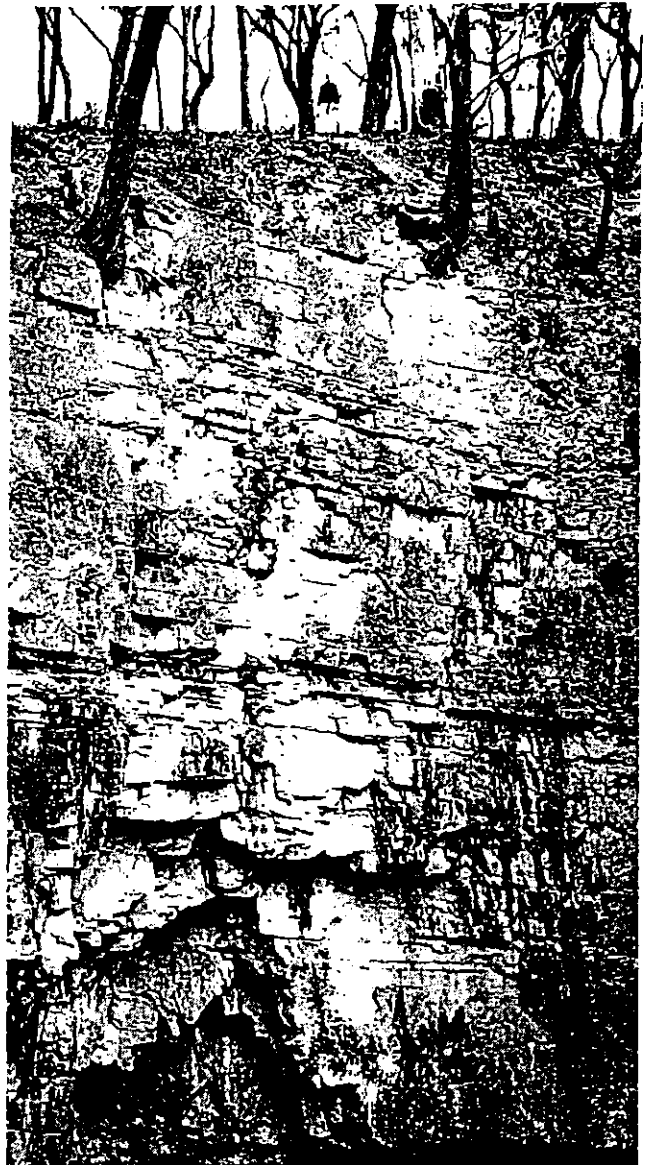
The former route to the Big Hole ran through private property and some years ago was closed off by the landowner. The NPWS has now acquired a strip of land running down to the Shoalhaven just beyond the Gundillion cemetery and has built a pleasant picnic ground at the end of the access road. Visitors must wade across the Shoalhaven so that the Big Hole is inaccessible after heavy rain. On the other side of the river a footpath has been built through light forest and dwarf casuarina leading to the Hole. It is about 20 minutes gentle walk.

The Big Hole is well worth seeing but NPA members are strongly advised to be extremely careful in approaching the Hole. There is no guard rail and it is to be hoped that one will not be installed but the edges are gravelly and shelves steeply to the sheer rock faces below. Large cracks in the top edge and sides show the possibility of further rock falls. Lively children should be kept on leads.

From the hilltop above the Big Hole a most beautiful view over the Shoalhaven Valley can be obtained and this is a delightful picnic spot. For the more energetic it is possible to walk on further to reach the limestone caves of the Marble Arch or to follow the Bettowind Fire Track along the Bendoura Range which looks over the Araluen Valley.

There is a more detailed account of the Big Hole in Graeme Barrow's excellent "25 Family Bushwalks in and around Canberra".

ALASTAIR MORRISON



The western and higher side of the Big Hole showing the fragile nature of the rock wall. (photo Hedda Morrison).

UPPER MURRAY HISTORY

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough;
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint stones
every stride,

The man that holds his own is good enough.

And the Snowy River riders on the mountains make their
home,

Where the river runs those giant hills between;

I have seen full many horsemen since I first commenced
to roam,

But nowhere yet such horsemen have I seen."

Those immortal lines from Banjo Paterson's, "Man from Snowy River" beautifully portray the Upper Murray district and the remarkable horsemen for which it became renowned. In the heart of this district lived the real Man from Snowy River, Jack Riley, who from 1884 until his death on July 16, 1914, managed the 8000 hectare Tom Groggin pastoral run for Mr John Pierce of "Greg Greg", near Corryong. Riley's main task was to drive cattle out to Tom Groggin in the summer for grazing on the high country and to bring them back as two-year-olds to his employer's station. The trips were extremely arduous involving guiding the cattle over the precipitous slopes of the Geehi Walls. Riley's epic ride took place in the mid 1880s when he joined a party of stockmen who were attempting to re-capture a thoroughbred stallion which had escaped and was running with a mob of wild horses near Mt Leatherhead. Paterson heard of the story while staying overnight at Riley's hut with Mr Walter Mitchell, of Bringenbrong station. His famous poem was first published in *The Bulletin* in 1890.*

It is a great pity that it had to become the subject of one of the worst, most cliché-ridden films that has ever been made in Australia. Those still suffering from the shock of seeing Hollywood stalwart, Kirk Douglas, striding around in a pair of American cowboy boots trying to look like an Australian mountain cattleman, should seek solace in Charlie Bingham's recollections of Riley in Tom Mitchell's book, "Corryong and the Man from Snowy River District."

Charlie Bingham was head groom Bringenbrong and Towong Hill, a magnificent cattle property rising above the Murray River flats, where Tom Mitchell was born in 1906 and still lives. "But off all the blinking hatters and hermits that knocked about the mountains up there in them old days, there was none that could touch old Jack Riley, the bloke that Mr Paterson called 'The Man from Snowy River' in that bit of poetry he wrote one time," Bingham recalled.

"He was queer old cuss, was this Man from Snowy River - I remember him well - he used to live away up there on Groggin on a bit of a selection he had there. "He'd had some trouble with the cops or he'd been worsted in a law-suit or something and that's what made him clear out and live like that - no by the Holy living Jesus I'm wrong - it wasn't that at all - I remember it now . . . "Oh he was a little grey-whiskered old fellow, and if you fetched up to his shack in Groggin you were all right as long as you had some whisky with you." Of course we could never find that sort of language in a modern film. It has largely died with the characters who spoke it and for that reason Mitchell showed great foresight in making verbatim notes in 1946 of his conversations with Charlie Bingham and another family retainer, George Lloyd, and reprinting them in his book.

Mitchell is himself an Upper Murray identity; his family has lived there since Charles Huon de Kerrilleau, the brother of his great grandmother, Elizabeth Mitchell, came over the Snowy Mountains from Monaro in 1837. It was Tom Mitchell's father who took Paterson up to see Riley. In his comprehensive account of Upper Murray history, Mitchell moves through the district's early settlement, the development of its primary industries, local government and education. The chapters on horses, Upper Murray personalities

and border life in general are highlights of the book because of Charlie Bingham and George Lloyd. Take for example Bingham's description of wild horses from the Snowy Mountains leaving Bringenbrong station; their ultimate destination, India, to be ridden by British army officers. "We'd have them in the yards and when we were all set, someone would open the gate and I guarantee that there was never such a sight like it in the whole of Australia. Out they'd come kickin' and squealin' and buckin' and fightin' and off hell for leather in one mad blooming gallop first to the left and then to the right, and then back to the left and then over to the right again, with us racing our horses to keep them headed down the flat towards the ford, and Mr Walter would be out in front doing his level damndest to steady the lead and he'd more than have his work cut out though he'd forgot more about handling horses than most blokes know today." Or George Lloyd's recollections of Ah Quong, a gardener at Bringenbrong for many years. "I remember one time we were coming along in the old buggy, me mother and me, and he pulls up at Ah Quong's and Ah Quong - I can see his old yellow face now with his pigtail hanging down behind - grabs me and lifts me out of the buggy and I'm roarin' and fightin' and squealin' to get away, and I think that my last hour has come and he swings me over the fence and gives me three big water melons, and I think Ah Quong is the greatest man on earth." Mitchell himself is certainly capable of evocative description: "The British Indian Army officers were immaculately dressed, and twirling the waxed ends of their carefully shaped and groomed moustaches, discussed the merits of the various horses in accented British phrases that sounded sissy to the flannel-shirted horde of Bringenbrong stockmen. The smell of the cigars they smoked also seemed effete to stockmen used to smoking vast amounts of coarse black shag-tobacco, cut off in plugs and then rammed into the bowls of their blackened old pipes; but these officers knew exactly what they wanted and quietly but efficiently superintended the drafting off of the chosen animals."

Mitchell's chapter on national parks and forestry includes some comments that would not be greeted with much joy by conservationists. He believes that while the major Alpine regions and the river catchment areas need protection, too much other land was unnecessarily included in the Kosciusko National Park. His main concern is the banning of snow lease grazing. "With reference to the fact that the banning of grazing spelt economic disaster to many whose livelihood the mountains had provided, some fanatics, concerned only with their new sources of pleasure, arrogantly said, 'Oh, they can find something else.' The impact of the Kosciusko National Park and its grazing ban was particularly severe on the Upper Murray, which proceeded to lose not only its ancillary grazing but its highly profitable and widely-known autumn sales of snow-lease cattle. With large areas of land not really needed by the Kosciusko National Park, it would seem reasonable to free some park land to form areas that could be kept in reserve for small graziers suffering hardship in years of exceptionally severe drought, but at no other time." Besides Kosciusko, Mitchell is also not very impressed with one of Victoria's newest national Parks, Burrowa Pine Mountain, north of Corryong. "Only time will tell whether this newest of Victoria's national parks will be an asset or a menace to the Upper Murray in the matter of noxious weeds, vermin and bush fires."

In marked contrast, he applauds the work of the Forests' Commission and is enthusiastic about the rapid replacement on a massive scale of native forest by radiata pine plantations near Koetong. His observation of "The endless green of the Forests Commission's vast pine woods, worth three times what the original eucalypt timber coverage would have been," appears sadly misplaced in face of increasing evidence of a softwood glut, let alone the destruction of the native forest's habitat for fauna and flora.

Mitchell's other interesting comments on modern devel-

opments in the Upper Murray concern his opposition to the Snowy Mountains Scheme and the move to make Albury-Wodonga a major growth centre. I would have been interested to see a fuller exposition of the former since the Scheme is usually portrayed as Australia's greatest modern engineering achievement. Compare that with Mitchell's view: "One day the amount of money needlessly wasted on the construction of the Snowy Scheme will be assessed with cold, uncomprehending horror by the Australian people." His opinion of the so-called father of the Scheme, the late Sir William Hudson, is no less direct: "There is no doubt that Sir William Hudson was a very brilliant man and deserved the honours he received, but he was coldly and contemptuously arrogant on a number of occasions, particularly to shire councils."

"Early Days of the Upper Murray," by Jean Carmody, covers some of the same ground as Mitchell's book but focuses more closely on the origins, successes, failures and heartbreaks of the district's pioneering families. Mrs Carmody has done considerable research and includes a remarkable amount of fine detail, but freely admits that while trying to achieve accuracy, much of the material is second or third hand "and who can say how much it has lost or gained in the various tellings." Probably the most important thing to be gained from the book by a reader unfamiliar with the region, is an appreciation of the extraordinary privations faced by the pioneers. Any present-day romantics longing for the simple life free from the accoutrements of modern civilisation might think again if they realised just how closely many of the pioneers' lives were characterised, in the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes' words, by "continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." With no modern medicine, the nearest hospital a long rough journey away in the back of a jolting bullock wagon and the necessity for both men and women to tackle dangerous physical challenges just to maintain their livelihood, it is cause for constant wonder that so many lived to such great ages. A sense of humour was a most important quality in coping with life, and as the book recounts, with death. "Mrs Shelley was asked to break the news to a fettler's wife that her husband had just been killed on the railway line then being put through between Tallangatta and Cudgewa. It was felt that a woman would break the news more gently than a man. Down the hill strode Mrs Shelley towards the dead man's camp calling 'Widow Schmidt! Widow Schmidt!' Mrs Schmidt came to the opening of the tent, her mouth full of pins, as she was just getting up her long hair. Removing the pins she corrected Mrs Shelley, saying that she was not Widow Schmidt. 'Oh, aren't you, begorrah,' replied the forthright Irishwoman, 'Well, you soon will be when you see what's up there in the dray!'"

Corryong and the Man From Snowy River District by The Hon. T.W. Mitchell; 1981; Wilkinson Printers, Albury, N.S.W.

Early Days of the Upper Murray by Mrs Jean Carmody; 1981, Shoestring Press, Wangaratta, Victoria.

*Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains by Harry Stephenson; Melbourne; 1980; page 96.

STEPHEN JOHNSTON

THE CAR VANDAL AT WORK

I had often wondered when it would happen and finally it did, 15 years almost to the day since we came to live in Canberra. I had often wondered, returning to our car left in some out of the way spot while we went for a walk, whether we would return one day to find that one of Australia's legion of vandals had tampered with the car. It did happen to us in April this year while the car was parked in the Queanbeyan Valley by the old road to Tinderry Station.

We returned to the car after a pleasant walk in the hills

bounding the valley to find that one rear tyre was flat. Not an unusual thing to have happen. Normally one would simply set to work and change the wheel. But my suspicions were aroused by the fact that the valve cap was missing. A quick check revealed that the tyre had been deflated by loosening the valve. The other rear tyre had also been deflated - to about 7-8 pounds. If we had changed the wheel and tried to drive back not suspecting that the second tyre had been tampered with, the tubeless tyre could well have become detached from the wheel rim. The front tyres had been left alone.

Since I carry a small foot pump in the car it was no great trouble to right matters. I then discovered that a distributor lead and coil leads had been disconnected. The car lacks a lockable bonnet. The leads were readily replaced.

My wife and I think that this rather disagreeable experience may be of interest to Association members who are also likely to leave their cars unattended while walking. I have heard of a similar experience suffered by some girl walkers in the Clyde area. I understand all their tyres were deflated.

Two examples are hardly an exhaustive sample but they do perhaps indicate what may happen. The vandal can, of course, totally immobilise or wreck a car but seems most likely to tamper with tyres.

And this leads me to suggest that the wayfaring National Parker should take the precaution of carrying with him the following inexpensive items: a tyre gauge; an implement to tighten tyre valves (Schrader tyre caps are useful in this respect); a tyre pump (the kind that fits into a spark plug socket is the most labour saving - most spark plugs are readily accessible though this is not the case with Beetles); and perhaps spare tyre valves - though tyre vandals may well leave these in place. Keep the items out of sight.

I hope a similar experience to ours does not befall any fellow member of NPA - it is a rare event - but if it does happen you will be glad indeed that you carried the items mentioned.

ALASTAIR MORRISON

MICALONG SWAMP OUTING

A total of 23 members and friends of N.P.A. made it to Micalong Swamp, I say 23 since two cars became separated on the last leg of the journey following failure to observe convoy rules, e.g. keep the vehicle behind in sight! A lesson for all.

Lunch was taken on a grassy slope overlooking the swamp - just as the aborigines may have done so in the past. After lunch Geof Hope a palynologist, who had been especially invited to join the outing talked about the 'peat bogs' in the southern tablelands and the special values associated with Micalong. Then followed a short discussion on the known history and current conflicts of the swamp itself and its catchment.

Then followed a walk around the top of the swamp to see evidence of early mining activities in the form of long-filled-in water races. The principal tree species were *Eucalyptus (m) stelluata*, *E (m) pauciflora*, *E (m) radiata* ssp. *robertsonii* and *E (s) dalrympleana* ssp. *dalrympleana*. The past glory of this forest was evidenced by the stature of the old trees.

Geof Hope then enlightened us on the mysteries of core-sampling by taking a core from the peat bog. It was fascinating to see the ancient layers of peaty material come to the surface - some four in all. Then gleyed clay, but no potentially gold bearing sediments. Samples were taken for carbon dating. Geof says they could be as old as 10-15,000 years.

An enjoyable outing was had by all.

John Banks

FOR SALE: One pair of new 8 x 40 binoculars. Betty Campbell 811771.

THE USE OF FIRE IN NATIONAL PARKS

Over the past two decades most people have come to recognise that fire is an integral part of the Australian environment. Most plant and animal communities have been influenced by fire at some time and many require periodic fire for their continued existence. The consequence of high-intensity fire need not be total devastation (as indeed was, and perhaps still is, the view of Australians conditioned by European learning and experience) as our tallest forests of Mountain Ash have been regenerated by such fires at a frequency somewhere between 30 and 300 years. However, the change brought about by high-intensity fires can be enormous. Repeated high-intensity fires will simplify the structure of a vegetation, and eventually the vegetation will be either replaced by a community which can tolerate repeated fires of low-intensity or, through the agency of erosion, will be removed altogether. Usually this process will be a change from a forest structure to a heathland or grassland.

I believe that as a basic policy, a national park should be managed to allow the maximum quantity of biologically fixed carbon to accumulate on the site, or, in other words, to allow the vegetation to achieve its full potential on that particular site. There will always be good reasons why this objective will be modified on specific sites; for example, to maintain a particular plant or animal species which is part of fire sere. Until such areas are identified, the above general policy can serve as a useful basis for developing a fire management policy for the area.

It then may seem that a policy of complete protection from fire may be the best way to achieve this aim. Or, on the other hand since fire is deemed to be part of the environment, our national park will truly be a 'natural' area if 'natural fires' (say caused by lightning, spontaneous combustion or volcanic activity) are allowed to burn. Both attitudes are impractical in Australia and can be considered irresponsible both from the points of view of park management and of community protection.

Four facts must be considered:

- (i) The area of 'natural vegetation' (and this term is used loosely to denominate those vegetation types which have been least altered by human agencies) has been reduced to small islands.
- (ii) The most area burnt and the maximum devastation (change from previous condition) are done by fires burning under extreme conditions of fire weather; e.g. drought, low humidities and high winds. Some 5% of ignitions cause 95% of the area burnt.
- (iii) There is no suppression system available anywhere to control fires burning under these extreme conditions and in heavy fuel loads.
- (iv) The chance of fires starting from human activity is likely to increase, and particularly from outside the park.

Fuel modification is required to reduce the impact of high-intensity fires. The most practical way of reducing fuels in natural forests is by carefully prescribed fire, usually of low-intensity.

A positive protection policy is required for all national parks. The strategy adopted will depend very much on the fire climate of the area, as well as material values both within and outside the park boundaries.

I am going to illustrate the need for fire protection on four very different national parks. All are being degraded by fires of high intensity. In each case the prescribed burning policy recommended is to reduce the impact of high-intensity fire and not necessarily to achieve a specific ecological objective. In no case is a let burn policy considered a reasonable option, nor can refined ecological management be undertaken until the area burnt by high-intensity fire can be substantially reduced. The Australian situation is compared with that in Yosemite National Park, U.S.A. where a natural fire program is practised.

Kakadu National Park, NT

This park has extensive areas of open forest and woodland and much smaller areas of riparian vegetation and relic areas of tropical vine forests. The fuels in the open forest and

woodland are dominated by tall tropical grasses, mostly *Sorghum intrans*. A shrub layer is not apparent although many shrub species exist within the grass layer suppressed by regular fires during the prolonged dry season. A series of experiments have demonstrated that late-season wildfires are slowly degrading both the open forest and woodland, promoting the growth of the coarse grasses, particularly *Sorghum sp.*, which in turn promote continued high-intensity fire. Although it appears that most areas now burn with high-intensity fire each year, ecological evidence suggests that these areas probably previously burned at an average frequency of perhaps 3 years. Protection from fire for 5 years allows the development of a substantial shrub layer, an increase in tree cover, with an increase in litter fuels and a decrease in the coarse grasses.

In such a large area as Kakadu National Park, the protection of even small areas is extremely difficult and requires substantial areas of wide fire breaks. After two years protection, there is sufficient litter fuels to allow low-intensity prescribed fire to be carried out while the tropical grasses are partially cured. Placed in strategic strips, biennial burning can create broad fire breaks without mechanical disturbance. These limit the spread of late-season fires while still allowing the recovery of the tree vegetation into a tall forest where rainfall and soils permit.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

Dominated by low forest and heathland, the vegetation of the Hawkesbury sandstone areas rarely survives more than 10 years before it is burned by a high-intensity fire. Hot fires promote regeneration of shrub species and provide a fuel for further high-intensity fires which are difficult to control. Sapling regeneration from the highly fire resistant Eucalypts and Angophoras are burned back and not permitted to develop. This in turn allows vigorous, un-suppressed shrub growth.

Protection of houses on the park perimeter is the major priority determined by local government. This can be achieved only by reducing heavy fuels both around the park boundary and on strategic areas within the park.

Fire set to the heathland to reduce fuels often is little different in burning characteristics and effects to a wild fire. The heath is reduced to ground level and the sapling regrowth is defoliated and set back. While this may be a legitimate treatment for heathland management to provide habitat for fauna requiring low heath for nesting sites, it does little to provide a long term change in fuels management. True heathland fuel loads are reduced for 5 to 10 years but the longer they are protected the heavier the total fuel loads become.

The easiest fuel type to manage for fire protection consists of a compact layer of leaf litter with a small component of grass and shrubs, associated with a closed canopy overhead. Fuels management can be easily carried out by low-intensity prescribed burning which does not scorch the overstorey canopy, every 6-10 years. But to achieve this condition either a long period of protection is required until the shrub component dies out naturally, or a prescribed burning strategy which is specifically designed to eliminate shrub species which regenerate profusely after fire.

The strategy which is being developed requires two very mild burns in quick succession. The first kills the above ground parts of all shrubs and promotes dense regeneration of those shrubs killed outright by fire. This burn results in a higher load of dead fuel than originally existed. The second burn is applied perhaps two years later when the dead standing shrub material has fallen over, and removes most of the dead litter and twig material and kills seedling regeneration before it has time to set seed. In both burns, the fire intensity is limited so that the crowns of sapling regeneration are retained intact and so in time the area is converted from a woodland to a forest structure.

Areas which have been seriously degraded by past fires may not have the growing stock to ever regain a forest canopy even though the site is capable of supporting a forest stand. These areas may require artificial seeding or planting

of native forest tree species combined with a period of complete protection from fire to achieve the final result of a tall forest.

Kosciusko National Park

The controversy about the use of fire has probably been most vigorous in Kosciusko National Park. The area contains sensitive alpine vegetation which is easily killed by fire and regenerates only slowly in the cold climate. The underlying soils can be easily eroded. The area has had a long history of burning. Considerable modification of vegetation has occurred since European settlement as a result of both wild-fires and deliberate burning off combined with grazing. Some people have proposed that the alpine areas form a natural firebreak and should be designated a "let burn" area where naturally occurring fires may be allowed to run their course. Their argument often is that such fires won't spread very far and in any case will probably self-extinguish under mild conditions at night. This argument is fallacious and four generations of dead ash stags in the Geehi valley (on the same site) illustrate the process of forest degradation that can be caused by unplanned fires of high-intensity.

Under extreme fire conditions, fires burn easily across the Alpine areas. The Tumut River fire in 1965 started on the western side of the park, west of the Tumut river, and in little over 8 hours burned across the high plains to the backwaters of the Adaminaby reservoir. The area suffered considerable drought at the time and the fuel consumption was almost complete over the entire area. The fire burnt deeply into organic soils and sphagnum bogs, causing changes to the vegetation and the hydrological properties of the soil which will take a long time to recover.

This wildfire caused a dramatic increase in both the peak storm flows and the sediment loads in affected rivers. Nine months after the fire there was a thousand-fold increase in the sediment loads carried by Wallaces Creek from 110 t day^{-1} to $100\,000 \text{ t day}^{-1}$ at high discharge rates. Hydrologists estimate that there may have been a 10 000 fold increase in the sediment loads carried by this stream soon after the fire. It took more than 5 years for the sediment loads to return to the pre-fire condition.

In addition to my basic policy regarding National Parks, protection of the catchment area must assume a very high priority in forming a fire management policy. This policy should involve almost total fire exclusion in the fire sensitive alpine vegetation, organic soils and peat swamps. To achieve this, low-intensity prescribed burning in the dry sclerophyll and sub-alpine forests is required to reduce fuel loads and reduce the risk of fires starting on the western slopes, by either natural or human agencies, entering the Alpine areas in a broad front and burning extensive areas.

Burning on the high plains may be considered to retain open grasslands and reduce the extent of shrub invasion (as was practised by the early graziers). This might be considered desirable from some aesthetic or recreation points of view, but would have little influence in managing fuels for fire protection purposes.

SW Tasmania Wilderness area

The classification of a wilderness area probably poses the biggest dilemma for Park Managers. There is a temptation to say that nothing should be done; that fires have little chance of extending out of and affecting areas adjacent to the park (and this is true of SW Tasmania) and should be allowed to burn. But if the consequences of high-intensity fire continue to reduce the total amount of biologically-fixed carbon, they are undesirable. A policy which permits this is tantamount to human interference which is far worse than an active management policy which accelerates ecological change in the opposite direction.

In SW Tasmania, fires have burnt unchecked for thousands of years and in many places I believe have reduced these areas from closed forest to heathland. Under drought conditions and extreme fire weather, the impact of high-intensity fires is devastating. They burn into rainforest, organic soils and peat bogs which have accumulated over thou-

sands of years as illustrated by the Zeehan and Savage river fires in the last two years (1981, 1982). At the same time, extensive areas were burning in the South West Wilderness area quite beyond the resources of Australia — let alone the Tasmanian National Parks service to bring under control.

The end result of this firing is to produce highly flammable button grass plains which are increasing in extent and which burn at a much higher frequency than the fringing sclerophyll forest. On the steep, exposed slopes, areas have been totally denuded and will require eons to achieve substantial vegetative cover. These fires are mostly man-caused and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

While there is considerable controversy about the ecology of the button grass plains and their possible succession towards rainforest, the influence of high-intensity fires is so devastating, even on button grass areas, that some form of fire control must be exercised if there is to be any hope of reversing the trends which are now so readily apparent.

The Button grass community is so flammable that it can be burnt even when the underlying material is saturated with free water below the aerial portions. Any protection program must start with an extensive prescribed burning program which reduces the button grass fuels at a time when the underlying organic materials will not burn and the fire will not penetrate into the forest margin. In this way an effective system of extensive fire breaks can be established which will prevent accidental fires burning huge areas during drought conditions (a button grass burn remains an effective fire barrier for three years).

Yosemite National Park (USA)

The policy of the US National Parks Service is to restore each park as near as possible to the conditions that existed when Europeans first visited the area. At low elevations and in the Yosemite Valley open stands of oak and ponderosa pine were maintained by regular burning by the Indian inhabitants. With the advent of effective suppression (of both Indians and wildfires), these open parklands are being replaced by dense forests of fire sensitive incense cedar, Douglas fir and white fir. At higher elevations lodge pole pine is invading open meadows in the absence of regular burning.

To 'restore' the park to its former condition, the Park Service has embarked on a program of prescribed burning and allowing natural ignitions to burn. In designated zones (Natural Fire Management Zones), fires resulting from natural ignitions are allowed to burn until they threaten to burn out of the NFMZ or they interfere with other park objectives. This zone covers some 74% of the park mostly above 6000' and has extensive areas of bare rock and low fuels which would contain fires to a small area e.g. in 1977, 28 ignitions burnt only 60 ha.

This natural fire program is confined to specified areas to meet certain policy objectives. In Australia, there are no equivalent national parks within forest areas in which fires can be allowed to burn during summer without the risk of a major conflagration which would burn extensive areas of park with high-intensity fire and probably burn onto surrounding private or State forest land.

There will always be natural ignitions which will burn under extreme fire weather conditions. In Australia, unlike the USA, it is unlikely that adequate suppression forces will be available to shift the balance of the pyric succession towards the over-mature, long-unburned stage and away from the early stages in the succession. Notwithstanding the need to protect other than 'natural' assets, the effect and extent of these ignitions must be limited to compensate for areas burnt under similar conditions by man caused ignition. With the resources available to National Park Services in Australia, for fire protection prescribed burning will always remain an essential tool for the National Park Manager.

Notes on a talk given to the Association on 20th May 1982 by N.P. Cheney, CSIRO Division of Forest Research.

ORRORAL HOMESTEAD CONSERVATION PROJECT

Our Orroral Homestead conservation project was launched with an energetic work party on Sunday, 10 October.

Some 30 people attended, including members and families and a group of architecture students from Canberra College of Advanced Education who are undertaking the Conservation Plan for the project with their principal lecturer Peter Corkery and architect Rick Butt. Archaeologist Jonathan Winston-Gregson, who has undertaken a study of the Gudgenby Nature Reserve, and prehistorian Valerie Chapman (an N.P.A. member) provided valuable archaeological advice.

The object was to clean out the homestead and tidy the site so that the students could measure and assess the buildings. The area around the kitchen block was not touched, however. The collapsed building is being left in situ until it is completely recorded, as the Conservation Plan may well recommend the future reconstruction of this building.

Over lunch Rick Butt talked about the architectural significance of Orroral Homestead explaining that, although a humble vernacular dwelling, it revealed fine craftsmanship and attention to detail.

A group of members, convened by Elizabeth Thompson, has been working over the last two months to establish the history of the building. This history, together with an

assessment of the fabric of the building, will help determine the significance of Orroral Homestead and the basis of the Conservation Plan.

We have been having a lot of fun with this aspect long hours in the National Library, talking to people who used to live in the area and involving past president Julie Henry in Sydney. At the time of writing, we haven't ascertained the date the homestead was built. Charles McKeahnie held the lease of land at Orroral from the 1860s and it appears that his elder son Archibald McKeahnie, a noted craftsman, built the homestead. We know that the house was officially valued at £100 and the kitchen £30 in 1893 and that the first officially recorded sale of the property occurred that year (to Charles Henry Alexander George McKeahnie, Charles' youngest son.)

Our history has to run up to the present day, covering the life of the homestead while it was occupied by such well known families of the district as McKeahnie, Bootes, Cunningham and Gregory. We are particularly looking for early photographs or sketches which show the building in its functional days.

Until the Conservation Plan is finished we cannot start major work, although there may be a few site clean ups. After his return from Greece, the Orroral Committee convenor, Ross Carlton, will be keeping you posted on progress. A work party has been scheduled for 27 March next year at which we hope to start the real work.

Denise Robin



Moving hay with a space-age backdrop to a century old building. — Photo Denise Robin.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARKS COUNCIL REPORT ON NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In the absence overseas of our appointed delegate, Bob Story, I attended the conference as delegate, accompanied by two observers, our Secretary, Judy Payne, and Vice-President, Denise Robin.

The conference was held in Sydney over the weekend of 18-19 September. In those two days of intensive discussions a wide range of issues concerning conservation and national parks around Australia was considered. Also on the agenda was a number of motions from several States (including A.C.T.) concerning the future organisation and operations of the A.N.P.C.

All the motions sponsored by the N.P.A. A.C.T. were, with one exception, passed unanimously. Our motions covered the topics of:

- constitutional changes to boost the Council by additional delegates and member bodies
- creation of a central filing system in Canberra for ANPC records
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park – calling on Commonwealth Government to act more speedily on declaration of the remaining areas
- proposed Brindabella National Park – calling on N.S.W. and Commonwealth Governments to reach agreement on leasing problems and facilitate declaration of the park
- funding for national parks – calling on the Commonwealth Government to help State Governments fund national park management services
- Kosciusko National Park – calling on the N.S.W. Government to increase funding for NPWS management services in KNP
- National Parks in Bicentennial Program – calling on the State and Commonwealth Governments to declare a major new national park in every State and Territory in 1988 as part of the Bicentennial Program
- cleanliness and back-country users – this motion sought to promote good housekeeping amongst back-country users by distributing an information card – it was referred to a sub-committee for further study.

The Council also decided to:

- press for adequate protection for the new Ningaloo Reef Marine Park in Western Australia and to oppose use of the park by the Defence Department for military training.
- press for extensions of the national parks in the South West of Western Australia to conserve the karri forests.
- urge the Governments of N.S.W., Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria to completely protect all remaining rainforests.
- press for the eradication of the Bitou Bush (Boneseed) which was introduced from South Africa to stabilise sand dunes after sand mining, but which is running rampant throughout many coastal areas to the detriment of indigenous vegetation.
- press for the dedication of the Cobberas Mountains National Park in Victoria and to oppose any logging within this area.

The amendment to the A.N.P.C. constitution will enable greater representation of voluntary conservation organisations on the Council and will also increase the number of delegates from each body from one to two. The effect of this change will be to give A.N.P.C. more strength as a national lobbying group and to provide a greater number of councillors from whom an executive can be elected each year.

For the coming year the executive elected by the conference is:

- Rick Nelson (N.S.W.) President
- Chris Harris (Tas.) Secretary
- Megan Lewis (S.A.) Treasurer

The executive carries out all the functions of the

A.N.P.C. between conferences, as well as co-ordinating the work arising from motions passed at the conference.

The next A.N.P.C. conference will be held in Brisbane over the weekend of 8-9 October, 1983.

Neville Esau

OUR TREES ARE DYING

Members who watched a recent 'Nationwide', experienced at first hand and were no doubt concerned at the alarming rate our country and city trees are dying. This is happening by disease and the loss is in addition to those destroyed by the use of the axe, chain saw and bulldozer which, up to now since European occupation, have reduced by two-thirds the forested area of Australia. At its best Australia had only 15% of forested cover and this by now has been reduced to a mere 5%.

At first the onset of disease, insect devastation and the effect of chemicals on single trees was passing unnoticed until whole areas were stricken and the spectacle of miles of dead branches against the sky became commonplace. The leafless crowns of trees are noticed first and then as the remainder of the tree is progressively defoliated the condition has become to be known as die-back.

The slow death of trees in the jarrah forests of Western Australia was first noticed in the 1930's and started to spread alarmingly in the mid 1940's. It took another twenty years to pinpoint the cause to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, a fungus of microscopic tubes devouring the living roots of trees and plants all over the continent. It derives its name from the cinnamon trees of Sumatra, which are resistant to it, and from there it was carried first to the Northern Hemisphere and now effects over 1000 species all over the world. Australian trees and plants are particularly susceptible and because of their long isolation from this disease they offer little resistance to its onslaught. It is carried particularly by earth-moving and other vehicles from contaminated areas and in S.W. Tasmania, walkers' boots are spreading it through wet and boggy areas from a European type garden established by a tin miner. In an attempt to save the jarrah forests, plants are being raised by cloning from naturally disease resistant trees. It will take years to establish whether this method of re-establishing jarrah forests in infected areas will be successful.



The pear-shaped sporangium liberates up to 30 mobile zoospores, indicated by arrows, which can swim through soil water and infect plant roots (x500). — Photo Ken Old, C.S.I.R.O.

In areas cleared for grazing, the few trees remaining in some areas of northern N.S.W. in the mid 1970's started to die back over a period of three years. Heavily grazed paddocks give little chance of natural regeneration and now die-back has been related to the growing of luxuriant foreign grasses coupled with the intensive use of fertilizers. This combination has produced a legion of super leaf eating bugs against which the few remaining trees cannot combat their onslaught. Fewer trees mean less birds and the bugs munch away unmolested until the trees have so few leaves left that they die.

Even cities are not immune from the spectacle of bare branches standing starkly against the sky. Around the waterfronts the defoliation is blamed on the detergents which are carried as air borne spray onto the leaves and so prevent efficient respiration.

Small plantations of plants or trees producing crops which have a high market value can be given some measure of protection but how can a continent be protected when even just to spray water is totally impracticable and could not be financed. We are losing trees of stature as well as numbers and the warning has been sounded that future generations may never see the giant trees that were once part of our forests except in the paintings of the artists of the beginning of the century.

Reg Alder

SNAKE BITE

All reptiles are protected in N.S.W. and any person possessing or killing lizards, crocodiles, turtles, geckos or snakes can be fined for doing so. Snakes are protected in the A.C.T. and it is the policy of this Association not to kill them as you are a visitor to his country if you should happen to meet in the bush.

The chances of meeting up with a snake are remote as they are only normally encountered searching for food or sunbasking in warm weather. Most are shy and will avoid confrontations with humans. The greatest risk however, is if a sunbasking snake is trodden on or you are between it and its chosen place of refuge. Do not provoke a snake, try to handle it or walk in bare feet, as common sense can avoid the risk of most snake bites. Snakes move at about the pace of a human walking, the actual strike is more rapid.

With the majority of snake bites little or no venom is injected into the victim and any wound should not be further lacerated or sucked. There is rarely any pain at the bite site, puncture marks may be difficult to see and some persistent bleeding may occur, one of the most interesting features of the Australian land snake fauna is the high proportion of venomous species – about 60% of a total of more than 130 species. Fortunately only a few are dangerous to man; the majority are rather small with relatively small fangs which can be used to kill or subdue only the small animals on which they feed. The venom of black snakes is relatively mild in contrast to the tiger and brown snakes and the death adder. The taipan is the most deadly and, fortunately, not found in the A.C.T.

A whole range of symptoms may occur from headache, nausea, vomiting, sweating to swelling of glands, double vision, muscle weakness and coma. It is essential to avoid panic and to achieve complete rest of the victim by being carried out.

The methods of treating snake bites have varied in fashion over the years and the current recommendations of first aid by the Capital Territory Health Commission for potentially envenomated subjects are: –

- (a) application of a constrictive bandage;
- (b) splinting of the bitten limb to achieve complete immobilization;
- (c) transportation of the potential victim to a place of definitive care, such transportation insuring maximal patient immobilization;
- (d) the firm reassurance of the victim that all will be well; and
- (e) the importance of a second person staying with the victim, if this is possible. If a handkerchief or an article of clothing is available with venom on it, this should be preserved.

The above treatment should be carried out as soon as possible. Identification of the venom will enable the victim to receive the appropriate antivenom. Washing is a waste of valuable time, as the venom is not absorbed through the unbroken skin and delay could postpone identification of the venom to the patient's disadvantage.

NATIONAL PARKS IN THE NATIONAL ESTATE

In his address at the 1982 Australian National Parks Conference dinner, Max Bourke, Director of the Australian Heritage Commission recalled that his first interest in conservation and the husbandry of our natural resources came while he was droving cattle in Southern Queensland. He observed the cattle cleaned up the ground like 'walking vacuum cleaners'.

Later with a degree in agriculture to further appreciate the enormity of the destructive processes taking place, he observed the duality of the farmer wishing to preserve the country as a livelihood for his children and at the same time, being responsible for the cause of the loss of his amenity.

Mr Bourke has since had the opportunity to observe the problem in other parts of the world and found that the most hopeful responses are occurring in Australia. We are still only a small population in a huge area and the pressures are thereby lessened. At the same time, there has been a growth and strength of people who care in the voluntary conservation movement.

In recent research for a thesis on the comparison of the voluntary nature conservation efforts in various countries he came to the conclusion that Australia is among the healthiest in the world. Mr Bruce Davis, also a member of the Australian Heritage Commission, in a doctoral thesis summarised that there are at present one thousand groups in five functional capacities dispersed throughout Australia. Four primary strategies have been adopted to defend the vanishing wilderness by multi-objective planning, parliamentary lobbying and media campaigns, the strengthening of regulations and the employment of inter-governmental relations.

Political expediency and excessive secrecy in the Australian Government, difficulties in challenging decisions, the problems in sustaining campaigns and the locus standi in courts make challenges difficult. There has been slow recognition of the value of inter-governmental relations which have been coupled with the limits imposed by institutional and operational obstacles. Despite this some successes have been achieved.

In 'The Last of Lands', the editors wrote, 'Nature conservation means different things to different people and conservation groups have to acknowledge there is a communication gap between them and the public. The scientist, hunter and angler, tourist promoter, aesthete, biologist, psychiatrists, agronomist and agricultural economist are but a few who see different and widely varying needs to preserve the environment.'

As expatriates our forefathers believed we were living in a second rate environment at whose destruction no one would shed tears and if it is only a rather precious idea, conservationists need to understand it. Our language with its origins in a temperate environment and our way of explicating ourselves to the world is rooted in it. Comparisons are made to Europe and there is difficulty in our ability to describe our arid and desert areas. Possibly because of this conservationists have concentrated mainly on the wetter and more temperate zones, although some have 'crossed the Blue Mountains' to become active in the arid zones.

A recent conference organised by the A.C.F. in Broken Hill was an important development in drawing attention to the poor representation of the arid zone plant communities in parks and reserves. In the Register of the National Estate, there is reasonable representation in Western Australia, Northern Territory, South Australia and N.W. Victoria, N.S.W. is fair but Queensland is poorly represented with only two reserves in the western area. However, more are under consideration by the Commission.

Arid areas need to be large because large intact areas are virtually non-existent, the slow recovery from natural and human perturbation and the need because of low ecological gradients to encompass reasonable diversity. Grazing in-

terests impose strong opposition when national park proposals imply cessation of grazing. There is a need for future surveys in the overall context within which more detailed work can take place and a detailed analysis on places already in the Register to determine what plant communities and land systems are already represented. The C.S.I.R.O. is reviewing existing definitions of the biophysical regions in Australia and developing a typology of geology/landform vegetation.

The initiative of the South Australian Government in introducing Heritage Agreements for the conservation of privately owned native or natural areas of bush could prove an invaluable adjunct to the provision of national parks, especially if the issue is taken up nationally. The Federal Government could assist with taxation concessions and the removal of assistance for destruction. 'English' style national parks around urban areas could provide recreational opportunities to relieve pressures on national parks.

A fourfold increase in reserves over recent years relative to a 25% increase in population has been encouraging. Also is the increase in the number of plant varieties, closed forests, open forest and low open forest, in Queensland and Victoria. However these additions still fall short of full representation in national parks for Australian plant communities particularly through the Brigalow region of Queensland to the Wimmera in S.A. and across to W.A.

Growth rates have brought problems in completing park management plans and providing rangers. This lack of funding means new parks cannot be maintained for weed eradication and rehabilitation for problems which existed before the park declaration. This gives opportunities for the critics of national parks to oppose further park declarations.

Mr Bourke said there was a need for eternal vigilance. In the words of Olegas Truchanas - 'We must try to retain as much as possible of what still remains of the unique, rare and beautiful.'

Abridged from the speech text by Reg Alder

THE DREAM THAT CAME TRUE

The "Dream" began twenty odd years ago, when a party of Sydney Bushwalkers, after a happy weekend spent in Blue Gum Forest, were toiling up Perry's Lookdown, heavy rucksacks on backs, hot, tired and grubby, as was normal, going home.

While enjoying a rest, someone said, "I'm not as young as I was, nor as active, and carrying a large pack up this track is not going to be for me, very much longer!" There was agreement, from some of those present, then, one made a positive statement, "This is the last time I'll be down in Blue Gum unless I am taken down there and brought up again in a helicopter!"

Loud laughter followed this remark, "Don't be ridiculous", they said, "That is just a silly dream, it could never happen, it will never happen!" But it was agreed, it would be great if it ever did.

On 26th September, 1982, the "Dream" came true, and, a couple of those who had been in the original party, and, had scoffed at the idea, were in the Forest, taken down and safely returned to the top of the cliffs by helicopter!

"The Year of the Tree", being celebrated this year, coincides with the Fiftieth Anniversary of acquiring the area of land, that, subsequently, became The Blue Gum Forest.

The story is well known how some members of The Sydney Bushwalkers, persuaded the holder of the Lease, to sell the land to the Club, to save the trees. Also how the money to pay for it, was raised by functions, concerts, theatre parties etc., entailing hard work by many people interested in the project. Money did not come easily during the Great Depression.

Finally, the debt was paid to the owner, who had been very generous in allowing time to pay, and the whole area handed over to the State Government, to be held as a recreational site to be enjoyed by all. Trustees were ap-

pointed to manage and care for Blue Gum Forest. Many "Working Bees" were organised, and well supported to help keep the place in good condition.

Some Trustees retired, or were not able to carry on, and were replaced by others approximately, ten in all, over the years, mostly drawn from the Walking movement.

As the need for universal conservation was recognized, the State Government formed the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Forest, along with other areas in the Blue Mountains, passed into the care of the Service, and Trustees were no longer required.

To mark the occasion of the "Fiftieth Birthday", the Advisory Committee of N.P. & W.S. - Blue Mountains District - thought it would be fitting to arrange a "Back to Blue Gum" Day, so a search was made for the present whereabouts of any ex-Trustees, or others, connected with the early days, and invitations were sent to those who could be located, to attend a luncheon in the Forest, everything provided, including the HELICOPTER!! So, on the day, those who could avail themselves of the opportunity, assembled at "Katoomba Airfield" at Medlow Bath, for the big adventure.

There was a howling, westerly wind blowing, but the pilot assured the passengers, taken aboard three at a time, that everything would be alright, but there may be a "Bump" or two, when we went off the escarpment - and he was right! The little machine bucked about a bit, but we all landed safely in the clearing alongside Govett's Leap Creek, not far from its junction with the Grose River. Several trips were made, and about fifteen people delivered, along with the sumptuous lunch.

Quite a number of "old hands" were at the Luncheon, the "tougher ones" even walked down. So friendships were renewed, and, there was plenty of "Do you remember".

Representatives of various walking movements, Boy Scouts Association etc., were present, along with our hosts, Rangers from N.P. & W.S. A total of twenty five persons, old and young, enjoyed the company and the excellent meal.

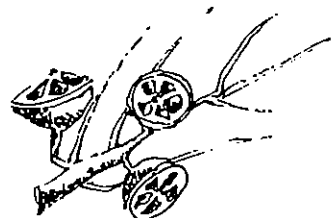
After lunch, we gathered at the edge of the Forest, for a short ceremony, yarns about the early days were told and there were a couple of speeches. Several groups of walkers, not actual guests, but very welcome, joined in the celebration, making a gathering of fifty altogether.

Later, a stroll among the trees, just as magnificent as ever, was a soul satisfying experience. It was great to see evidence of the care being taken by the Service to preserve the wonder of Blue Gum for those who are prepared to use, and not abuse, this great heritage.

So with "Thanks" to our hosts for such an unusual and enjoyable day, we prepared to go aboard the little "chopper" and return "top side".

Thus that "silly Dream" finally came true for some of those tired Walkers, who had laughed at it, so long ago, but on "Back to Blue Gum" Day, they may have been thankful that it did.

D. Berry



A reminder - the Association has for sale: N.P.A.Q. Song Books \$2; N.P.A.-A.C.T. T-shirts \$5.50 and \$6; N.P.A.-A.C.T. badges 50c (while they last, then \$\$\$); also a range of books at discounted prices.

The DEADLINE DATE for the next issue of the Bulletin is 15 December.

*The President and Committee
wish all members*

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

and invite all to the

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Orroral Valley Picnic Ground at 3p.m.

on Sunday 12 December 1982

WINE, CHEESE, BISCUITS PROVIDED – MAY EVEN BE A CHRISTMAS CAKE

BRING AN EVENING MEAL

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OUTINGS

Please notify the leader by the previous Wednesday of your intention to go on any weekend outing.

The Committee suggests a donation of **FOUR** cents per kilometre (calculation to nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transportation. Drive distances quoted from the meeting point, for one way only, are approximate and for guidance only. Walk distances shown are total.

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept sole responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability in respect of any injury or damage suffered whilst engaged on any such outing.

DECEMBER 4,5 WEEKEND PACK WALK

Feints Range Ref. Brindabella 1:25,000 Leader Garth Abercrombie 814907
Exploratory walks into Feints Range; steep climbs without track. Contact leader for details.

DECEMBER 5 SUNDAY WALK

Purnoo Lookout Ref. Caoura 1:25,000 Leader: Ian Beveridge 495363
Meet: Northbourne Avenue/Barton Highway 7.30a.m. 20 km fairly easy walk on forest road for views of Shoalhaven and Kangaroo Rivers. 145 km drive via Goulburn, Marulan and Tallong.

DECEMBER 12 SUNDAY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Orroral Picnic Area Ref. Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000
Join us for the last meeting for the year. Come at 3.00p.m. and bring an evening meal. Wine, cheese and biscuits provided.

JANUARY 23 SUNDAY WALK AND SWIM

Shoalhaven River Ref. Braidwood 1:100,000 Leader: Reg Alder 542240
Meet: Canberra Railway Station 9.00a.m. or Warri Bridge 10.00a.m. 3 km walk downstream from Warri Bridge, which is on the road to Braidwood. Swim, picnic lunch. 80 km drive.

JANUARY 29, 30, 31 PACK WALK, LONG WEEKEND

Deua Ref. Araluen 1:100,000 Leader: Garth Abercrombie 814907
Contact leader for details of this pack walk, which will possibly be a round trip in at Wyanbene and out at the Big Hole. Li-lo on river.

JANUARY 29, 30, 31 CAMP, LONG WEEKEND

Bournda Recreation Reserve Ref. Bega 1:100,000 Leader: Ian Currie 958112
Camp in the Bournda State Recreation Reserve in the Tathra area near Bega. Walk, swim and relax. Please contact leader. 270 km drive.

FEBRUARY 6 SUNDAY SWIM AND WALK

Murrumbidgee Ref. Cotter Dam 1:25,000 Leader: Fiona Brand 479538
Meet: Cotter camping area 10.00a.m. 6 km walk upstream by the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. Bring swimming gear, picnic lunch and a li-lo for floating on the river.

FEBRUARY 12,13 WEEKEND CAMP

North Durras Ref. Bateman's Bay 1:100,000 Leader: Neville Esau 864176
Swim, fish, walk and relax in the Murramarang National Park. Contact leader.

FEBRUARY 20 SUNDAY WALK

Mt. 74.48 Ref. Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000 Leader: Garth Abercrombie 814907
Meet: Kambah shops 8.00a.m. 20 km walk up Rendezvous Creek, 600 metre climb to the unnamed mountain 74.48 map reference, then return down Middle Creek. 50 km drive.

FEBRUARY 20 SUNDAY WALK AND SWIM

Murrumbidgee Ref. ACT 1:100,000 Leader: Noeline Denize 319079
Meet: Kambah shops 10.30a.m. 5 km walk on farm road to the Murrumbidgee. Swim, relax and picnic.

FEBRUARY 27 SUNDAY NATURE WALK AND PICNIC TEA

Blundell's Flat Arboretum Ref. Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Leader: Ken Eldridge 815685
Meet: Eucumbene Drive/Cotter Road 1.30p.m. Walk through the pine arboretum Californian redwoods, larches, Douglas fir, spruces etc. planted between 1929 and 1960, and continue on to the poplar plantations. The leader is a forest research scientist at C.S.I.R.O. Bring a picnic tea and see the wombats at dusk. 35 km drive.

FEBRUARY 26, 27 WEEKEND PACK WALK

Cascades Hut Ref. Jacobs R. 1:100,000 Leader: Reg Alder 542240
Contact leader for details of this walk from Dead Horse Gap to Cascades Hut over a fire trail with some steep sections.

MARCH 6 SUNDAY WALK

Billy Range

Ref. ACT 1:100,000

Leader: Charles Hill 958924

Meet: Kambah shops 8.30a.m. Follow the boundary of Gudgenby Nature Reserve from the ranger's cottage at Glendale Crossing and over the Billy Range. Open country and scrub, with possible climbs for views of Naas Valley. 40 km drive.

MARCH 13 SUNDAY WALK

Orroral Valley

Ref. Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000

Leader: Margaret Aston 887563

Meet: Kambah shops 9.30a.m. A leisurely walk of 6 to 8 km in an open grassed valley beyond the Orroral Tracking Station, returning on the tree lined fire trail if warm.

MARCH 13 SUNDAY WALK

Leader: John Webster 476769

Details in next Bulletin.

MARCH 19, 20, 21 CANBERRA WEEKEND PACK WALK

Happy Jacks

Ref. Kosciusko 1:100,000

Leader: Frank Clements 317005

Contact leader for details of this walk in the high country.

MARCH 19, 20, 21 CANBERRA WEEKEND CAMP

3 Mile Dam

Ref. Yarrangobilly 1:100,000

Leader: see next Bulletin

Camp at the Dam 6 km from Kiandra. This Dam was built in 1882 to supply water for hydraulic sluicing at the nearby New Chum diggings. Open grassland vegetation makes for easy walking. Contact leader.

MARCH 27 SUNDAY EXPLORATORY WALK

Hanging Rock

Ref. Braidwood 1:100,000

Leader: Babette Scougall 487008

Meet: Canberra Railway Station 8.00a.m. Explore the area near Hanging Rock, finishing with a swim in the Shoalhaven River. Maps and compass will be used. Contact leader for details.

MARCH 27 SUNDAY WORKING PARTY

Orroral Homestead

Ref. Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000

Leader: Ross Carlton 863892

Bring a picnic lunch, some tools and gloves out to the Homestead. Jobs for all.

A WEEKEND IN THE KYBEYAN RANGES

Was it the alternative of spring flowers at Bundanoon, or the word 'exploration', that resulted in only four takers for the August 14/15 weekend? Whichever — or whatever — those members and their extremely capable 'stand in' leader Phil Gatenby, will have many pleasant memories for a long time to come.

A new member Dirk, and his nine year old son Rolf were able to accommodate the whole group for the 170km drive in their mini bus. Leaving Canberra in thick frost at 7.00am, via Cooma and some 50km S.E. of Numeralla, we were off — packs on backs — around 10.30am in glorious sunshine. Slowly climbing some 210m up a fire track, we then hid our packs — taking only lunch, billy and water — to follow an animal trail to the top of Wadbilliga at 1,337m. A fantastic, clear view lay all around us, west to the 'snow' and east to the blue Tasman Sea. Dropping out of the wind, billy tea and lunch were enjoyed, then back over the saddle with the deep valley of the Brogo river one side, and the headwaters of Wadbilliga gorge the other.

Collecting packs, we contoured up and down, round and round, either 'bush bashing' or heath humping'. This casuarina heathland was anything from ankle to thigh deep, its new red shoots adding masses of glorious colour to the rocky areas. Around 5.00pm, we dropped to the head of a valley, where (because of drought) we found just about enough flat (?) areas for three tents above a slow flowing creek. Various evening concoctions were made over the welcome fire, with one member forever accidentally stepping into the water in the dark — all 10cm of it! This manoeuvre is now called 'doing a Jack'.

Hardly had we eaten, than light rain drove us to our tents, getting heavier, stopping and starting again to finally (and conveniently) finish just before getting up time! Thanks to a tube of wonderful 'instant fire' hot drinks and breaky were enjoyed, and around 10.00am we were heading back up to the Kybeyan plateau. Again dumping packs, we explored a broken cliff line with an old hand built cairn at about 1,230m. Although the car was only 2½km below us (and Rolf would have loved to have dropped off and headed in a straight line!) — the day was yet young. Again we 'waded' through the heath, up and down the range — more or less southwards — for more views of range upon range and deep gullies out to sea. It was then a steady drop down to the Tuross river (marked on one map

as Dolondundate Creek!) where we again boiled the billy for lunch. Following this river, we joined the Kydra Peak fire track back to the car around 4.00pm.

Being a small group in a remote area, we saw NO humans, but plenty of wild life: echidna, kangaroo and wallaby, parrots, gang gangs, thornbills, robins, honey eaters, rosella, grey strike thrushes, kookaburra and wedge tailed eagles — to name but a few, and also heard — clear and close — the howl of dingoes as we reached the car.

Once again, the rain was kind to us, holding off for most of the dirt road, and in spite of thoughts of running out of petrol and having to push, we reached a petrol station with Dirk's careful driving. Five very happy, satisfied folk reached Canberra, home, showers and comfy beds around 7.15pm. Approximate distances covered were 13km on Saturday with a 320m climb, and 15km on the Sunday with many 'ups and downs'.

This area east of Cooma has one of the largest tracts of forest and heathland in N.S.W. — with some wild, rugged and lovely scenery plus good walking, and is well worth more 'explorations'.

OLIV B.

(Technical information by PHIL G.)

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members are welcomed to the Association: Craig Allen, Holt; Dr Anthony Butterfield, Chapman; Dorothy Brown, Duffy; Peter Barrer, Holt; Marcia Boyden, Waramanga; Christine Campbell, Macquarie; Sophie Caton, O'Connor; Kim Croker, Barton; Mr & Mrs G. Fulton, Fraser; A. & B. Furnass, Hughes; A. & B. Fox, Queanbeyan; Mr & Mrs J. Gornoy, Downer; Pat Green, O'Connor; K. Griffiths, Dickson; Dal and Christine Hyde, Hawker; Brian and Carol Keil, Civic; Jennifer Le Gassick, Chifley; Patricia and Lawrence Ludovici, Fisher; Lorraine Lewis and family, Queanbeyan; R. & M. Maxwell, Forrest; Peter Mason, Lyneham; Mrs A. McDonagh, Hawker; L. & W. Nicholls, Duffy; Jan Ogden, Kaleen; Edith Parkinson, Flynn; Kate Rowland, Yarralumla; John and Moira Rowland, Deakin; Noel Semple, Hughes; Don Shepherd, Bradon; Jill Selvey, Narrabundah; Cyril Tarrant, Pearce; Dean and Elizabeth Thompson, Yarralumla; Janet and Alan Tweedie, Hawker; Mr & Mrs D. Von Behrens, Page; Anne Wallace, Curtin; Glenys West, Hackett; Graeme and Patricia Wicks, Mawson; Peter and K. White, Flynn; A.H. and J. Wynd, Hackett.

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION A.C.T.

OUTINGS SUMMARY

December

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 4/5 | Saturday-Sunday | Feints Range | Pack Walk |
| 5 | Sunday | Purnoo Lookout | Walk |
| 12 | Sunday | Orroral Picnic Area | Christmas Party |

January

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 23 | Sunday | Shoalhaven River | Walk and Swim |
| 29/30/31 | Long weekend | Deua | Pack Walk |
| 29/30/31 | Long weekend | Bournda State Recreation Reserve | Camp |

February

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 6 | Sunday | Murrumbidgee/Cotter | Walk and Swim |
| 12/13 | Saturday-Sunday | North Durras | Camp |
| 20 | Sunday | Mt 74.48 | Walk |
| 20 | Sunday | Murrumbidgee/Kambah | Walk and Swim |
| 27 | Sunday | Blundell's Flat Arboretum | Nature Walk and Tea |
| 26/27 | Saturday-Sunday | Cascades Hut | Pack Walk |

March

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 6 | Sunday | Billy Range | Walk |
| 13 | Sunday | Orroral Valley | Walk |
| 13 | Sunday | See next Bulletin | Walk |
| 19/20/21 | Long weekend | Happy Jacks | Pack Walk |
| 19/20/21 | Long weekend | Three Mile Dam | Camp |
| 27 | Sunday | Hanging Rock | Exploratory Walk |
| 27 | Sunday | Orroral Homestead | Working Party |



GENERAL MEETINGS

Held at 8.00pm, Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic.

December — No meeting.

January — No meeting.

February — Thursday 17 1983.

Follow FRANK CLEMENTS, with a N.P.A. group, in the tracks of ancient man around Lake Mungo.

Subject: A talk on the archaeology and scenic attractions of the area.