



NPA Bulletin

National Parks Association of the A.C.T.

Vol 24 No 3

March 1987

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY INC.

Inaugurated 1960

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 organised 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.

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18 March - Outings Sub-Committee Meeting

All outings details are to be with the convenor by 31 March to allow time to organise the outings program.

DEADLINE DATES for NPA BULLETIN contributions:

15 October, 15 January, 15 April, 15 July

Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect Association opinion or objectives.

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Attention All Members

Contributions of between 200 and 300 words, with or without photographs (black and white preferably) are sought eagerly for the *Bulletin*. Of course we need longer items as well, but short ones are popular ... with everyone!

Share with us your camps, trips and pack walks, your trials and tribulations and adventures of all kinds.

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

At the December committee meeting of the Association, the committee welcomed Judith Martin (now Simondson) as the new editor of the *Bulletin*. Production of the December issue owed much to the work of Philip Gatenby and the efficient production sub-committee.

There has been some discussion by the committee of the role and nature of the *Bulletin*. Given that it is produced on a low budget by voluntary labour, I believe the *Bulletin* sets a good standard. Currently, it combines the functions of a newsletter and a journal and this seems the preferable format to continue with. However, it is inevitable that the *Bulletin* will change through time, reflecting the interests of the Association and the stamp of individual editors.

As always the *Bulletin* needs your contributions – letters to the editor, articles on walks, matters of conservation interest and observations in the bush. Finally, if you have ideas for the *Bulletin* the Committee would welcome suggestions.

Committee News

At its last meeting the Committee welcomed Judith Martin (now Simondson) to the Committee, and appointed her as *Bulletin* editor. If Judith's name is familiar to readers, it might be because she was listed in the last issue of the *Bulletin* as one of the new members. Philip Gatenby, who edited the last issue of the *Bulletin*, has offered to assist with the publishing side.

Plans are well underway for Heritage Week (5-12 April) and Glyn Lewis is representing our Association on the Heritage Week Committee. An exhibition will be held at the Albert Hall with the theme 'A week of discovery'. The Association's display will include a topographic model of the ACT highlighting points of interest in Namadgi National Park. Any members wishing to assist with 'staffing' the display during Heritage Week should contact Glyn (95 2720). Plans are also underway for the Environment Fair next Autumn, at which our Association will pitch a tent complete with packs, sleeping bags, billies etc. Any member wishing to participate should also contact Glyn.

Debbie Quarmby's report on Woodchipping in Eden, which was commissioned and published by the Association, has already sold out, but orders are still being received. Consequently the Committee has had the report reprinted and copies are available.

The Committee has also purchased a new slide projector. It is a Kodak carousel with cordless control and a zoom lens. We hope this will enhance the excellent slides which are such a regular part of our monthly meetings.

The Population Debate

Ross Carlton

In the last *Bulletin* it was reported that, following an ANU conference on Australia's future population, we asked the following questions of the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

1. What does the government see as the optimum population level for Australia?
2. When is it expected that this level will be achieved?
3. Where is it expected that the additional 6 to 8 million Australians forecast for 2021 will be housed and employed?
4. What, in broad terms, will be the environmental consequences of this?

A prompt reply was received from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs on behalf of the Minister. In response to the first two questions it was admitted that 'The government does not seek to define "Optimum". The "Optimum" is always changing in response to improved management techniques, technological advances and social values.'

This presumably means that they see the optimum as continually increasing. I am not sure what 'management techniques' means but it is plain that, in spite of the evidence, we are faced with the same old blind faith that technology will solve all our problems. And 'improved social values'? What does that mean? Perhaps it means a greater acceptance by the community of the environmental degradation and reduced quality of life which must inevitably accompany a too-high population.

They ducked our third and fourth

questions with some bureaucratic waffle and the statement that 'The impact of population on the environment is often more dependent on the technology, knowledge and values of that population than their absolute numbers.'

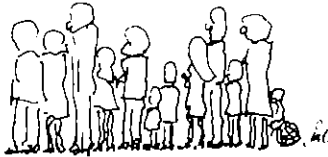
The Department's position, and presumably that of the Minister, is given in the last sentence of the letter. 'The benefits of population growth are seen to far outweigh the costs.'

Even if this statement were true at the present time, and I am by no means persuaded that it is, there is absolutely no recognition that it must be a temporary situation. In a world and a country of limited resources, we must sooner or later face the necessity of stabilising our population. Because it takes several decades to influence population trends, we must plan ahead. It is like trying to stop an aircraft carrier. It is no use stopping the engines when you reach the wharf. You have to think ahead and go into reverse several miles out.

If our population increases by 50 per cent, whether through immigration or natural increase, what will happen to our national parks? They will be crushed between the two pressures of economic exploitation and overuse for recreation.

In spite of the protestations of the Department that we are locked into our immigration program, variation of the immigration rate remains the easiest way of controlling population levels. Birth rates can only be changed slowly and indirectly and we don't really want to increase the death rate, so that leaves us with immigration. But our

Government has just announced a massive increase in the migrant intake, and the opposition supports them! This, in spite of the fact that nobody knows what level of population will yield the best living conditions for this country and nobody is even trying to find out. Maybe we can support the increase, but it would be nice to think that someone had done the sums rather than trust to a blind faith in technology.



New Address

To all my friends at NPA.

My best wishes for 1987 to all members. I always enjoy reading the *Bulletin* and often in my mind I am on your walks.

Our Club here is very well established and there are interesting walks for everybody!

Maybe the birds brought the rumour to Canberra that 'Hela moved again'. So, here we go – the latest address!

3/6 Eric Tenning Drive
SURF BEACH NSW 2536
Telephone (044) 712006
Visitors welcome!

Regards to all,

Hela Lindeman

Cotter Hut

Dear Sir,

Since the President in his response to my letter on the retention of Cotter Hut raised a counter argument on my necessarily short factual statements, I feel compelled to reply with more information.

I have no doubt that the formal decision to retain the hut for a further five years was based on its use for management purposes and not on its aesthetic value. A ranger has once again taken up residence, confirming the need of one of the uses I proposed for the hut. I was particularly grateful during the fierce storm of last November to be able

Letters

to shelter in an outhouse for a couple of hours from one of the most violent electrical storms I have experienced. With no time between the flash and crash of the lightning there would have been great risk to have been out in the open.

There may not be any recommendation in the Committee minutes. After six years as a Committee member, I am no stranger to statements made at meetings not being recorded. The Convenor in response to an urgent request, made phone contact with available members of the Sub-committee and conveyed their opinions verbally to the Committee. I still believe the Committee should involve members in reporting a wider range of its activities and decisions.

Historic value was not the only consideration in whether the Cotter Flat Arboretum was to be preserved. The fact that it contained a species of conifer which was significantly invading the surrounding ecosystem was advanced in the management plan as the reason for them to be felled (page 31, Invasion of park ecosystem by exotic conifers). That is all that has been done, and now we have a copse of fallen exotics which still show the evidence of man. The concept of wilderness around Cotter Flats is even more illusionary.

Traditional craftsmanship with the use of local materials is that skill handed down by our ancestors to posterity. Slab walled houses, common a century ago to our ancestors, are now traditional and as an example, we are now trying to preserve Orroral Homestead. Traditional materials and methods will be used to preserve and restore it. There is no thought however in preserving the adjoining timber clad house, but is it not just as traditional for a part of this century as its near neighbour was in the last? Similarly, a whole range of house styles have become traditional for the period in which they were built. Suburban fibro houses are particularly vulnerable to change with additions, recladding in pseudo brick, wood and masonry, and to be demolished in the name of redevelopment. The Cotter Hut is clad in

a heavy type of formed fibro used more for industrial buildings and hence more likely to stand the passage of time. Should all slab walled buildings have been demolished in 25 years because they were commonplace when built?

The Cotter Flats, grazed for a century, are an extensively European modified environment with exotic trees, an extensive road system, tracks, fences, gates, fords, bridge, weather station and of course the hut and its outbuildings. By no means could this area be classified as wilderness. The Council of Nature Conservation Ministers approved in May 1985 a report of their Working Group on the management of National Parks and in it the following definition of land having wilderness area potential was made:

- . Remoteness and Size – a large area preferably in excess of 25,000 hectares, where visitors may experience remoteness from roads and other man-made facilities.

- . Evidence of Man – an area with minimal evidence of alteration by people.

The draft Plan of Management for Namadgi proposed that the Cotter Catchment be gazetted not as a wilderness zone, but managed as a wilderness management area. The catchment was changed to a wilderness zone in the final plan.

The NSW Wilderness Working Group in their report of May 1986 proposed various wilderness areas. One called Bimberi encompassed the western area of Namadgi. The boundary excludes the stored waters of Corin Dam and all the area of the catchment below to the Bendora Dam. With a slip of the pen it could have, and quite rightly, included the Cotter Flats only another five kilometres upstream. In their boundary deliberations the Group very purposefully excluded all man-modified areas from their recommended wilderness zones.

Hence, to argue that the Cotter Hut is an intrusion into wilderness has no substantiation based on the past and present use of the area or by definition. I am however in support of no further development of the Cotter Flats and for it to be managed jointly with the adjacent wilderness zone.

Reg Alder

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage of Jervis Bay

Sue Feary^o

Introduction

Several articles in the September issue of the NPA Bulletin discussed the significant natural values of Jervis Bay. A rich and diverse cultural heritage also exists, in the form of prehistoric archaeological sites and places of mythological importance to Aboriginal people. In fact Jervis Bay is unique on the New South Wales south coast for the number and variety of sites that have been recorded over the last decade. The majority of these occur on Beecroft Peninsula, where many are still well preserved. Ironically, it is the long time presence of the gunnery range which, through restricting public access, has helped to protect these sites.

Protection and management of Aboriginal sites at Jervis Bay is made difficult by the present land tenure. As yet there is no heritage legislation for the Australian Capital Territory and the various pieces of Commonwealth legislation have no provision for long term site protection. The geographical boundaries imposed by this land tenure have no relevance to the nature and distribution of archaeological sites nor to the Aboriginal people for whom they are significant.

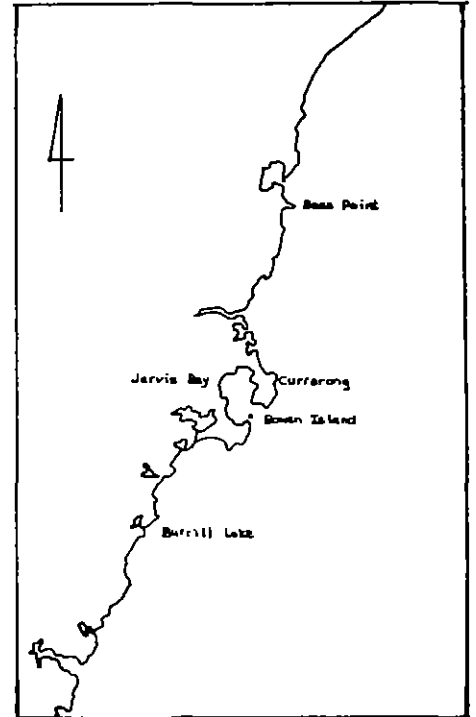
Fortunately, Mr Carr, the NSW Minister for Planning and Environment has undertaken to ensure full

involvement of the State's Department of Environment and Planning and National Parks and Wildlife Service in the planning process. Because of this agreement it may be possible to protect and manage Jervis Bay sites through the strong State legislation.

The Archaeology of Jervis Bay

Humans have occupied the NSW south coast for at least 20,000 years. The oldest known dates come from deeply stratified middens at Bass Point (Bowdler, 1970) and rockshelter deposits at Burrill Lake (Lampert, 1971). At this time sea levels were about 140 metres lower than present and the Jervis Bay coastline lay some 20 kilometres eastward. No doubt people also camped along the Pleistocene foreshore, but the evidence has long been submerged by marine transgressions.

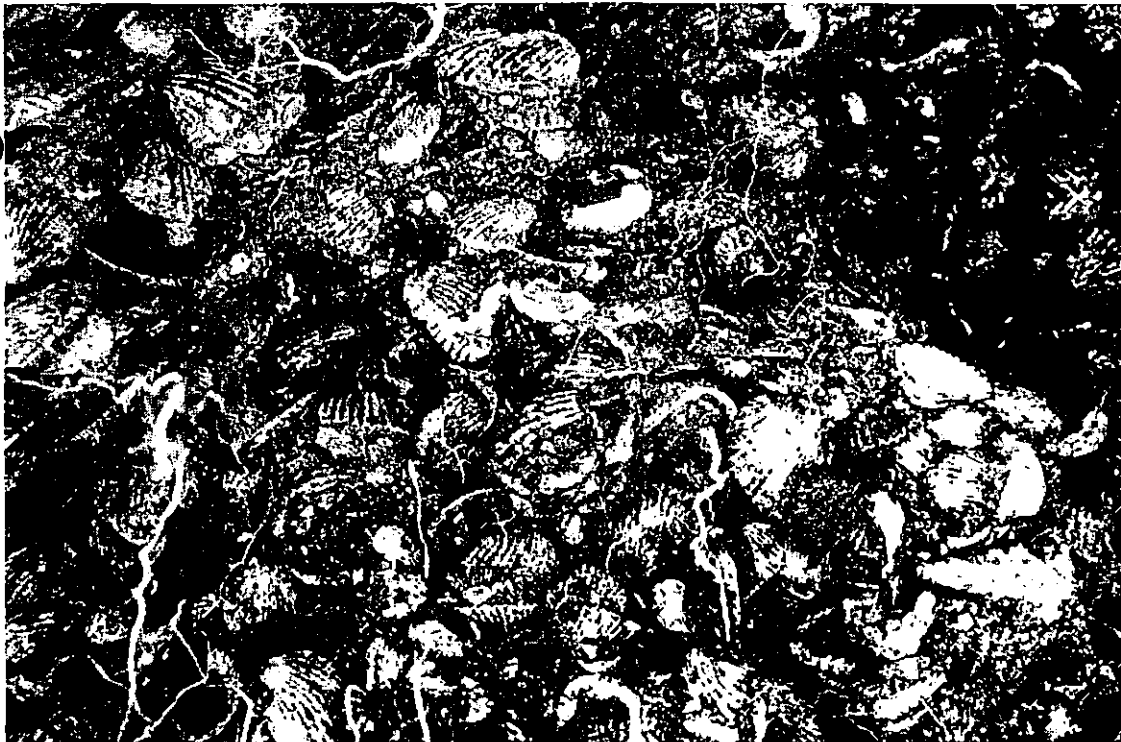
Most archaeological sites along the present coastline postdate the latest stabilisation of sea levels about 6,000 years ago. Those few sites with occupation histories that span the sea level changes also show an increase in intensity of occupation after this time. It can be demonstrated that sea level stabilisation extended the littoral zone through formation of lagoons, inlets and rock platforms, thus providing a highly productive resource zone for



Aboriginal exploitation (Lampert and Hughes, 1974).

It is tantalising to interpret the proliferation of sites and increased site usage as reflecting greater numbers of people in recent times but this is yet to be proven (Hughes and Lampert, 1982).

Aboriginal people probably first settled at Jervis Bay soon after rising sea levels formed the deep sheltered bay with its protective



Close up of Aboriginal midden showing estuarine shells in a sand/charcoal matrix.
Photo by Sue Feary

peninsulas of Beecroft and Bherwerre. The oldest date recorded so far is 4,000 years from a rockshelter at Currarong on the Beecroft Peninsula (Lampert, 1971). Excavation revealed temporal changes in both the Aboriginal toolkit and the type of economy that was practiced. Prior to 2,000 years ago artefact assemblages were dominated by backed blades - small finely shaped implements usually made from fine grained siliceous rock types. After this period, backed blades decline in number and unmodified quartz flakes predominate. This two phase sequence is characteristic of late Holocene sites throughout south eastern Australia, although there is geographical variation in the timing and clarity of the transition. The impetus behind what appears to have been a major shift in stone tool technology has so far defied explanation, but probably results from a complex mix of social, cultural and economic factors. The upper levels at Currarong also contain appreciable numbers of organic artefacts, such as fish hooks made from shell, and points, made by shaping one or both ends of pieces of marsupial and bird bone.

Analysis of bone and shell from the Currarong sites indicated economic changes, which broadly parallel the technological changes. The basal deposits are dominated by shells of the rock oyster, which could have been easily collected from nearby tidal creeks, suggesting a specialised economy centred on a single species. In more recent times, the diet became much more eclectic, with full utilisation of all the resources of the rich and varied terrestrial estuarine and marine environments of the area.

Cultural remains from excavated middens at Wreck Bay and Bowen Island provide evidence for other important socioeconomic changes. Between 1000 and 500 years ago, both these sites show a change from the large solitary gastropods which inhabit the lower littoral of the rocky shore, to the gregarious blue mussel, characteristic of the upper littoral in more sheltered stretches of the coastline. This transition occurs in many sites along the south coast, but appears to have begun earlier, at about 1200 years ago on the far south coast (Sullivan, 1982). It is loosely correlated with the introduction of line fishing, represented in stratified deposits by the appearance of shell



Aboriginal midden at Greenpoint, western side of Beecroft Peninsula showing different cultural levels and a hearth (right hand side of photo)
Photo by Sue Feary

fish hooks and the bones of fish such as snapper which are more easily caught by a hook and line than by spearing.

Records of early explorers indicate that line fishing from bark canoes and shellfish collecting were the tasks of Aboriginal women, whereas men spent their time spear fishing and hunting larger terrestrial game. Bowdler (1976) has suggested that the involvement of both men and women in fishing facilitated a more effective and extensive use of offshore resources, but left less time for gathering the elusive large gastropods. By contrast, blue mussels could be quickly harvested by women on their way home from a days fishing which could explain the large number of blue mussel shells in the upper levels of the sites.

The above discussion has concentrated on chronological aspects of prehistory, because these are the focus of archaeological research, but also to demonstrate that Aboriginal society was not static. There were major changes in economic life which would have affected, or be the result of cultural and social changes which do not appear in the archaeological record.

Interpreting site distribution patterns in terms of their environmental setting, is another vital component of reconstructing past lifestyles.

Middens containing shell, bone, stone artefacts and charcoal are

the most commonly occurring of the 200 or so sites at Jervis Bay. These are concentrated along the coastline and their contents reflect a seasonal preference, probably summer or spring, for aquatic resources. Headlands and frontal dune systems such as Bherwerre Peninsula were popular camping places, selected to provide shelter and easy access to a range of foodstuffs and water. Where the shore line is precipitous as on the eastern side of Beecroft Peninsula, sites are situated on cliff tops adjacent to natural pathways down to rocky shore platforms.

Scatters of stone artefacts may represent subsistence activities based on land fauna and plant foods at other times of the year. They are common throughout coastal forests and although they no doubt occur in the forested hinterland of Jervis Bay, little work has so far been carried out.

Axe grinding grooves, paintings and burials have also been recorded from the area. Axe grinding grooves are found on flat sandstone slabs, usually near water. The grooves are formed by repeated abrasion of the relatively soft sandstone against the harder material of axe heads, to produce smooth polished faces and bevelled edges. Axes were a prized item of the Aboriginal tool kit and good quality stone for their manufacture was traded over very large distances.

Painted rockshelters occur in

gullies on Beecroft Peninsula where the sandstone bluffs have eroded to form overhangs. Red and white pigment and charcoal was used to paint outline and infilled figures of humans and animals, with some stencils of fish, hands and feet (Bindon, 1976). It is not possible to date the paintings with currently available techniques, but superimpositions of the figures can be used to establish a relative chronology for different art styles and techniques.

Evidence for Aboriginal 'fire stick farming' (Jones, 1969) on Beecroft Peninsula comes from botanical studies. Lampert and Sanders (1973) have hypothesised that the present vegetation is the result of regular firing over many thousands of years. Firing of vegetation to provide new growth and ease of movement was a widespread practice in Australia and there are several ethnographic observations of large fires along the south coast. Present invasion of open forest by rainforest plants suggests that the rainforest had been artificially confined by regular burning in the past but is now spreading because traditional firing regimes have ceased.

Aboriginal Concerns

Beecroft Peninsula is of considerable spiritual significance to members of the Jeringah Aboriginal community. Although now confined to a small area of land at Orient Point, the ancestors of this community once had unimpeded access to the entire Jervis Bay area. Emotional ties to the landscape are still strong despite 200 years of destruction to traditional culture. Elders can still identify certain places as being of particular importance, such as sacred sites or sites where young people were taught to fish and swim. These places are important because they provide a direct link with the past.

The Jeringah have approached relevant government authorities and ministers, seeking assurance that these sites will not be disturbed if the Naval Base is built. We can only hope that their pleas do not fall on deaf ears.

Conclusion

It is clear that the proposed Naval Base and associated developments constitute a threat to a fascinating Aboriginal cultural heritage as well

as to the complex natural ecosystems.

Any tangible evidence of prehistoric Aboriginal society is irreplaceable because Aboriginal people no longer practice a traditional lifestyle. Unnecessary destruction of this evidence will be a loss to all people interested in Australia's history but particularly to the Aboriginal people themselves.

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◦ National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW)



Captions please !

Can you think of a more appropriate caption for this photograph ?

We would like readers to submit their ideas for a suitable caption for this photograph and depending on your response we may make this a regular feature of the *Bulletin*.



Christmas Party – or Guilty Party – at Orroral ?

Macquarie Harbour

Col Simpson

'The resources of the Isle of Van Diemen are daily developing; two Harbours by the bold and enterprising perseverance of an individual, in a whale-boat, have been discovered on the bleak and western shores of the Isle...' So editorialised the Hobart Town Gazette of 15 June 1816. The Gazette goes on: 'Macquarie Harbour (is) of very considerable extent, into which, a River² that runs a considerable distance through the Country disembogues itself; unfortunately at a small distance from the Mouth of the Harbour ... is a Bar that extends across its entrance, having no more than nine feet of water over it, which will for ever render it impossible to be Navigated, but by very small Craft'.

There follows an eye-witness account of the Harbour, obtained from Mr Dennis M'Carty, owner of the *Brig Sophia*, out of Hobart and recently returned with a cargo of Huon Pine: ... 'from the entrance of the Harbour we encountered shoals for the first 10 miles ... we then continued our course up the Harbour in a whale-boat; having advanced about 10 miles further we found on the Northern shore a quantity of Coal ... on further inspection we found the Bank from the River was nearly all Coal, in strata of 6 feet thick'. Dennis M'Carty then gives Gazette readers the first description by a European of the Gordon River: 'On the following day we continued our course up the Harbour, to the entrance of Gordon river; we computed distance from the mouth of the Harbour to Gordon River, to be about 50 miles—pursuing our course up the River we arrived at the First Falls (similar to the Falls of the Derwent), and which we considered to be 50 miles further inland'³ M'Carty concludes: 'We then procured our Cargo by drifting the wood down to the Brig ... The Mountains on the Northern shore where the Coal is, are barren, but the rest are generally covered with Myrtle and Pine'. During the next year or so, the *Sophia* made a number of voyages from Hobart for the timber.

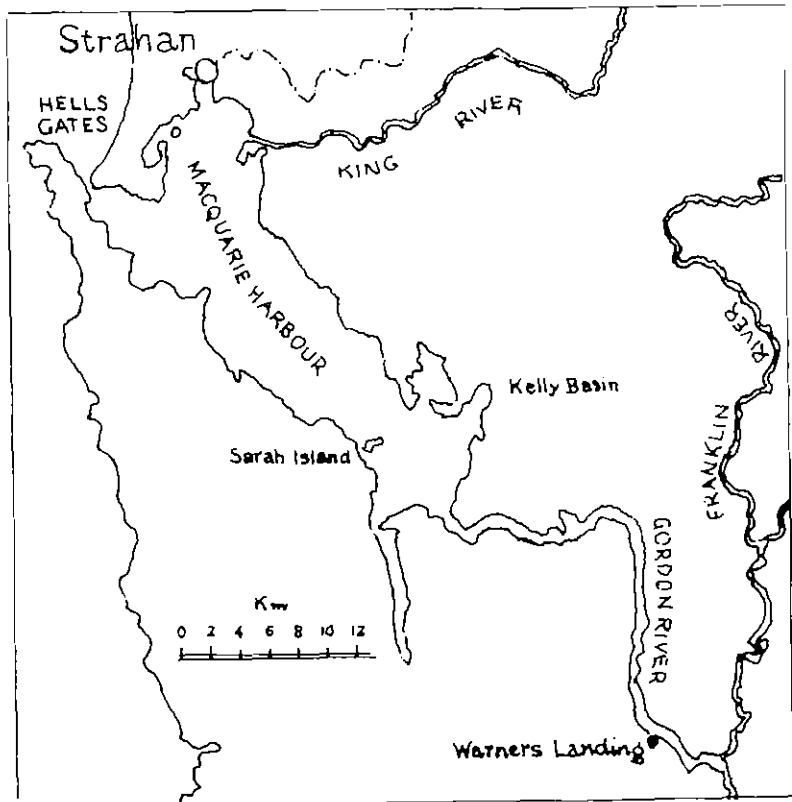
Fifty years after M'Carty, Marcus Clarke, writing what has become a recognised Nineteenth Century Australian novel, sees the Harbour differently. In *For the Term of His*

Natural Life, Clarke describes the convict settlement which had been established at the Harbour in 1822: 'The air is chill and moist, the soil prolific only in prickly undergrowth and noxious weeds, while foetid exhalations from swamp and fen cling close to the humid, spongy ground. All around breathes desolation; on the face of nature is stamped a perpetual frown'. Clarke, an Englishman, had never in fact visited the South West. He continues: 'the convict, chained on the deck of the inward-bound vessel, sees in front of him the bald cone of the Frenchman's Cap ... while, gloomed by overhanging rocks, and shadowed by gigantic forest, the black sides of the basin narrow to the mouth of the Gordon. The turbulent stream is the colour of indigo, and being fed by numerous rivulets which ooze through masses of decaying vegetable matter is of so poisonous a nature that it is not only undrinkable, but absolutely kills the fish which in stormy weather are driven in from the sea'.⁴ Clarke has evoked for the purposes of his novel, a Gothic landscape which might have had more credibility in a European setting. His knowledge of West Coast ecological

systems is sketchy. Certainly he presents a landscape having little resemblance to that part of Tasmania.

Previously, an older and an indigenous explanation had told how the South-West was made by Moiherneer who was hurled down from the heavens after a fight with the great spirit Dromerdeem. Moiherneer cut the ground and made the rivers, and cut the ground and made the islands. Moiherneer also made Parlevar the man; and the area was populated.⁵ Such an account may be over 20,000 years old, which would date from about the time of first human occupation.

In 1986 a wholly different aspect presents itself. One can cruise at thirty knots across the Harbour named after the early New South Wales governor. The voice coming over the public address is modulated and informative; bar service is operating. The Gordon Explorer approaches Hells Gates without venturing over that difficult entrance, before swinging south-east for Sarah Island. As the boat slows, red brick remains dating from the convict period are quite visible. The boat then noses up the Gordon, which turns out to be not indigo but more of a deep brown-black. Ridges, thickly vegetated, rear straight up from the water—Huon Pine, Beech, Myrtle, Blackwood. Past Warners Landing, until the river narrows and



Map drawn by Robert Story

it seems the boat won't be able to turn. Descending, the Gordon Explorer stops briefly to pick up a rafting group which has come down from further upstream. From the water no other signs of human presence are evident and the area has the appearance of being untouched.

The Lower Gordon today flows protected in a narrow corridor which reaches out from the Franklin/

Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, right to the Harbour. But as for the Harbour itself and the surrounding foreshores, they must fend for themselves.

References:

1. Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour had been discovered by James Kelly in December 1815.

2. The Gordon River; observed and named by Kelly in 1815, but not entered.
3. Both estimated distances are grossly inaccurate.
4. Marcus Clarke, *For the Term of His Natural Life*, Book 2, Chapters One and Two.
5. Peter Dombrovskis and Bob Brown, *Wild Rivers*, 1983.

A System for Public Participation

The ACT now has an effective mechanism for public participation in the planning and protection of its natural environment.

This has come about recently with the extension of the terms of reference for the previous Namadgi National Park Consultative Committee to become the ACT Parks and Conservation Consultative Committee.

The Minister for Territories, Mr Gordon Scholes, approved the creation of the new committee at the end of November 1986, following what he saw to be the success of the Namadgi committee in advising him and providing a forum for public consultation.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Consultative Committee will advise the Minister and his Department on aspects of nature conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the ACT. In detail, its terms of reference are:

- . to provide the Minister with a point of liaison and communication with community interests in relation to park management, nature conservation and outdoor recreation management; and
- . in particular, advise the Minister and/or the Department on the management, planning and development needs of Namadgi National Park and other reserved areas in the ACT.

The size of the committee has been expanded by two and now includes thirteen community representatives, two officers of the Department of Territories and an officer from each of the National Capital Development Commission and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.

All the members of the previous Namadgi committee have been invited to serve a second two-year term. However, this time we have

been asked to nominate an official deputy and so the president, Dr Kevin Frawley, is the other NPA representative.

This facility to officially share the work between two people is welcomed as the new committee is expected to handle a greater volume and diversity of work. Having two NPA members involved also enables us to tap a wider range of skills and to present a broader Association viewpoint.

Amendments to the ACT Nature Conservation Ordinance

Members will be pleased to hear that at last proposals are before Parliament to amend the ACT Nature Conservation Ordinance to provide more protection for Namadgi. The proposed amendments would provide a statutory base for the management plan and would make it more difficult for the park boundaries to be altered. The amendments will be automatic after the first two sitting days of the Autumn session of Parliament, provided no disallowance motion is moved.

A Management Plan for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor

The first task of the new Consultative Committee is to stimulate public participation in the development of a management plan for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

The establishment of a nature conservation corridor is something that NPA has been pressing for for several years. In NPA's submission to the parliamentary inquiry on the subject, we asked for a corridor, ranging between 500m and a couple of kilometres wide for the whole length of the river in the ACT, to be declared under the ACT Nature Conservation Ordinance. This was accompanied by a map of our proposed boundaries.

Denise Robin

Several other organisations have been addressing the boundary question which is a complicated one because of all the different forms of land uses existing within the proposed corridor.

To date, the only legal protection afforded the corridor is its listing in the Register of the National Estate. Some parts of it, such as the recreational areas like Point Hut, Pine Island, Casuarina Sands, currently are managed by the Parks and Conservation Service, but the whole corridor will not be protected until exact boundaries are determined and it can be gazetted under the ordinance.

Development of the Management Plan for the corridor is expected to involve a greater diversity and complexity of interest groups than the development of the Namadgi plan.

Involvement of the ACT Heritage Committee

Consultative Committee members will be taken by the Parks and Conservation Service on an inspection of the proposed river corridor some time early in February. They will be joined by members of the ACT Heritage Committee which also has an interest in the river and the other natural and cultural resources found along its length.

The operation of both of these committees, comprised of members of the Canberra community, gives people of the ACT an opportunity to have a say in environmental protection in our local area.

The system now exists and we have to make it work for conservation. If you have any ideas or questions that you would like put forward, or would like more information on the matters mentioned here, please be in touch with either Kevin or myself.



Just Briefly—



For those of us who are southsiders and are familiar with Mt Taylor, Mt Wanniasa, and the humble Oakey Hill, Ingrid's mid-week walk in November gave us a new perspective on Canberra. A walk of 12 kilometres return, it took in the northside peaks of Mt. Painter and the Pinnacle. The views and lunch were enjoyed in an icy cold but exhilarating strong breeze. The rain which could be seen shifting swiftly across distant hills and valleys all around the horizon, obligingly avoided us until near completion of the walk. During the day, Peter remarked upon the interesting variety of people one meets on an NPA walk. One must agree on the diversity of personalities present that day. There were the 'quiet achievers' such as Charlie and Reg, and there were the ... others. Alan espousing the Pritikin Diet and regular exercise, had those of us who were drinking coffee decidedly worried. Then there was the ex-Victorian, sounding-off about the glories of that State, as if in the pay of its Department of Tourism. (Of course, everything she said was true!)

★ ★ ★

The 7.30 am meeting time for Arno's walk on December 7, was no deterrent for the seventeen enthusiasts who took the 200km return drive and waded the Shoalhaven to proceed to the Big Hole. Viewed for the first time, this feature impresses one with its great depth and menacing gape. The next natural phenomenon was several kilometres and a very steep descent further on. To experience the so-called Marble Arch involves making your way along Moodong Creek which goes tunnel-like through caves under the hillside. Eventually it makes its way into a rocky steep-sided narrow gorge, ending (for us)

where a waterfall gushes from a gap high in the rock wall, into a deep, flowing stream. The variety of textures and marble-patterned, sometimes mossy contours of the walls are beautiful, but underfoot the rock is treacherously slippery. However, the whole complement returned with limbs intact, from a richly rewarding 40 minute 'slippery dip'.

★ ★ ★

An intriguing carved inscription was noticed on a large log beside the big Hole during the above walk. A faint but readable '1884' and the name 'PAPAN' were separated by a small cross. Could any reader shed light on this?

★ ★ ★



Photo by Don Honey

An appropriate function of this column is to enable *Bulletin* readers to maintain some contact with those NPA members who have moved away from Canberra. Thanks to Shirley Lewis for the following interesting item.

★ ★ ★

Hela Lindeman, a very keen bushwalker, when in Canberra led many NPA walks. She moved to Batemans Bay in early 1984 and went into a retirement village from where she continued her bushwalking, discovering a whole new world on foot.

Hela founded the Batemans Bay Bushwalking Club whose membership escalated to a couple of hundred in a very short time. She regularly walks three or four times a week, and we now hear that she has moved out of the retirement village and into a unit at Surfside. Is walking the way to rejuvenation?

★ ★ ★

This watery incident is vividly recalled by Gladys Joyce after her tour of Northern Territory National Parks last August. The tour company arranged for Gladys and her group to travel by canoe along Katherine Gorge – two people in each canoe. Rock bars across the water at several points necessitated portage by the canoeists of their craft over the rocks to the next water level. This done, Gladys, inexperienced in the fickleness of canoes, was in the process of stepping into hers when it drifted slightly and she was, as they say, unceremoniously dunked. However, pretending that she was just checking under the canoe for barnacles the brave Gladys climbed in carefully and paddled on.

★ ★ ★

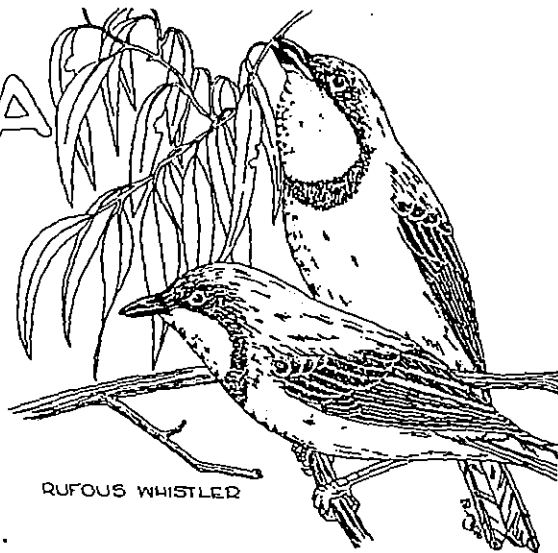
Curried Frogs?

This example of 'oneupmanship' must be one of the more unusual. Why would otherwise sane people go squelching around paddocks and farm dams on a Saturday night after torrential rain? Why? To immortalise their name in a scientific paper of course. In years to come, when you read of a new species of frog being named something like *Froggus curriei* or *currieana* you will know that Ian and Jean have achieved their ambition.

★ ★ ★

In another column in another place, the writer 'gets stuck into', satirically of course, chain-photographers (as in chain-smokers). He says they are a nuisance, and he is tired of being delayed by them when bushwalking. Their compulsion to capture on film '... every mossy rock, possum dropping, leaf, spider web and dew drop', puts the walk schedule behind. *Just Briefly* suggests that NPA walk leaders may need to divide not the sheep from the goats, but the D.O.G.'s from the C.A.D.'s, that

BRINDABELLA FOREST WALK



RUFIOUS WHISTLER

The time is NOW.

The Government is about to make a decision on the renewal of the Eden export woodchip licence.

The Forest Festival.

On the weekend of 4-5 April, the people of Canberra and region will show their concern at concerts, a march, a fair, and much more. The weekend will climax on Sunday afternoon with a march to the rally at Parliament House with speakers including Bob Brown.

Walk For the Forests (in a team of 6!)

On Saturday 4 April you and your friends can help save the threatened forests of the Southeast by forming a team of six to walk the beautiful tall wet forests of the Brindabellas. Learn more about the forests, feel the magic, and help raise much needed funds.

Details on reverse. Save this portion for your information on April 4th.



Send this portion to:

Brindabella Forest Walk
Conservation Council of the Southeast
Region and Canberra
GPO Box 1875
Canberra 2601

Walkers' Information.

Your team can choose any walking distance from 1 km to the full 10 km. Each member then seeks sponsorship pledges based on the team's intended walking time. The money raised will both fund a forestry education kit for the schools, and give a big boost to the campaign at this critical time.

Walkers need comfortable walking shoes, a sun hat, drinking water, a day pack, and clothing to suit the weather (it is often cooler in the mountains than in Canberra). Don't forget to bring your sponsorship forms along on the bus ride.

Brindabella Buses and Sponsorship Forms.

Buses will depart the Jolimont Centre at 9.00 am on Saturday 4 April, returning at 4.30 pm. Seats are strictly limited. The \$5 round-trip tickets must be purchased in advance. NO LAST MINUTE SEATS WILL BE AVAILABLE.

Clip the form below and reserve your seats. Along with your tickets, we will urgently rush you your sponsorship forms so that you have sufficient time to seek sponsorship. Prizes for sponsorship funds raised will include Wilderness Shop gift vouchers, and grand prizes from Paddy Pallins and Wilderness Expeditions.

DON'T MISS THE BUS! Send your completed form in straight away whether or not you have assembled your team of six. If you have yet to assemble your team, enter your name as team co-ordinator and purchase 6 bus tickets. We will rush you 6 tickets and 6 sponsorship forms. Then, after you have assembled your team, ring the Conservation Council with the members' names. Telephone the Council on (062) 477808.

Team Name (be creative!) _____

Team Co-ordinator: 1. Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Team Members (name and phone): 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

Bus fare enclosed @ \$5 per adult # _____
\$3 per concession # _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: # _____

Please rush me
one sponsorship
form per person.

OUTINGS PROGRAM

March - May 1987



OUTINGS GUIDE

- Day Walks** - Carry lunch, drinks & protective clothing
- Pack Walks** - Two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BEFORE WEDNESDAY.
- Car Camps** - Often limited or no facilities. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK WITH LEADER EARLY.

Other activities include Nature Rambles, Field Guide Studies, Ski Tours, Snow Crafts, Tree Maintenance and other projects.

DAY WALKS - GRADING

- A Up to 15 km, mainly on tracks or forest roads, relatively flat terrain or shorter distances through trackless open bushland.
- B Up to 20 km, mainly on tracks or shorter walks through trackless open bush.
- C As for 'B' may include rougher terrain, i.e. heavy scrub, rock hopping or scrambling or steep terrain.
- D Up to 30 km, relatively easy terrain or less over trackless or steep terrain.

PACK WALKS - GRADING

- 1 Up to 14 km a day over relatively easy terrain.
- 2 Up to 20 km a day, may involve long ascents.
- 3 As for '2' may include rougher terrain, i.e. heavy scrub, rock hopping or scrambling.
- 4 Strenuous long distance or much steep climbing or very difficult terrain.
- 5 Exploratory in an area unfamiliar to the leader.

Additional information will be contained in the actual walks programme. If necessary contact leader.

28 April - Tuesday Walk (A)
Gibraltar Peak Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Leader: Shirley Lewis 95 2720
 Meet at Tidbinbilla Information Centre 1000 for a 6 km walk with short steep pinches along fire trail to the peak among the spectacular granite tors for views to Tidbinbilla and Canberra. 70 km drive.

2/3 May - Pack Walk (2/3)
Northern Budawangs Ref: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Craig Allen 54 9735 (h), 52 6058 (w)
 Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this walk in the northern Budawangs. Approximately 300 km drive.

2 May - Saturday Walk (C)
Honeysuckle Creek - Three Peaks Ridge
 Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Charles Hill 95 8924
 Meet in Kett Street alongside Kambah Village Shops 0845. A 10 km walk in trackless forest with some rocks and scrub along the ridge south of Apollo Rd. Spectacular rocks and views. Climbs total 430 metres. 80 km drive.

9/10 May - Pack Walk (3)
Mt X Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Neville Esau 86 4176
 Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this walk to rocky peak east of Mt Kelly (715461). A 25 km walk, no tracks, some scrub with rocky scramble to peak for magnificent views. 100 km drive.

10 May - Sunday Walk (B)
Booroomba Rocks Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Shirley Lewis 95 2720
 Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0900. A 9 km walk along fire trail, track and some scrub to high point with extensive 360° views from area of granite outcrops. Climb of 300 metres. 50 km drive.

16/17 May - Car Camp
Meroo Point Ref: Tabourie 1:25 000
Leader: Reg Alder 54 2240
 Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this car camp in forest at Meroo Point. Easy access to 2 surf beaches and Meroo Lake. Necessary to bring your own water. 360 km drive.

16 May - Saturday Walk
Bush Bottoms/Goulburn
Leaders: Laurel Lowe/Ian Haynes 51 4762
 Meet at Dickson Library car park, Woolley St side at 0700 for lifts, or at Goulburn Court House, Montague St at 0830. Guided walking in this picturesque valley near Goulburn, with billy tea lunch. Bring your own lunch. Entrance fee.

17 May - Sunday Walk (B/C)
Ginini Falls Ref: ACT 1:100 000
 Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Leader: Lyle Mark 86 2801
 Meet at corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road at 0730. An 8 km walk from Mt Franklin to Ginini Falls and return. A demanding 550 metre climb through fallen timber. Worth it for the hardy ones who want to see this 180 metre cascade. 110 km drive. Not for beginners.

20 May - Wednesday Walk (A)
Molonglo Gorge Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Olive Buckman 48 8774
 Meet at first BBQ area east of main Duntroon entrance on Morshead Drive at 1000. A 6 km walk on track with some rocks and short climb. 20 km drive.

23/24 May - Pack Walk (2/3)
Deua Ref: Krawarree 1:25 000
Leader: Frank Clements 31 7005
 Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this walk commencing at Wyanbene Caves then to the Deua with a steep 600 metre descent and ascent with river crossing. 300 km drive. Not for beginners.

23 May - Saturday Tree Maintenance
Glendale Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Charles Hill 95 8924
 Arrive 0930 or after with gardening gloves, mattock, spade or chipping hoe. 90 km drive.

24 May - Sunday Walk (B/C)
Mt Tennent Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Ian Haynes 51 4762
 Meet at Tharwa shops 0830. A 10 km walk with a 700 metre ascent and descent. Climb ridge on the southern side of Tennent to summit with steep rough descent to Tharwa Road. Car shuffle. 50 km drive.

31 May - Sunday Walk (C)
The Onion Ref: Michelago 1:25 000
 Tinderry 1:25 000
Leader: Philip Gatenby 54 3094
 Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 0700. This walk involves a climb of nearly 800 metres through scrub, with rock scrambling. 120 km drive. Not for beginners.

POINTS TO NOTE

New faces to lead, new places to go!
 Please help to keep our Outings Program alive by volunteering to lead a walk occasionally.
 Contact Walks Convenor Ian Haynes on 51 4762 (h).

* * * * *

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the A.C.T. 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 A.C.T., its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability in respect of any injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

* * * * *

The Committee suggests a donation of FIVE cents per kilometre (calculation to nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the Program are for approximate return journeys.

* * * * *

28 February/1 March – Pack Walk (3/5)
Island Mountain/Camping Rock Creek
Ref: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Eric Pickering 86 2128
Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this walk in the northern Budawangs. Most of first day spent in Crevasse Canyon, where if conditions permit swimming will be possible. Returning via Island Mtn. 340 km drive.

8 March – Sunday Walk (A)
Hospital Creek Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000
Leader: Beverly Hammond 88 6577
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0900. Leave cars at the pine forest by Gudgenby property. Walk on fire trail and through open paddocks to Hospital Ck. Follow the creek to a hut and return on the Old Boboyan Road. Very little climbing. 10 km walk and 100 km drive.

14/15/16 March – Pack Walk (1/2)
Pretty Plains Ref: Khancoban 1:25 000
Leader: Ian Haynes 51 4762
Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this walk to the upper reaches of the Tooma River via picturesque Wheelers Hut, impressive Pretty Plains log cabin and various ruins. An initial climb of 280 metres along Snakey Plain Fire Trail. The walk is partly on fire trails and partly on walking track. Walk distance 33 km with a drive of 480 km.

14/15/16 March – Car Camp
Wapengo/Mimosa Rocks National Park
Ref: Eden Project Map
Leader: Ian Currie 95 8112
Contact leader early for details of this car camp north of Tathra. Numbers limited. Walk, swim, fish, canoe, bird-watch and explore the hinterland. Note that there are no facilities, no toilets and no water – bring plenty of fresh water!

14 March – Saturday Walk
Mt Coree Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leaders: Arno Wynd 47 8542, Phil Goddard 54 8279
Meet at corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road 0830. A walk of about 10 km on a fire trail from Blundells Flat to top of Mt Coree with a 600 metre rise and for the more energetic an alternative more direct route to the top with both groups meeting. 30 km drive.

15 March – Sunday Walk (A)
Stockyard Creek Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Kevin Frawley 82 3080
Meet at corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road 0830. Visit arboretum which is the highest remaining in the ACT, leaving vehicles on the top of Mt Ginini. Suitable for families. 120 km drive.

18 March – Wednesday Walk (A)
Kambah Pool/Red Rocks Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Glyn Lewis 95 2720
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0930. Walk upstream on track with some sandy patches and rocks from Kambah Pool to steepish rock wall on Murrumbidgee. Bring swimming gear. 8 km walk and 5 km drive.

21/22 March – Pack Walk (3)
The Castle Ref: CMW Budawangs, Corang 1:25 000
Leader: Nick Gascoigne 51 5550 (h), 46 2167 (w)
Contact leader by Tuesday for details of this walk in the southern Budawangs. Scenic drive to Yadboro. The Castle in its isolation provides spectacular views through 360°. Some rock scrambling, hopping and climbing. 750 metre climb. Not for those who have problems with heights. 350 km drive.

21 March – Saturday Tree Maintenance
Glendale Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Charles Hill 95 8924
Arrive 0900 or after with gardening gloves, mattock, spade or chipping hoe. 90 km drive.

22 March – Sunday Walk (B)
Rock Flats Area Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Frank Clements 31 7005
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0830. A 16 km walk just short of Rock Flats, along fire trails and through rough bush with two steep 200 metre climbs. Walking time 8 hours. 80 km drive. Not for beginners.

22 March – Sunday Field Guide Walk (A)
Tidbinbilla Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Laurie Adams 58 1048
Meet at Tidbinbilla Information Centre 0930. A series of short walks around Tidbinbilla examining the various tree species but not Acacias and only one or two Eucalypts! 70 km drive.

28/29 March – Car Camp
Tantawangalo Ref: Eden Project Map
Leader: Ian Currie 95 8112
Contact leader early for details of car camp in this threatened State Forest, camping at Postmans Track crossing on Tantawangalo Creek. Meet at Bibbenluke Village at 1030.

29 March – Sunday Walk (B/C)
Flea Creek Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Les Pyke 81 2982
Meet at corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road 0830. Easy scenic 10 km walk with testing downhill walk to Flea Creek then up along the Goodradigbee River to the bridge at Brindabella. 100 km drive.

4/5 April – Pack Walk (5)
Bogong Peaks Ref: Yarrangobilly 1:100 000
Talbingo 1:25 000
Leader: Garth Abercrombie 81 4907
Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this exploratory walk in the Bogong Peaks area at the northern end of the Kosciusko National Park. Aim to traverse between Lampe and Jounama Trigs. Expect some thick scrub and rock scrambling with climbs of 600 metres. 360 km drive.

5 April – Sunday Bike Ride
Lake Burley Griffin and Molonglo River
Leader: Gary Schneider Ref: Canberra's Bike Paths
Meet at Acton Ferry Terminal at 1000 for family bike ride of exploration. Bring bikes, lunch, drinks. Contact outings convenor for details.

5 April – Sunday Walk (A/B)
Honeysuckle Creek Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Lyn Richardson 41 5498
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0830. A walk along the ridges and among the granite tors in the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station area. 50 km drive.

11 April – Saturday Heritage Week Walk (A)
Nursery Creek/Orroral Homestead
Ref: Rendezvous Ck 1:25 000, Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Lyle Mark 86 2801
Meet in Kett Street alongside Kambah Village Shops at 1000. Easy 10 km walk to inspect aboriginal paintings. Also inspect the pastoral heritage of Orroral Homestead. 100 km drive.

12 April – Sunday Walk
Orroral Valley Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Reg Alder 54 2240
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0900. A 12 km walk on fire trail and through open bush up the Orroral Valley to Peak 1339 overlooking Sawpit Creek and across to Mt Mc Keahnie. 400 metre climb. 120 km drive.

17/18/19 April – Pack Walk (3/4)
Namadgi National Park
Ref: Rendezvous Ck 1:25 000, Yaouk 1:25 000
Leader: Margus Karilaid 82 4118
Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this 3 day 35 km walk up Middle Creek to Rotten Swamp. Side trips to Namadgi, Mt Kelly. Returning along Scabby Range and Sams Creek Fire Trail, taking in Mt Gudgenby time permitting. 120 km drive. Not for beginners.

17/18/19/20 April – Lodge Weekend
Edrom Lodge, Twofold Bay Ref: Eden Project Map
Leaders: Ray and Joan Hegarty 81 3973
The lodge was built in 1913 and is now operated by the NSW Forestry Commission. Facilities: all kitchen wares, fridges and stoves. Bring: food, sheets, blankets etc or sleeping bags. Dormitory type accommodation. Walk, swim, fish, visit Boydtown. Numbers limited, members only. You are asked to pay prior to trip. Contact leaders early for this popular weekend.

25 April – Saturday Walk (C)
Peak 722492 Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Philip Gatenby 54 3094
Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 0700. Walk from Orroral Valley to this mountain above Rendezvous Creek. Mostly through scrub and a total climb of approximately 1000 metres. 120 km drive. Not for beginners.

26 April – Sunday Walk (B)
Brandy Flat/Caloola Farm Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Dianne Thompson 88 6084
Meet at Kambah Village Shops 0830. A 16 km walk on track from Caloola Farm following the creek to Brandy Flat Hut. 80 km drive.



Contemplating the Big Hole ...

Photo by Val Honey

is, the Dedicated Onward Gallopers from the Camera-Attached Dawdlers. Incidentally, it may be of interest to know that *my* photographic collection of possum droppings has been highly commended and accepted by the International Bureau of Scientific Evacuative Investigation.

★ ★ ★

'Joan's Ordeal' – a one-act drama

Time – Late afternoon.

Place – Green Patch, Jervis Bay.

Characters – NPA members (mostly relaxing after the long haul uphill from Steamers Beach)

Suddenly our peace and quiet is shattered – medical (and surgical) attention is required by someone. An urgent call goes out for kerosine, etc., and a man is seen moving swiftly across the camping area with a hurricane lamp. Then a be-masked figure with a small black bag disappears through a doorway. The delicate operation under canvas begins. Scalpels, tweezers, sutures ... kerosine at the ready ... out comes the tick ... no legs? ... no head ... looks ... er, kind of wooden.

Q. When is a tick not a tick?

A. When it is a splinter.

★ ★ ★

Most readers have fallen victim to the ubiquitous crimson rosella at some time. Hordes of these beautiful marauding creatures regularly descend upon picnic tables everywhere, and can leave a prepared

pursued by biscuit-hungry humans, and so is totally unprepared for the loud hand-clap from below it. With a screech, it relinquishes its grip, and the Kingston falls to the ground to be conveyed triumphantly back to camp by the miserly human. It's as well the bird was not a Honey-eater!

★ ★ ★

They were going to stop, they said, to take a look at the Fitzroy Falls – but there they were, on the *other* side of the road, sinking their teeth greedily into *pies* at 3 o'clock in the afternoon! Two Currie pies, two Honey pies, but only one pie Hegarty – 'cos our little Ray of sunshine declined a 'Four and Twegarty'.

★ ★ ★

Keep groaning – here's another one – 'Are river redgums found only at the mouth of a river?'

★ ★ ★

Please keep in mind the earlier comment that an appropriate function of this column is to carry news of NPA members now living away from Canberra. Items of interest regarding *any* members are welcome, and indeed necessary so as to broaden the participation in *Just Briefly* of a wider spectrum of NPA members. Please 'phone 88 1889.

Melliodora



... another way of looking at it.

Photo by Val Honey

Towards 2000 – Where Are We Going?

Reg Alder

The population of Canberra has almost doubled over the past fifteen years and except for a slight hiccup in the 'Fraser' years it has had steady growth. With the near completion of the transfer of Commonwealth Departments, the past rate may diminish but it can be expected that there will still be a substantial growth with the consolidation of Canberra as the nation's capital.

Likewise our Association's membership has more than doubled over the same period, but not in line with the increase in the population of Canberra. Ours has occurred over the past five to six years after a static period during most of the seventies. In addition we now represent a higher percentage of the population than in the early seventies.

This raises the question of what has caused this livening interest in the Association and will it continue? If so, we need to plan for this growth.

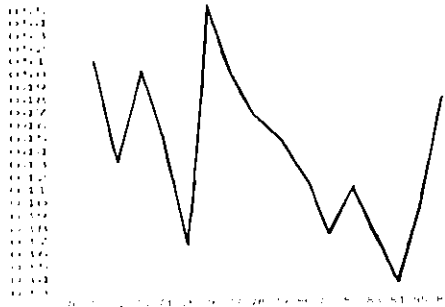
There are many possible reasons for this healthy trend. Some which may have had an influence are:

- . Interest in the environment triggered off by Fraser Island, the Franklin River, national parks, woodchips, rain forests, Daintree, uranium and the Barrier Reef.
- . 'Life be in It' and get fit programs, bringing out an interest in bushwalking.
- . The public finding that the Association's activities suits its lifestyle.
- . The change in emphasis and content of the Bulletin, its increased public circulation and publicity.
- . A younger age group finding out that the Association has much to offer.

Our relatively low subscription.

There could be many more reasons, what do you think?

The graph of percentage of subscription to salary shows dramatically how our subscription did not keep pace with inflation. The policy for some years was to keep subscriptions low. At times they just met expenditure.



PERCENTAGE OF SUBSCRIPTION TO A BASE SALARY

Now we have only a small reserve and if more contingency funds had been accumulated, a greater income from interest would now be possible. The Association's membership of 775 has reached the stage where voluntary help cannot be expected to service the demands of a high membership. For the past four years we have had a small grant from the Community Development Fund and from it have employed a part time office assistant. If the grant was withdrawn completely it would be a calamity to the organisation of our Association.

Our subscription is still lower than the average of kindred associations and we indulge in less fund raising activities such as fees for outing participation, socials and supper. Our subscription was raised last year to provide some 'fat' to tide us over the variations we will have to anticipate in the annual allocations of grant monies. There are increasing demands from the community for a share of the fund and we cannot always expect to receive all that we apply for. The graph shows it is still much cheaper to be a member now than it was in the early and mid 70's. Nevertheless, subscriptions need to keep pace with inflation.

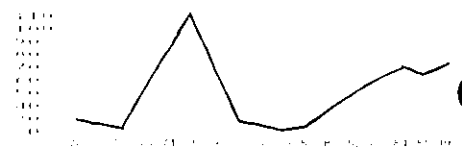
Membership growth may soon reach a stage when the time needed for direction of the Association will be beyond that of a voluntary president and secretary. Thought and

provision towards this day must be undertaken now.

The style of the Bulletin has been changed progressively over the past few years when it was realised that we put less effort and proportion of members' subscriptions into its publication than other associations. It became too much work for our volunteer typists and at some cost we went commercial by having the text typeset. Typesetting gave twice the amount of text per page with a consequent printing economy. Also, photographs were introduced from members' submissions. As a result the Bulletin became more attractive and interesting. Costs of the Bulletin are closely controlled and with editorial, layout and distribution still being carried out by Association members, it is good value with its photographs and interesting original reading. Moreover, it is invaluable for the publicity it engenders and the spread of the environmental message.



AVERAGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER SUBSCRIPTION



PERCENTAGE OF COST OF BULLETIN PER SUBSCRIPTION

The Bulletin depends on members' contributions and a grant from the Community Development Fund. With an annual content equalling the size of a paperback it is a substantial publishing effort, reflecting the healthy state of the Association. The talent for its production may not always be available in the future and further paid assistance may be needed.

This exemplifies the need for our subscription to be adjusted regularly to keep pace with the increased activities and future growth of the Association.

Dubbo Falls °

Judith Webster

The first weekend in November Garth Abercombie led a pack walk to Dubbo Falls on Dubbo Creek, which flows into the Goobarrandra River in a valley beyond Brindabella. We met at the bridge over the Goodradigbee River in the Brindabella valley at 8.30 am Saturday.

The drive there was quite an adventure. Deborah had agreed to give me a lift and pick me up at 7.00 am. When it got to 7.10 am and she had not arrived, I became a bit anxious as I knew we had a long drive. I'm afraid I hassled her a bit because I phoned to see what had happened. She was running late having had difficulty getting to sleep the night before and then oversleeping! It was nearly 7.30 am before we left Canberra. As we began the descent from Picadilly Circus to the Brindabella valley, Deborah remarked this was the first time she had driven on a dirt road, which was a bit unnerving as we were somewhat under pressure wondering if we would get to the meeting place before the others had all given up hope of our arriving and left! However, that part of the journey was relatively short and we arrived only five minutes late. What a relief!

We left Deborah's car parked beside the bridge and she and I continued the journey in Timothy's old campervan which travelled much slower than the other vehicles so that we soon lost sight of them. We took a wrong fork but discovered our mistake quite soon as it was a dead-end leading to the river bank. Back on the right track, the road was very rough and narrow, winding and climbing steeply. We bumped, jolted and rocked our way along this bone-rattling road for about 30 km to where the Broken Cart Fire Trail leads off it. The others had waited for us here. Just where we turned onto the Broken Cart Fire Trail was a wet muddy patch and here Timothy's van managed to get bogged. It became well and truly stuck in muddy water to a depth half way up its wheels. The next 2 hours were spent trying to jack up the van (putting the jack on big stones) and then putting large flat stones under the wheels. We also put chains over the tyres but all in vain. As time went on we lit a small

fire, boiled a billy, had a brew-up and continued with our efforts of stone gathering and jacking! Finally a four-wheel drive vehicle came by and towed the van out in five minutes flat! We decided it was prudent to leave the van at the junction.

So, squeezing ourselves and packs into the remaining three vehicles, we now proceeded slowly and carefully down the Broken Cart Fire Trail, encountering many more boggy patches. We finally came to one that looked too deep to risk and the alternative route was blocked by a huge fallen tree. Parking here, we began our walk – at 12.30 pm! The fire trail was followed down, down, down for about 3 hours to the planned campsite on the flats beside the Goobarrandra River. There was not time to visit Dubbo Falls that day. After setting up camp and enjoying afternoon tea, some people went on a short exploratory walk to find relics from gold mining days – parts of machinery, a small dam, and a water race. The rest of us took the opportunity to freshen-up and generally relax.

The leader got us up early next morning to go to the Falls. It was a beautiful day, sunny, warm and clear. Leaving the campsite at 7.45 am we crossed the river which was absolutely freezing. The soles of my feet felt as though I had been walking on spiked ice and my legs turned red and blue! Then we crossed Frog Porridge Creek (lovely name!) and headed up onto a ridge. The country was fairly open forest, magnificent tall trees and not too much scrubby undergrowth, with a few prickly bushes, bracken and fallen timber. Many birds were calling and the howl of a dingo was heard. We approached the falls from the top and could hear the thunder of tumbling water before we saw it. The falls were great! Spring rains and probably some winter snow melts had produced a large volume of water which plunged down in a series of falls to the Goobarrandra. Slanting sunlight, fine flying spray, rainbows and glistening rocks combined to create a marvellous spectacle. I haven't seen anything like it since the Milford Track.

We climbed down alongside the falls. As we descended, they became

cascades tumbling along a rocky creek bed under leaning tree ferns. It was very beautiful. We then reached the junction with the river. Our leader intended that we cross the river and climb up the other side to the race which the others had located the previous afternoon. However, the water here was too deep and flowing too swiftly so we scrambled along amid lots of scrub on the steep bank. Some of the group, who had visited the area in 1982 before the drought had broken, recalled how they had been able to rock hop and splash along the river and how they had scrambled up what had then been the dry rocky faces of the falls themselves.

Eventually we found a place where we thought we could cross – Garth and Philip placed a young fallen sapling across to a small grassy outcrop in the middle of the river to use as a handrail. The water was flowing very fast and came up to the middle of my stomach. I decided to keep my joggers on and this certainly made crossing less painful. Everyone got across without mishap and then several folk, who felt hot after the morning's walk, decided to have a swim. I thought they were mad as the water didn't feel any warmer than it had in the morning. Our leader submerged himself quickly a few times, shook himself vigorously and declared it was 'very brisk!' Even Jan plunged into this chilly water, subjecting her 18 week foetus to a range of unusual experiences. 'You might give it pneumonia' said the prospective father. However, Jan's motto seems to be 'bring it up tough'!

We then struggled along on the opposite bank looking for the water race, which took some time to find. At 3.00 pm, hot and dehydrated we reached the campsite. Meredith thankfully rested her feet, wriggling blistered toes in relief and then carefully rewrapping them for the remainder of the walk. A pair of unsatisfactory boots caused her problem, but fortunately she had also brought a pair of joggers and managed to soldier on uncomplainingly.

Our late lunch was greatly appreciated, particularly the unlimited cups of tea! We packed up camp

and left at 4.15 pm to begin the long haul up the fire trail to the vehicles. We reached these at 7.25 pm, having been walking, more or less continuously – apart from lunch – since 7.45 am. It was then a bumpy ride along the rough fire trail; squelching

through boggy bits and straining up steep hills. One hill proved quite difficult; Philip's passengers had to get out and walk and Babette's car required a push. Just on dusk (about 8.00 pm) we reached the spot where the campervan was parked. It was

still a long drive over rough roads, first to Brindabella (to pick up Deborah's car) and then on to Canberra. Deborah finally dropped me at home at 10.45 pm!



see cover photo

Interpretation In National Parks

Elizabeth Beckmann

Interpretation is the term used by many organisations involved in managing public lands, such as National Parks, State Forests and recreation areas, to describe the ways in which they try to make the natural and cultural history of those areas more understandable and enjoyable to the visitor. A variety of interpretive methods may be used: visitors may interact directly with rangers on guided walks, or may learn about an area through self-guided walking trails, park publications, or audio-visual and other displays at a visitor centre.

The first major attempt to describe the philosophy and practicalities of interpretation was made in 1957 by Freeman Tilden, an American park naturalist, in his 'Interpreting our heritage'. Tilden defined interpretation as 'an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings ... by first-hand experience ... rather than simply to communicate factual information'. This idea of 'first-hand experience' underlies most interpretation programs: people are encouraged to become active, rather than passive, observers of their surroundings.

More recently, the US Park Service has described interpretation as 'the process of stimulating and encouraging an appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage and of communicating nature conservation ideals and practices'¹ while to the UK Countryside Commissions a major aim of interpretation is 'to communicate the conservation message'².

Visitors' experiences in a National Park or similar setting are undoubtedly enriched by good interpretation. So recreational benefits can be increased without a consequent impact on resources. Moreover, interpretation can increase the effectiveness of park management: some forms of environmental impact, such as littering

or trail damage, can be reduced significantly with appropriate interpretation. Even in wilderness areas, where the more intrusive forms of interpretation such as signs are unsuitable, effective pre-visit interpretation can assist by encouraging minimal-impact bushwalking. At the same time, interpretation plays a role in the continuing environmental education of people of all ages, an important consideration as public participation in planning and management decisions becomes more common.

The use of interpretation as an educational instrument, and its potential as a management tool, are now generally accepted in Australia. Despite its increasing status, however, management decisions in this field are still based largely on personal initiative and *ad hoc* practices. The majority of interpretive programs do not have defined and assessable objectives, and feedback on program effectiveness, if it exists at all, tends to be informal and anecdotal. In many cases there are not even reliable statistics concerning the number of visitors who participate in interpretation programs. Formal evaluation procedures, measuring not only the achievement of interpretation objectives but also the cost-effectiveness of specific methods, are considered an important part of any form of planning process³ but are rarely included in such processes in Australia.

In some cases at least then, it may be political expediency rather than interpretive objectives that forms the basis for decisions concerning interpretation. For example, a large portion of a park's budget may be spent on building a visitor centre rather than on employing seasonal rangers over several years: is the reason cost-effectiveness or the greater monumental character of a building? Should all parks share

the same interpretive objectives, or do some have special aspects that need highlighting? How do different interpretive methods compare with one another in effectively conveying the messages about the park to the visitor? Should interpretation be seen primarily as an adjunct to existing educational sources, as a form of public relations, or as an important management tool which is potentially far more effective than excessive regulation of park users?

As part of my research, I would be very interested in hearing of readers' experiences with interpretation. For example, is it always true that meeting and talking with a ranger, whether on a guided walk, in the visitor centre or at the campsite tends to add a great deal of interest to the visit? Are sources of on-site information adequate? Do you prefer your information from a person, a sign or a leaflet? Do you have any praise or criticisms of interpretation programs in certain parks or reserves, particularly those in the ACT? If you would like to pass on your comments, ideas and experiences of interpretation – or if you would be interested in taking part in a more detailed survey in the future – please write to Elizabeth Beckmann, C/- NPA, GPO Box 457, Canberra ACT 2601.

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Guidelines For Travelling Through And Camping In The Bush

Part 2

Keith McRae

In the September edition of the *Bulletin*, it was suggested that the increased interest and participation in bushwalking and other outdoor leisure pursuits posed a potential threat to natural environments and created a need for a comprehensive and environmentally-protectionist set of guidelines designed to minimise human impact on natural communities and entities. The first section of the code dealt with the planning responsibilities of leaders. In this, the second in a series of articles, guidelines for people who travel through and camp in the Australian bush are suggested:

Travelling

(a) Move in a group of four to six people if travelling with a large party providing, of course, that each group contains at least two people with the leadership qualities needed to minimise environmental impact and human risk and to maximise satisfaction and enjoyment.

(b) Resist the temptation to take short-cuts on zig-zag tracks. Keeping to tracks is important particularly in areas used by large numbers of people. Vegetation can be damaged and erosion can result.

(c) Follow wildlife or other tracks wherever possible.

(d) Select footwear appropriate for safety, comfort and the terrain. Heavy, studded boots may have an adverse effect on fragile environments. Use lightweight footwear wherever possible. Tread carefully and, if possible, walk on boulders and stony ground.

(e) Consider carefully the environmental implications of travelling in areas which have no previously used tracks. Such movement requires experience and extra sensitivity to the needs of the environment.

(f) Eliminate all unnecessary or loud noise whenever travelling or camping in the 'bush'. Apart from the fact that party members will appreciate the quiet, they will not be distracted from observing and enjoying *the environment* and the wildlife will be less disturbed. Rowdy songs and games should be saved for other times and places.

Campsites

(a) Locate the campsite at least 30 metres away from natural water

sources and avoid areas which are frequently visited by wildlife.

(b) Avoid tall trees, high knolls (lightning) and cliff bottoms (falling rocks) when selecting a site.

(c) Choose a resilient site which is non-inflammable and non-scarring.

(d) Avoid areas of fragile vegetation which can be easily trampled or slopes on which erosion is likely or wet sites on which there is likely to be soil and vegetation compaction.

(e) Pitch tents in areas where there is ample organic materials or in sandy areas if present.

(f) Use an existing campsite rather than make a new one in the same area providing that the area is not in danger of being heavily compacted. In either situation, disperse use throughout the area to avoid soil or vegetation compaction resulting from a concentration of activities in a confined area but avoid expanding the campsite.

(g) Avoid digging ditches, especially in delicate areas. Use natural drainage or tents with built-in groundsheets.

(h) Refrain from using rocks or digging up soil or sod to hold pegs or tent flaps; and from landscaping the campsite by cutting live branches, removing rocks or pulling up plants. If sleeping areas need to be cleared of twigs or small rocks, scatter these items over the area before leaving.

(i) Select and set up the chosen campsite as early as possible to minimise unintended impact on the environment.

(j) Avoid spending more than two days at any one campsite unless it is an already established site. Even then, be conscientious about moving the campsite to avoid damage. In pristine areas (i.e. never previously used), it may be desirable to limit stays to one night.

Fires and Firewood

(a) Use stoves where law and local regulations dictate; where there is a fire hazard; where serious danger to the ecosystem exists; or where there is little or no firewood. Except where firewood is abundant, burning wood interrupts the natural cycle in which nutrients taken from the soil

are returned by the decay processes.

(b) Use an existing fireplace if available providing that it is not too full of wood ash or the area over-trampled or scarred.

(c) Select a site (providing that fires are permitted and conditions are suitable) which is away from decaying matter, tents, trees, branches, shrubs or underground root systems. If groundcover or duff (forest litter) exists clear the area thoroughly and dig well into the mineral soil. Dousing vegetation in the vicinity of a fire should be considered, particularly in dry conditions.

(d) Avoid lighting a fire on a windy day when sparks might be dangerous.

(e) Avoid ringing fires with rocks or building them against reflecting rocks in order to prevent permanent blackening and unnatural exfoliation.

(f) Use fires only in areas with a plentiful supply of firewood and rapid resource replenishment. The firewood should be selected from small diameter wood lying loosely on the ground in order to ensure complete and efficient burning. Never cut live wood for fires.

(g) Avoid wasting firewood on unnecessarily large fires. Fires should be kept small, i.e., large enough only for important and immediate needs.

(h) Burn all wood as completely as possible. Plan ahead to ensure that only logs which are needed and which will burn to a white ash are placed on the fire.

(i) Attend fires constantly.

(j) Douse the fire thoroughly when it has burnt down as completely as possible. Retrieve non-burnables such as foil, tin cans and plastics so that they can be carried out in a plastic bag (glass should not be carried *in*). Scatter widely as much of the cold, white ash as possible in order to avoid an unnatural concentration of minerals in the fireplace.

(k) Restore the fireplace area and leave as few traces as possible. Scatter any firewood inadvertently left unburnt.

Tropical Cruise

Ross Carlton

Ah, the wonder of flight. To crunch the grass underfoot leaving home in two degrees of frost and by lunch-time to be on the deck of a boat well north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Five NPA members gathered at Airlie Beach for a cruise of the Whitsundays under sail. The combination of great weather, great company and a great place made it a trip to remember. For those of us arriving by plane the arrangements were made doubly easy. Syd and Barbara had arrived by caravan a day early and done all the provisioning for us. Consequently, Syd was the only one who knew what was what amongst all the tins and packets of food, so it was only logical that he should do most of the cooking. And a fine job he did too. I didn't notice anybody wasting away. John Webster continued the tradition of previous trips and is now well on the way to his masters degree in washing up.

Our anchorages were many and varied. Some secluded, some crowded, some steep sided, some edged by mud flats and mangroves, some with sandy beaches, some with reefs of coral. Selection of anchorages and anchoring procedure are important parts of a trip such as this from the points of view of both comfort and safety. An exposed anchorage can lead to an uncomfortable night with the boat rolling and banging about and it is essential for safety's sake to make proper allowance for the large tidal range in the area. up to six metres. This tidal range leads to some ferocious currents around the islands and in fact the whole cruise must be planned around the tides; it is a waste of time trying to sail against them.

Having sorted out these technicalities it was just a matter of lazily enjoying the sunshine and the multitude of inlets and islands waiting to be explored. I tried fishing and was probably on the verge of success when I was made to throw the bait away. A shore party came back aboard holding their noses and claiming they could smell the squid half a mile down wind. Jehn Chinn threatened to cook it if it was still there at tea time.

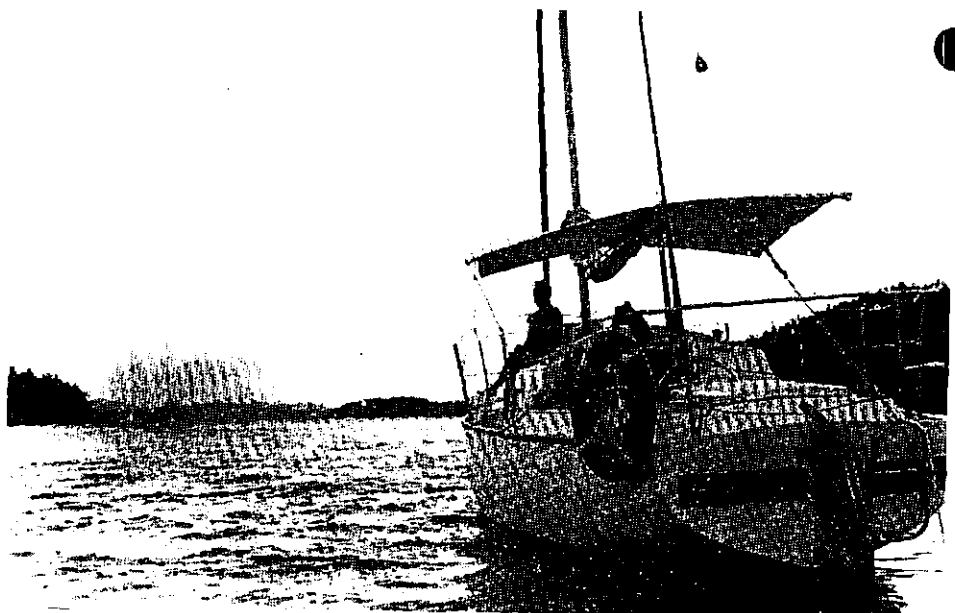
Although the islands form a compact group they vary greatly. From the red cliffs and open forest

of Hayman to the weathered grey rocks and thick scrub of Hook and Whitsunday and the bare grassy hills of Dent. The peaks of Hamilton, Whitsunday and Hook rise in spectacular fashion and the northern skyline is dominated by the saw-tooth ridge of Gloucester Island rising 1000 metres above the sea. Some of the islands are national parks and remain virtually untouched. Others have been used in the past for grazing and still others house large resorts. This enables many people to enjoy the popular resort-type holidays while at the same time retaining in large measure the natural character of the region. Although at times we had more than 20 other sails in sight, the waters are wide and we never felt crowded. Fortunately the islands can cope fairly well with the present numbers and the flushing action of the big tides ensures that there is surprisingly little visible pollution. How long this happy state can be maintained is, however, a matter for conjecture as the impression we gained was that as far as tourism is concerned, the boom is just beginning and 'we ain't seen nothing yet'.

We were perhaps a little disappointed with the bird life of the islands although the sea eagles and brahminy kites were a delight to watch. We were however enthralled by the variety of the vegetation: spectacular pines, eucalypts and rain forest brush, with here and

there a flame tree pushing through the canopy. By the waters edge, pockets of mangroves with their fascinating exposed root systems and behind the beaches the weird shapes of pandanus palms. Some of the inlets end in tidal creeks, lined with mangroves, which can be explored in a dinghy for some distance at high tide. This can also be attempted at low tide but may require some innovation in the means used to propel the dinghy. Methods we tried included outboard, rowing, poling, getting out and pushing and simply waiting for the rising tide to carry us forward. It also helps if you have a crew member who will volunteer to get out and take a photograph. With the lightened dinghy once more afloat he can be left to his fate while the explorers press on.

Best of all, however, is the discovery of what goes on below the water level. The teeming activity there far exceeds everything that is happening above. Whether snorkelling, walking in the shallows or peering through the glass of an underwater observatory there is an endless source of wonder. Around the observatory there is ceaseless movement with the seaweeds and soft corals swaying gently back and forth and the myriads of fish going about their business. A groper, patterned all over with an intricate design of lines and swirls, schools of yellow-tail, the tiny brilliant demoiselles, fish nibbling coral, fish lurking in coral caves, but everywhere movement, colour and strange shapes. Walking on the



Waiting for the sunset, Whitsunday Island.

Photo by Syd Comfort

reefs some of the colour is lost but a closer inspection can be made of the forms and shapes of the corals. There are also many surprises in the shallow water: a moray eel, an epaulette shark and a school of brightly coloured parrot fish in water less than knee deep, their white dorsal fins projecting and looking like a fleet of tiny yachts. They didn't seem to mind my presence a couple of metres away and only shot off when a larger fish swam by. Frequently while walking, a cloud of sand would rise suddenly as a ray took off at high speed. There were many rays, the most attractive being the spotted eagle ray. We saw our first of these while approaching a sandy beach in the dinghy. What

looked like two tiny pointed ears appeared momentarily above the surface. On investigation, these turned out to be the pointed 'wing' tips of a ray about two thirds of a metre across. It had a projecting snout for feeding on the bottom, a wicked looking tail about a metre long and pointed 'wings' which it flapped lazily in a way vaguely reminiscent of a moth. Its back was dark brown and covered with bright blue spots. The lazy grace of its movement was a delight to watch. However, we discovered later that when disturbed, they can move with extraordinary speed. On looking this ray up in our fish book we learned some rather amazing facts. They grow to a 'wingspan' of 3

metres and frequently leap clear out of the water. What is more, they are reported to give birth while so leaping. The sea is certainly full of surprises.

We finished off the trip with an evening barbecue in Conway National Park between Airlie Beach and Shute Harbour. There, apart from chasing off the possums that clambered onto the table to get at the food, we spent an idyllic evening. Idyllic that is, until three busloads of school kids arrived to set up camp. It's funny, I entirely approve of school kids trips to national parks: until they come and camp beside me.



Blackdown Tableland – National Park in Capricornia

Charles Hill

In spring '86 Audrey and I joined the large number of people who have visited and enjoyed Carnarvon Gorge National Park in Queensland. Leaving there we headed north to Rolleston, west to Springsure and north again to Emerald with one of our aims being to look at an intriguing green patch on the map called Blackdown Tableland. Our enquiries in Emerald resulted in little information, but nevertheless we headed east along Capricorn Highway to the turnoff between the small towns of Bluff and Dingo; the Tableland is the main feature of the skyline to the south. So started three very pleasant days and readers may be interested to know more of the recent addition to Queensland National Parks.

Blackdown Tableland is a plateau of sandstone rising to 950m, bounded by cliffs up to 600m with many sheer faces. Its height gives it a noticeably cooler and moister environment than the surrounding plain. The plateau is a mixture of State Forest and National Park; logging is still in progress in the Forest and the gravel access road was corrugated or rough in parts. The camping area is 31 km from the highway; we found it very pleasant camping with large, tall trees thinned out to provide a variety of sites. Despite school holidays there was ample vacant space; near us a party from the Chinchilla Field Naturalists was camped for a week. Good pit toilets are provided but no showers

or piped water. Drinking water has to be carried from Mimosa Creek and boiled; we had enough in our van tanks to see us through. We cooked by campfire each night.

There is a very good picnic area at Horseshoe Lookout on the road in, which gives excellent views. We had lunch there on the way in and again on the return. The rangers are opening up two new walks from this spot, one to a viewpoint on an escarpment peninsula and the other to a waterfall. We were told that at least one walk will be wheelchair negotiable.

From the camping area there are rambles down the creek with its stepped sandstone bed. A pleasant circuit track goes through a variety of habitats including an Aboriginal art site; this site was interesting but not up to the standard in Carnarvon Gorge. Another track leads to Officer's Pocket on the escarpment edge which gives a view down to the valley.

Using a vehicle gives easy access to two longer walks. The first is to Rainbow Falls. Although a dry spell meant a somewhat low level of water, we rated the falls, pools, surroundings and vegetation as amongst the prettiest falls complex we have ever seen. The creek drops down over several large sandstone ledges, most having a cool pool for swimming. The pleasant track brings one onto the falls complex about a third of the way down; it is fairly simple with care to ramble over

some of the ledges and there are several delightful spots for lunch. Towards the bottom the creek drops into a ferny, mossy cavern cut back into the escarpment. The creek above the falls is also worth exploring with large deep pools and its own micro-environment of a permanent water supply; one pool has an under water connection with another pool which is swimmable with a deep breath!

The second walk is to Stony Creek (5km one way) with at the end of the track, a spectacular view of a very large, sheer, crescent-shaped sandstone cliff escarpment. After heavy rain there would also be a magnificent waterfall. With binoculars we could see the towers of a huge coal-washing plant on the plains several kilometres away, a reminder of the effort put into mining in this inland grazing area in recent years. The echo from the edge of the escarpment further to the right is intriguing—whole short sentences would bounce back clear and complete. The track has some good spring flowers including a grevillea with a striking large bloom which was new to us. On both the longer walks we had morning tea unobtrusively near a rock pool and enjoyed watching a continual display by the local birds, mainly honeyeaters, drinking and bathing.

In our opinion Blackdown Tableland is well worth a visit of three or four days.



Hurrah – for Boolijah !

Olive Buckman

Boolijah Creek – a fascinating sounding name for a backpack in November 1986. A phone call to the leader ascertained that (a) it was east of Ettrema, and (b) yes, he would happily take this 'oldie' along. I had twice backpacked in Ettrema, and having recently borrowed the most interesting book imaginable covering 'almost inaccessible' places, I looked up the area:

'First impressions of Ettrema are of poor sandstone country – a plateau rising 600 to 700 metres... rising gently to the west... cut off abruptly by the deep gorge of the Shoalhaven. Currents of long ago are captured in the bare rock expanses that swirl and curve over the surface of the tableland like a petrified flood... a plateau landscape varied only by a few scattered basalt ridges as at Sassafra, Quiera and Tolwong.

This two-dimensional impression is rudely interrupted when you come to where Ettrema Creek has taken its gigantic bite into the earth's crust. The gorge is up to 400m deep and flanked by unbroken cliffs 100m high. To the east less dramatic gorges have been formed by Bundudah, Danjera, Boolijah, Yarramunmun and Yalwal creeks; here the plateau gives way to flat-topped mesas a few hectares in extent, or long ramparts of isolated sandstone only metres wide.'

So wrote Peter Prineas in 'Wild Places'. A map showed me our goal was about 10km east of the Ettrema/Jones Creek area. Along with six other takers and leader Philip Gatenby we left Canberra at the crack of dawn in two vehicles. Taking a track 5km beyond Sassafra, the larger vehicle was left about 12km beyond the start of our 'round' trip – and was a welcome sight on the Sunday evening!

Heading off along our plateau – ablaze with tea trees in a variety of colours, we soon dropped steeply down to Boolijah Creek, not far from its source. An enjoyable couple of hours took us rock hopping back and forth, up and down, in and out, then a steep scramble upwards through vines, over fallen trees, to eventually drop again. This manoeuvre became obvious when we reached the bottom of a vast, beautiful waterfall, curling down through



Boolijah Creek

Photo by Philip Gatenby

the rocks into a large pool – an ideal lunch spot. With the billies on the boil, most members dived, jumped, or slowly entered the cold, clear water, a most delightful spot, with the cliffs towering some 200 metres above us.

Back to rock hopping and scrub bashing until another lovely fall entered on our left, and we climbed upwards alongside. One – almost – sheer rock face found our three male members doing the first haul – of many – of rucksacks upwards on a rope, while we used the other half to help ourselves scramble up. Donning packs again, it was a long, slow, steady plod up a ridge to finally emerge on one of the plateaux so ably described by Peter Prineas.

Although we wondered if Philip was going round in circles for the next hour or so, we should have known better, and around 6.00pm a halt was called, and tents sprang up in a grassy area, near masses of pools on the flat rock – our water supply. We all (quietly) felt that the next 24 hours would prove whether we had safely 'boiled the bugs away' – or not!

The usual 'culinary conversation' went with meal preparation, and certain – nameless – males finished up with five to six courses, finishing off various items when we girls (?) felt we could eat no more. One of many joys of a night in the bush, is a feeling of peace, and serenity, as if the group are the last remaining

beings on earth. This was slightly shattered when I said I could see a light. 'Imagination' I could hear some minds thinking but there it was – and more – the coastline around Nowra about 30km away below us.

Rain had us up and about early on the Sunday, packing up in a drizzle which did not last long, but had wet all the rocks, grass and under-growth enough to get us wetter and wetter as we brushed through the scrub.

Setting off eastwards, the top of the plateau became more and more narrow, as we approached the 'nose' with the deep gorge of Danjera Creek on our left, and our Boolijah Creek on the right. Although right on the northern edge of the escarpment, we had to deviate inland from time to time where great faults in the rock face had eaten inwards. At one point we came across a fascinating geological feature. One moment we were on the edge of the sheer drop of the rock face, the next, there was a gap of 3-4 metres on our left, and the *real* edge was running parallel with us, itself only a few metres or so wide. Crouching down, we looked into a bottomless cavern between, and wondered if – in a few thousand years time – the outer ridge could become a natural arch, with the Danjera Creek waters wearing their way through at water level.

Standing on the 'nose' of the plateau, Ray, Mary and Philip cast around for the usual cairn which would mark a rockfall crevice to get us down the sheer cliff face. Once found, it was rucksacks off, pass downwards for some 3 metres, then we ourselves found foot and hand holds to negotiate the huge rocks that fall and block these natural crevices (or 'passes') which are typical of the area.

Once down, we followed a long, long slope down to the junction of Danjera and Boolijah Creeks, 300 metres below the plateau. Our creek too, was much wider – especially after the unusual heavy November rains, and was waded – leeches an' all to a delightful lunch spot, billy boil, and swims for the hardy. Eventually we just had to climb up and out – like it or not! This we did in two reasonably short, but fairly steep stages, 300 metres to

the bottom of the escarpment. We enjoyed the flowers, but I not the stinging nettles, small bushes with holly like leaves, and other delights (?) of nature which stung or tore one's legs.

At the sheer rock face, Ray (who'd been here before) found the 'pass' – another rock fault – very narrow – but negotiable, using wedged rocks and ledges, but I not with packs on! Once again these were hauled up for us, then – one at a time and careful not to send loose rocks down onto those below – we hunted for foot and hand holds, convenient rocks to take leverage from wedged parts of one's anatomy, to reach upwards for the next hold. Two clefts with a total of about 25 metres of rock climbing and scrambling brought us to the top, and what views awaited us! The deep gorge of Boolijah Creek wound its way from far left to right – below us, and

the plateau of our camp site was across the creek at our level, with the long, long slope down to the junction with Danjera Creek clearly visible.

Photos taken, rucksacks back on and a short walk to the waiting vehicle, through the greatest show of flannel flowers I had seen! All weekend the wildflowers had been magnificent – *leptospermum*, *hibbertia*, *pimelea*, *tetratheca*, fringed lilies, sun orchids, and many many more. The November rains had ensured that all these were 'bigger, brighter, more numerous' than usual, but the flannel flower (*Actinotus helianthi*) really excelled itself, huge clumps, tall straight extra large heads, not the 'cream' of the flower book description, but a shiny 'Rinso white'. They will remain happy memories of a most enjoyable backpack, with good company and excellent leadership.



New Members

The following new members are welcomed to the Association:

Soraya BARKHORDAR, Fraser; Elizabeth BECKMANN, Hackett; Allara BLIGHT, Rivett; Roderick DALGLEISH, Hughes; Deborah DAWKINS, Dickson; Jean FINN-EGAN, Lyneham; Len HASKEW, Curtin; Michael JEFFERIS, Canberra; Mrs E. JONES, Red Hill; Tim and Margaret KAHN, Giralang; Margaret KENNEDY, Holt; Mrs Ruth LATHLEAN, Wanniasa; Mr and Mrs B. MCKINNON and family, Farrer; Philip O'HARA, Hawker; Tom RHYNES and Rosalie GRANT, Aranda; Margaret ROSEBY, Rivett; Bryan SULLIVAN, Farrer; Gary TAYLOR, Spence, Dr Michael TEDESCHI, Garran; Sonja WEINBERG and Ian MASON, Braddon; Judy ZARDA and Darryl BOWLING, Weston.

Warning

The shelter which was located temporarily near the remains of Albina Hut (Kosciusko 1:100,000; reference 141674) was removed in December 1986.

There is now no shelter near Lake Albina.

Emergency shelter is still available at Cootapatamba Hut (124622) and Seaman's Hut (147653).

Be warned and go prepared.

NATIONAL PARKS ON THE NSW SOUTH COAST

Wallaga Lake National Park (1141 ha)

This park conserves one of the more unusual lake systems on the coast – a deep river valley, long since drowned by the sea.

To fully appreciate the area, the best way to approach the park is undoubtedly by boat, but don't let this dissuade you, there are plenty of boats for hire in the surrounding holiday centres. Although there are low grade vehicle tracks into the park, they are not suitable for conventional two wheel drive vehicles and walking is recommended.

The park is an ideal area for bushwalking, quiet picnics, swimming, fishing, and observing wildlife – it is especially suited for family outings by boat.

Take time to look at the many Aboriginal middens along the foreshores of the lake. These middens are the remains of the meals of shellfish which made up the diet of the Aboriginals who once lived here.

Although camping is not permitted in the park (there are also no toilet or picnic facilities) caravan parks at Regatta Point and Beauty Point are close by, whilst Bermagui

also has a choice of accommodation facilities.

Narooma District (044) 76 2798).

Mimosa Rocks National Park (5,181 ha)

Mimosa Rocks National Park is one of the most picturesque of all coastal parks. Its 17 kilometres of coastline is heavily timbered and offers a diverse and complex system of beaches, sea caves, headlands, small islands and offshore stacks.

Two of the most spectacular features of this park are Bunga Head and Mimosa Rocks. These are massive blocks of weathered volcanic rock. Mimosa Rocks were cut off from the mainland by a rise in sea level, forming offshore stacks.

Summer months are ideal for swimming, surfing, foreshore fossicking and birdwatching. Many species of birds inhabit the area, including wrens, thornbills, goshawks and sea eagles.

Camping is allowed in the park but bring your own drinking water as there is none available in the park.

Narooma District (044) 76 2798).



Field Guide to the Native Trees of the A.C.T.

This pocketbook describes 60 species of trees of four metres or more that are known to grow naturally within the boundaries of the ACT. It is written for the non-specialist and has instructions on how to use a botanical key. For easy reference it is divided into three parts – Eucalypts; Acacias and other species, with trees that are similar placed side by side.

Each species is treated separately and is fully illustrated, with a thumbnail map to show where authenticated specimens have been collected. A key to all species, index and glossary are provided.

The Field Guide is useful in the neighbouring Southern Tablelands (Goulburn, Cooma, Kosciusko National Park).

Price \$4.00
(plus \$1.00 to cover postage and packaging)

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GENERAL MEETINGS

Held at 8pm, Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic

MARCH – Thursday 19

Dr Brian Pratt, who has recently been appointed as Manager of ACT Forests, will give an overview of forests and forest policy in the ACT, including Jervis Bay.

APRIL – Thursday 16

Sands of Time, a new film about Fraser Island, showing the natural beauty and wildlife of the largest sand island in the world. Produced and directed by Chris Wilcox. 55 minutes.

MAY – Thursday 21

Garth Abercrombie will give an illustrated talk about his recent four week trek in the Khumbu area of the Himalayas.