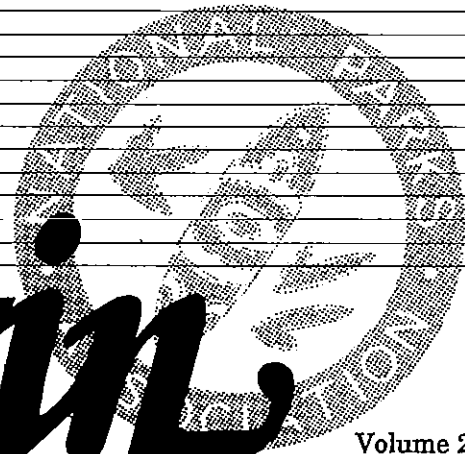
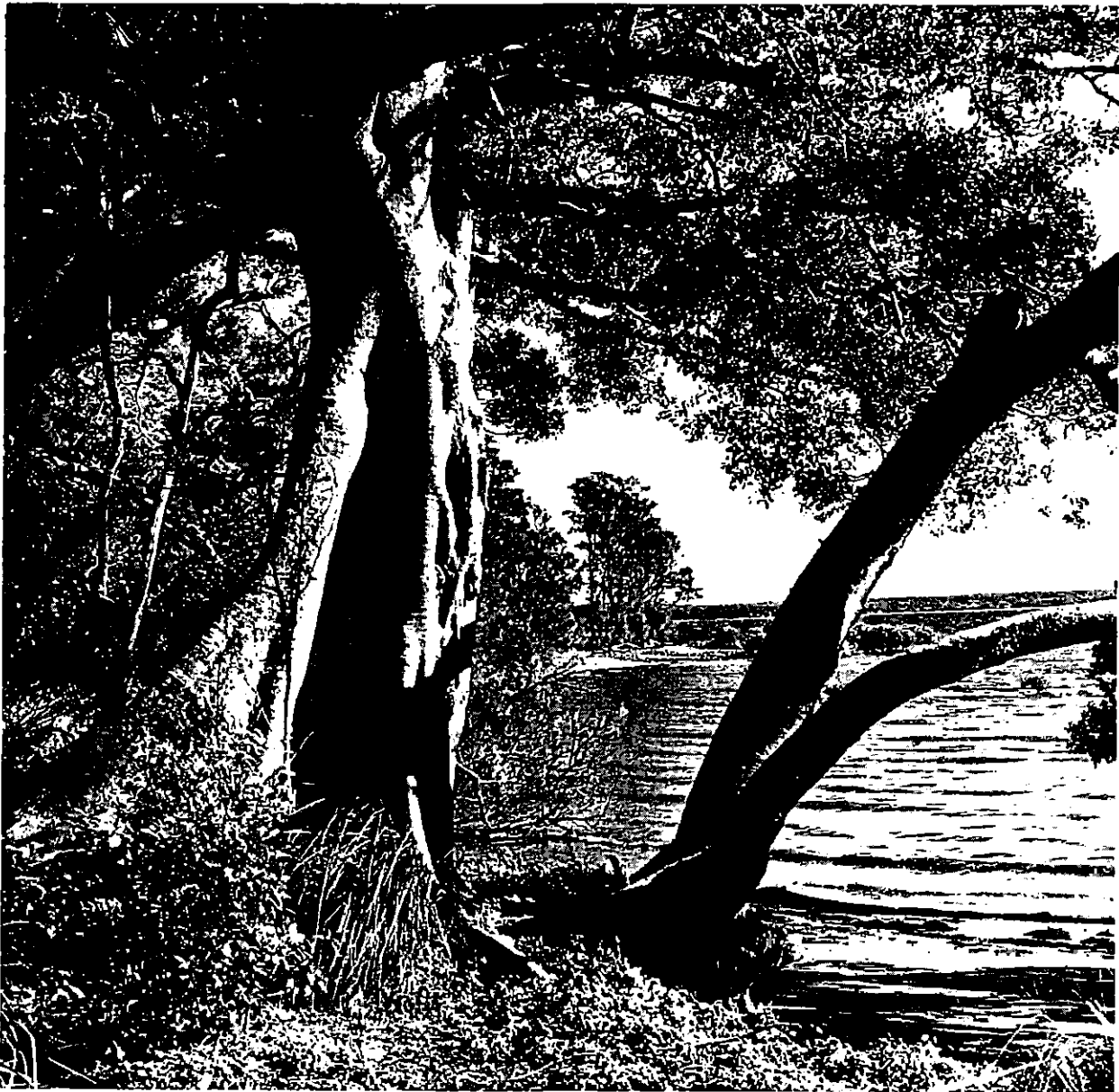


NPA Bulletin



Volume 28 number 3
September 1991

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Life membership for Kevin Frawley

Walker's guide to the north Brindabellas

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National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated

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.

Office-bearers and Committee

President Beverley Hammond 288 6577(h)
(Les Pyke will be President until Beverley returns from overseas at the end of September.)

Vice-President Dianne Thompson 288 6084(h);
244 7572(w); 244 7934(fax w).

Immediate Past President Les Pyke 281 2982(h)

Secretary Len Haskew 281 4268(h)

Treasurer and Public Officer Mike Smith
286 2984(h); 248 3624(w)

Subcommittee conveners

Co-Conveners Environment

Tim Walsh 285 1112(h); 274 1465(w)

Len Crossfield 241 2897(h); 263 2267(w)

Convener Outings

Dianne Thompson 288 6084(h); 244 7572(w);
244 7934(fax w).

Convener Namadgi Dugald Monro 231 8776(h)

Other Committee members

Neville Esau 286 4176(h); 249 9500(w)

Syd Comfort 286 2578(h)

Clive Hurlstone 288 7592(h); 246 5516(w)

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Please phone Laraine Frawley at the NPA office.

The NPA (ACT) office is located in Kingsley Street, Acton. *Office hours* are:

10am to 2pm Mondays

9am to 2pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: (06) 257 1063

Address: GPO Box 457 Canberra 2601.

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Contributions of articles (news, description or fiction), black-and-white photographs and line drawings are keenly sought for the *Bulletin*. Please label photographs with the name of the subject, the name of the photographer and the date. Leave contributions at the office or phone the editor, Roger Green, on (06) 247 0059. The editorial fax is (06) 249 7373.

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

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President's foreword

Standing room only?

It is officially estimated that over the next 15 years the population of the ACT-Queanbeyan area will increase by some 100 000 from 311 000 to at least 411 000. Over the same period the population of Sydney is officially estimated to increase by 800 000 to 900 000 and the population of Australia to increase in the range of 3.1 to 3.8 million. If these increases worry some, one can take almost any combination of countries in the South-East Asian region and the comparable increase would be many millions.

Anything that reduces the costs, or time, of transport such as falling air fares, improved roads, a very fast train (or an enhanced public railways system propelled by the fear of competition) will encourage urban decentralisation. Improved telecommunications technology, thus enabling more to work at home, will do likewise. It is by no means a flight of fantasy to envisage the Sydney and Canberra regions reaching rapidly towards one another as the decades roll by. What are the implications of the resultant people pressures, even give or take a solid variation or two, on the national park and open areas of the ACT?

A solution for some may be to stop the growth of Canberra. If this is not to be done by totalitarian fiat, a process most unlikely in democratic Australia, such a solution begs some important questions. Which government should the question be addressed to, bearing in mind that the future Canberra may lie in part (or if we look far enough ahead, most of Canberra) in New South Wales. Also, who will foot the bill for the massive public acquisition, or freeze, of private land around Canberra, to a huge radius, to prevent it being subdivided and sold for residential or commercial development.

For some a solution may be appropriate limits on national population and immigration, thereby reducing or steadying the pressure

on resources and helping us maintain an acceptable living standard and lifestyle. But all this assumes that we have the freedom to make such a choice, having in place the relevant correct policies on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Customs, and the concomitant resources of personnel and equipment. It also assumes we have sufficient export income. Nonetheless let us say we get all this right and we have a politically acceptable limit on national population and immigration. There is no guarantee that its consequences will fall evenly across the continent. We could still have the Canberra and surrounding region humming along in growth mode.

The choice more likely before us seems to be either a quickly spreading city with the open spaces that are characteristic to date or an increased density of residential development with its question of which open spaces are we likely to lose. In material recently circulated by the 'Sustainable Canberra Project' for a public meeting, statistical tables showed that by city standards throughout Australia, America, Europe and Asia, Canberra has a high degree of dependence on the motor car and a very low population density. This suggests scope for prising people from private cars towards enhanced public transport, cycling, walking and living near the job in denser housing. But however Canberra grows, we must expect greater people pressure on recreation space and Namadgi and other national parks in our region.

With regard to the Namadgi National Park, official estimates show that in the last five years the number of annual visitors has increased from 65,000 to 110,000. Annual visitor estimates for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor have reached 500,000 and for Jervis Bay Territory in the 800,000 to 900,000 range.

A sizeable swathe could be cut through the increased numbers because of the inability of many to get beyond esky and radio cassette

blaster carrying range from their cars. Nonetheless there would remain an inevitable increase of patronage in the more distant parts of national parks and recreation areas. We should expect, in particular, increased density of use of the fringes towards the wilderness areas. This will place pressures on park authorities to put in more walking paths and trails. If these are put in too early they could accelerate pressure on wilderness areas; if they are put in too late there could be erosion of natural areas by uncontrolled wanderings on a wider front. It is a nice piece of timing—when to embark upon track development.

In the longer term one should expect developments such as low impact camping with the carrying of cooking fuel and stoves (many believe we should be doing this now) and some kind of rationing of entry, such as by bookings or fees. If this causes dismay to some, I suggest visiting a heavy impact area such as Wilsons Promontory which receives huge surges from the metropolis of Melbourne. There the unsuspecting can easily be lost in thick vegetation between a network of high grade and wide paths, and one can enjoy superb overnight back-packing and scenery provided one observes the booking process and time schedules from one camp site to the next.

This is, not to suggest that Namadgi should become the style of Wilsons Promontory; it will develop its own way of coping. But it does point to hope in the longer term future; it's a matter of sophisticated management. It behoves this Association or its future form to monitor the authorities and ensure that their management is adequate to the changing demographic scene. Such monitoring should include strong public comment if governmental policy retards the park service by staff or budget cuts which bring it down to less than an adequate level.

Les Pyke

NOTES

New members

Jenny Atton and Keith Johns, Kingston
Ruth Blackburn, Chifley
Damien Browne, Manuka
David and Shireen Brunkhorst, Kambah
Joan Buckie, Pearce
B and R Douglas, Aranda
Jean and Chris Emery, Reid
Mr M Grigg, Calwell
Heins Family, Hughes
Mary Anne Highfield, Garran
Ross And Bev Hyland, Holder
Kathryn Kelly, Chifley
Gregory and Alison Lewis, Phillip
Stella Morahan, Aranda
Bruce Prosser and Necia Burford, O'Connor
Margaret and Ralph Richardson, Ainslie
Diana Schneider and John Kennedy, Kambah
Karen Sismey, Duffy
Jane Smith, Kambah
Robyn and Bob Stewart, Forrest
Polly Templeton, Mawson
Cathie Triffett and Shane Harrington, Narrabundah

VNPA opposed to changes

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) have spoken out against recent changes to the Department of Conservation and Environment (DCE). They say these changes could lead to the destruction of the National Parks system and running down of conservation programs.

The changes, announced on 21 June by the DCE Minister, Steve Crabb, have defined major restructuring where new divisions will be created and jobs and responsibilities reallocated. Funding for these new divisions may have to be allocated from established funds.

The VNPA fear that the tendency with DCE to treat all Public land as the same, without recognition of the special value of National Parks, is likely to become entrenched. There could also be the danger that it is the intention of the Victorian Government to do away with the National Parks Act altogether.

Letter from the ANPC

Time has flown by since I started working for the Australian National Parks Council at the end of May. My days at the office have been enjoyable and fully occupied.

Part of my job is to build up contact not only with the member bodies of the Council but also other conservation organisations. Accordingly I have spent a lot of time on the phone, introducing myself and finding out about the concerns of each member association. Here in Canberra we have several active conservation organisations: the Conservation Council of Canberra and the South-East Region, The Wilderness Society, Australian Conservation Foundation, Forestry Working Group and Greenpeace. They are all keen to help the ANPC take a more active role in helping to preserve our national parks system. Another aspect of my job is to pursue issues on behalf of the Council. Having spoken to conservation organisations, to NPAs and to Councillors, several priorities

have become clear. These are:

- mining in national parks
- resource security
- marine reserves
- tourism in national parks
- *tourism developments adjacent to parks*
- Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project in Queensland
- Murray-Darling Basin.

Most of these issues are relevant to every state in Australia. This shows the potential for concerted action at the national level. If anybody has information on any one of these issues or ideas to pass on, I would be pleased to hear from them.

Anne Forsythe
Executive officer ANPC
Phone (06) 257 6103

Minister to Molonglo

On 21 July the Association held an interpretive walk and viewing of the lower Molonglo. It was an educative exercise so that members could be better informed on its scenery, natural values and the effects of urban settlement and grazing. The Association wishes to study the Molonglo corridor with the objective of formulating a proposal to Government authorities to protect the corridor.

The walk was particularly pleasing to members as they were joined by the Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning, Mr Bill Wood, who wished to familiarise himself with the area. It is satisfying to have a political representative who makes the time and effort to go into the field to find the facts of a situation.



NPA president Les Pyke and Minister Bill Wood on Molonglo study walk.

Life membership for Frawley

The General Meeting of the Association on 18 July unanimously elected Dr Kevin Frawley to Life Membership of the Association. To achieve this honour a person has to have a record of meritorious service to the Association.

Kevin has served the Association in a very active way over seven years. This included three years as President, six years on the Committee, seven years on the Environment Sub-Committee including three years as its convener and four years on the Namadgi Sub-Committee. In addition Kevin has been President of the Australian National Parks Council and the Association's delegate to the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra.

During these stretches of duty Kevin had a leading organising role in the production of three reports of major significance: the Eden Woodchip Report, the Alpine Conference Papers, and the Northern Cotter Catchment



Kevin Frawley

Report. In addition he authored the recently released Report on the Conservation of the Remnant Woodland and Native Grassland in the ACT, believed by many to

be one of the most timely strategic documents produced by the Association.

Kevin's career with us coincided with mounting pressures on the Association arising from environmental issues throughout Australia and the world, national parks being part of that scene. The Association has come under pressure to react to requests for action, to invitations to seminars and to the need to make submissions to Parliamentary and Government inquiries. In conveying the Committee's recommendation to the General Meeting the current President, Les Pyke, said that 'History might eventually say that Kevin Frawley, with his professional skills and the time that he put in, was the right person at the right time.'

In its history of some 30 years the Association has elected only 10 Life Members.

The Association congratulates Kevin and wishes him the best.

Westbourne Woods

Do you know Westbourne Woods—that lovely arboretum designed by Thomas Weston and planted mainly between 1914-1918 and 1950-1954? It's a wonderful part of Canberra's history and used to be freely available to Canberra's population. However since 1962 the arboretum has been leased to the Royal Canberra Golf Club, so the citizens of Canberra can only visit the area on specially arranged outings.

The Westbourne Woods Action Association (WWAA) was formed in 1980, its aim being to increase public awareness of the value of Westbourne Woods and to protect the woods from further encroachment. Sunday morning walks are conducted on the second Sunday of each month, commencing at 9.30am and meeting at the golf club entrance, Bentham Street, Yarralumla. The second Sunday in November (10th) has been placed on NPA's outings program so that

we can support the WWAA. In autumn NPA will arrange a walk in the woods, looking especially at the management plan's proposals.

The Westbourne arboretum was planted by Thomas Weston to test suitable tree and shrub species for the gardens and open spaces of the planned city of Canberra. A planting area of 160 hectares was set aside—40 hectares being the City Parks Nursery. The remaining 120 hectares were divided into three areas: B for Australian trees and shrubs, C for English trees and D for a pinetum. Now these trees are nearing maturity and create tall groves on the once bare hillside.

A plan of management for the trees has been produced by ACT Parks and Conservation Service to try and address the needs of the area. The objectives of the management plan are as follows:

1. Preserve the National Estate values of the Arboretum.

2. Preserve stands in sound health and representative condition for as long as possible.
3. Provide for replacement of species in anticipation of the eventual loss due to decline or death and to maintain replacement stands to ensure the continuity of the collection and to create a variety in age classes.
4. Establish, within the limits of space available, new species that will increase the diversity of the collection.
5. Encourage continued interest in the historical, scientific and educational aspects of the Arboretum, and to realise its heritage potential.

The management plan is available from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service or you can look at a copy in the NPA office.

**Fiona MacDonald
Brand**

Lake Burley Griffin fisheries

Guest speakers for the July meeting of NPA were both from the Wildlife Research Unit, ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Biologist Mark Lintermans spoke on the Lake Burley Griffin Fishery, while senior ranger Terry Rutzou's subject was the Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

The Lake Burley Griffin Fishery, 1964-1991.

The Molongolo River, the damming of which in 1964 formed Lake Burley Griffin, was earlier known as Fish River because of the abundance of the native fish such as Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Silver Perch; however by the time Scrivener Dam was completed and the Lake formed in 1964, the fish population had been decimated by the collapse of mine waste dumps in Captains Flat in 1938 and again in 1943. Thus, when the lake was formed in 1964, fish numbers were very low, but since then it has been stocked with nearly 1.2 million fish of various species to 1991. The lake has been stocked with fish because although its primary purpose is as a landscape feature, it is also managed as a recreational resource. Present stocking of the lake is with both native and introduced species.

There are three distinct phases in the history of Lake Burley Griffin:

I. The early years, 1964-1976.

During this phase the lake was dominated by Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Brook Trout because these were the only fish commercially available. Of the three, Brown Trout was the most successful, growing to 40 centimetres in one year, living for five years and representing 50 to 60 per cent of the total catch. Over the period Rainbow Trout were stocked in much greater numbers

than Brown Trout, but they did not grow as rapidly as this species. They lived for only about two years and returned only 1.3 per cent of the total stocked compared to 73 per cent of Brown Trout.

Brook Trout were not successful and have not been stocked since the lake's first phase.

II. The rise of native fish, 1976-1983.

As stocks of native fish became commercially available the lake was stocked with Golden Perch, Silver Perch, Murray Cod and Freshwater Catfish. Trout were still stocked in large numbers, but their returns dropped dramatically for some reason. This phenomenon has been noticed for other large bodies of water, that is lakes, as these age. Golden Perch were originally stocked in 1973 and 1974 but an unexplained fish die-off occurred in 1974. A further 134 500 Golden Perch were released between 1979 and 1983, the Golden Perch fishery reaching its peak in the early 1980s.

The first release of Murray Cod took place in 1979, but only 42 000 were released to 1984 as this species is difficult to rear and breed and stocks are expensive. However, as anglers have reported success in catching Murray Cod, the continued stocking of this fish is considered desirable.

Because of extremely low returns, Silver Perch are no longer stocked and neither are Freshwater Catfish for the same reason. Occasionally, there are reports of Catfish being caught in the Molongolo at Queanbeyan.

Carp attained high levels in Lake Burley Griffin by 1979 and did well until 1985-86, being the most abundant species in the lake. It is interesting to know that its introduction was accidental, probably occurring when it polluted a release of trout or Golden Perch. Carp are often considered to be a problem species, but there is no real evidence to back up the assertion that they muddy the water

and eat native fish. (On a walk some days after the talk, one of our NPA members asserted that he had seen a carp muddying the water at the shoreline of some water way!)

III. The arrival of redfin, 1983-1991.

Redfin arrived in Lake Burley Griffin in 1983 after the drought broke, and the ensuing flooding flowed over from the Yowani Golf Course dams into Sullivans Creek. The Redfin had reached Yowan via a series of farm dams from Lake George into which they had been stocked in 1959 by New South Wales Fisheries.

They were first detected in Lake Burley Griffin in 1984 when they comprised 0.1 per cent of the catch. By 1990 the figure had grown to 62 per cent, but dropped to 36 per cent in 1991. The reason for the decline is not known, but it is possibly due to the sampling techniques used. Only time will tell if it is an actual decline.

Because Redfin are notorious predators of fish they are detrimental to other fish populations. Fortunately, they are rarely larger than 15 centimetres in length, so predation of other species is limited to the juveniles of those species; unfortunately their small size means they are not sought after by anglers. In contrast, Carp are sort after by anglers, being table fish popular with Asians and Europeans.

Provided the correct techniques are used, for example lures, Golden Perch and Murray Cod can still be caught in the lake. Murray Cod in excess of 15 kilograms have been reported in recent years with one specimen weighing in at more than 45 kilograms.

Thus Lake Burley Griffin is a valuable recreational resource and should be used accordingly. It is continually changing.

and Jerrabomberra Wetlands

Jerrabomberra Wetlands

The Jerrabomberra Wetlands were formed when water, following the filling of Lake Burley Griffin in 1964, flowed back onto the old flood channels of the Molongolo River. Lying at the eastern end of Lake Burley Griffin, they are bounded by the lake, the Molongolo River, Dairy Flat Road and Jerrabomberra Creek.

Interest in the retention and development of the Wetlands goes back to 1977. A report on issues such as the building of a major arterial road, a bicycle path, sand and gravel mining, bird numbers, habitat, water quality and recreational, scientific and educational uses, was published in 1982. This report forms the basis for the planning and development of the area.

A draft management plan was prepared in 1988 and in September 1990, under the *Nature Conservation Act, 1980*, the area was declared as the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve.

Canberra Nature Park manages the Wetlands and this management has initiated a number of projects including the rebuilding of two hides at Kelly's pond, the planting of trees and shrubs and the construction of a footbridge over Jerrabomberra Creek to link walking trails, one near this creek, the other on the Molongolo side. Kelly's land has been drained, this work including the banking of the inlet channel and the installation of a pipe and stop cock to assist in the regulation of the water level. The pond is drained in the summer. The draining and consequent refilling in the winter enhances the food supply for birds later on.

After the first refilling of the land, bird numbers and species diversity increased dramatically. The average number of birds for each monthly count was 29 from early August 1989 to 2 April, 1991. When the rains came (after the dry summer of 1991) the count

rose to 112 on 25 May, 1991 and to 189 on 19 June, 1991. Thus fluctuating water levels benefit the bird population.

One proposal for the Wetlands development is that a visitor centre and classroom for school children be constructed. If these facilities were constructed it would probably be necessary to monitor visitor numbers and activities, as the wetlands are a small and fragile area.

There are a total of 178 bird species listed for the Jerrabomberra Wetlands, the species falling into three groups: Aquatic 73, Terrestrial 90 and Raptors 15.

Thirteen species of duck dominate the aquatic species while 15 species of waterbirds have been recorded as breeding in the Wetlands, Molongolo Reach being an important breeding site. Little Black Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants and Darters have nested in this area for a number of years, the last two being the most prolific breeders.

In addition to these three species other common species of aquatic birds, to name but a few, are: Grebes, Pelicans, Ibis, Black Swans, Maned Duck, Teal, Swamphens, Plovers and Gulls. Some terrestrial species are: Galahs, Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, Easter Rosellas, Kookaburras, Rufous Whistlers, Grey Fantails, Red Wattle Birds, White-plumed Honeyeaters and Spotted Pardalotes. Raptors include Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Goshawks and Australian Kestrels.

The habitat of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands is varied and includes deep water, shallows, mudflats, reedbeds, grasslands, shoreline areas, shoreline trees and, across Dairy Flat Road, sewage ponds. Each habitat attracts its specialised feeder, less commonly observed birds like Grebes, Shovelled Ducks, Pink-eared Ducks, Hardhead Ducks and Chestnut Teal are usually located at the sewage ponds, the Freckle-faced Duck showing preference for number three pond, while the

Musk Duck apparently prefers number one pond. Shelduck and Pelicans prefer Jerrabomberra Pool for feeding but rest on the peninsula between the Wetlands and East Basin. Darters and Cormorants are found mainly along the Molongolo, but they also rest on the peninsula. Darters reuse nests in one tree from year to year. Rails and Crakes prefer Kelly's Pond while Latham's Snipe can be found on the peninsula from late August to late January. (Latham's Snipe are a seasonal visitor to the Wetlands. They leave Japan in July and arrive in north Australia early to mid August en route to Tasmania. Their numbers peak at the Wetlands during October-November and decline rapidly as summer approaches when they leave for Tasmania. It is thought that they depart on their 9000 kilometre return journey to Japan in February.)

The Jerrabomberra Wetlands, so close to the centre of Civic, have great potential for use as a centre for wetland education for students, local residents and tourists. It is to be hoped that each group will enjoy, learn about and contribute to the conservation of wetlands generally.

There is a car park and a walking trail at Kelly's Pond accessible from about half way along Dairy Flat Road. It is advisable to seek permission to visit the sewage farms.

Frank Clements

What should you do if lost in the bush?

How do people usually behave if lost?

Hear the guest speaker from the Australian Federal Police Rescue Squad at the General Meeting on 19

Canberra's tree heritage

There were 30 of us at the general meeting on 16 May to hear Dr Robert Boden's talk on 'Canberra's Tree Heritage—a look at the original vegetation and the way it has changed'. Robert touched on the long, long history of the Australian vegetation before he started on his main theme, which was its history in the neck of our woods since the coming of the Europeans two hundred years ago. The appearance of the tree cover early last century can to some extent be made out from the records of explorers. Robert mentioned several, including two who furnished authoritative accounts on the amount and quality of the tree vegetation. He commented that their reports differed from those of a forester in the early part of this century who said there was not a tree in the Territory 'fit for a telegraph pole'.

The reports are supplemented by modern evidence which, with ecological knowledge and putting two and two together, can be used to reconstruct a scene that vanished long ago. It is done from strips and islands of the original vegetation, for example in cemeteries and at roadsides, but even such evidence is not always above suspicion, for it is rare indeed to find any places that have not been modified in some way.

Robert gave a general picture of our vegetation from the lowlands to the tops of the ranges and then selected about half a dozen types for more detailed discussion, with slides of each one.

The grasslands of the valley bottoms are where cold air lodges, causing winter frosts severe enough to prevent tree growth except where one gives the seedlings some protection when they are young. This works wonders, as our street and garden trees attest. Under the onslaught of burning, grazing, cultivation and what is called development, very little of the original grassland remains, to say nothing of the creepy-crawlies that lived there. To moderate what they saw as a rather stark environment, town planners and set-

tlers used to plant trees, sometimes from other states and sometimes as a homesick reminder from the home country. They still do. In the early days Weston took a prominent part in this work. Our speaker dealt with only a small selection, there must be hundreds.

Grasslands, forming a ground cover for the woodlands, have been altered less than those of the frost pockets, but only slightly so. As for the woodland trees, although the Aborigines used them for shelter and fuel and for the sale of the honey, bark and animal products they found among them, their effect was negligible compared with the effect of the Europeans, who cleared them extensively for fuel and to provide for unimpeded cultivation and grazing. These matters have been fully reported. The speaker paid tribute to the most recent report done by Kevin Frawley and sponsored by our association, on the conservation of remnant woodland and native grassland in the ACT.

Woodlands are scenically attractive, but if they are to be maintained in the face of continued grazing, some replanting becomes necessary.

Lowland hills are under dry sclerophyll forest. Most of what we see around Canberra is regrowth, which we can deduce ourselves on the walking tracks if we keep our eyes open. One of Robert's slides from former days which showed open country on the south-east side of Black Mountain provided telling evidence of this.

On the mountains the forests, so far, have been disturbed much less and likewise on the tops. We hope their importance as a protection for our catchments will keep them that way even if aesthetic considerations do not.

All these vegetation types can be divided into communities, of which the number and complexity are a matter for the worker himself to decide upon. We were given a selection which was interesting because of its distribution, rarity or requirements, for example the

scattered snowgums at the edges of the frost pocket grasslands, which are the counterpart of the snowgums on the frosty tops of the Brindabellas; the well defined patches of cypress pine in the Molonglo Gorge and on the Clear Range; and the strips of river she-oak along the waterways, limited there too by the temperature range. This species came up again for discussion at question time. Robert, acting on Reg Alder's letter to the Canberra Times, had gone out specially to Casuarina Sands to see the unexpectedly sudden demise of the trees after destruction of the weir.

As unexpectedly sudden was the only hiccough of the evening—a group of vicious brats (or deprived kiddies, according to your point of view) smashed a window of the room while Kevin Frawley was moving the vote of thanks. They failed to disturb the decorum of the meeting. The President inspected the damage and returned to his seat without turning a hair—which is perhaps no more than could be expected of him; our speaker remained impassive; I didn't see the secretary/tea lady, but wherever she was 'she nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry'; and Kevin Frawley picked up the thread of what he had been saying and finished strongly.

Robert Story



*A Snow Gum on Mt Gingera.
Sketch by Jane Rawson.*

A rural perspective on conservation

Born in Canberra and resident in properties bordering the Murrumbidgee River for 54 years, Mr Peter Buckmaster now farms in the ACT and NSW. He has for many years been actively involved in rural and community affairs including 25 years membership of the ACT Rural Lessees Association and is thus particularly well-placed to present a rural perspective on conservation in the ACT. His address to the June 1991 NPA general meeting was nicely timed as it coincided with the Legislative Assembly's inquiry into rural leases to which both the Rural Lessees and the NPA made submissions.

Historical background

Within ten years of Europeans first reaching Canberra, that is by 1830, settlers had occupied the land which now forms the ACT. The land was mainly occupied by wealthy landowners who pursued animal grazing based on shepherding in the European tradition. Until 1860 very little was done to the land which remained in a near natural state. Following the introduction of the Robertson land reforms in 1860, opening NSW rural areas to small selectors, different farming methods were introduced. The remaining years of the century saw extensive clearing and ringbarking (controversial even at that time) and huge increases in animal numbers. But by the turn of the century a series of bad seasons, fires, poor markets and, perhaps most significantly, the arrival of the rabbit in plague proportions, had caught up with over-stocked and over-grazed land. Graziers had serious problems.

From 1911 land in the ACT was gradually transferred from various forms of NSW holdings to ACT leases, with some land being resumed. A number of factors operated to adversely affect these rural leases right through until after World War II. These included the short terms of initial leases, the loss of experienced farmers following resumptions, soldier settler schemes bringing in inexperienced

farmers and of course the depressed conditions of the thirties.

The fifties saw extensive pasture improvement with its consequential gains from higher carrying capacity, at least in the short term, but with a legacy of long term problems. In this period also general uncertainty about the future of Canberra, until resolved by decisions of the Menzies Government, adversely affected the management of rural leases.

Personal observations

In expressing some personal views on conservation issues related to rural interest, Peter dealt first with river corridors. Over the years there had been improvements in the area between normal and flood levels due largely to conservation measures in the headwaters: there was less siltation, there was grass to the water's edge with very little movement, even in floods. However, between the river's edge and the property fence line there now existed a problem area overrun by blackberries and other weeds where there was little control of feral animals and very limited regeneration of native species.

In grazing properties a number of desirable changes had occurred such as the elimination of most gulleys by grassing; there were more birds and fewer feral cats. But on the other hand there had been a serious loss of eucalypts, largely attributable to the earlier clearing practices but compounded by the provisions of leases which required ringbarking and clearing except in shelter dumps or of timber suitable for cutting into fence posts. There is now considerable difficulty in regenerating eucalypts due to lack of natural seeds and regrowth from introduced seed which will result in changes to the landscape.

Whereas 50 years ago there were few kangaroos, now they are in plague proportions. This change could be attributed in part to the creation of additional reserves and also to the withdrawal of hunting

dogs introduced for rabbit control, but which also chased kangaroos and are now not used because of the decrease in rabbit numbers. Fox numbers had built up and pigs were worse than ever. Landholders were very concerned about the build-up of noxious weeds such as saffron thistle, St John's wort and Patterson's curse. Lack of enforcement of weed and pest control measures by the ACT authorities contributed to the problem. There is a need to restrict reserves unless authorities can manage them properly.

The future of rural leases

There are now 76 long-term rural leases in the ACT covering 27 000 hectares which in 1988-89 yielded an estimated \$16.6 million value of rural produce. However, over the past decade the number of cattle has fallen substantially and sheep numbers have also declined. The Rural Lessees Association favours the adoption of policies which will achieve long-term viability of rural properties. These properties are seen to contribute significantly to the national capital by providing a very important element of the landscape, by contributing historical and heritage values, and providing a visible connection with rural endeavour in this country.

Measures proposed by the Association to sustain ACT rural activity over the long-term include: security of lease tenure; compensation on just terms in the event of resumption; amalgamation of small leases to farm viable properties; adjustment of lease charges to encourage lower stocking rates; and government assistance in arresting erosion and control of weeds.

These steps are needed to ensure the sustainability of rural properties and the retention of the contribution made by them to Canberra as the national capital.

Life member Robert Story's vote of thanks to Peter Buckmaster was warmly endorsed by all members present.

Syd Comfort

Peak councils' meeting

Peak conservation organisation representatives meet with the Federal Minister for the Environment three to four times a year to discuss current environmental issues. The Minister seeks community input and professional advice through this forum and representatives have an opportunity to raise issues of concern and to lobby the Minister and other government officials.

Peak council organisations include national organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and state-based organisations such as conservation councils. The Australian National Parks Council (ANPC) represents state-based NPAs and other conservation groups at a federal level. ANPC concentrates on national issues which relate to national parks—such as resource security and mining in national parks—and on parks in which the federal government is involved, such as Kakadu. It also assists state NPAs with local issues when lobbying of the Commonwealth is required.

The April meeting was attended by Anne Taylor, Project Officer for the NPA of the ACT. She has written an excellent report which I have summarised here.

Issues dealt with at the last meeting were:

- Commonwealth Environmental Protection Agency
- Uranium Policy
- Resource Security
- United National Conference on Environment and Development
- National Parks
- Tully-Millstream
- Lake Eyre Basin
- Greenhouse Update
- Waste management
- World Heritage

Commonwealth Environmental Protection Agency

ACF and Greenpeace have made some suggestions to the proposed legislation. These include provisions for the general public to enforce legal action, including citizens directly affected by the legislation and third parties.

Resource security

The Minister stated that it is the government's policy to limit resource security to the forestry industry. The Minister undertook to examine the suggestion that the proposed endangered species legislation be linked to the proposed resource security legislation.

National parks

ANPC raised three points under this agenda item.

1. Would the Commonwealth consider mechanisms to achieve standardisation of management planning across all national parks?

The Minister said this subject had been raised through the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers but, as some states are resistant to the idea of national parks, it was not met positively and never pursued. The Minister acknowledged the lack of uniformity of management plans and resources for management, but did not give it a high priority.

2. What commitments is the federal government prepared to make to ensure that the objectives of the Alpine National Park memorandum of understanding are met?

The Minister undertook to examine the suggestion that the Commonwealth seek a mechanism to improve management arrangements for the Australian Alps National Park.

3. Does the government's proposal to hand the Jervis Bay Territory to NSW mean it is no longer committed to the concept of co-operatively managing the area and incorporating it into a marine national park?

The Minister indicated that the Commonwealth was still committed to the concept of a Jervis Bay Marine National Park and undertook to examine the proposal to hand the territory back to NSW in the light of our concerns.

Tully-Millstream

The Minister indicated that the Task Force report on the proposed Tully-Millstream hydroelectricity scheme would be examined by the Commonwealth. This would include examination of the environmental aspects by the Wet Tropics Management Agency and examination of the scientific aspects by a consultant.

World Heritage

The Minister has asked the states to identify areas or objects to be placed on an indicative list for consideration for World Heritage nomination. Listing does not mean nomination is inevitable, nor does it define eventual boundaries.

Issues to consider

Some of the issues which were dealt with at the meeting and which would be appropriate for the ANPC to consider are:

- mining
- management of national parks, for example, cross-border management issues—that is, adjacent parks on state borders; management of boundaries—that is, appropriate land use on national park borders; tourist developments
- marine reserves
- resource security
- Tully-Millstream
- arid lands
- Murray-Darling Basin.

Anne Forsythe

Do you know about caves, their features and heritage value?

Hear the guest speaker at the General Meeting on 21 November.

International conservation union

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has its headquarters in Switzerland and is the peak body for hundreds of conservation organisations around the world, including government and non-government agencies. A week-long general assembly is held yearly in different parts of the world—last year it was in Perth. A considerable number of resolutions and recommendations were passed at that meeting covering a wide range of topics: indigenous communities, human population and resource demand, environmental restoration and protection in eastern Europe, land degradation, conservation of wildlife, biodiversity and marine conservation just to name a few.

Specific recommendations concerning Australia dealt with resource security, mining in national parks, Kakadu, the Kimberleys, arid zones, Fraser Island and wilderness and forest conservation in Tasmania.

The Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) consists of those Australian organisations which belong to IUCN. This committee was the driving force behind getting endangered species legislation enacted. More recently it has been responsible for bringing the issue of marine reserves into the public arena and is organising a conference on this matter—the Fenner conference on marine and estuarine protected areas to take place in Canberra in October.

As a representative of the Australian National Parks Council I attended the latest meeting held in July in Canberra. Several issues were raised which would be of interest to NPAs.

The Kimberley region in WA was discussed and a motion passed calling upon the government of WA and the Commonwealth to give priority to developing management strategies in cooperation with Aboriginal owners, to ensure

that this area of wilderness is protected. A similar motion was passed regarding the wet tropics area in Queensland. In the two and a half years since it was listed as World Heritage there is still no conservation management plan, the management agency is seriously under-resourced, there is lack of cooperation with the public and, what is worst, there are over 100 development proposals for the area. One of these proposals alone, the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme, seriously threatens the integrity of the World Heritage rainforest. Fraser Island was discussed and the Queensland Government commended for recognising its world heritage values and urged to halt logging by the end of 1991. The issue of resource security legislation was brought up with reference to Tasmanian forests and ACIUCN expressed its concern that the Tasmanian Government is planning to put thousands of hectares of National Estate areas and potential World Heritage areas into permanent wood supply zones.

The meeting also agreed upon future directions for ACIUCN: arid land management, biodiversity (including endangered species) and the marine environment including coastal land management.

On 21 October the director-general of IUCN, Dr Martin Holdgate, will be in Australia to launch their World Conservation Strategy now titled *Caring for the Earth—A Strategy for Sustainable Living*. It is hoped that there will be regional launches around the country so keep your ears and eyes open for this.

Anne Forsythe

Environment subcommittee

If you don't spend the fourth Thursday evening of every month participating in meetings of the Environment subcommittee you're missing out on what has been called 'One of the most stimulating evenings of my life.'

The range of issues to be tackled by the subcommittee continues to be broad. These include the hardy perennials of a marine national park for Jervis Bay, amended management plans for Kosciusko National Park, NSW coastal development, planning and environmental matters in the ACT, track maintenance in the Budawangs and mining in national parks. A few of the specific tasks undertaken by members include the drafting of a submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Enquiry into the Environmental Aspects of Rural Leases, preparation of a submission to the Commonwealth's enquiry into planning in the Jervis Bay Territory, representations following the damaging military exercise in the Jervis Bay area and liaison with the Australian National Parks Council. The sub-committee welcomes new members.

You don't have to attend every meeting or participate in every issue. You don't really have to attend meetings at all in order to take part in the subcommittee. If there is an environmental issue you feel the Association should do something about give the convener or one of the members a call and talk it over.

Timothy Walsh

How do you choose the best footwear for bushwalking?

How do you care for your feet?

Hear the podiatrist guest speaker at the General Meeting on 17 October.

ACT Parks and Conservation

The ACT Parks and Conservation Consultative Committee was appointed in November 1989 by the ACT Legislative Assembly to advise the Minister for Finance and Urban Services and to provide both the Minister and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service with a point of liaison and communication on issues relating to park management, nature conservation, and outdoor recreation in the ACT.

The Committee consists of eight members appointed in an individual capacity by the Minister. Members are:

- Professor Peter Cullen, Director of the Water Research Centre, University of Canberra (Chairperson)
- Dr Graham Yapp, nominee of the Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Peter Buckmaster, nominee of the ACT Rural Lessees Association
- Ms Elizabeth Beckmann, nominee of the Australian Association for Environmental Education (ACT)
- Mrs Heather Crompton, nominee of the Institute of Foresters Australia (ACT)
- Ms Jeannie Douglass and Mr Ian Fraser, nominees of the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra
- Mrs Anne Taylor, nominee of the National Parks Association of the ACT

The Committee also has representatives assisting in an ex-officio capacity from:

- Environment and Conservation Bureau
- Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service
- National Capital Planning Authority; and
- Territory Planning Authority

The Committee has developed a position and provided advice, guidance and/or recommendations on a wide range of significant issues

since it began meeting. Many of these issues were of particular concern to the NPA and came to the notice of the Committee as a result of that concern. The Committee dealt with them in the following ways.

Extensions to Namadgi National Park

The areas known as the North Cotter and Mt Tennent/Blue Gum Creek/Gibraltar Falls were left out of Namadgi National Park at the time of its declaration. The NPA was of the view that the areas should be included in the Park as the reasons for their exclusion are no longer valid. The matter was raised through the Committee and the following recommendations were made:

- the Committee wrote to the Minister and advised that as commercial harvesting of hardwood forests is no longer carried out in the ACT the impediment to the inclusion of the Northern Cotter was removed and therefore the area could now be added
- the Committee set up a working group to investigate rural leases in the Mt Tennent/Blue Gum Creek/Gibraltar Falls area.

The group determined that the leases do not detract from the natural values of the area, as limited clearing and pasture improvement has left the natural vegetation of the lease areas largely unmodified. The leases will not be renewed when they expire in the next ten to 12 years. The working group in discussions with the Parks Service identified suitable boundaries for the areas to be recommended for inclusion to the Park.

The Chief Minister announced proposals to gazette the areas as National Park on World Environment Day 1991. The proposal is to be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on August 1, 1991 and the areas are expected to be declared under the *Nature Conservation Act, 1980*, by the end of 1991.

Gudgenby Homestead

The Committee reviewed a report outlining a variety of proposals for the future management of the Gudgenby Homestead and surrounds. The Committee recommended that the paddocks around the homestead be allowed to revert to natural grassland.

A number of suggestions for a future commercial use of the homestead have been made. However under the existing *Nature Conservation Act, 1980*, a lease cannot be issued in a National Park. The new legislation which has been drawn up and is currently being reviewed by the Assembly has provisions for the Conservator to issue leases and licences in National Parks.

In anticipation of this, the Committee developed a policy document setting out guidelines for the granting of concessions in national park and nature reserve areas, based on the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers (CONCOM) Guidelines for Concession Management in National Parks, and relating specifically to the conditions within the ACT. It is hoped that these Guidelines will be adopted by the Environment and Conservation Bureau and that they will be effective in ensuring that unsuitable commercial activities are not undertaken in the ACT's National Parks and Nature Reserves.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands

The Committee reviewed the draft management plan and recommended that the emphasis for any educational program for the area be on habitat management rather than nature conservation as the area is not a pristine natural environment but is highly modified and relies on fairly intensive management practices such as grazing and clearing of waterways to enable it to continue to fulfil its role as important waterbird habitat.

The Committee recommended to the Minister that the area be gazetted under the *Nature Conservation Act, 1980*. The area

Outings program

October to December 1991



Outings guide

- Day walks** carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.
Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY.
Car camps facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

Other activities include nature rambles, environmental and field guide studies and ski tours.

Walks gradings

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 - up to 10 km
- 2 - 10 km to 15 km
- 3 - 15 km to 20 km
- 4 - above 20 km.

Terrain grading

- A - Road, firetrail, track
- B - Open forest
- C - Light scrub
- D - Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E - Rock scrambling
- F - Exploratory.

The walks program contains additional information. If necessary, contact the leader.

4,5,6,7 October-Pack Walk (2/3/A/C/F)

The Dargals Ref: Khancoban 1:50 000
Leader: Di Thompson 288 6084h 244 7572w
Contact leader by Tuesday. Wander through Broadway and Pretty Plains, and upper Tooma River. Visit mountain huts, ruins and old gold diggings. Destination depends on snow: alternative from Round Mountain. 400km drive (\$80 per car).

12 October-Saturday Walk (4/A/B)

Cotter Rocks Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Frank Kelly 241 2330h 275 6119w
Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.00am. A 23km walk from Orroral Valley up the old bridle track to Cotter Gap, and up the hill to Cotter Rocks, a spectacular pile of giant boulders offering great views of Namadgi. 100km drive (\$20 per car).

19 October-Saturday Walk (2/A)

Gudgenby Property Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Reg Alder 254 2240h
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A walk of 12 km to view Yankee Hat paintings, axe grinding grooves on Middle Creek, and relics of early and more recent European settlement. 140km drive (\$28 per car).

19-20 October-Weekend Pack Walk (4/A/D/E)

Mt Hoddle Ref: Budawangs Sketch Map
Leader: Phil Gatenby 254 3094h
Not for beginners. Contact leader by Wednesday. A walk in the Western Budawangs visiting Mt Hoddle, and some other mountains if time permits. Total climb about 500 metres. 300km drive (\$60 per car).

19-20 October-Weekend Pack Walk (2/A)

Blowering Dam to Browns Creek
Ref: Hume and Hovell Trail sketch map
Leader: Barbara de Bruine 258 3531h 2592642w
Contact leader by Wednesday. An easy overnight walk along the Hume and Hovell track along the shore of Blowering Dam totalling 19km. A pleasant and leisurely spring-time wander through delightful scenery, with an opportunity for fishing for trout. Campsite has picnic tables, water and pit toilets. 420 km drive (\$84 per car).

19-20 October-Weekend Canoe Trip

Shoalhaven River Ref: Moss Vale, Kiama 1:100 000
Leader: Chris Bellamy 249 7167ah or 286 1307ah
Contact leader by Wednesday. Travel to Tallowa Dam via Kangaroo Valley. Depending on water and paddlers, paddle upstream 20km into beautiful Shoalhaven Gorge or shoot whitewater downstream towards Nowra. Hire or buy canoe. Camp from canoes Saturday night. 400km drive (\$80/ car).

23 October-Wednesday Walk (1/A)

Square Rock Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Olive Buckman 248 8774h
Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 9am. A pleasant 8km varied walk on tracks to a fascinating rock formation with good views and exciting inner rock formation. Rock scrambling optional. A climb of 270m. Ideal for beginners and families. 80km drive (\$16 per car).

26 October-Saturday Walk (1/B/C/E)

The Pimple, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Leader: Martin Clark 295 3502h 265 1172w
Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.15 am. The Pimple is a rocky outcrop on a ridge to the West of Tidbinbilla Peak. Although a relatively short walk, there is a steep climb of 500m through light scrub and open forest. From the top of the Pimple there are fine views of the ridges West of Tidbinbilla running down to the Cotter Valley, and of the Brindabella Range. 70km drive (\$14 per car).

27 October - Sunday Walk (2/A)

Orroral Valley Circuit Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Len Haskew 281 4268
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Along the fire trail through the forested southern slopes of the valley. Descend Smokers Trail for about 2km, then follow open, grassy valley back to cars. Be prepared for wet feet in boggy and swampy areas. Suitable for beginners. 100km drive (\$20 per car).

26-27 October-Car Camp (2/D/E)

Yadboro, Belowra Creek Ref: Corang 1:25 000
Leader: Di Thompson 288 6084h 244 7572w
Contact leader by Wednesday. Car camp at Yadboro. Clamber down gorge on Belowra Creek to see the Dendrobium orchids, wading in the Creek and along the Yadboro River on both days. River pools and swimming holes. 430km drive (\$86 per car).

2 November-Saturday Walk (1/A)

Red Rocks Gorge, Urambi Hills Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Dugald Munro 231 8776h
Meet at Kambah Pool Walkers' carpark at the top of the ridge above Kambah Pool (there is a sign) at 9.30am. There is a short (5km) car shuffle. An easy walk on a track to the spectacular Red Rocks Gorge and then, through paddocks, up over Urambi Hills.

2-3 November-Car Camp (1/A)**Little Forest Plateau**

Ref: Ulladulla 1:100 000, Milton 1:25 000

Leader: Di Thompson 288 6084h 244 7572w
and Allan Norman

Contact leader by Wednesday. Join Allan Norman (our Budawang's work party ranger) of NPWS for an interpretive weekend at Little Forest Plateau in Eastern Budawang's, an area little visited by NPA. Inspect revegetation project. Contrast the beautiful places visited on the trip with developments at Porters Creek Dam, treatment works, and the controversial translator site. 480km drive (\$86 per car).

9 November- Saturday Walk (2/A/D/E/F)**Blue Gum Creek**

Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Leader: Les Pyke 281 2982h

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9am. An exploratory scenic walk to the East from Smokers Flat trail. Total distance 10-12km. Climbs of 200m to be expected. 60km drive (\$12 per car).

10 November-Sunday Ramble (1/A)**Westbourne Woods, Yarralumla**

Ref: Canberra Tourist Map (16th ed.)

Leader: Fiona Brand 247 9538h

Meet at the entrance to Royal Canberra Golf Club, Bentham Street, Yarralumla at 9.30am. A member of the Westbourne Woods Action Association will lead a two hour walk, explaining the history of the woods, and identifying the trees to be found in it. At 11.30am NPA members are invited to gather at Weston Park (3rd barbecue on right) for lunch. After lunch we can explore Yarralumla Nursery.

9-10 November-Weekend Pack Walk (1/D/E/F)**Bogong Peaks**

Ref: Talbingo 1:25 000

Leader: Phil Bubb

248 6769h 266 5128w

Contact leader by Wednesday. This is a short but hard walk with solid climbs and dense scrub. Long pants, gardening gloves and gaiters are recommended. The seldom-visited Bogong Peaks provide a spectacular horizon to the West of the Brindabellas. We shall scramble up to the wonderful views from Jounama and Big Plain Peaks, camping in the saddle between them, and maybe visiting the Big Plain (swampy frost hollow) without packs. Short car shuffle. 400km (\$80 per car).

13 November-Wednesday Walk (1/C/D/F)**West of Smokers Flat**

Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Leader: Les Pyke

281 2982h

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9am. An exploratory walk from Smokers Gap (grid ref. 7165). A walk of 7km with a 200m climb over 2km. 60km drive (\$12 per car).

16 November-Saturday Walk (3/A/B)**Mount Boboyan**

Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000

Leader: Frank Clements

231 7005h

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30am. A walk of 18km via Hospital Hill and Boboyan Mountain, with a short exploratory section. Total climb 300m. Return via Old Boboyan Road. 100km (\$20 per car).

17 November-Sunday Walk (3/A/D)**Corang Peak**

Ref: Corang 1:25 000

Leader: Mike Smith

286 2984h

Meet at Queanbeyan Swimming Pool car park at 7.30am. Note early start. A walk in the Budawang's from the Wog Wog entrance to a peak with 360 degree views. Side trip to Admiration Point for lunch (scrub-bashing). Return by same route. 250km drive (\$50 per car).

16-17 November-Weekend Canoe Trip**Murrumbidgee River**

Ref: Tantangara or Cootamundra

and Tumut 1:100 000

Leader: Chris Bellamy 249 7167 or 286 1307 both ah

Contact leader by Wednesday. Depending on water and paddlers, the trip will be above Tantangara Dam or from Jugiong to Gundagai. Overnight camping from canoes (hire or byo canoe). 300 km drive (\$60 per car).

16-17 November-Weekend Pack Walk (3/D/E/F)**Middle Creek, Mt Namadgi vicinity**

Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Leader: Les Pyke 281 2982h

Contact leader by Wednesday. Starting Gudgenby, backpack to campsite on Middle Ck. Lightpack to Big Creamy Flats and exploratory climb of 200m of unnamed mountain (grid ref: 722 492). Total walk 24 km. Drive 130 km (\$26 per car).

23-24 November-Car Camp**Bundanoon/Morton National Park**

Ref: Bundanoon 1:25 000

Leader: Len Haskeew 281 4268h

Contact leader by Wednesday. Camp in Morton NP camping area. Several walks mainly on tracks to visit lookouts with spectacular views, fern-lined creeks and overhanging cliffs. Perhaps a night stroll to see the glow worms, Devon-

shire teas for sweet tooths. 300km drive (\$60per car).

1 December-Sunday Walk (2/A/E)**Bungonia Gorge**

Ref: Caoura 1:25 000

Leader: Mike Smith

286 2984h

Meet at Southwell Park and the corner of Northbourne Avenue at 8am. A steep walk on track down to Shoalhaven River and downstream to Bungonia Creek. Follow creek upstream through spectacular gorge. Climb out steeply via the 'Efflux' route (400 m up). 220km drive (\$44 per car).

7 December-Saturday Walk (2/A) or**7-8 December-Car Camp with day walks****Snowy Mountains Flower Walk**

Leader: Phil Bubb 248 6769h or 266 5128w

Contact leader at least a week ahead to register preference (both may be possible if transport can be arranged). A simple walk from Charlottes Pass to Watsons Crags or elsewhere on the Western side of the main range to view the flowers and take in the air. We could stay overnight at Island Bend (car camp) or at a lodge, depending on the wishes of participants. On Sunday we could spend half a day visiting the new Burrungubugge Hut. 350km (\$70 per car).

25,26,27 January-Weekend Canoe Trip**Lachlan River**

Ref: Cowra 1:100 000

Leader: Chris Bellamy

249 7167h

Contact leader by Wednesday. Canoe between Cowra and Forbes, where the Lachlan River wanders in seclusion between river gums reflecting quintessential Australia. Riverside camping (hire canoes in ACT or byo). 350km drive (\$70 per car).

Points to note

New faces to lead, new places to go. Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead a walk occasionally.

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

The committee suggests a donation of TWENTY cents per kilometre DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS in the car, including the driver, (to the nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.

Consultative Committee

has now been declared a Nature Reserve under that Act.

Boboyan pine plantation

The NPA has had a particular interest in the future of this area as demonstrated by the involvement of our members in a series of work parties removing wilding pines from the natural areas surrounding the plantation.

The Committee inspected the plantation during a field trip in September 1990 and on the basis of this was able to make recommendations regarding the plantation's ongoing management and eventual removal from the Park.

The Committee wrote to the Minister recommending that the burnt area of the pine plantation be rehabilitated as soon as possible to conform as closely as possible to the surrounding natural areas. It also recommended that all pine regeneration be removed and that the ACT Forests undertake rehabilitation according to standards specified by the Service.

Forestry will not be harvesting the undamaged portion of the plantation until 1993 as it is uneconomic to do so sooner. The Committee strongly urged that the cost of managing the plantation until this time be met by forestry and not by the Parks Service.

Canberra Nature Park

Members of the Committee have been examining early draft material for the management plan and have provided comments to the Service. Discussions over the boundaries of the Canberra Nature Park (CNP) are still going on. They will be defined by the draft Territory Plan which will be available for public comment when it is released. The CNP will be a Nature Reserve within the draft Territory Plan which is a category of Public Land identified in the new legislation. The draft of the CNP management plan is expected to be released for public comment early in 1992.

Urban open space management

City Parks sought the assistance of the Committee to obtain public comment on their dry grass mowing and irrigation policies. A working group was set up including three members from the Committee and three members from other community groups with specific expertise. The Working Group discussed a series of options which City Parks might adopt to reduce resource usage in these areas without seriously compromising community expectations. Effective communication with, and education of, the wider community was identified as an important component in the development of future programs and policies. The group's recommendations will be forwarded to City Parks after they have been approved by the Consultative Committee.

Alpine national parks

Representatives of the Committee met with Alps Advisory Committees from NSW and Victoria to discuss cross border management issues and the effective operation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which exists between NSW, ACT, Victoria and the Commonwealth to provide a structure for the co-operative management of the entire Alpine National Park System.

The recommendations from the meeting, which were sent to each of the Ministers, were for increased resources to be committed to the Alps to enable more effective on-ground management to deal with: increasing visitor numbers; pests, weeds and feral animals; and to maintain water catchments.

Following this meeting the Chairs of the three Advisory Committees attended a meeting of the four Environment Ministers responsible for the Alps MOU, held at Namadgi Visitors Centre in April 1991. At this meeting the budget for the administration of the MOU was discussed and

increased funding agreed upon. The Committee Chairs discussed our concerns and ended the meeting by calling on the Ministers to demonstrate their commitment to the MOU by taking further initiatives to extend the co-operative approach to management and to communicate the concept to the Australian public.

Issues for the future

Some of the issues which the Committee hopes to consider during the remainder of this year are:

- Boboyan road upgrade: a preliminary assessment document is now available from government shopfronts for public comment.
- Decade of landcare: the Committee will provide comments to the ACT Decade of Landcare Steering Committee on their decade of landcare draft plan for the ACT.
- West Belconnen planning proposals: The Committee will examine the proposals once documentation is available for public comment.
- 'Parkcare': the use of volunteers in the management of Canberra Nature Park.

The purpose of the Consultative Committee is to provide liaison between the community and the Government on issues relating to the environment in the ACT. The NPA has already used it effectively to raise issues of concern and has seen very positive results in the form of the gazettal of areas as National Park and Nature Reserve. Members of the NPA should continue to make use of this forum to raise new issues and to have input into current issues. Individual members can do this by contacting a member of the NPA executive, by contacting your Consultative Committee nominee, or by attending a meeting of the NPA Environmental Sub-Committee or the NPA Namadgi Sub-Committee.

Anne Taylor

Forest and timber inquiry

The draft report of the Resource Assessment Commission's national forest and timber inquiry was released on 5 July to stimulate further discussion about major issues which will affect the future use of Australia's forest and timber resources.

The inquiry is inviting public and interest group comments and submissions on the draft report and will hold a series of further public hearings before preparation of its final report to be presented to the federal government by 30 November this year.

In presenting the report, Dr David James said that identification and selection of the most appropriate options for the use of Australia's forest and timber resources is one of the major resource use issues in Australia today. Views had become polarised and, on occasions, strongly held views had led to physical confrontations.

According to the Commission, Australia's native forests have been overcut in most states, causing an impending shortage in the supply of hardwood sawlogs. It says this prolonged overcutting and NOT the inclusion of timber-producing areas in national parks and conservation reserves appears to be the main cause of the dwindling supply of hardwood sawlogs. The reduction in supply has in turn been an important factor in the decline in the number of timber mills and the number of people employed in logging and milling. This decline is expected to continue.

This does not mean that Australia is about to run out of sawlogs. Rather, Australia is in the process of restructuring an industry from one that is labour-intensive and based on old-growth forest hardwood, to one that is equipment-intensive and based on plantation softwood.

The inquiry has gained the impression that many industry representatives were unaware of the effect of past overcutting on the present supply of indigenous sawlogs, believing instead that

the industry decline was a consequence of land acquisition by conservation agencies. This is an oversimplification of what has occurred, according to the inquiry. It says overcutting coincides with, and is caused by, the cutting out of most of the unreserved old-growth forest well before significant numbers of regrowth sawlogs reach harvestable size.

'This anticipated outcome is probably the main reason that milling quotas have been reduced progressively in all states, and this reduction, RATHER THAN the inclusion of timber-producing areas in national parks, is the main cause of the dwindling supply of hardwood logs', the report says. The report also points out that the Inquiry cannot find any instance in recent decades where large areas of forest have been managed on a sustained yield basis. Although it has been told that some state forestry services are moving towards a sustained-yield offtake, it does not believe it is possible to approach a sustained yield by gradually reducing the cut after such a long period of overcutting. 'It is necessary to compensate for the previous period of overcutting by a substantial period of undercutting,' the report says. It continues, 'It seems that for much of its history, the indigenous timber industry has not been in equilibrium with the supply of its raw material. It seems that in most years there have been too many mills for the timber on offer. Milling capacity was almost always greater than the supply of logs to the mills and hence inevitably led to mills closing or amalgamating.'

Current harvesting practices may increase the risk of extinction of some animal species and adversely affect flora, soil and water, but there is inadequate information to assess the situation with confidence. There is some evidence suggesting that regional extinctions of some forest animal species have occurred.

Australia's deforestation rate (due mainly to clearing for agricul-

ture) is cause for concern, the report says. Some forest types, such as those containing brigalow in Queensland, have been cleared at rates which threaten their survival.

Only 20 per cent of our remaining forest and woodland is in conservation reserves. About 25 per cent is on private land and this is where most clearing takes place, with little re-forestation occurring. Since European settlement about half the country's forests have been cleared or severely modified. If we continue to clear the land at this rate, there will be no forests left in a couple of hundred years.

Anne Forsythe

Farm accomodation in the Snowy

Happy Valley is a thousand acre rural property first settled in 1848 by Thomas Locker, the first overseer at Lanyon. It is located in a secluded valley three kilometres from Adaminaby. In winter the snow is only a half hour drive away whilst at other times of the year Lake Eucumbene is three kilometres.

Happy Valley is run by Neville and Kate Locker, who used to run the Travellers Rest Museum at Cooma. Features of the farm include a hundred year old shearing shed, stone dairy, 1860 horizontal slab kitchen, barn and other sheds containing a variety of old farming impliments, horse-drawn vehicles, domestic utensils and other artifacts.

Accomodation is available in either the cottage or the farmhouse. The cottage is an 1860 Police Station from Jerangle, complete with cell for the children. The original portion of the farmhouse was built in the 1870's and added to in the 1950's.

For a leaflet giving additional accomodation details, booking arrangements and directions to the property, call Neville or Kate on (064) 542 439.

Developer abandons Jervis Bay

South Coast property owner and developer, Mr Warren Halloran, through his private company Realty Realisations Pty Ltd, has announced the abandonment of future development plans for Jervis Bay.

Recent advertisements have displayed prominently the company's intention that its Collingwood beach Estate, located in reclaimed wetlands at Vincentia, represents the 'LAST RELEASE OF PRIVATE LAND IN JERVIS BAY'.

Jervis Bay Beacon, May, 1991.

Save the rainforest

The NPA Central Coast Branch's joint application with State Council for a Save the Bush grant has been successful. The grant will fund an NPA study of remnant rainforest and associated native plant communities in the Gosford and Wyong areas.

National Parks Journal (NSW), May-June, 1991.

Garigal National Park

On 19 April 1991 the NSW Government gazetted the new Garigal National Park. The new park is the first declared by the Greiner Government, and comprises some 786 hectares of the Narrabeen Lake catchment, 15 kilometres north of Sydney.

Garigal National Park is one of the State's smallest which will protect remnant Sydney bushland as represented in the nearby Kuringgai National Park, a number of prime aboriginal sites and a former feature film set. A more representative park would have included more of the Deep Creek catchment, adjacent Crown Land, the Narrabeen lake foreshore and the lake itself, as well as the area known as Red Hill presently being cleared for urban development.

National Parks Journal (NSW), May-June, 1991.

Canadians 'Ban the Dams'

Environmentalists in Canada and the United States won more time recently when Hydro-Quebec postponed its \$40 billion plan to dam some of the wild rivers flowing into the James and Hudson Bays.

The first phase of the James Bay project, called La Grande 1, created five reservoirs covering 11 335 square kilometres—an area half the size of lake Ontario. Water fowl nesting sites, shoreline habitat, caribou calving grounds and snow goose staging areas were destroyed.

When the floodgates were opened in 1984, a water surge drowned more than 10 000 caribou.

The Colong Bulletin, May, 1991.

Education kits

The release of the environmental education curriculum statement has shown a commitment of the NSW Department of Education to promote environmental awareness to school students—from kindergarten to year 12.

To assist teacher's and students, NPA NSW plans to produce a series of education kits, containing information and worksheets. The kits will focus on nature conservation, national parks and environmental protection and will be specifically related to the new school syllabuses, including the Sciences, Geography, Economics, English and Arts.

National Parks Journal (NSW), May-June, 1991.

Green belt

Brisbane's new Lord Mayor, Mr Sorley, has unveiled what he claims is an environmental vision for Brisbane. It includes flora and fauna protection, no 'nett loss' of wetlands, water quality standards, air pollution levels, soil and tree retention and avoiding the destruction of bushland, along with a number of other environmental issues. There is also an environmental levy to enable the council to buy bushland under threat of development, thus forming a 'green belt' around the city.

The Colong Bulletin, July 1991.

Rainforest conservation program

The Queensland and Commonwealth Government's recently announced a major conservation package for Queensland's unique rainforests, jointly funded to the extent of \$2.8 million for research, management, education and visitor facilities for Queensland's rainforests.

NPA NEWS (QLD), July, 1991.

National estate grants

The VNPA and the National Trust have been granted \$40 000 to prepare criteria for nominating grassland sites for the Register of the National Estate, promote greater public awareness of grasslands conservation and establish a number of 'Friends' groups. A project officer will be employed. The Association has also been granted a further \$20 000 for its 'degradation processes in National Estate areas' project being conducted by Gerry Rayner. A \$20 000 grant from the Department of Conservation and Environment's Greenhouse Community Grants Scheme for a Linear Corridor Project has also been received.

VNPA Newsletter, June, 1991.

Radiata Plateau

The World Plan Executive Council of Australia has received development approval from the Blue Mountains City Council to build a 50-bed 'academy' on Radiata Plateau, part of the upper Blue Mountains which is recognised as being of World Heritage significance.

Radiata Plateau is located two kilometres west of Katoomba, near the historic area of Pulpit Hill and the Explorer's Tree. The area is an important recreational, scientific and educational resource and has some of the last unpolluted water catchments on the southern Blue Mountains escarpment, which are close to urban areas.

At least 18 known 'rare and endemic plants are known to occur on the Plateau as well as significant stands of Blue Mountain ash forest.

National Parks Journal (NSW), May-June, 1991.

No sparrows, starlings, black-birds or Indian mynahs

North West Safaris offer six safaris starting and finishing at Alice Springs. Ours was for 28 days through the Tanami Desert, Broome, the Kimberley, Bungle Bungles and return to Alice Springs.

Early to bed early to rise was the pattern for our 28 days and we duly rose at 5.30am on Friday 3 May and headed north west through the Tanami. There were ten of us in all: Peter and Anthony the two owner drivers, Jill our cook for the tour, three of us from Canberra and four others from South Australia and Queensland. Jill had previously been on three safaris with Peter and Anthony. All three were enthusiastic and experienced bird watchers and we found their interest extended to anything that grew or lived along the way.

To be able to refuel at the end of the first day we had to reach Rabbit Flat, strategically situated in the Tanami Desert, so day one was a long one—700 kilometres. The Tanami proved very different from any ideas I had had about deserts. No barren ground here, for there was a wealth of plant life and a great variety of birds. Reaction by the drivers to anything that looked interesting brought the vehicles to a halt, often a U-turn, to get another or better look. Binoculars, bird and plant books occupied front seat positions in our vehicles and were in constant use. That day brought a succession of birds to be viewed, to mention a few, wedge-tailed eagles, red-tailed cockatoos, peaceful doves, brown falcons and flocks of budgerigars, the latter always in ballet formations, turning in unison with flashes of brilliant green. There were bustards too, endearingly stately birds, true aristocrats who showed us they knew they were a cut above all other creatures. Walk, not fly, seemed to be their motto, as at a measured pace they strolled



Geikie Gorge. Photo by Penny Hebbard.

along, casting lofty glances at lesser creatures. The Tanami however offered me much more than the wide variety of birds. I gained from it my first real lesson in space, and the very different beauty from the cool and well-treed states I'd lived in until then. Bleached spinifex on flat, flat land dotted with termite castles appeared at the end of this day. The late afternoon sun highlighted the stark beauty of the place.

Rabbit Flat proved to have a roadhouse, the most isolated in the country we were told and very welcome at the end of that long, hot day. It appeared suddenly against the horizon, an oasis of trees and windmill in the spinifex. It is surprisingly secure in a land which looks initially empty. We were to learn of the riots it has had to cope with here in the desert. Our camp that night was a little distance from the roadhouse among some small trees and long grasses. There were so many grasses, all beautiful, and there were flowers too from the Mulla Mulla, some perfumed, to Holly Grevillea just coming into bloom, and many kinds of acacias and groundcovers.

Day 2 brought us to Caranya

Station camping ground, passing through unseasonably green landscape and unseasonably flowing rivers and meeting a group of Aborigines fishing at one crossing. Caranya Station itself had experienced eight feet of water through its store in a big rain in February. We were able to cool down with ice creams and cold drinks from the re-stocked store before driving a little further to visit Wolf Crater. This huge crater is about 900 metres in diameter and is the second largest meteorite crater in the world. We scrambled down from the rim, a very rocky and steep slope, to the floor, now largely covered by mixed vegetation of spinifex, shrubs and small trees. A large body of water in one area supports considerable birdlife.

Another place to have experienced the February rains was Fitzroy Crossing and our camp there included not only a visit to the historic old pub but counting frogs in the toilet block. If numerous frogs are a sign of well-being, then Fitzroy Crossing must be a healthy place for we found plenty. Life at the old pub abounded too and seemingly every other person

Mt Franklin Chalet

This joint KHA/NPA Heritage Week walk was a great success. At Mt Franklin Chalet we were met by a work party of members of the Canberra Alpine Club (formed in 1934) and Alan Bagnall gave a fascinating account of its development. The Chalet, built in the summer season of 1937-38 by Canberra contractor Warren McDonald, is the oldest unaltered building on the Australian mainland especially for skiing. During the War Dutch squadrons based at Fairbairn used the Chalet while on R&R leave.

It wasn't hard to imagine cosy, convivial evenings around the piano, dart board and the old fuel stove from the Prime Minister's Lodge. Upstairs (don't forget to use the safety rope), the sleeping compartments were still in good condition with their Baltic pine lining and only the 'Honeymoon Suite' had a door.

Outside we inspected home-made skis and the Slalom and

Nursery ski runs which once had Harley Davidson or Austin A40 powered ski tows. A wind-powered generator once located on the roof would create fierce vibrations throughout the Chalet in rough weather and unless the propeller was 'feathered', it would be blown away into the trees.

The proximity of a 60 year-old wooden border marker emblazoned with the letters CT (Capital Territory) gave Alan the chance to draw our attention to the water catchment demands of the interstate toilet next to the Chalet.

Travelling to Mt Ginini we next viewed the RMC ski lodge site and the ski run of the Gingera Ski Club which is visible from parts of Canberra against the snow-capped Brindabellas.

Tom Gregory's brumby trapyard was built across a well-used brumby pad on the southern slopes of Mt Ginini. Matthew Higgins explained how salt was used to entice brumbies into the

yard and a tripwire, triggered by the jostling horses, dropped the gate.

Nearby we found the remains of the long V-shaped wings of Jack Maxwell's trapyard and still further the site of Peter Spotswood's hut built in 1947.

Pryor's hut was built in the early 1950s to enable the establishment of an alpine annexe to the Canberra Botanical Gardens. Because of ill health Lindsay Pryor was unable to be with us but we were fortunate in hearing his taped interview with Matthew Higgins, undertaken as part of the Namadgi oral history project. Afterwards some went to look for the Huon pine labels marking the specimens in the Arboretum.

On the walk back to Mt Ginini I reflected on Professor Pryor's description of the annexe: '...a little labelled collection of rare and endangered species; a collection to be visited; a place of preservation.'

Tony Corp

No sparrows, starlings, blackbirds or Indian mynahs

was a 'character'. Anthony's determination to get us there to widen our experiences was justified. The new and up-market tourist complex had been scorned in preference for the pub and personalities, and for colour it won hands down.

A cruise up Geikie Gorge next morning before continuing on to Broome took us along a beautiful stretch of water flanked by towering cliffs. Carved into a Devonian age reef, Geikie Gorge had a lot to recommend it, still waters and their reflections, those richly coloured cliffs and our first sightings of fresh water crocodiles which brought the cameras into action. The crocodiles were a bit of a let down for they were very young ones and small. I found a short-necked tortoise more interesting that day. Before leaving the gorge we had time for a quick swim and wallow in the water before heading west for Broome.

I think we were all rather

charmed by Broome and far from disliking what Lord McAlpine has done for/to it. We rather approved his touch. The beach resort is well out of the township and while there is a fair degree of opulence, accommodation seems to run also to a camping area and the whole concept is beautifully executed and fits well into the surroundings, creating a very pleasant atmosphere. It is hard to imagine not enjoying a stay there. The rebuilding evident in the township seems to have highlighted the features of the old town and somehow drawn the whole together. The famed stairway to the stars was out for us, not the right time of the lunar month, but we did manage to take in some of the other features of the town. One of us visited the bird sanctuary, we all saw the sunset at Cable beach and the Osprey's nest on the pier, being checked in turn at the latter by two of the Ospreys. A stamp of

approval was given also to the excellent bookshop at Broome.

Broome was pleasant and the two full days there were welcome. They gave the opportunity to explore the township, catch up on the domestics such as washing and generally gear ourselves for the adventure stage of the safari. I was grateful for the shops too. My camera had 'died' in Broome and to have some record of the eleven days pretty much away from civilisation I was able to arm myself with my first throw-away camera. Anthony and Peter had said by the end of the first week everybody would have settled in pretty well and this proved correct. After being something of a Calamity Jane in the first couple of days I felt I'd started to redeem myself. By the end of those first six days it seemed we'd made a great start.

Margaret Pyke

Down the Murray

In mid February 1991, six paddlers set off from Yarrawonga down the Murray heading for the Barmah Forest or beyond. We were blessed with good water levels and in fact as a group we made it as far as Echuca after paddling 265 km over 6 days. We consisted of myself and Rollo from Canberra, Tony from Melbourne, Dave and Veronica from Sydney and Jenny from Newcastle. Jenny was the oldest, a sprightly 63. Most of us were primarily bushwalkers, that is, new to canoes or kayaks. The party had four kayaks and one canoe. So in perfect weather we launched midday Saturday from the Yarrawonga Shire caravan park below the weir in the same spot where the Red Cross marathon also starts. They average 90 km a day, we expected to do 30 km a day and in fact did nearly 50!

We said goodbye to the cars after having shuffled them between Picnic Point and Yarrawonga and ventured towards Cobram. Saturday night saw us at the first of what proved to be one of many idyllic camping spots by the water's edge. We had no trouble finding spots with white sandy beaches, trees for shade, easy access for the boats, facing east for the morning sun. The day always



Evening view from camp site. Photos: Chris Bellamy.

finished with a swim then dinner around a campfire.

The next afternoon we hove to at Cobram, our first town. We ended up camping in a lovely grassy green park with full facilities and an easy walk to a pub, the Royal, and an Italian restaurant. You have to eat Italian in Cobram. Of course we had another swim but then it was warm thirsty weather.

The next day we paddled past more lovely beaches and arrived

at Tocumwal. 'Toke' is a joy to arrive at for the paddler. We rounded a bend, past an interesting house boat and sighted the town, with its rooftops just peeking over the well grassed levee bank in front of us. We tied up at the jetty next to another party's canoes. They were just about to head off. We exchanged pleasantries and then headed off to sample the delights of Toke. Rollo did well and scored all the brown rolls at the town bakery. His luck however ran out at the fruit shop where they must have thought he was a stray from a latter day Kelly gang and threw him out. Jenny did better at the old style hardware store and got some rope to fix her tent whose centre ridge pole had chosen to expire the day before. We discovered that the town boasted three pubs and loaded up with liquid supplies. We bid our farewells and headed off in the late afternoon sun heading for another lovely beach. Who said life is a beach?

For most of the journey we had paddled past state forest on at least one side of the river. Near towns we encountered speedboats and water skiers. Away from them we did pass a lot of car campers with tents, caravans etc enjoying

Jenny moving on the Murray.



Namadgi news

A short track has been constructed from the Namadgi Visitor Centre to a prominent point on the side of Mt Tennent. The track from the Centre crosses a bridge over the outlet from the dam, then proceeds over the road to climb through open forest to a small rocky creek and on to a rocky platform overlooking the grassy paddocks below. Allow two hours for the return walk.

The swamp of Bogong Creek below the Boboyan Forest car park has been an impediment to easy access to the Yankee Hat Rock Shelter Aboriginal paintings. To avoid wet feet and damage to the swamp it has been necessary to make a circuitous walk around it. A bridge is being built over Bogong Creek to make for easier and more direct access. The most

direct route to the bridge will be from the gate on the rise just before the car park is reached and then on to the rocky knoll beside the creek.

A viewing platform has been built at the Yankee Hat Rock Shelter to make viewing easier and to provide a small measure of protection from dust and physical contact. A drip line has also been put in place to stop water drainage damage to the paintings.

A concrete causeway has been poured over the second of the Hospital Creek crossings on the northern section of the Old Boboyan Road access to the Boboyan Forest car park.

Whilst on an investigation to locate the remains of early settlement on the Gudgenby property, members of the Kosciusko Huts

Association located an extensive Aboriginal tool grinding site on Middle Creek. It is beyond the creek junction at the end of the grassed section of the valley on the main arm of the creek where the Gudgenby property fence line crosses it.

Reg Alder

Namadgi heritage in print

NPA members who have an interest in Namadgi's cultural heritage might like to have a look at the winter issue of *Heritage Australia* (the quarterly journal of the Australian Council of National Trusts). It contains an article by a NPA/KHA member.

Down the Murray

those lovely beaches. It seemed from the midden heaps of brown bottles that a lot of campers make the pilgrimage to the Murray during the Christmas holidays.

The section from Toke to Picnic Point was supposed to take three days but we did it in two. En route we enjoyed one camp site where we had a lovely vantage point from which to watch the birds coming down to drink at sunset. The varieties seemed almost endless as they swooped down to the water's edge and then away.

Leaving Toke I met George, newly retired from Brisbane, who was satisfying a lifelong ambition to paddle the Murray from Albury to Swan Hill. George had a whole canoe to himself and he needed it, having brought almost everything including the kitchen sink with him.

A memorable spot was the Gulf, near Yielima Station, a massive turn in the river where one almost encounters an inland sea, christened the Gulf by the old paddlesteamer skippers. At the Gulf we encountered our first modern paddlesteamers, as they have come into fashion as houseboats for wealthy Melburnians. We also

encountered the Barmah Forest, the largest remaining red gum forest and a great wildlife sanctuary. As the river passes through the forest at floor level rather than in the usual trench, the paddler can really enjoy the wildlife too.

The day we paddled into Picnic Point was our longest at 55 km. En route we passed the remains of an old paddle steamer as well as the exit for the Edwards River, a 200 km anabranch of the Murray that keeps the Deniliquin (Deni) rice farmers in water. Our attempt to paddle into it next day proved too much like an African Queen epic and we took a rest day instead, savouring the delights of Deni.

For me the trip from Picnic Point is hard to beat, with two big lakes to paddle past, lots of wildlife and a good current to shoosh one along. I tried to get some photos of the azure kingfishers but suffered for the lack of a telephoto lens. For Rollo, Jenny and Tony the end of the trip came at Barmah where we celebrated at the local pub.

Veronica, Dave and I then paddled our kayaks out of the forest at Barmah where we encountered more overt signs of civilisation and the start of a weekend. We found it

hard going dodging the speedboats. The giant house boats which abound in the Echuca area, however, proved to be good for a free ride if you could sit your boat properly in their wake. The strong current still pulled us along though.

Eventually we passed the confluence with the Goulburn River and then what proved to be one of several paddlesteamers carrying tourists. Tired, we ended our journey as a group at Echuca and pulled up just short of the town port at a caravan park. That night, having done the sights of downtown Echuca, old pubs and all, I lay in my tent and went to sleep with the sounds of a paddlesteamer throbbing and splashing its way down river, passing our camp site and showering sparks into the night.

If you would like to do some paddling this summer in a kayak or a canoe, you will notice three different weekend trips in the latest NPA walks program. In addition I am considering leading a Murray trip in late November 1991 and a Murrumbidgee trip in early January 1992, both of one week duration. If you are interested ring me on (06) 249 7167.

Chris Bellamy

Bournda—the lucky few

The weather forecast for the June long weekend was for rain, rain and more rain, all down the east coast. Nothing undaunted Charles and Audrey Hill and I had a pleasant drive on the Friday morning, meeting slight rain Cooma onwards. Views coastwards were lost in cloud and rain increased but we arrived at the Bournda recreation area to find NO RAIN!

Also awaiting us were leader Syd Comfort and Barbara—who had taken a slightly longer route via Perth, Melbourne and the coastal road! Margaret Aston soon joined us, having left Canberra in pouring rain but finding NONE IN BOURNDA!

There WAS a three hour heavy downpour (after we had retired) Friday night, which certainly gave my new tent a more than full test, but we awoke to dry skies. Saturday morning saw most members climbing to the trig (only putting on raincoats for a few minutes), while Margaret and I shopped for necessities in Tathra—meeting more rain, but NONE IN BOURNDA on return!

Adrienne Nicholson arrived lunch time Saturday (making a total of seven out of the 12 expected) and that afternoon some of us took the delightful walk along the beach and around the N.W. side of Bournda Lagoon. Our turning point was a new low foot-bridge which has replaced the old suspension one, lost in floods some two years ago.

Sunday—still NO RAIN IN BOURNDA—we all set off along the beach (the Wallagoot Lake entrance being open) and then started the delightful Kangarutha track—high on the coast for the most part—to Tathra.

Some of us had done this two years before in pouring rain, so that it was a joy to not look north and inland at the black clouds, but concentrate on our own dryness and the lighter skies towards New Zealand. If the rains were spoiling others' weekend, they certainly did not do so for ours, in fact we had an added bonus of



Along the Kangarutha track. Photo by Syd Comfort.

extremely heavy seas bashing against the high cliffs, tumbled rocks and rocky islands of the coast line. Views down to each of the little bays were almost mesmerising as we kept waiting for the next really big one and the next and the next.

This track is memorable for its varying scenery—open heathlike areas where we saw and experienced epacris, correa and boronia; melaleuca forming an arch for parts of the track; dropping into delightful little bays (and climbing out); headlands with jumbled rocks below receiving the full force of the huge waves and so on. Again we only donned raincoats for a few moments of the walk. Margaret kindly met us at the Tathra end where we all wolfed tea and scones before returning to the camp area—STILL NO RAIN IN BOURNDA! We did have a small downpour that night but after we had retired.

Monday saw us all slowly walking—and birds watching—to the Scotts Bay area, then Adrienne (very reluctantly) dragged herself away and back to Canberra.

All weekend we heard reports of floods within a few miles and the

Bega road was cut for some hours, but we enjoyed no daytime rain in camp and even saw the stars for a few moments on a number of occasions at night (plus a possum).

Tuesday morning Charles, Audrey and I returned, finding vast floods, rushing rivers, fallen trees, rocks and debris and signs of the heavy rain everywhere. Views were again denied us on Brown mountain and in Coom over lunch we learned that they had received rain constantly since the previous Wednesday (six days) but NOT IN BOURNDA for the lucky, lucky few. (Needless to say no one believed us on our return!)

Olive Buckman

Members should note that the general meeting of 21 November will be held in the rehearsal room upstairs in the Griffin Centre instead of the usual ground floor room. Same time 8 pm.

A decade of neglect

The history of the Orroral Valley goes back to between 1826 and 1830 when a squatter, William Herbert, staked a claim over a run in the valley. The property passed through various owners until about 1849 when it was acquired by Charles McKeahnne.

Archibald, the son of Charles and Elizabeth McKeahnne, was left in Scotland when his family emigrated in 1838 and joined them in 1851. Archibald married Mary McMillan in 1864 and the birth of their first child is recorded in 1865. Other children were all born at Orroral in 1867, 1873 and 1877. It could be assumed that they would have commenced the construction of a substantial building to house the family and oral history has it that Archibald built the present Orroral homestead in that period over ten years. A map of 1885 records a small triangular plot near the junction of the Orroral River and Sawpit Creek as a reserve for the preservation and regrowth of native timber. It could be presumed that there had been a sawmill there and the timber for the homestead milled at the site.

The house was occupied until 1950 and from then suffered considerable damage by being used as a store for hay and junk with access to the grazing stock.

In 1981, Ross Carlton, then a committee member and later President of the Association had a vision that the restoration of the

main building could be an excellent project for the Association to undertake. At that time he could not have envisaged how long it would take to even make a start.

In that year, on representation from the Association, a fence was repaired and posts were installed along the front verandah to prevent further sagging.

In 1982 the Association received a grant for the preservation of the homestead and preparation of a conservation plan. The assistance of the Canberra College of Advanced Education (as it was then) was sought and it was made a student project. In October 1982 about 30 members attended to clean out the homestead so that the students could measure and assess the building. In March of 1983 a further work party carried out some temporary repairs such as placing covers over the chimneys, straightening up the sagging back verandah, and some minor drainage work.

Since then, apart from assistance at an archaeological dig, the Association's ability to carry out further restoration has been prevented by bureaucratic delays while further investigations and reports are made on the structure and methodology of working are considered. In the meantime no stabilisation work has been carried out and if it were not for the substantial stonework around the chimneys at each end of the build-



Rotten cornerpost and collapsing masonry, Orroral Homestead.

ing, the main building could have collapsed like the adjoining kitchen building. The main supporting posts of the structure have all rotted at ground level and the walls only gain their lateral stability and support from the end and internal walls.

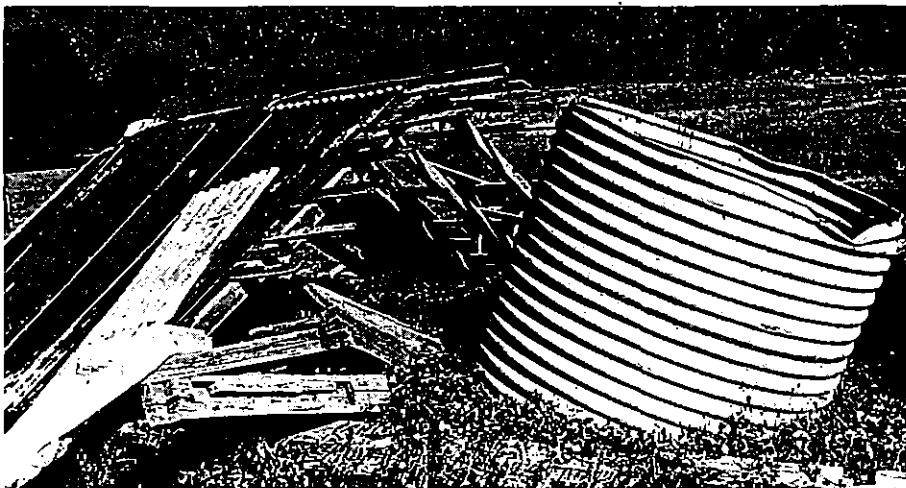
It would appear now that those of us in the Association who have some skills will not be permitted to carry out any of the work that a person skilled with hand tools could do. The Association members are to be relegated to only cleaning up operations, which is a lot less than participation in a stabilisation program which many of us thought we would be involved in. After all Archibald McKeahnne was a grazier who was handy with the tools and in the bush carpenter category.

If Association members are not to be permitted to carry out this essential and urgent work to prevent the collapse of the building, when will something be done before it is too late to preserve this precious relic of the early settlement in our national park?

The notice on the gate has the slogan 'Caring for our cultural heritage'. A decade of neglect hardly represents this care.

Reg Alder

The collapsed kitchen of Orroral Homestead. Photos: Reg Alder.



Introducing old friends



A view of the northern Brindabellas. Photo: Ray McJannett.

On first opening *Above the Cotter*, I felt transported into another world. The fine drawings by Helen Fitzgerald are perhaps reminiscent of the drawings in *Winnie the Pooh*, the long lists of plants and animals suggested *Watership Down* (though there was not a rabbit in sight).

After browsing through the book for a while, I realised that I was not suffering from some sort of English homesickness born of too many foreign books in my youth. The transport was due to the book's denseness and rich texture that is often missing from fictional or non-fiction works about the Australian landscape. As the cliché goes, Australia is a wide brown land: one of its most distinctive features is space (or distance from one watering hole to the next).

Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett have done us a great service by interpreting the landscape in another way; they have taken a close look at a smallish part of it, the northern Brindabellas. They have described its by-ways and by-by-ways. And they have made it all feel like home.

So I was transported to another world—given that weekends are another world spent in another place from where we spend the working week. But it was not a foreign world. It was just up the road.

I suppose that is one reason for

calling the book a driver's guide. From the first sentence the authors set out to make the reader feel at home in the bush, to avoid the idea that bushwalking is an intimidating adventure only undertaken by the young and bold. They give a rather unflattering description of their physical condition so you can relax. 'If we can do it, you can.'

The friendliness of the book could be a product of knowing the two authors well. But I suspect that visitors to Canberra who have never met Ian or Margaret could pick up this book and start to penetrate the territory's bleak and grey image. Friendliness is in the conversational tone of the writing and the folksy layout of the pages. It's in the snippets of history buried in the botanical descriptions.

Those descriptions contain the sense of a closely settled landscape. It is not settled by humans but by an amazing variety of plants and animals that the book identifies for ignorant visitors. This is not the sort of walker's guide that just gives directions for the route. This is a traveler's guide that hospitably and idiosyncratically takes you by the hand and lovingly introduces you, by name, to old friends along the route. It is no wonder that the Environment Tours, run by the authors for the Conservation Council and the Environment Centre, are so popular

The book is set out into sets of drives, walks and short excursions. The distances are short and the directions thorough. Each drive or walk is richly illustrated with drawings and the photographs of Ray McJannett.

I have done a number of the walks but looking at the book I resolve to do them again, to take a closer look at all I had missed. Mount Franklin assumes a different meaning covered by ski runs and people, as it was in the 1940s.

One walk I must do is to the Bendora arboretum (walk number 7). I live in a street called Cassinia but I have never identified the plant in the wild. Now I know where to go. The same applies if you want to blackwood or blanket bush, corroboree frogs or yellow-tailed black cockatoos. The walks are all timed and there are maps by Kim Tatnell.

Above the Cotter is recommended for visitors and for those who regard the Brindabellas as home. Wherever you may happen to live.

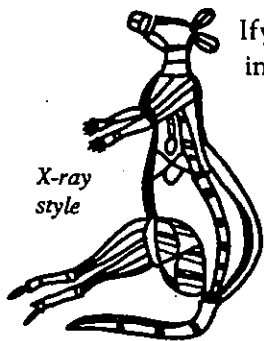
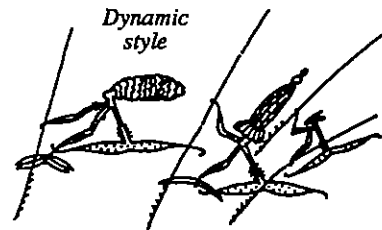
Roger Green

Above the Cotter: a driver's and walker's guide to the north Brindabellas, by Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett. Canberra and South-East Region Environment Centre. \$13.65. Available at a discount at NPA meetings.

ABORIGINAL ROCK ART IN KAKADU

The rock paintings in Kakadu reflect a cultural tradition spanning tens of thousands of years. During this time, there has been a distinct sequence of styles, many of which are almost unknown to the general public.

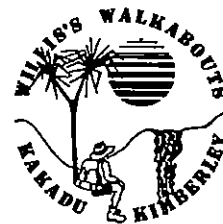
A few major galleries such as Nourlangie and Ubirr are easily accessible by vehicle. Hundreds of others are accessible only on treks of three days or more. Willis's Walkabouts offers trips which visit many such sites throughout Kakadu, the rest of the Top End and the Kimberley. Even in areas where our guides have been walking for ten years or more, we continue to find as yet uncatalogued art sites.



If you are reasonably fit and interested in seeing a wealth of Aboriginal rock paintings inaccessible to the average tourist, write or phone for our free brochure.

Willis's Walkabouts

12 Carrington Street
MILLNER NT 0810
Ph: (089) 85 2134
Fax: (089) 85 2355



New edition of Canberra bushwalks

Graeme Barrow has produced a third edition of his popular title, *25 Family Bushwalks In and Around Canberra*. The book describes walks mainly in the city and around the ACT. Five of the walks are on the escarpment to the east—in Deua National Park, at Majors Creek and in the Budawangs.

The new edition has colour photographs and a clean layout. The walk descriptions say how to get there and features that mark the route but the two maps only give a very broad overview of the region. Except for the simplest track walks, for example to Mount Majura or Boboyan Trig, topographic maps should be purchased. The book points out which ones to buy.

The book is a useful brief introduction to easy walks around the ACT.

25 Family Bushwalks In and Around Canberra, third edition, by Graeme Barrow. Dagraja Press, 52 pages, \$9.95.

The Conservation Council of the South-east Region and Canberra

presents a

B u s h D a n c e



at the Yarralumla Woolshed

on Friday 13th September

8pm to midnight

\$6.00 student & L.E.S.S. concessions • \$8.00 others

Music by Skedaddle

All dances called, no partners required

for further information call Georgie or Rodney on

247 7808

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 5 Committee meeting, 7.30pm, 35 Millen Street, Hughes. Les Pyke, 281 2982(h).
Thursday 12 Namadgi subcommittee, 7.30pm, 7 Verdon Street, O'Connor. Babette Scougall, 248 7008(h).
Thursday 26 Environment subcommittee, 7.30pm, 43 Fitchett Street, Garran. Tim Walsh, 285 1112(h);
274 1465(w)

OCTOBER

Wednesday 2 Outings subcommittee, 8.00pm, 41 Maranboy Street, Fisher. Dianne Thompson, 288 6084(h);
244 7572(w); 244 7934(fax w).
Thursday 3 Committee meeting, 7.30pm, 21 Hyndes Crescent, Holder. Beverley Hammond 288 6577(h).
Thursday 10 Namadgi subcommittee, 7.30pm, 16 Goodparla St., Hawker. Phil Gatenby 254 3094.
Thursday 24 Environment subcommittee, 7.30pm, 43 Fitchett Street, Garran. Tim Walsh, 285 1112;
274 1465(w).

NOVEMBER

Friday 1 Deadline for December *NPA Bulletin*.
Thursday 7 Committee meeting, 7.30pm, 21 Hyndes Crescent, Holder. Beverley Hammond 288 6577(h).
Thursday 14 Namadgi subcommittee, 7.30pm, 35 Millen St. Hughes. Contact Les Pyke on 281 2982.
Thursday 28 Environment subcommittee, 7.30pm, 43 Fitchett Street, Garran. Tim Walsh, 285 1112;
274 1465(w).

NPA Bulletin

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SURFACE
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AUSTRALIA

General meetings

Held at 8pm, room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic.

19 September

A spokesman from the Australian Federal Police Rescue Squad will speak on the squad's operations and services and points for bushwalkers from its experiences with searches and rescues in the bush.

17 October

Mr Richard Lee of the ACT Podiatry and Sports Podiatry Centre will give an illustrated talk on 'Footcare and Footwear for Bushwalkers'. His talk will include points of interest in choosing shoes and boots and for members with children.

21 November

(Please note this meeting will be held in the Rehearsal Room upstairs in the Griffin Centre instead of the usual Room 1)

Mr Andy Spate will give an illustrated talk on caves: their features, heritage values and conservation questions.