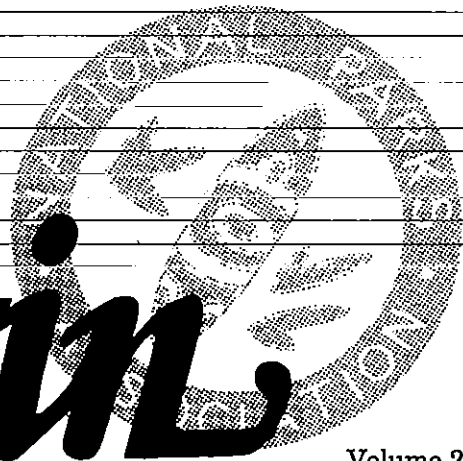


NPA Bulletin



Volume 29 number 4
December 1992

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION / AGI / INCORPORATED



Mount Burbidge gazetted

In search of a great cappuccino

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Cover

Photo: Reg Alder

NPA and Parks and Conservation Division members at the start of the Yankee Hat track. Mount Burbidge is in the centre background.

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.

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Contribute to your Bulletin

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

Five members of the Namadgi sub-committee spent a profitable day on 26 October in the Namadgi National Park with senior officers of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The occasion provided an opportunity for us to share ideas on recent and ongoing projects, to discuss management issues and to explore possibilities for our current and future programs.

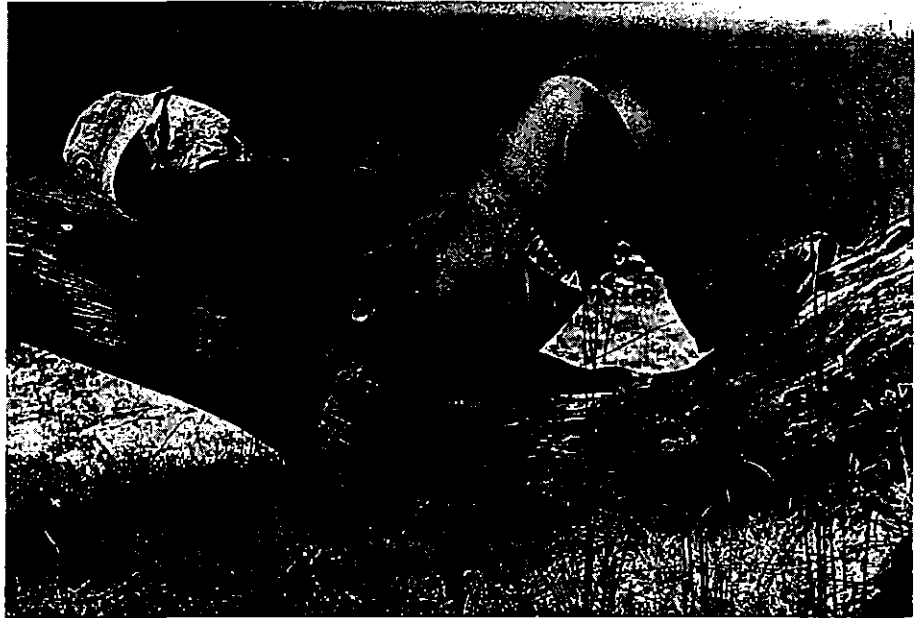
The meeting was initiated and planned by Diane Garrod, recently appointed manager of Conservation and Wildlife who is getting to grips with the parameters of her new position as quickly as possible. We were also accompanied by John Thwaite, general manager of Parks and Conservation, Brian Terrill and Greg Hayes who have responsibilities for Namadgi and the Murrumbidgee corridors respectively and by senior ranger Margot Sharp.

I will briefly mention the issues discussed as it is important for NPA members to be aware of developments in the national park for which our Association has lobbied for over thirty years.

The ACT Government policy on **insurance for volunteers** is still in draft form and practicalities are yet to be detailed. However, work parties will require prior formal endorsement by the Parks and Conservation area manager, will need to be supervised by someone who has attended a training course on safe working practices and will require a list of names of participants.

Environmental values will play a greater part in specifications for maintenance work in the park. It is appreciated that fire and maintenance trails must be kept open to provide ready access. We discussed damage caused by vehicles in soft areas such as Grassy Creek, cutting of trees for use in blocking off tracks and the intensive use of Namadgi during large organised events.

The meeting adjourned to the **Orroral homestead** where John Feint, manager of the Heritage Unit, joined us. We were pleased



In our last issue our active President was featured, so it is perhaps appropriate that she should be shown in her other mode.

Photo by Reg Alder

to note that a new sign near the stile at the road access acknowledges the combined efforts of our Association and the Parks Service.

Work is yet to be commenced on plastering internal stone walls for which we have committed the remainder of our heritage grant. Once chimneys have been completed, windows and doors have been secured and the site has been tidied up, interpretive signs explaining the heritage values of the homestead will be erected. Hopefully this will show that the area is valued and under supervision and vandalism will be deterred. Reg Alder and several park workers will soon install corner footing posts in the style of the original building. We have offered our services to lime wash external walls and to launch other work parties as required. Stabilisation of the shearing shed is soon to begin.

The **Orroral tracking station** demolition has almost been completed. Interpretive signs will illustrate the significance of various areas of the site. It is likely the current car park will be retained for visitor use and that planted gardens of exotics will remain, with the exclusion of species likely to become invasive.

After lunch at the Orroral camping area we drove to the Gudgenby property. Two sub-committee members are on the consultative group formed to resite the **Yankee Hat carpark**. Its location and formation need to be carefully planned and executed. Disturbed rocks, which were hastily removed from the carpark surrounds, will be placed as carefully as possible in holes of appropriate size once the ground has hardened. We have offered the services of a member to assist with this task.

The **Boboyan pine trees** will be removed by Forestry, probably in 1994-95. The Parks and Conservation Service will be developing strategies for restoration of the area, removal of self-seeded pines and reseeding with local species. Willows by the homestead are increasing in number and have been the subject of service studies. Babette Scougall pointed out the role played by exotic trees and plants in locating early settlements. It was agreed that control measures are needed to prevent the spread of some species.

The recording of **Aboriginal involvement** in the Gudgenby area was to begin the following day. Joan Goodrum has been

continued on page 4

President's foreword

continued from page 3

invited to join in initial surveys. A data bank of heritage sites is being compiled and we will soon be informed of the avenues we can use to access the register and to add to it.

On our return to the Namadgi Visitors' Centre the ACT segment of the Melbourne to Canberra **Alps Walking Track** was studied on the map. It is proposed to go from Murray's Gap to Cotter Gap, Orroral, Honeysuckle Creek, Booroomba Rocks, Mount Tennent and so to the Visitors' Centre. Syd Comfort and other NPA members will join service personnel soon to explore the Booroomba segment, as a low-key track will be formed by Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers in December. The track will not be promoted as a walk from the centre.

Located on a recent extension to Namadgi National Park is the **Mount Tennent homestead**, consisting of pisé and pine slab houses, shearing shed, an orchard and other out-buildings. Once work has been done here, it is likely to be added to walks casual visitors can do from the centre.

A **walking track** is proposed in the **Orroral valley** from the camping area up to the homestead and tracking station. It is expected to be widely promoted and needs to be well sited for heavy impact, especially given the swampy nature of the river valley. Several routes have been proposed and we have offered to be part of the team which makes final determinations.

Feral animal control programs continue. We took the opportunity to invite Peter Banks to address our March meeting on his fox studies.

NPA (ACT) values its ongoing close collaboration with the Parks and Conservation Service. A major advantage of living in an area as small as the ACT is that we can develop personal relationships with government officers and can represent the community in decision-making to the benefit of our national park.

Beverley Hammond

Letter to the editor

Dear Sir

In response to Fiona MacDonald Brand's question in the last Bulletin on the place of willows in the Australian scene, I have to state firmly that, from a conservation point of view, the willow must go!

I am aware that some cultural landscape devotees argue that willows offer useful evidence of points of European settlement and in some cases are an important component of a significant cultural landscape. This may be so, but their potential to harm river landscapes in Australia means that they should be removed from areas of riverine conservation importance.

A recent Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service-funded report on environmental weeds found that riverine habitats right across Australia face the greatest threat of weed invasion. Willow was identified as one of the major invaders of this habitat. Not only does willow displace native species and reduce diversity, but it disrupts the whole river system, changing stream flow, patterns of sedimentation and the nature of faunal habitat.

Within the ACT, willow is already a dominant presence along otherwise naturally vegetated creeks and rivers. White willow (*Salix alba*) is the most abundant species but weeping willow (*Salix babylonica*) and crack willow (*Salix fragilis*) are common. Recent work done for a PhD thesis at ANU by Michael Mulvaney indicates that the willow has a high potential for further spread. This is particularly worrying for riverine habitats such as the Gudgenby River where willow is present, but as yet does not have a stranglehold on the system, as it does along the Molonglo.

The association Towards Ecologically Sustainable Australian Landscapes strongly recommends against the planting of willow along watercourses and provides a number of alternative species, native to the ACT, that can be used as replacements when

willows are removed. These include river oaks (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) and manna gums (*Eucalyptus viminalis*). In higher country black sallee (*Eucalyptus stellulata*), black gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata*) and swamp gum (*Eucalyptus camphora*) are appropriate.

The Tasmanian Forestry Commission's publication *Tasforests* (Volume 4, July 1992) contains an article giving the Hydro-electric Commission's recommendations for Total Catchment Management. The article quotes a survey by the Liffey Land Care Group that found that willows were a significant cause of river bank erosion, along with livestock and block/log jams.

I know that willows have been used in some soil conservation work, mainly in New Zealand. Even so, willow has been recognised as a major problem in some districts there too. From the reading I have done and close observation of riverine environments where willows grow and indeed are spreading rapidly, I feel they must be removed and replaced by the original native vegetation. It is not a question of keeping two or three in a landscape—like rabbits they multiply alarmingly!

Timothy Crosbie Walsh

Namadgi brumby yards

Have you ever seen any brumby trapyards during your walks in Namadgi? If you have, I would like to hear from you. I am doing a survey of these sorts of structures and although I know of a number of sites, I am sure that there are quite a few more, some of which may have been seen by NPA walkers. Any information will be very much appreciated. Please contact me on 247 7285 (work and home) or at 99 Duffy Street, Ainslie, 2602.

Matthew Higgins

Environment sub-committee

The environment sub-committee continues to respond to all manner of environmental and conservation issues at both the Commonwealth and ACT level. Subjects of recent interest have included proposals to allow mining in national parks, especially in Tasmania; the recently released discussion paper *Jervis Bay—Our Heritage, Our Future*; responses to proposals for wilderness declarations in NSW; the recent community history forum in the ACT; proposed biodiversity and endangered species legislation and the Review of Environmental Factors for the Construction of Facilities in the Murrumurung National Park.

A particularly well attended and lively evening was held in August when we were fortunate to have as our special guest the redoubtable Milo Dunphy. Milo gave us a detailed explanation of wilderness and national park issues in NSW and stimulated us to consider further a number of alarming proposals affecting nature conservation being pursued by the NSW Government.

Themes being followed by the sub-committee currently include

eco-tourism and its effects on protected areas, Aboriginal involvement in national parks; in association with the Namadgi sub-committee and especially in relation to southeast Australia, and coastal management strategies at the state and Commonwealth level. Particular interest is being taken by the sub-committee in the range of current threats to national parks including increased pressures to allow commercial activities within parks.

The sub-committee played a major part in drafting NPA ACT motions for this year's meeting of the Australian National Parks Council on:

- Aboriginal involvement in national parks
- ecologically sustainable development and tourism
- biological diversity and protected areas
- threatened species legislation

The sub-committee welcomes new members and can promise jobs for all!

Timothy Walsh

New consultative committee

Conservation interests are well represented on the newly reconstituted ACT Environment and Conservation Consultative Committee which met for the first time on 28 October.

The committee, which grew out of the Namadgi National Park Consultative Committee established in 1984, advises the Minister on issues relating to the ACT environment, including park management, nature conservation, urban open space management and outdoor recreation.

It now also advises on the implementation of the ACT's Decade of Landcare Plan and acts as an assessment panel for ACT allocations under the National Land Care Program.

Members have been appointed by the Minister on three-year terms. They are Professor Peter Cullen (chairperson), Den Robin (deputy chairperson), Fiona Brand, Christine Purdon, Ian Fraser, Brian Lawrence, Dr David Smiles, Anne Taylor, Peter Buckmaster, Rodney Falconer, Jacqueline Rees and Matilda House.

As well as Anne, Fiona and Den, another familiar NPA face is Dr Kevin Frawley who attends under his National Capital Planning Authority hat as an officer assisting the committee.

The consultative committee's first meeting was taken up mostly with introductory matters and Minister Bill Wood dropped in for morning tea. The committee will hold a planning day on 28 November to develop its work program.

As in the past, NPA's official representative Anne Taylor will report regularly in the Bulletin, but in the meantime if any members want to know more about the committee's activities, please get in touch with Anne.

Are you interested in GOLD?

Since its publication in 1990, *Gold and water, a history of Sofala and the Turon goldfield*, written by NPA member Matthew Higgins, has received consistently good reviews. Sofala is Australia's oldest surviving gold town and the picturesque Turon valley was one of the most important gold-mining areas of colonial New South Wales. This fully illustrated book is the first in-depth look at the goldfield's history from 1851 through to the present century. Owing to the publisher moving interstate, Matthew now has a small quantity of stock for sale directly to readers at \$19.95 plus \$2 postage. If you would like a copy of this fascinating goldfield account, send your order to Matthew at 99 Duffy Street, Ainslie, ACT 2602.

Aquifers at risk: Towards a national groundwater quality perspective

The Australian National University's Centre for Continuing Education is sponsoring a conference in Canberra from 15-17 February 1993, in cooperation with the Australian Geological Survey Organization (formerly BMR), to provide a scientific and community forum on a range of groundwater quality issues. This conference will be the ninth in the series *Issues in Water Management*.

For further information, please contact:

Shirley Kral
Centre for Continuing Education
Australian National University
GPO Box 4, Canberra, 2601
Telephone (06) 249 4580
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Naming of Mount Burbidge

On 8 October 1992 the Department of the Environment, Land and Planning officially gazetted the name 'Mount Burbidge' in Namadgi National Park. This came about as a result of a submission by NPA in September 1991. In this submission it was suggested that the name of Mt Burbidge be given to an unnamed peak 1720 metres high (map reference Rendezvous Creek—1:25 000, 714461) in Namadgi National Park. It can be best viewed as a prominent peak from near the Boboyan forest car park, as can also Mt Kelly and Namadgi.

Mt Burbidge in the centre of Namadgi National Park forms a triangle with two adjacent peaks, one Namadgi, the name given by the Aborigines to the peaks southwest of Canberra, and the other Mt Kelly, named after an early settler. It is appropriate that the peak has been named after an indefatigable worker for the declaration of a national park in the ACT and so completes a triad of names relating to the history of Namadgi National Park.

The name Burbidge fulfils the fifth criteria of the ACT Parks and Conservation policy for the naming of geographic features, that is, 'Names of prominent persons in the area's development.'

George Chippendale of the NPA wrote a brief biography of Nancy for the Australian Dictionary of Biography, and the volume in which this will be printed will be published soon. Following are some of the notes from this biography.

Nancy Tyson Burbidge, botanist, conservationist and advocate for women's issues, was born on 5 August 1912 at the Vicarage, Cleckheaton, in Yorkshire, England, only daughter of William Burbidge and his wife Mary Eleanor (known as Eleanor) née Simmonds. William and Mary met on a voyage to Australia in about 1900, William becoming a member of the Bush Brotherhood



Nancy Burbidge

at Longreach, Queensland and Eleanor teaching in Sydney. They married in England on 3 October 1906. There are several photographs of this celebration. William later became an Archdeacon. Nancy had one older brother Edward Humphrey Burbidge (born 1907) who is an Anglican priest in Western Australia. The name 'Tyson' was from the family of the maternal grandmother. There are several pictures of Nancy at five and six years of age and pictures of her parents over some years and some of other members of the family.

The family came to Australia in 1913 where William was appointed to the Parish of Katanning, Western Australia. Because education beyond state school was not available at the time, Nancy's mother started the Kobeelya Church of England Girls' School at Katanning in an old residence of that name which Nancy attended, proceeding to Bunbury High School for her final year. Nancy graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1937, with an Honours Degree in botany and with a Free Passage Scholarship with which she spent 18 months at the Kew Herbarium,

England during 1939–40. She obtained a M.Sc. degree and studied the ecology and taxonomy of Western Australian plants for three years while working at the Institute of Agriculture, University of Western Australia (1941–42) and at the Western Australian Forest Department (1942–43) and her publications in this period were on ecology and also a revision of the Western Australian species of *Triodia*.

She became assistant agronomist at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, Adelaide in 1943, working on native pasture regeneration in the arid and semi-arid areas of South Australia. In 1946 Nancy was appointed systematic botanist in the Division of Plant Industry of the CSIRO in Canberra. Initially she was to provide an identification service for other CSIRO staff; Nancy soon organised and expanded the plant collections, leading to the establishment of the Herbarium Australiense.

In the years 1953–54, Nancy was the Australian botanical liaison officer at Kew Herbarium and during this period she photographed and indexed many type specimens of Australian plants in the Kew Herbarium. This greatly assisted the botanical research of Australian botanists. She published revisions of a number of plant groups in the years 1956–65 and the important *Phytogeography of the Australian Region* (1960) which contributed to her award of the first degree of Doctor of Science ever given to a woman by the University of Western Australia. Other publications include *Wattles of the ACT* (1961), *Dictionary of Australian Plant Genera* (1963), *Gum Trees of the ACT* (1963), *The Plants of the ACT* (1963, with Max Gray), *Australian Grasses* vol 1 (1966), vol 2 (1968), vol 3 (1970), *Flora of the ACT* (1970, with Max Gray) and *Plant Taxonomic Literature in Australian Libraries* (1978, ed. Alison McCusker). In the above

list, the booklets on *Gum Trees of the ACT* and *Wattles of the ACT* show that Nancy was as interested in providing useable information for people generally as she was in her more scientific publications. Many of her publications were also illustrated by her drawings.

From July 1973 to March 1977, Nancy was director of the Flora of Australia Project, sponsored by the Australian Academy of Science, but remained on the staff of the Herbarium Australiense. This reflected both her botanical knowledge and her competence in administration.

Not only love of working with plants, but also love of the Australian bush led to Nancy's deep involvement in the conservation movement. She was a foundation member of the National Parks Association of the ACT in 1960, and in the early days she personally convinced people to support this group so that it became the main conservation body in the ACT. Her own commitment, firstly as founding secretary, committee member for 11 years, leader of innumerable walks and as president for two terms, guided the Association to have areas of the ACT protected and also, after many years of submissions, led to the declaration of much of the southern part of the territory as Namadgi National Park. Much of her love of bushland is expressed in the publication *Mountains, Slopes and Plains* (AGPS 1971) which was a composite manuscript by members of the National Parks Association of the ACT, but contributed to and encouraged by Nancy. The series of drawings entitled *Eyes or No Eyes* by Nancy in the NPA Bulletin were a charming feature of that periodical. Nancy also contributed to discussions and decisions while a member of the ACT National Conservation Committee and the Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve Committee at a time when Gibraltar Falls was being developed and the Tidbinbilla Fauna Reserve was being reclaimed from grazing. Nancy's involvement in this sphere was as much a contribution to the general public as to the Association or committees.

Nancy Burbidge became a member of the Australian Federation of University Women after she graduated in 1937 and continued to be a member throughout her life, serving as president of the Canberra branch from 1959-61 and leading the Canberra delegates in Perth in 1962 when a national conference was held.

Nancy was international secretary of the Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association 1961-68, and was second vice-president 1968-72. In this association, Nancy joined other women in advancing women's causes over a wide range, including scholarships for Aboriginal women and, with other women's organisations, worked for the establishment of a residence hall for women at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Nancy was also involved with the Royal Society of Canberra, serving as president and on its committees; this society was dissolved in about 1974.

She was secretary of the Systematic Botany Committee of ANZAAS which published, from 1947 until February 1954, *Australasian Herbarium News* which attempted to keep systematic botanists in Australia and New Zealand in touch with one another, and she was active in establishing the Australian Systematic Botany Society which took over the role begun by the above committee. In 1973, Nancy was the prime mover in establishing the Committee of Heads of Australian Herbaria which has since then attempted to coordinate projects and procedures in Australian and New Zealand herbaria.

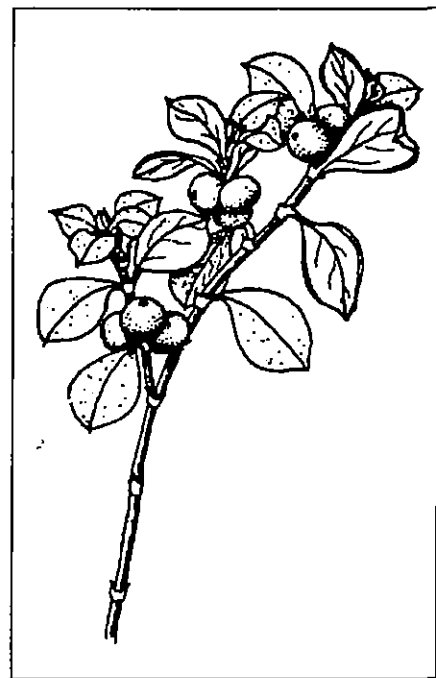
In 1971, Nancy was awarded the Clarke Medal from the Royal Society of NSW for distinguished work in natural science and in 1976, she was honoured by being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for her service to science and the community. A year after her death on 4 March 1977 she was also commemorated with an altar-frontal, showing banksias and honey-eaters, at St Michael's Anglican Church, Mt Pleasant,

Perth. Then in 1980 she was commemorated by the establishment of the Nancy T. Burbidge Amphitheatre in the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, this being for open-air lectures, teaching, poetry readings, weddings and other such functions. This was, indeed, a most fitting tribute, close to the heart of Canberra to which she contributed so much, and surrounded by Australian plants to which she devoted her life.

In his book *As I Remember Them* (1987), Noel Stewart states, 'Anyone who was a contemporary of Nancy at the university will remember a quietly conscientious student with a great sense of fun, but also a tremendous dedication to the subject that was to be her life's work.' Obituaries were published by William Hartley in *Brunonia* 1:123-9, 1977, by Kath McDonald in the *Australian Fellowship of University Women Newsletter* 62,5 May 1977, and also by Kath McDonald in the *NPA Bulletin* 2-5, March 1980.

George Chippendale always remembers Nancy as believing that NPA fostered social, friendly contact, as well as working for the aims of the Association.

An illustration of a currant bush drawn by Nancy Burbidge. Nancy often illustrated her own publications.



From the Blues to Hugo's

After reading Robert Sloss's Guidebook to the 'Ensign Barrallier' route from Katoomba to Mittagong I was anxious to attempt the walk which Sloss describes as 'the most exhilarating experience of a lifetime'. Wondering how I would find like-minded companions I hit upon the idea of seeking out dedicated coffee drinkers who would be tempted by promises of excellent coffee at Katoomba and again at Mittagong, especially if I glossed over the 150 odd kilometres between cappuccinos.

The con worked and Good Friday saw eight of us boarding the 6am train at Canberra en route to Katoomba where the promised excellent coffee was found at the Blues Cafe.

After a night of heavy rain Saturday dawned fine but foggy and after giving details of our proposed expedition to the Katoomba Police we were deposited at the locked gate at Narrowneck Peninsular about 9.15am. Despite our unaccustomed heavy loads and the fog hiding the views, we set out in fine style and strode along the fire trail. I don't think we really missed the views because we were all very much preoccupied with thoughts of negotiating Tarro's Ladder. This ladder consists of steel spikes about 1 metre apart down a 20 metre or so cliff face. Den was first down and showed us all that the trick was to use the spikes as *hand holds and to let our feet look after themselves*. Peter and David Frost lowered our packs down by rope and we all descended without incident. After lunch at the foot of the ladder we followed the foot pad over Mt Debert to Medlow Gap. We found the Gap rather over-used and degraded and walked another couple of kilometres or so until David Hall found an excellent campsite. In all we'd covered about 16 kilometres.

Day two was much more testing both physically and navigation-wise. After travelling mainly downhill we arrived at the Water

Board's gauging station on the Cox's River. From there we waded upstream until we found the large dead casuarina that Sloss's notes assured us marked the beginning of Bungalooloo Spur. The spur certainly was a 'lulu', starting off very steeply and seeming to go on forever relentlessly upward. The top of the spur has several groves of casuarinas dotted around and we guessed that this gave rise to its name of Oak Terrace. The top of Oak Terrace is wide and featureless and the foot pad we had been following became very vague. Without much difficulty, though, we picked up a path over Wonga Mountain and then we followed some animal tracks which dropped down very steeply to Ti-Willa Creek and the Kowmung River. Here we found a magnificent grassy campsite on the banks of what must surely be the most beautiful river in the Blue Mountains. (All eight of us are determined to return to Kowmung country). Our day concluded with a very welcome swim after our 19km journey.

Day three was an extremely pleasant and relatively easy day. We began by crossing the Kowmung and then following animal tracks along the eastern bank of the river. We found the Kowmung to be a beautiful, clean river with deep, inviting pools and



*Lowering packs down Tarros Ladder
Photo by Len Haskeu*

short stretches of shallow rapids. The banks were lined with magnificent gums and casuarinas alternating with ferny glades and wide, grassy flats. The river beckoned at morning tea and lunch time and its beauty proved to be something of a trap causing us to end up camping well short of our project campsite at Kiaramba Creek having only walked (and swum) about 17.5 kilometres.

Rain fell all night and made me reluctant to attempt the necessary several rocky river crossings between us and Kiaramba as I was sure that they would be rather slippery. So a decision was made to go up Murragin Ridge to the Scott's Main Range fire trail. Like all other Blue Mountains ridges

we encountered, this one began steeply and seemed to go on forever. It was rather overgrown and wet. We all had the feeling that we must be the first walkers to use this ridge but eventually we came across a cairn and the remains of two fences so our fanciful notion was soon dispelled. Once we reached the fire trail everybody pounded towards Yerranderie at their own pace. By now the early morning fog had cleared and we had some fine views of Mt Kowmung and the Axehead Range. After crossing the Tonalli River (and turning up our noses at the smell!) we were soon at the Water Board's campsite at Yerranderie well pleased with our almost 22 kilometres.

Day five was a much-needed rest and laundry day. We relaxed watching the local kangaroos and birds. Some short walks were taken to view the privately owned village, to inspect the old mine workings or to look at the headstones with the sometimes poignant inscriptions in the overgrown cemetery. Fortunately Marti had the foresight to ensure that we had dry firewood for tomorrow's early start.

Day six was the day we were all rather worried about. We had to cover a minimum of 28 kilometres because camping is not permitted on Water Board property. We decided to follow the old farming tracks rather than pound along the Sheepwalk Drive fire trail. Our relatively faint track traversed delightfully open country and gave us the feeling of being in touch with the pioneers. Just before we crossed the Jooriland River we came upon a herd of 15 or so wild cattle all in very good condition. We reached the Wollondilly at lunch time and found plenty of time to boil the billy. After making the 50 metre knee-deep crossing we followed a Water Board road to Beloon Flat and were afforded magnificent views of the Wanganderry Walls. Eventually we reached a small sign pointing to Beloon Pass and once again the steep climbing began. Most of us had several stops to 'admire the views' but Di surged on and reached the final

entrance to the Pass well ahead of us all. The last climb is about 40 metres or so and it is almost straight up. We were glad that we were ascending as coming down with full packs could have its moments. At the top we duly signed the log book and took photos to record our success. Daylight was fading fairly quickly down the rocky and interesting Travis Gully to our projected campsite at Vineyard Flat on the Nattai River. However we found the Flat covered with head-high bracken and we ended up camping (quite comfortably) on an overgrown fire trail. In all we had covered about 30 kilometres but found the day much easier than we had expected.

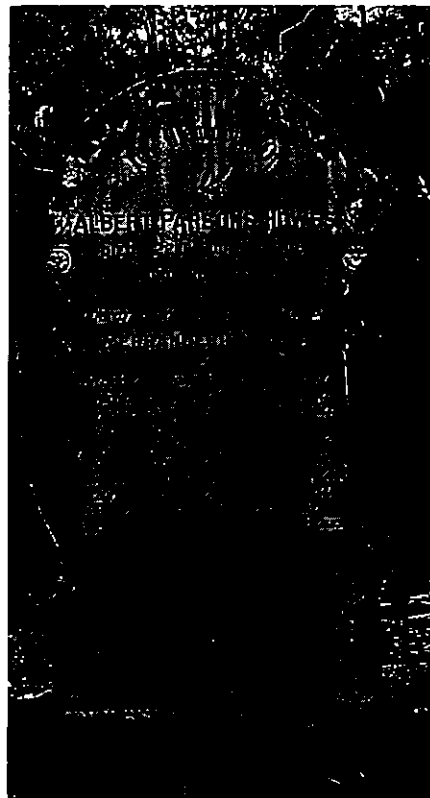
Our next three days were spent following the Nattai River. We expected this to be fairly easy going and several people we met at Yerranderie assured us that it could be done quite easily in two days. However we all found this to be the most demanding part of our journey. Robert Sloss had earlier marked the route with blue mark-

ers but many of these had disappeared, some through the action of floods or other 'natural' causes but in some areas we had the impression that they had been deliberately removed. The two-metre high bracken and the prickly scrub close to the river banks made the going tough at times. Nevertheless there were many highlights to be remembered. When we were able to follow Sloss's route (and Robyn could see a blue marker from a distance of at least 500 metres) we found that he would take us away from the obvious route to pass through, for example, a small forest of paper bark which was almost cathedral-like in the way it filtered the sunlight. The Nattai, although badly polluted, flows through magnificent scenery. Our second day on the Nattai saw us scrambling through the Nattai Gorge. After our thirteenth river crossing I stopped counting. Most were fairly rough and rocky and required reasonable vigilance. When we left the gorge and the Nattai we exited by animal tracks which proved to have been made by feral goats. We were pleased to reach the tranquillity of Drapers Creek where we had quite a comfortable campsite. Our last day was relatively easy going as we continued to follow the Nattai. The closer we came to Mittagong, the easier became the walking. Eventually we reached the point where we had expected to pick up the fire trail leading on to the Caravan Park. Instead we picked up the Mittagong By-pass and we found ourselves finishing off our walk by tramping along a couple of kilometres of newly-laid concrete!

After a more than welcome hot shower at the Caravan Park we had the second instalment of our excellent coffee at Hugo's Restaurant before boarding the bus for home.

In all we'd walked about 160 kilometres and we were well pleased with ourselves. And rather unbelievably nobody said, 'There must be an easier way to get a cup of coffee'.

Len Haskew



*Headstone at Yerranderie
Photo by Len Haskew*

Be prepared—walkers' responsibilities

From time to time, and with increasing membership, we all need to take stock of our responsibilities, especially when participating in any of the Outings Program activities.

While our voluntary leaders take a great amount of care for each group, there are a number of aspects where responsibility is firmly in the hands of the participants.

- 1 Fully check details of outings, contacting the leader with any queries of any aspect where you need clarification.
- 2 If in doubt of your fitness (or equipment) choose a lesser walk to get the feel of our gradings and descriptions.
- 3 In summer and hot weather, always carry with you: sun protective cream (a must even on cloudy days), sun hat, sun glasses, light shirt (for sunburn cover) and plenty of liquid. A light waterproof can also be useful if weather is doubtful.

Heat stroke can hit in some circumstances—look for headaches, irritability, nausea and vomiting, faintness, cessation of sweating, hot dry skin, rise of temperature, mental disturbance. For treatment, get patient to a cool place, remove clothing, sprinkle with water or wrap in wet clothes, give drinks of salt and water. It is very important to replace salt under these conditions.

- 4 In autumn, spring and especially our winter, remember that Canberra is at 600 metres and walks often go up to 1500 metres. Gaining height will add a drop in temperature and wind at exposed heights can be a killer. A seven kilometre per hour wind will take away eight times more body heat than still air causing the lethal wind chill factor. add to this possible already wet clothing, or rain and snow, and the loss of body heat is even greater.

It is vital that at the above times of year, individuals face their responsibility and carry

extra clothing. This should include a rainproof jacket and extra clothes in the form of jumpers, gloves and scarf (all wool if possible). Failure on just one member's part to take this responsibility could lead to hypothermia for the culprit. Other members offering clothes could lead to further casualties and problems for the leader who must put the needs of one irresponsible member before the safety and enjoyment of the group. A number of layers of clothing are better than one bulky one and can be removed or added as temperatures rise or fall.

The effect of cold is insidious and the person concerned seldom knows that they are suffering hypothermia. Be alert to the following signs and symptoms in other members: increasing slowness and mental effort, cramps and shivers, unreasonable behaviour or irritability, difficulty in speech or vision, stumbling or change in character.

Get the patient to shelter and protect from wind, rain or snow. Keep them warm with clothing, paper or any other insulation, get into a sleeping bag with them if possible, and with minimum clothing, to give body to body warmth. Give sweet warm drinks and get other help as necessary.

Footwear should cover the whole foot and be firm and strong; boots give protection for those with weak ankles. In wet weather, sneaker type shoes can help lead to hypothermia, our extremities of feet, hands, head etc lose heat at a quicker rate than any other part of the body.

General

Perhaps we could also think of such matters as keeping together as a group, letting someone know if you break off for any reason, leaving no litter, stopping to treat (or get help for) an injury as soon as possible (see first aid below) and always keeping the front person in sight. If you cannot see them, stop and 'Coo-ee', do not plod on, they may have taken a turn around rocks or in dense

bush. If lost, stay put, someone will return to the last point where you were seen, do not move on unless your call has been answered and you are sure of the direction it came from. Above all, stay calm, cool and collected and have a nibble!

Food is fuel, carry snacks and eat regularly, more often than at home or in the office, as you are using up your fuel quicker by activity. Remember, a car cannot run without petrol!

First aid

This item is your responsibility and everyone should carry their own basics. In the event of a major injury, a pooling of items may be necessary. If you are the unfortunate victim, remember to return any items that were loaned to help you.

It is preferable to make up your own small kit, especially for the bush, as many bought kits are not suitable. Carry these in a watertight container, tin or strong plastic.

At the first sign of a blister (from the rubbing of a boot or shoe), twisted ankle or knee, send word to the leader to hold up the group and stop to attend to the injury. Continuing to walk will only make things worse.

A basic kit should contain:

- a small supply of Band-aids of various sizes
- a crepe bandage eight centimetres wide and pin
- a triangular bandage
- small and/or large antiseptic dressing (Melolin)
- a small tube of antiseptic cream
- a few aspirin or other painkillers.

The above are basics. Optional extras could include splinter tweezers, anti-histamine cream if allergic to bites, Hirudoid for both children and adults, which is wonderful for taking the sting out of severe bruises.

While most of the above are obvious in their use, may I stress the many uses of a triangular

bandage, and not only for first aid. A triangular bandage can:

- be folded into a narrow, medium or wide bandage to hold a dressing in place
- hold a dressing on a whole hand, foot, head or other large area
- be used as a padding on a bush splint (folded bark)
- be used as a sling, of course
- cover any area getting sunburnt
- cover the lower face, head or neck in extreme cold
- be waved around on a stick if lost; its uses are endless.

The only broken limb in 30 plus years of NPA was a wrist, some 200 kilometres from Canberra. The combined first aid from a group of seven was needed, and even then more triangular bandages would have helped pad the

splint. This incident proved the need for each member to carry the basics and how supplies can be combined.

Report any serious injury to the leader if they are not there at the time so that decisions regarding the patient, and the whole group, can be made and carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Snake bites are rare indeed and treatment has altered rapidly. Do not suck, wash, cut or apply a tourniquet. Do keep calm and reassure the patient. Immediately apply firm pressure just above the bite, then a firm wide bandage from above the bite to well below and back up again to above. This would need at least two seven centimetre crepe bandages according to the limb affected. Immobilise the limb. If it is a leg, tie it to the other leg or else splint and sling the affected limb. Improvise transport to keep

the patient as still as practicable and get them to a hospital as quickly as possible. While doing all this, get someone to identify the snake or record a description of it.

Note—None of the above (for snake bites) has been required over the many years that National Parkers have roamed far and wide.

Finally, let us all remember the golden rule of bushwalking, that one should go in a group of at least three people. In the event of a serious injury, one person can stay with the injured and the other can go for help. If going into the bush, other than a programmed activity, remember to leave a note somewhere with someone giving your proposed route, estimated time of return and who to notify if late.

Olive Buckman

Landcare in the ACT

In July 1989 the Prime Minister announced a number of measures aimed at addressing the problem of land degradation in Australia and launched the Decade of Landcare. The goal of the Decade of Landcare is to work towards achieving sustainable land use throughout Australia through changing land use practices which contribute to land degradation and to introduce practices which will contribute to ecologically sustainable use of all natural resources.

A year later it was decided that in order to coordinate efforts over the decade, a Decade of Landcare Plan should be prepared, and that this is to comprise a national overview and individual plans, by each State, Territory and the Commonwealth. The ACT Decade of Landcare Plan has now been published having been prepared by the Parks and Conservation Service under the direction of a broadly-based steering committee.

This Plan does a lot more than set out a plan to implement Landcare in the ACT. It outlines the data and background from which a plan can be developed and this provides a valuable refer-

ence resource. Areas covered include history of land use in the ACT; current land use; survey of soil degradation, water quality and flora and fauna; causes of land degradation; trends in land degradation; and requirements yet to be met to achieve sustainable land use in the ACT.

The Plan then goes on to set down goals and principles for future action. The roles of government, community groups and individuals are detailed and action programs developed. These involve land care community groups, rural lessees, legislative review, community awareness programs, resource assessment, research, and development of monitoring procedures.

The ACT Landcare Plan is certainly a useful reference and may awaken some to their responsibilities towards land care. But it is essentially a plan and like all plans is of little consequence until converted to substance.

ACT Parks and Conservation Service: ACT Decade of Landcare Plan (1991). This publication is available from Shopfronts without charge.

South Durras development

The NPA recently responded to a proposal by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to build commercial facilities at South Durras camping area in Murrumbidgee National Park on the south coast. These facilities would include a licensed restaurant, swimming pool and tennis court.

We expressed concern that the review of environmental factors being undertaken by the NPWS does not deal with the broader issue of whether it is appropriate to build such facilities within a national park. The submission pointed out NPA policy which is that commercial facilities should be located outside the boundaries of national parks where possible. The existence of the camping area in Murrumbidgee National Park is no justification for the addition of further infrastructure. Neither does the existence of similar facilities within other national parks in Australia justify the need for them in this location, especially as Bateman's Bay is only fifteen minutes' drive away.

Travellers' tales (Part two)

Wales: 22-29 June

John and I spent a week at Cynwyd near Corwen in North Wales. At the suggestion of another NPA member, Timothy Walsh, we had booked to stay at a small guest house, run by a husband and wife team who offered a choice of walking or cycling holidays. Unfortunately the husband became ill and the wife, Kay, wrote to say they could provide full board but the guided walking and transport were doubtful. They hoped we would still like to go and we decided we would.

On arrival Kay put us in touch with a local rambling group and we were able to join them on their Sunday walk to a local waterfall. The weather for this was showery and bleak in the morning but improved in the afternoon. The walk turned into quite a marathon—we began walking at 10am and didn't finish until 7.30pm!

The rest of the week we did our own walks with the aid of maps and bus timetables lent to us by Kay. These Welsh walks took us along narrow, tunnel-like lanes between high banks and hedgerows; through muddy, manure-splattered farmyards; along woodland tracks; through river leas of knee-deep wet grass and onto high misty moors (the showery weather persisted!) where short tough heather and myrtleberry thrived.

Later in the week, when a lively breeze had chased away the loitering clouds, we had our most interesting and varied walk. It began with a visit to the ruined Abbey of Vale Crucis, and ended with a visit to the ruins of Castle Dinas Bran. We spent about an hour looking over the elegant and photogenic ruins of the Abbey. In an intact upstairs room an exhibition explained the evolution of abbeys and the monastic system in general and the Order at the Abbey Vale Crucis in particular.

Leaving the Abbey we climbed gently through woods to the base of the escarpment. Here we ate the lunch Kay had packed for us - a satisfying wholemeal vegetarian



*Abbey Vale Crucis, North Wales
Photo by Judith Webster*

pastie and several slices of cake. Thus fortified we scrambled up a stony gully onto the high open moorland with lovely views along the valley of the river Dee (of 'Jolly Miller' fame). The ruins of the Castle Dinas Bran stood atop a separate cone-shaped hill. We finished the walk at Llangollen with a couple of hours to spare before the bus back to Cynwyd so took a stroll to look at the boats tied up along the nearby canal.

Some of these converted barges were very smart with glossy decorative paintwork, shining brass and bright potted flowers. One proud owner was busy polishing the already gleaming fittings on his boat. The signwriting on the cabin showed an Australian address. 'Now why would you have that written on your boat?' asked John, as if he hadn't guessed! 'We're from Australia' came the reply. We had an interesting chat to this couple from Victoria who each northern hemisphere summer spend three months exploring sections of the several thousand kilometres of the British canal system.

Our week in Wales over, it was just a hop step and jump (well short bus, train and ferry journey)

to the Emerald Isle!

Eire: 29 June-12 July

Dublin's Fair City appeared a little drab in the drizzly rain which keeps Ireland so green. In addition to the countryside being green, it seems to be a theme for other things, some intentional—buses and mail boxes are green—and some unintentional and undesirable—the River Liffy looked thick and had a decided green tinge. We were told on good authority (an Irishman, to be sure) that one can walk on the Liffy!!

We wandered down O'Connell street, crossed the Liffy (by conventional means) to find our way to Trinity College where we hoped to view the Book of Kells—very ancient, beautifully decorated manuscripts of the Gospels but we discovered the Book was not on public display on Sundays! However, we were able to join a guided historical walk of the Mediaeval part of Dublin, led by a history student from Trinity College. He gave an excellent commentary to cover a broad concept of Ireland's problems and Dublin's history without giving us information overload!

Next day we travelled by rail to Killarney where we hired a car for a week to give us scope for doing some scenic tours. The small part of Ireland that we glimpsed in the south-west, confirmed it is a beautiful country—green and lush. Showers gave way to bright sunlight and fuchsia hedgerows glowed with crimson blooms. The three peninsulas of Beare, Iveragh and Dingle offered miles of lovely coastline, cliffs and coves, bays and inlets, while inland the mist-shrouded hills released tumbling streams which cascaded into little tarns or spread out into shining lakes. At the roadside shaggy sheep, with black and white mottled legs and faces, and long curling horns, gazed impassively at the passing tourist traffic.

We were keen to do some walking in the Emerald Isle so we bought a book of local walks. It contained a lot of interesting



First aid



Courtesy St John Ambulance Australia

St John Australia recommends that those adventuring off the beaten track should have completed a first aid course. These notes are not intended to replace a training course and should only serve as a guide. First aid skills need to be taught under the guidance of a trained instructor and should be updated regularly. For more information about training courses call St John ACT on 282 2399. St John has a range of specialist first aid kits and first aid publications.

Much of the following was taken from *Survival! Remote area first aid*, St John's newest publication. Recommended retail price is \$24.95 and it is available from St John ACT.

The St John DRABC action plan

In an emergency, the first aider needs a plan of action for managing an injured or ill casualty.

D Check for DANGER—to yourself, others or the casualty. Do not become a casualty yourself. Only move the casualty if in danger. Danger can come in many forms: fallen power lines at a road accident, high temperatures in unshaded areas of the outback.

R Does the casualty RESPOND? Gently shake the casualty by the shoulders and shout, 'Can you hear me?', 'Open your eyes!', 'Squeeze my hand.' If conscious, check for bleeding.

A If the casualty does not respond, turn him or her onto their side and clear the AIRWAY. Using two fingers, clear the casualty's mouth of any obstructions, blood, vomit, broken dentures or teeth. Open the airway by placing one hand high on the casualty's forehead and supporting the chin with the

other hand in a pistol grip. Gently tilt the head back, lift the jaw forward and open the casualty's mouth slightly.

B Check for BREATHING: look listen and feel. If breathing, leave the casualty on their side in a stable position and observe continuously. Check for and manage bleeding and other injuries.

If not breathing, turn the casualty onto their back and immediately begin expired air (mouth to mouth) resuscitation. Give five full breaths in ten seconds.

C Check for CIRCULATION.

Feel for the pulse at the neck for five seconds. If a pulse is present, continue expired air resuscitation at a rate of 15 breaths per minute.

If there is no pulse, commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if you have been taught the skill. Manage any bleeding and other injuries as soon as possible. Seek urgent medical aid.

Basic hints

Bleeding

Severe bleeding can be life-threatening. Act promptly. Apply direct pressure to the wound with either your hand or a clean dressing. Apply a firm bandage to keep the dressing in place. Rest the casualty.

When foreign objects are embedded in the wound, do not attempt to remove as it may cause further injury. Apply pressure and a bandage around the object, not directly on it.

Burns

All burns should be cooled with running water, if available, for up to ten minutes, then covered with a clean, non-stick dry cloth.

Do not apply ointments, cream

or oily substances, such as butter or margarine to any burn.

Chest injuries

These injuries can make breathing extremely difficult and painful. The casualty may rapidly deteriorate into unconsciousness if not treated promptly. Broken ribs can cause damage to the lungs or other underlying organs. Internal bleeding can result.

Conscious casualties will be most comfortable half-sitting and inclined to the injured side. Loosen any tight fitting clothing and place padding over the injured area. Encourage slow breathing and reassure the casualty.

Unconscious casualties should be managed according to the DRABC action plan.

Chest pain

Any pain in the centre of the chest, which sometimes radiates into the neck and down the left arm, may be a heart attack. There may be shortness of breath, vomiting, nausea and pale, cold, clammy skin. Make the casualty as comfortable as possible, loosen any restrictive clothing and observe the response, airway, breathing and circulation regularly.

If the casualty becomes unconscious, follow the DRABC action plan.

Choking

If the casualty is breathing, encourage deep breathing and coughing to remove obstruction. In the case of a child, lay the casualty over your lap with the head down and give three or four sharp smacks between the shoulder blades with the heel of one hand. In the case of an adult, lie them down if possible with the head low and give three or four sharp blows between the shoulder blades.

Follow the DRABC action plan and seek medical aid.



Hypothermia (mild to moderate)

Symptoms and signs are that the casualty is conscious, though they may be confused and apathetic, possible shivering, skin is pale and cold, possibly an odour of acetone on the breath.

Immediately move the casualty to warm surroundings or build a shelter as required. Remove all wet clothing and replace with dry clothing. Wrap with insulating materials, covering these with blankets. Pay special attention to head and neck, but leave the face uncovered. The arms and legs should be kept isolated from the trunk by wrapping the body in a separate first insulating layer if possible. An insulating layer should separate the casualty from the ground. Rewarm the casualty. In the field, wrapping your body with the casualty's in the insulating material may be the only option. Both bodies should be unclothed. Give plenty of warm sugary fluids plus extra calories in the form of sugar cubes or sweets if the casualty is conscious. Do not give alcohol. Check especially for local cold injury. Have the casualty lie still. Do not rub extremities. Transport the casualty to medical care gently and ensure that he or she is insulated from wind and cold. Protect the head and neck especially. If possible, seek ambulance or ski patrol transport to the centre. Give priority to thin casualties if multiple casualties are encountered.

Leeches

Apply glowing twig or salt.

Limb injuries

Injuries to bones, joints and ligaments may be recognised by tenderness, deformity, pain, bruising, swelling, loss of movement.

Support the injured limb in the position in which it was found, by immobilising the joint above and below the injury with padding, splints and bandages. Control any bleeding. Rest and assure the casualty. Seek urgent medical aid.

Overheating

Symptoms may be weakness, loss of colour, dizziness, headache, rapid breathing and pulse, early free sweating then dryness as condition worsens, cramps, nausea, vomiting, temperature rise, col-

lapse, irritability, mental confusion.

Cool the casualty in the shade, remove unnecessary clothing, douse with water or immerse if possible. Cover the casualty's body with a wet cloth and fan to increase air circulation. When fully conscious, give fluids with small amounts of sugar or glucose and half teaspoon of salt per litre.

Shock

In the case of shock the body will direct blood automatically to the vital organs such as the brain, heart and lungs at the expense of skin, muscles and limbs.

Symptoms and signs of shock (the casualty will show some or all): pale face and lips, cold clammy skin, usually a weak, rapid pulse, rapid breathing, faintness or dizziness, restlessness, nausea, thirst.

Symptoms and signs of severe shock include: extremities become bluish in colour, the casualty may become drowsy, confused or unconscious, rapid breathing, usually an extremely weak, rapid pulse.

How to manage the shock:

- DRABC
- reassure the casualty
- seek medical aid urgently
- control any external bleeding
- unless fractured, raise the casualty's legs above the level of the heart
- dress any wounds or burns
- immobilise any fractures
- loosen tight clothing
- keep the casualty comfortable but do not heat
- if the casualty complains of thirst, moisten lips, but do not give anything to eat or drink. If after several hours medical aid has not arrived, small amounts of water may be given.
- monitor and record breathing and pulse at regular intervals and maintain an open airway.
- place casualty in a stable side position if there is breathing difficulty, if vomiting is likely, or if the casualty becomes unconscious.

Snake bite

Symptoms can take anywhere from 15 minutes to two hours to become evident. Treat all snake

bites as if they are potentially dangerous.

Symptoms may include: strong emotional reactions, headache, drowsiness, nausea and/or vomiting and diarrhoea, pain or tightness in the chest or abdomen, giddiness or faintness, puncture marks about one centimetre apart at the site of the bite, swelling of the bitten area, reddening, bruising, sweating, breathing difficulties.

How to treat the snake bite:

- DRABC
- Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage over the bitten area using a bandage about 15 centimetres wide. Apply the bandage as firmly as possible, for example, from bite to fingers then up to armpit. Apply a splint to the bandaged limb with a second bandage. Do not remove the splint or bandage once applied.
- Rest and reassure the casualty.
- Seek medical aid urgently.

Warning:

- Never wash the venom off the skin as this will help in later identification.
- Never cut or excise the bitten area.
- Never try to suck the venom out of the wound.
- Never use a constrictive bandage.
- Do not try to catch the snake, although a description will aid with identification.

Sprains

Symptoms include pain, swelling and tenderness but, unlike a fracture, there is no loss of function and no deformity. Cool in water, apply padding and a compression bandage firmly and elevate the limb. Don't remove shoe if sprained ankle—keep walking with rests and lighter load.

Ticks

Apply methylated spirits, shellite or Betadine. Grip as near as possible to skin with tweezers or open blades of scissors being careful to remove mouth parts. Search carefully for others particularly in the hair, behind the ears and other body crevices.



Outings program

December to April 1993



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.

January 23, 24, 25, 26 Pack Walk
 Ettrema Gorge

Ref: Touga
 1:25000

Leaders: Eric and Pat Pickering Ph. 2862128 h
 Australia Day falls on the Tuesday. This could be a collaborative walk with the Canberra Bushwalkers. Details are not finalised and are subject to change. However it is a spectacular area, lots of swimming and rock scrambling. Not for beginners. Phone leaders at least a week beforehand for details.

January 23, 24 Pack Walk (2A/C)
 Munyang/Rolling Grounds/Guthega Pondage

Ref: Mt.Kosciusko
 Ph .2961165 h

Leaders: Andrew and Julie Lyne
 Contact leaders by Wednesday for details. From Guthega Power Station (Munyang) walk along unmarked fire trail to camp in the Whites River Hut area. Maybe walk up to Schlink Pass and Dicky Cooper Bogong. Next day, Granite Peaks the Rolling Grounds, Consett Stephen Pass to Mt.Tate, descend Tate East Ridge return to Guthega. Car shuffle required between Guthega and Munyang. (400km drive \$80 per car)

January 24 Sunday Walk (1A)
 Molonglo/Murrumbidgee River

Ref: ACT
 1:100000
 2488774 h

Leader: Olive Buckman
 Meet at the Murrumbidgee Lookout (sign) off Stockdill Drive Holt at 9.30am. A pleasant riverside walk of about 6km down to Molonglo River, across and along the Murrumbidgee to East Urriara and return. If bridge underwater return to cars and walk up lower Molonglo Gorge, swimming either or both rivers.

January 27 Outings Committee Meeting

Meet at Mick Kelly's place 1 Fitzmaurice St Kaleen commencing 7.30 pm. to plan outings program for April to June 1993. If you are unable to attend please forward offerings by mail to my address or phone me on 2412330 h.

January 31 Sunday Walk (2A/C)
 Rocks above Honeysuckle Ck

Ref: ACT
 1:100000
 241 2330 h

Leader: Mick Kelly
 A walk to a series of rockfaces above Honeysuckle Ck sometimes referred to as The Spinnaker, return via ridge and Orroral Ck/ Honeysuckle Ck fire Trail. Suitable for fit beginners. (60 km drive \$12 per car)

February 6 Saturday Walk (2/A)
 Mt Aggle & Mt Franklin

Ref: Tidbinbilla
 1:250000
 Ph. 2814268 h

Leader: Len Haskew
 Meet corner Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road 8.30am. A 12 km walk along old tracks to two peaks with fine views and passing through beautiful alpine countryside. (120 km drive \$24 per car)

February 7 Sunday Walk (3/A)
 Naas Ck/Sheep Station Ck/Grassy Ck

Ref: Yaouk
 1:250000

Leader: Marty French Ph 2583528 h 2642477 w
 Meet at Kambah Village Shops 8 am. A pleasant 18km walk mostly

along fire trails with fine views of Sentry Box Mtn. Good walk for fit beginners. Car shuffle required. (150 Km drive \$30 per car)

February 6,7 Canoe Trip
 Murrumbidgee River/Wagga
 Leader: Chris Bellamy
 Ref: Wagga 1:100000

Contacts: Chris Bellamy 2497167 h Jill Roberts 2491390 h
 Starting from Oura Beach above Wagga paddle to Wagga Beach for lunch, camping overnight at Kohlhagens Beach, finishing at Currawananna S.F. next day. Good introductory trip for fit beginners. Car based camping. BYO canoe or hire in Wagga. (560 km drive \$112 per car)

February 13 Saturday Walk & Swim (1/A)
 Murrumbidgee River
 Ref: ACT 1:100000

Leader: Syd Comfort Ph. 2862578 h
 Meet corner Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Rd at 9am. A short walk along the Murrumbidgee from Casurina Sands to a beach for swim li-lo and loaf.(35km drive \$7 per car)

February 14 Sunday Walk (2/C/E)
 Billy Billy Rocks
 Ref: Corin 1:250000

Leader: Mick Kelly Ph. 2412330 h
 Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8 am. A sometimes scrubby walk to outstanding rock features overlooking the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Suitable for fit beginners.(60km drive \$20 per car)

February 21 Sunday Walk (2/A)
 Corn Trill
 Ref: Araluen & Monga 1:250000

Leader: Mike Smith Ph. 2862984 h 2483624 w
 Meet at Woolworths carpark in Queanbeyan at 8 am. The walking track follows the original pack horse route over the Clyde Mountain. A 650 metre descent from the top of the Clyde Mountain to Buckenbowra River. Car shuffle or cross over depending on conditions and numbers.(240 km drive \$48 per car)

February 20, 21 Car Camp Ref: Nattai & Picton
 Mittagong Area 1:250000

Leader: Trevor Bensley (Berrima Branch)
Contact: Len Haskew Ph. 2814268 h
 Contact Len by Tuesday for details. This will be a joint outing with the Berrima Branch of the NPA. We will camp on Trevor's property at The Alpine on the Old Hume Highway. The activities are at this stage but will probably include a selection from the following. (1) Balmoral to Tahmoor via Picton Weir (2) Balmoral Ridge-Little River-Picton Lakes (3) Troys Ck-McArthurs Flat- Starlights Trail (4) A walk along the Bargo River led by a member of the Bargo River Protection Society. (420 km drive \$84 per car)

February 24 Wednesday Walk (1/A/E)
 Michelago Ck/Murrumbidgee River

Ref: ACT
 1:100000

Leader: Olive Buckman Ph. 2488774 h
 Contact the leader for details of meeting place and time. Six km walk through paddocks (private property) drop down to Michelago Ck and 'rock hop' to junction with Murrumbidgee. Laze and swim

in large delightful area, return with hill climb and through paddocks. (100km drive \$20 per car)

February 28 Sunday Walk (3/A/C/D)
The Camel/Tidbinbilla/Mt Domain Ref: Tidbinbilla
1:25000
Leader: Marty French Ph. 2583528 h
2642477 w

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am. A walk partially on fire trails, tracks and through light scrub, taking in The Camel ridge Tidbinbilla Peak and Mtn, onwards to Mt.Domain and descending to join the Fishing Gap fire trail. Glorious views. Car shuffle required (70 km drive \$14 per car)

February 27,28 Canoe Trip Ref: Yarrangobilly
Lake Talbingo 1:100000
Leader: Chris Bellamy Ph. 2497167 h
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. Canoe in the Kosciusko NP. Paddle from Talbingo Dam wall south across clear sheltered waters to a delightful camp site on Tumut River Arm, returning on Sunday. Canoe based camping. BYO canoe or hire in Tumut. Suitable for fit beginners. (Drive 460 km \$92 per car)

February 27,28 Pack Walk (1/A)
Goodradigbee River Ref: ACT
1:100000
Leader: Fiona Brand Ph. 2479538
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. The annual blackberrying and relax weekend on the river around 2 km walk each way. Good campsite and swimming. (Drive 160 km \$32 per car)

March 6 Saturday Walk (2/A/B)
Bendora Arboretum Ref:Tidbinbilla
1:25000
Leader: Len Haskew Ph. 2814268 h
Meet Corner Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Rd at 8.15 am. A 15 km on management trails and fire breaks to the arboretum that was established in the 1940's. Interesting scenery plus opportunities to test your skill at tree identification using our field guide. Suitable for beginners who don't mind the odd steep pinch. (120 km drive \$24 per car)

March 7 Sunday Walk (2/C)
Naas Ck. Gorges Ref: Colinton
1:25000
Leader: Jack Smart Ph. 2488171 h 2492191 h
Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am. Walk from Shanahan's Mtn carpark over Shanahan's Mtn and down to the confluence of Shanahan's Falls Ck and Naas Ck. Inspect Naas gorges. Return by a variation of morning's route. Not for beginners. (160km drive \$32 per car)

March 10 Wednesday Walk (2/A)
Casurina Sands/Bulgar Rocks Ref: ACT
1:100000
Leader: Olive Buckman Ph. 2488774 h
Contact leader for details of meeting place and time. A 16 km walk on undulating tracks above the Murrumbidgee River to lunch and swimming spot past Bulgar Ck. (40km drive \$8 per car)

March 14 Sunday Walk (3/A/B)
Cotter Rocks Ref: ACT
1:100000

Leader: Frank Clements Ph. 2317005 h
A 20km walk partly on fire trails and partly on old bridge trail with final 250 metre climb from Cotter Gap through bush to granite tors of Cotter Rocks. Impressive views. (100km drive \$20 per car)

March 13,14,15 Pack Walk (3/C/D)
Kowmung River/Church Ck Ref: Yerranderie & Bindook
1:25000

Also see CMA Blue Mtns Tourist Map
Leader: Mick Kelly Ph.2412330 h
Canberra day long weekend. Walk in the Southern area of the Boyd Kanangra National Park. From Bats Camp (off Oberon/Yerranderie Rd Bindook Map) to Kowmung River and Church Ck via Lannigans Ck. Return to vehicles via Mount Armour and Colong Caves. Walk will involve at least two river crossings. Not for beginners. Phone leader by Wednesday for details. Note if soaking rain in area prior to date, alternate walk will be provided in the Gungahlan/Kerries area) (Drive 560 km \$112 per car)

March 13,14,15 Canoe Trip
Murrumbidgee River/ Narrandera Ref: Wagga &
Narrandera

Leader: Chris Bellamy Ph.2497167 h
Contact leader by the Wednesday by Wednesday for details. Paddle from Currawananna S.F. below Wagga to Narrandera, camping enroute from canoes with a night at Berembed Weir. Paddlers should enjoy fast moving water. BYO canoe or hire in Wagga. (Drive 670 km \$112 per car)

March 20,21 Pack Walk (2/A/B/C)
Mt.Scabby Ref: Yaouk & Rendezvous Ck
1:25000

Leaders: Andrew and Julie Lyne Ph.2961165 h 2509460 w
Contact leaders by Wednesday for details. Walk from Yaouk Valley to Yaouk Gap along Scabby Range to camp on Mt Scabby. Depending on time/inclination may wish to walk along ridge toward Mt Kelly. Mt Scabby offers extensive views. (200 km drive \$40 per car)

March 20, 21 Car Camp Ref: Yass
Burrunjuck State Rec.Park 1:50000
Leader: Marty French Ph.2583528 h 2642477 w

Contact leader by Wednesday for details. Meet in the car park at the end of the red pedestrian bridge to Belconnen Mall off Lathlain St. Saturday afternoon explore Carrols Ck area and climb Barrenjack Mountain on the Sunday. Camping fee \$6 per person. Suitable for beginners. (200km drive \$40 per car)

March 20 Saturday Walk 3/B/D
Mt. Burbidge Ref: Yaouk and Rendezvous Ck
1:25000

Leader: Murray Dow Ph. 2574371 h
Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 7 am. By this date the naming of Mt. Burbidge should have been achieved. Passing through mainly scrubby and sometimes rocky bushland this walk will follow the ridge between Bogong Gap and Middle Cks returning via Middle

Ck. Total climb about 800 metres. Not for beginners. (100 km drive \$20 per car)

March 27,28 Pack Walk (2/A)
Corang Lagoon Ref: Corang 1:25000
& CMW Map

Leader: Mike Smith Ph.2862984 h 2483624 w
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. Walk from the Wog Wog Ck. entrance to the Budawangs to the Corang river lagoon via Goodsera Creek with optional walk upstream to rock ribs area. (250 km drive \$50 per car)

April 3,4 Pack Walk (2/A/C)
Tantangara Ref: Tantangara
1:25000

Leader: DI Thompson Ph.2886084 h 2447588 w
Contact leader by Wednesday for details. A collaborative walk with the Family Bushwalkers to Blankety Plain and Witses Hut. Returning along the Big Boggy. Walk mostly on tracks or tussock grass. (300km drive \$60 per car)

April 4 Bike Ride
The Lakes Ref: Canberra Cycleways Map
Leader: Gary Schneider Ph. 2549801 h

Meet at near the Acton Ferry Terminal at 10 am. Please wear your helmets for this delightful autumnal ride from Lake Burley Griffin across to Lake Ginninderra and return. Distance about 20 km.

April 9,10,11,12 Car Camp
Wapengo/Mimosa Rocks National Park Ref: Eden State
Forests Map
Ph.2958112 h

Leader: Ian Currie
Contact leader early, before 2 April, for details of this Easter car camp north of Tathra. Walk, swim, fish, canoe, birdwatch and explore the hinterland. Numbers limited and facilities few.

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.

detail on local history and legend but little in the way of specific walking directions. For example, one afternoon we started out to do what was described as a four and a quarter hour circuit of Lough Anascaul. The scenery was impressive with brooding hills enclosing this quiet lough. We laboured up a 2,000 ft climb for nearly two hours. Our guide book dismissed this effort with one sentence. The text then meandered on with the story of Scal Ni Mhurnain after whom *Loch an Scail* is named. A giant came to take her away and she sought the hero warrior, Cuchulainn's, assistance. The warrior and giant fought for a week, throwing boulders at each other across the lake and then Cuchulainn was hit and gave a loud groan. Scal, thinking him killed, drowned herself in the Lake.

But where to next on our walk? The nitty gritty was brief: 'From the cliff edge, travel west to the peak before attempting a descent to the boggy expanse below. Contour to the top of the saddle to join the green road zigzagging up from the south.'

We looked at the cliffs; at the extensive boggy plateau below; the 1,000ft climb up a ridge on the other side and the clouds that lurked about the hilltops. We also took account of how long we had already taken and the lack of a proper map—and we were daunted! We gave it away.

We had now moved our base on to the delightful little fishing port of Dingle and one night we went to a local pub to hear some real Irish music. We made ourselves comfortable in a window seat and soon a few musicians drifted in to occupy the other end of the window seat. A flute, penny whistle, bagpipe with elbow-operated bellows and fiddle set the mood. More musicians continued to arrive until we were squeezed into a corner amid nine players. The music was intense, exciting and spontaneous! It was great!

Another memorable event in Dingle (apart from the tractor gathering in the silage in the paddock behind our bedroom until 2am!!) was the Blessing of the

Boats ceremony. Two pipe and drum bands and the priest processed down the hill from the church to the wharf where the gaily decorated fishing fleet waited. After blessing the boats, the Priest and Harbour Master boarded the life boat and motored out into Dingle Bay. All the fishing boats and every other craft in the harbour followed—packed to capacity with locals and tourists making the most of a free ride! Alas, our schedule didn't permit us to join in this part of the festivities; we had to press on to Limerick to return the rental car.

However, we did have our own 'cruise'. John had arranged that we rent a yacht for three days on Lough Derg, a lake on the Shannon river. The yacht was an 18ft Hurley, not much bigger than a dinghy, and a good size for the two of us to handle. We were able to cook and sleep on board but its other amenities were limited so we 'hung on' till we were able to get ashore!

It blew half a gale (felt like a whole one to me) for the three days so we didn't get the chance to explore very far down this lough. We went to a tiny, picturesque, stone-walled harbour called Garrykennedy and stayed there all three nights but ventured forth across the lake during the day and to the local pub at night! We met 'three men in a boat'—mad Irish variety—sailing a beaten up 25 foot yacht from Dublin by way of canals, rivers, lakes and the sea around to Cork to see the Tall Ships Race when it called in there.

Now it was time for us to move on from Ireland. We travelled by train from Southern to Northern Ireland and discovered it was Orange Day!! Bunting and flags decorated the streets of the towns in Northern Ireland. At Belfast we had to transfer to another station, using a taxi as no buses were running. Armed police loitered around the station. With everyone out of town or lying low, there were not many passengers on the ferry we caught that evening from Port Larne to Stranraer on the Scottish coast.

Scotland: 12-21 July

After an overnight stay in Stranraer we caught a train to Glasgow and another to the Bridge of Orchy. Here a bus from the Holiday Fellowship (HF) guest house met arriving guests to transport us all to Loch Leven. It was a 35 minute drive through the spectacular Glencoe Valley. We passed grey, wind-whipped lochs and the road ran parallel to a raging stream cascading over rocks into a gorge. Tall, dark, cloud-shrouded hills closed in but sometimes we glimpsed bleak peaks where snow still lingered. In the gloomy gloaming Glencoe's beauty held a sombre, uneasy quality tainted by its history of the infamous Massacre of Glencoe.

The Holiday Fellowship (for those not familiar with it) offers full board in comfortable guest houses throughout Britain, traditionally with a walks program but nowadays they also have special weeks featuring other recreational activities—golf, bridge, photography, etc. We were booked in for walking. At this centre, there were four levels of walks each day: low, middle, high and hard high! Boots were insisted on for everything except the low level.

On Sunday we did our first Scottish walk, an easy stroll in showery conditions, along boggy Glen Gour. When returning along the shore of the Loch Leven, Ron, our Leader, who was a keen 'Birdo', pointed out Sheld Ducks, Eider Ducks, Oyster Catchers, Sandpipers and a Hooded Crow. He also spotted seals on a rocky island exposed by the low tide. Some of us set off across the wet sand hoping for a closer view but the seals became aware of our approach and began to flap towards the water so we left them in peace.

The weather for our week in Scotland was probably typical of the Highlands. We were beset by showers and low cloud denied us views. However, the company was good—70 guests included people from various parts of Britain, the US, Canada, Holland, Germany, France and Australia.

continued on the next page

Travellers' tales

continued from previous page

In the evenings 'entertainment' was provided—often by ourselves—we were called upon to participate in 'Highland Games', an Auction ('Boney' Prince Charlie's knee cap and other items of that ilk!), a Treasure Hunt and a Concert. On two evenings we had speakers—one an expert on the local history and the other speaker was one of our walk leaders. Ron, who by profession is a craftsman—a woodcarver of British wildlife.

Mid-week we had a 'free' day when no walking had been programmed. A number of us went on a coach trip to the isles of Mull and Iona. St Columba landed on Iona from Ireland in 563; built a monastery and began the Christianisation of Scotland. Through the following centuries religious activity fluctuated; the abbey was destroyed and then rebuilt in the 11th century. We also looked around the ruins of an old Nunnery which has particularly attractive pink stonework.

The next highlight of our Scottish week was meant to be the walk up Ben Nevis—Britain's highest mountain at 4408ft. All grades of walkers were to cover some aspect of this mountain. The middle level group, which included me, were to follow the stony, zig-zagging track built to enable Queen Victoria to ride up on a pony!



*Ron, Graham and Judith on top of Ben Nevis, Scotland.
Photo by John Webster*

We hadn't got very far when we were assailed by cold, lashing showers. Undeterred, we plodded on and later, when the rain had eased, took a short lunch break. A steady stream of hardy, determined tourists passed up and down the track. Near the top, it became bleaker—the ground was covered in scree; thick mist hung stubbornly to the peak and the marked path disappeared in a drift of snow.

After four hours of chilly exposure, we shivered triumphantly on the summit. Like many thousands before us, we had climbed Ben Nevis and, I suspect also like a many thousands before us, we could see nothing!! We were thinking it was **not** a good place to linger, when a scantily clad runner steamed into view. He glowed with warmth and vigour.

'How long did it take you?' I enquired. He cast a brief glance at his watch and stated with nonchalant pride 'One hour twenty five'. Turning to a fellow Aussie in our group, I said 'and **how** long did it take us?' With equal nonchalance and quick wit he responded 'Oh! One hour twenty six!'

Well, if Ben Nevis was a disappointment, the walk I did on the Friday certainly made up for it. This walk took in the peaks of Sgorr Bhan, Sgorr Dehargand, Sgorr Dhonuill. Don't these Gaelic names look great—I couldn't possibly pronounce them! The weather had improved and we had some great views of glens, lochs, ridges and peaks. The cloud still tantalised at times and locked us into a white world. After bagging two 'Monros' (peaks of over 3000ft) some of us climbed a narrow ridge to the craggy summit of Sgorr a' Chaolais (Peak of the Narrows) as an optional extra.

It had been a lovely day and an enjoyable week and that evening there was a special menu at the guest house which included a taste of Haggis, Neaps and Tatties (Haggis, turnips and mashed potatoes). The Haggis was ceremoniously borne aloft into the dining hall to the drone of a Bagpiper and a quotation from Robbie Burns' *Ode to the Haggis*! Thus our stay in Scotland came to an appropriately traditional conclusion.

Judith Webster

Welcome Reef Dam

Reaction to the Sydney Water Board's plans to build its huge Welcome Reef Dam on the Shoalhaven River near Braidwood has taken a new turn with the formation of the Coalition against Welcome Reef Dam.

For more information:

Angela Marshall, Braidwood
(048) 461170(h) 422077 (w)

May Leatch, Nowra (044) 231615

David Hughes, Hawkesbury-
Nepean (02) 652 2565

Tom Hayllar, Sydney
(02) 905 3484

Rodney Falconer, Canberra
(06) 247 7808 (w)

Endangered Species Legislation update

The Democrat's Threatened Species Bill was tabled by Senator John Coulter in late 1991 and revised in March 1992. Labor and Liberal combined to defeat the Bill in the Senate in October.

On the night of 27 October, Federal Cabinet approved Minister for the Environment Ros Kelly's endangered species legislation, which was then passed by the House of Representatives on 10 November. The Liberals intend to support the Bill, while the Democrats will try to amend it by reintroducing sections of their own

Bill. The legislation is considered by many as a compromise to economic demands. In determining what protection is needed for native flora and fauna, the legislation will consider social and economic concerns with the decision-making power mainly lying with the portfolio ministers. Cabinet will have the final say.

The laws include a list of endangered species and of recovery programs. Mrs Kelly has the power to issue interim conservation orders in case of dire threat to a listed species.

America by campervan

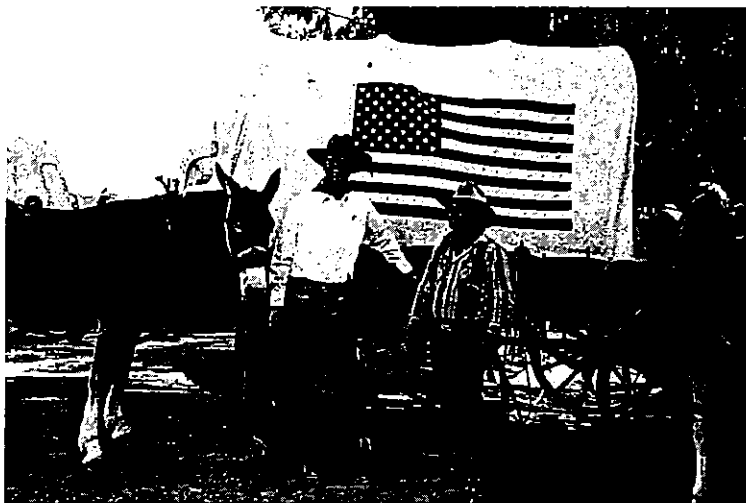
Barbara Comfort continues the story of her and Syd's trek around America. When we left Syd and Barbara they had just returned to the USA from Canada...

It was then on to Yellowstone National Park, another highlight of our trip, where we spent five nights at various camp sites. Here we discovered we had a small mouse in the van but when we went to the store to buy a mousetrap were promptly told they didn't sell them as we were in a national park and it was an offence to kill any wildlife. We had to drive about ten miles out of the park and then couldn't buy one but had to buy a packet of two. Anyhow we caught the mouse!

There were lots of elk roaming in the park with the bucks bugling incessantly as it was the start of the rutting season. Old Faithful performed for us and as well we saw Opal Terraces, Minerva Springs, Artist Point and Roaring Mountain to mention just a few, all steaming and bubbling in the most fantastic colours. We then moved on to Grand Teton National Park where we stayed at Signal Mountain campsite with a magnificent view of the snow-capped Grand Teton mountain, 13 770 feet, through the pine trees.

We now drove through Jackson and on to Salt Lake City along valleys with the hills on either side covered in autumn colours. On the Sunday we caught the shuttle bus from the campsite into the city, our plan being to visit the Tabernacle and hear the Sunday morning radio/TV presentation of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. When we reached Temple Square we were confronted with over 7000 people: we had arrived on the day of the twice-yearly conference. We were lucky and managed to get tickets into the Tabernacle together with 6000 other people and enjoyed the half-hour recital. We were then able to wander through the grounds where hundreds of people were

*The '49ers,
Death Valley
Photo by Syd
Comfort*



sitting on the grass listening to the proceedings which were being broadcast. We visited the Beehive House, original home of Brigham Young, founder of Salt Lake City, and then back to Temple Square and to the Museum of Church History and Art. On Tuesday we drove out to Salt Lake which was very depressing with low water level and the whole area heavy with smog from a large copper smelter.

We then drove through country becoming more and more barren to reach Capital Reef National Park where we spent two days. The small camping area is in the valley originally farmed by the Mormons and has towering red cliffs rising from the valley floor. There are still fruit trees and vines growing here.

We drove through Dixie National Forest ablaze with golden aspen and on to Bryce National Park. The colours are fantastic every way you turn. We walked down into the canyon surrounded by beautiful rock formations ranging from delicate pink to russet red.

Our next stop was Zion National Park with entry through a mile-long tunnel through a mountain with rangers operating a one-way traffic system. Temperature here was 94 degrees Fahrenheit.

We drove on next to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon where we had a campsite almost on the rim from which we enjoyed fantas-

tic sunsets. One morning we rose early and watched the sunrise before having breakfast at The Lodge, and then walked part of the way down into the canyon itself. Very warm. We spent four days here driving and walking to various points of interest before going on to Glen Canyon for two nights. From here we did a float raft trip down part of the Colorado River going ashore at one point to look at Anasazi petroglyphs on the rock wall. We then spent two nights at Monument Valley which is in Navajo territory, the campsite being run by the tribe. Again we had an excellent site overlooking the valley with huge rock formations rising straight out of the valley floor, giving beautiful sunrises and sunsets. We went on a tour through the valley with a Navajo driver/guide, again with magnificent rock formations and colours.

The weather was much cooler as we headed for the South Rim of the Grand Canyon where we spent four nights, again driving and walking. We woke on our last morning to four inches of snow and moved on to Flagstaff with still a lot of snow about but the roads cleared. We visited Indian ruins at Wutpaki National Monument out of Flagstaff, also the Museum of North Arizona.

After leaving Flagstaff we

continued on the next page

America by campervan

continued from previous page

stopped at Walnut Canyon National Monument, where there are lots of Indian cave dwellings built into cliff overhangs, before reaching Fort Verde. Then on to Montezuma Castle National Monument which is a huge four-storeyed Indian construction built half way up a sheer cliff. It was now the beginning of November but the weather was much warmer again as we had left the higher altitudes. We toured the Hoover Dam and spent a night at Lake Mead National Recreation Area before driving on to Las Vegas where we spoil ourselves, staying two nights in a luxury hotel. Eating out here was very cheap with all the hotels and casinos competing against each other. It was interesting to watch people playing the gaming tables. Death Valley was next on our itinerary and our arrival coincided with the arrival of the 'Forty-Niners' with their mules and covered wagons—

all very colourful. This is an annual event commemorating the first crossing through Death Valley to California in 1849. The next day we drove the length of Death Valley, an extremely desolate and hot area.

Next a stop at Calico Ghost Town, then on to 29 Palms and Joshua Tree National Monument with its beautiful cactus gardens and of course Joshua Tree. We spent a few days with friends in LA and from there drove to San Diego where we saw some of the America's Cup yachts, not the Australians as they had not yet arrived.

We continued on our way to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks where we saw the biggest living thing—the General Sherman Tree, estimated to be 2300–2700 years old with a circumference at ground level of 31.3 metres. Then we spent a few days in Yosemite National Park, unfortunately confined to the lower valley because most of the upper passes were closed with snow, as it was now the end of November. Thanksgiving Day was spent here,

clear blue skies but with a temperature of 1 degree Celsius at lunchtime.

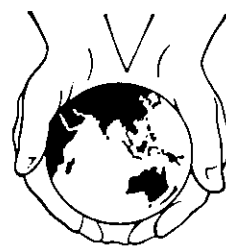
When we reached Lake Tahoe we found ice and snow right down to the water's edge, but still enjoyed a boat trip round part of the lake.

It was then back to San Francisco to return the van and join a flight to Honolulu where we spent a few days relaxing before returning to Australia. We arrived in Honolulu the day before the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbour so the place was crowded with Pearl Harbour survivors. We visited the Arizona Memorial which is very impressive (administered by the National Parks Service) and also took a bus tour around the island. And so home to Australia, crossing the date line again but this time losing one day completely.

Syd drove 15 000 kilometres in the van. We had only nine wet days, stayed in 56 different national, provincial, state, forest and tribal parks and between us sent off 179 letters and postcards!

Barbara Comfort

Will your investments *realise* your good intentions?



The August Investments Managed Trust is Australia's first public unit trust to incorporate an ethical charter into its Trust Deed. It offers skilled and conservative management of superannuation and other investments in tune with your social and environmental concerns. As an option, it also offers an income donation facility; allowing you to invest a sum with its earnings directed to, say, The National Parks Association until you need to draw upon it.

The unitholders' newsletter, "*AIM high*", lists all the Trust's investments and the ethical basis for their selection. We would be glad to send you a copy upon request.

And, if you would like to know more, please ask us for a copy of our lodged and registered prospectus dated 22nd September, 1992, which details all that an investor would want to know; or ask an investment advisor who understands your ethical concerns.

The August Investments Managed Trust,
Suite 66, Canberra Business Centre, Bradfield Street, Downer ACT 2602.
Telephone: (06) 242 1988 or 008 021 227. Facsimile: (06) 241 5284.

for investors, society and the environment

Wilderness assessments

In the September issue of the *Bulletin*, we asked readers to send submissions on ten wilderness assessments in NSW. The NPA put in submissions on the three areas closest to the ACT—Nadgee, the Goodradigbee and the Deua—as well as sending a letter to the Minister for the Environment, Chris Hartcher, the Premier and other members of parliament expressing our support for the creation of the ten proposed wilderness areas. In this letter we emphasised that the management principles outlined in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Wilderness Code should be adhered to. These are:

- no private motor vehicle use or animal transport
- wilderness will be maintained free of signs and markers
- minimal impact bushwalking will be encouraged
- motor vehicle trails closed, except for essential management
- scientific research permitted by written consent
- Aboriginal sites to be managed in accordance with the Burra Charter
- control of introduced plants and animals where necessary

The Nadgee submission described the beauty and variety of the area, and pointed out that it is the only remaining area of coastal wilderness in NSW with examples of heath, wetlands and rainforest vegetation. The Association supported the Colong Foundation's proposal to include the area of Nadgee State Forest along the border which contains Maxwell's Flora Reserve and lightly logged rainforest, in order to protect creek catchments of the Croajingalong National Park and to link this park with the Nadgee Nature Reserve. The Association did not support the service's proposal to exclude Wonboyn Beach as this is the only large beach in NSW which can be managed as wilderness.

Our submission on the Goodradigbee highlighted the importance of its alpine and sub-alpine areas, as well as pointing out the beauty of the natural features such as the Dubbo Falls, the gorges, caves and rock formations which occur there. The issues which concerned us were: the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles, horse riding and the fact that the proposal splits the area into three separate zones.

The submission on the Deua

focused on the importance of this area as a catchment for the Deua and Shoalhaven Rivers and the Diamond, Georges, Woila and Burra/Oulla Creeks. The entire catchments need to be added to the national park and be designated as wilderness in order to afford the necessary protection. A point of major concern was the continued use of existing roads which will effectively split the proposed wilderness area into three separate zones. The use of these roads by the public contravenes the Wilderness Code. The existence of tracks and fire trails increases the potential for adverse impacts on wilderness through incursions of weeds, feral animals, erosion and other impacts such as noise pollution and litter.

We are now waiting with keen anticipation the outcome of the assessments. Watch this space!

NPA in NZ

In the article on this subject in the last *Bulletin*, Lake Mackenzie hut should have read McKellar Hut.

A conundrum

Question: What have an old country cemetery, a travelling stock-route resting paddock, a pastoral station's horse paddock, a roadside verge and railway track's verge got in common?

Answer: Remnant stands of native tree species, clumps of native shrubs and a ground cover of native grasses sometimes sprinkled with small flowering plants.

These small areas are often the only examples of the original vegetative cover of the whole area before European settlement and farming practices changed the land. And of course they are also often the only feeding and nesting areas for the native birds and animals which have managed to survive the great changes to their

once broad environment.

Remnant grasslands and woodlands have become a study for botanists and zoologists in an effort to understand species and manage these areas so that they flourish with wildlife.

The clearing of land in Australia began in earnest 200 years ago and despite the powerful evidence of what such clearing does to the environment, there has been an acceleration of clearing in many areas in the last 50 years. A biologist named Dominic Sivertsen who works for NSW NPWS is investigating the box tree and ironbark forests of the western slopes of NSW. He has found that the surviving remnants have declined in size dramatically in

the past 15 years as more land goes under the plough. The population of small marsupials and birds is declining because of loss of habitat and the 'endangered species' stage has arrived for some.

This dismal picture is slightly redeemed by the strange collection of sites listed in my opening question. These sites have been accidentally left natural and show us what we have lost and what is still disappearing.

It is urgently important that shires and town councils keep such sites in a natural state and make them into reserves as refuges and examples of once common species.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Baldur Byles and Kosciusko National Park

During the summer of 1931-32 Baldur Byles, a forester with the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau and a brother of the early environmental activist Marie Byles, carried out a six month period reconnaissance of the mountainous part of the Murray River.

His report formed the basis for more effective control of the fragile environment of the alpine areas on the New South Wales side of the Murray which eventually led to the formation of Kosciusko National Park. The park was later consolidated and extended because the Snowy Scheme needed strict control of erosion.

In the 1930s all the mountain country was held under some form of grazing lease which did not permit the destruction of trees or the lighting of fires in the summer months. In practice, lessees lit fires as often as they thought fit, talking about lightning, glass bottles and spontaneous combustion as a reason whilst having the knowledge of who lit it. If the fire happened to burn one of their own paddocks they had no proof, their only hope being that during the next summer they may be able to get even with the man who lit the fire. These fires destroyed thousands of acres each year.

Fires, in destroying the alpine woody scrub and alpine ash, initiated erosion in the high country and gulying in the freehold properties below 700 metres. The velocity of the degradation process was increasing in geometrical proportion to the extent that in areas where alpine ash had completely disappeared, landslides were occurring. Gutters and gullies were forming on the grass slopes of the Kosciusko tops and in the lower altitudes soil had been completely washed away from under fence posts. Ninety-nine per cent of the fires occurring were lit to clear away the collection of rank unpalatable grasses or to remove scrub from the stock routes.

At the time of the report approximately two-thirds of the area originally covered by the alpine woody scrub type had been com-

pletely cleared by fire. All the species forming this cover are extremely fire sensitive and once burnt out do not coppice and their powers of seed production are light. Where grass formerly grew it may thrive after a fire, however where the soil is too shallow the organic layer dries up and blows away to be followed by the loose sandy soil, leaving bare granite rocks and stones.

In only one place did Byles see a snow gum stand in the almost natural state, but even then this had been badly burnt around the butts. Although snow gums coppice abundantly after burning, successive burnings kill them altogether. In the more accessible country no signs of original stands were left. Where an original snow gum stand is killed by fire, fairly dense undergrowth comes in which, with further burnings, causes the scrub to disappear and a final stage of snow grass to be reached.

All of this clearing caused serious drying-up of the swamps in the plateau country: whereas 30 years previously a swamp in the parish of Jagungal could not be crossed by horse, now in an average summer a bullock dray could be driven across it. A change in climatic cycle was discounted as a reason for the drying-up as this was not shown from the rainfall records of the surrounding country.

When fire destroys an alpine ash stand a good crop of seedlings comes up in its place. However if fires occur at intervals of five to ten years, the new crop does not reach seed-producing age as mature trees need to reach a height of near 20 metres at an age of 20 to 30 years before producing seed.

Baldur Byles travelled on a saddle horse supported by one pack horse and because of the strenuous nature of the work and somewhat poor natural feed, frequent changes of horses were necessary. There were few tracks and the locals had little knowledge of areas which were not of direct interest to them for grazing. In many instances he had to walk

from the tops to a valley bottom which frequently involved 12 hours of arduous walking and climbing without the assistance of local guides.

Whereas today we are used to paved motor roads and fire trails, 60 years ago Kosciusko could have been defined, apart from the grazing, as an almost true wilderness area. The report lists access points: motor vehicles could only reach Possum Point on the Tooma River, Khancoban, Wollondiby near Jindabyne, Adaminaby, Snowy Plain on the Gungahlin and Kiandra. Access was gained by bullock teams to Wheeler selection and Round Mountain on a track described as very bad; Grey Mare and Mawsons hut by bullock team; and from Adaminaby, Pretty Plain and Geehi by pack horse. Groggin was reached by bridle track from Geehi. From Groggin a bridle track led up to Dead Horse Gap from where a poorly defined track led to the Pilot and on to Omeo. A recent track led from Geehi up to the main range at Kosciusko and a metre and half track from Groggin to Limestone Creek was impassable because of fallen logs and washouts. From Jindabyne a motor road led to Thredbo River and from there a bridle track led to Dead Horse Gap and on to Kosciusko. The remaining descriptions only cover bridle track routes and from them it can be seen how much of the alpine area has been opened-up with the aid of bulldozers and graders since World War Two.

It is well to reflect upon how much more of the Kosciusko plateau would have been degraded if Baldur Byles had not drawn attention to the serious erosion occurring in 1931-32. In 1931 Myles Dunphy did a grand walking tour of 200 km from Beloka to the Snowy and on to Mt Kosciusko and Thredbo. It would be probably no coincidence that Myles with his association with Marie Byles, both of the Sydney Bush Walkers, talked about the degradation of Kosciusko and formed his idea for

continued over

Feral pig control

Feral pigs have been present in Namadgi National Park since the 1960s. Numbers remained relatively small until the early 1970s but over the next decade their distribution increased until about 1980 when feral pigs could be found in most of Namadgi.

Mark and recapture programs and radio tracking programs were initiated in 1977 to gain information on movements and home range. Control programs undertaken from this time involved shooting on sight and extensive use of yard traps. These programs were conducted largely in the Cotter Valley and Gudgenby areas.

During May 1986, a cooperative exercise was carried out in Namadgi to test the effectiveness of poisoning with warfarin as a technique for the control of feral pigs. This involved the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Ecology, Bureau of Rural Resources, NSW Department of Agriculture, Canberra College of Advanced Education and Namadgi and other ACT Parks and Conservation Service staff.

This study demonstrated that warfarin could be effective in reducing populations of feral pigs and in this instance the estimated

reduction in the populations under study varied from 91 per cent to 100 per cent.

Warfarin acts as an anti-coagulant and causes internal haemorrhaging. It is the active ingredient in many commercial rat baits and was commonly prescribed for human consumption where blood clotting was a problem. It is particularly effective in the control of pigs due to their feeding habits whereby they ingest large amounts of roughage likely to cause gut injuries. The susceptibility of other animals and birds to warfarin is many times less than pigs.

One of the advantages of warfarin is that once ingested by an animal and metabolised, it is not passed through the food chain in the way that other poisons such as 1080 are.

Further cooperative research with CSIRO has indicated that the use of dogs is ineffective in controlling pigs and has also shown that May is the optimum time for a poisoning program in the southern ACT.

In 1987, the results of this research were put into practice. The traditional control methods of virtually year-round trapping and opportunistic shooting including

the use of dogs were abandoned in favour of a concentrated poisoning campaign, involving virtually all Namadgi staff for a period of about two weeks. This involved several teams of people who covered all areas of car and motor-bike access and a team covering the inaccessible areas of Namadgi from a helicopter.

This program was very successful and was repeated in 1988, 1991 and 1992. Since 1991, these programs have been applied on a regional basis and have involved staff from Murrumbidgee River Corridor, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, ACT Agriculture and Landcare working together with ACT Forests and local landholders.

This year the program also involved 20 staff from NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Victorian Department of Conservation and Environment who participated in order to gain knowledge of how feral pig control is undertaken at Namadgi National Park in the 1990s.

Brian Terrill
Manager, Namadgi

Baldur Byles

continued from previous page
a national park. Baldur, besides being a forester, also had a deep regard for the environment and because of his official position would use Marie as his public voice. Myles worked on his proposal for a Snowy-Indi National Park or Primitive Area and displayed his scheme at a public exhibition in Sydney in 1935. The war intervened and in 1943 he was requested by the Lands Department of NSW to develop further his National Parks and Primitive Areas Council scheme for a national park. Kosciusko National Park was declared in 1944.

Reg Alder

Namadgi work party

*Julie Lyne and Joss Haiblen
prepare to kill off another briar.
Photo by Reg Alder*



Saturday 10 October was a mild partly cloudy day, just right for some light outdoor exercise. This is exactly what work party members had as they cleared briars in the vicinity of the Yankee Hat track and rock art site.

Using secateurs or, better still, long arm loppers, NPA members cut the briars near ground level and park rangers applied weedicide to the open cuts. This 'cut and squirt method' is very effective against woody weeds. As briars are widespread in Namadgi, our one-day effort was restricted to a limited area but much was achieved. Both rangers and volunteers are to be commended on their involvement.

President's annual report 1991-92

August 1992

The year was once again a busy one for the National Parks Association (ACT) as we continued to promote objectives of protection of our environment both in the ACT and nearby areas of NSW.

Membership is a little lower than in previous years but we have a valuable core of members who have participated on committees, have enjoyed meetings and outings, have contributed to the Bulletin and have represented our Association in public forums.

The Association's financial position is sound. We have not had to change subscription rates thanks to donations, book sales and the grants from the ACT Heritage Grants Program. We continue to employ a part-time office secretary and a research administrative assistant and to engage an editor for the Bulletin. The archives have received attention and an important task for the new committee will be to determine an archive policy which will set out the objectives for the archive program, define the scope of the collection and set out uniform and consistent procedures for management and use of the archives.

The Australian Capital Territory

Namadgi

We have been pleased to participate in work parties with staff of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service on the Orroral homestead and kitchen. Some funds still held from a 1982 Heritage Grant were expended on stonework and the remainder of the grant will be spent on resurfacing the internal stone walls. Communication with the ACT Minister for the Environment and officers of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service resulted in several meetings to discuss issues related to the siting and construction of a car park for access to the Yankee Hat Aboriginal paintings on the old Gudgenby property and to the

demolition of Gregory's house in Orroral. The Association has been assured of stricter implementation of procedures set out in the Namadgi National Park Management Plan.

Discussion has taken place on the removal of the Boboyan pine forest, the impact of the Tri-state Alpine Walking Track on Namadgi, European and Aboriginal artefacts in the park, feral animals and plants, Boboyan roadworks and the impact of increased tourism following track construction and expansion of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service public education, walks and visits program.

Mulligan's Flat

NPA joined with six other ACT conservation groups to prepare a detailed submission to the Chief Minister for the reservation of an area of grassland and open forest called Mulligan's Flat in Gungahlin. The proposal was well received when presented to the Minister for the Environment in July. This is a valuable follow-up to this Association's Remnant Woodland and Native Grassland Report which emphasised the importance of preserving such areas.

Federal Government Inquiry—Protecting and Managing the National Capital's Open Spaces

Our submission and subsequent committee hearing highlighted values of the inner hills, the need for legislative protection for such areas, the impact of transport planning threats to some local environments and the need for funding commensurate with national capital goals.

Draft territory plan

This vital document received our attention mostly in aspects relating to urban open space (where emphasis on landscape values seemed to be at the expense of habitat, education, recreation and natural values) and to references to Namadgi and Tidbinbilla.



Further developments will be monitored by this Association.

Amongst other matters to receive attention in the ACT were West Belconnen, Lake Burley Griffin, Red Hill, the Molonglo Sewage Treatment Plan, volunteer Workers Insurance and a review of the Heritage Grants Program.

Outside the ACT

Jervis Bay

Our long-term interest continues with response to the Draft Plan for Jervis Bay National Park which raised key issues of sewage discharge, naval exercises, foreshore development, penguin spotting, dolphin chasing, camping restrictions and fishing. We will continue to liaise with other conservation groups working towards the larger Jervis Bay Marine Park, which would cover a terrestrial area and the waters around the peninsulas.

National telecommunications code

Our submission and meeting with consultants highlighted concerns that the code did not appear to provide sufficient protection for the environment or clear guidelines to contractors as Telecom and Optus expand their services.

National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity

The positive outlook of this document was appreciated by our Association but the practicality of implementation would seem to be a concern without adequate financial and human resourcing.

The National Parks Association also made major responses to the coastal zone inquiry, Kosciusko National Park Management Plan, the review of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act, ACT Decade of Landcare and the inquiry into tourism in the ACT.

All documents are available for perusal by members at the office in Acton. Thank you also to those members who contacted the Association to draw our attention to issues worthy of our attention.

Outings

Work parties for trail maintenance in Morton National Park were given a boost by a \$1000 grant from the NSW National Estate Grants Program. The outings program of long and short walks, pack walks, ski tours, canoe adventures and car camps continues with growing participation in mid-week walks.

Meetings

Monthly meetings at the Griffin Centre provided opportunities for the greater understanding of issues through lectures, illustrated talks and question times. Topics ranged widely from cultural heritage and national park management to national parks in the USA and Canada and what footwear we should wear when bushwalking.

Bulletin

Our quarterly publication, as well as being a record of Association activities and developments, acts as an important educational medium as it enables contributors to keep members informed about broad and local conservation issues.

Other groups

NPA was once again able to nominate a representative to the ACT Parks and Conservation Consultative Committee. This provides an important opportunity for

our Association to keep in touch with local environmental issues and to provide a regular contribution to park management, conservation and outdoor recreation in the ACT.

Two members continue as office-bearers on the Australian National Parks Council and take our submissions for debate at the annual conference.

Representatives attend quarterly meetings of the Conservation Council of the Southeast Region and Canberra and of the Environment Centre. Our participation with the ROCKS group (Renewal of Childers and Kingsley Streets) continues because of the location of the NPA office.

Two informative outings were provided by our Association in Heritage Week. Several joint outings with Kosciusko Huts Association and other ACT walking groups have enabled us to share perspectives and expertise.

Appreciation

I would particularly like to thank two committee members who are retiring: Tim Walsh who has convened the environment sub-committee so enthusiastically and ably, and Dugald Monro for his work in convening the Namadgi sub-committee.

Thank you to Sheila Kruse for working on the archives, to Adrienne Nicholson for supper at meetings. Laraine Frawley does a cheerful and efficient job in the office and Anne Taylor services our sub-committees very effectively. I won't name those who have put many hours of work into writing submissions, tramping around Namadgi, planning work parties, drafting letters and attending meetings, but the Association would not have the status it has in the conservation field without their efforts. I would, however, like to thank Syd Comfort and Les Pyke, both past presidents, whose practical assistance I have appreciated very much.

Several Association matters continue into our next year—the NPA archives, office accommodation, the Flora Guide and a review of our committee structure. We will

continue to monitor the Welcome Reef Dam, Jervis Bay, the Alpine National Park and issues relating to Namadgi and national parks nearby in NSW and we plan discussions on Aborigines and national parks with a view to developing a policy. I am sure that, with the continued support of you, the members, the National Parks Association (ACT) will maintain its important contribution to the conservation of our environment.

1991-92 Committees

NPA committee

President: Beverley Hammond

Vice-president: Dianne Thompson

Treasurer: Mike Smith

Secretary: Len Haskew

Past president: Les Pyke

Members: Tim Walsh, Syd Comfort, Neville Esau, Clive Hurlstone, Dugald Monro, Len Crossfield

Namadgi sub-committee

Convenor: Dugald Monro

Members: Les Pyke, Syd Comfort, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Reg Alder, Babette Scougall, Frank Clements, Len Haskew, Bob Story, Charles Hill, Phil Gatenby, Anne Taylor, Tony Winsbury

Environment sub-committee

Convenors: Tim Walsh and Len Crossfield

Members: Kevin Frawley, Bernadette O'Leary, Jane O'Donahue, Neville Esau, Di Thompson, Den Robin, Anne Taylor, Roger Green, Les Pyke, Andrew Lyne, Anne Forsythe, Peter Barrer, Tim Bull, Isobel Crawford, Graham Guttridge, John Paraskevopoulos

Outings

Convenor: Dianne Thompson

Members: Stephen Forst, Graham Guttridge, Les Pyke, Mike Smith, Ben Thompson, Gary Schneider, Len Haskew, Bob Story, Frank Clements, Matthew Higgins, Mick Kelly, David Hall, Chris Bellamy, Syd Comfort, Ken Johnson

Bulletin

Convenor: Beverley Hammond

Members: Phyl Goddard, Sonya Lenz, Roger Green

Beverley Hammond

The rear wall of Orroral Homestead

The rear wall of Orroral homestead is unique in a building of its age and may be described as a curtain wall in that it is hung from the top wall plate. Although the method of attaching the slabs to the wall plate is different to that usually employed, I recently saw a residence being constructed with its walls following the same principle as used in Orroral where the bottom ends of the slabs are kept out of contact with the lower wall plate. The ends of timber sections are particularly vulnerable to rot if encapsulated and not allowed to dry out.

I have advanced the idea that this feature of the design in the Orroral homestead was there from the time it was constructed and others have had the idea that the hangers only became necessary when the ends of the slabs became rotten and this support was necessary to stop the slabs falling out.

If the design is closely examined, together with the relationship of the slabs to their position in the wall plates, it can easily be demonstrated that the hanging system was there from the time that Archibald McKeahnie built it in the 1860s.

Both top and bottom wall plates were grooved to a depth of 5cm to house the ends of the wall slabs and it could be assumed that the slab lengths were cut (with an allowance for clearance) to fit into these grooves. Examination of the present location of the top ends of the slabs shows them to be pulled up by the hangers completely into the top wall plate groove. Furthermore, because the groove in the top wall plate has been stopped short in the wall plate about a half slab width from the building support posts, the end slabs have been checked out to allow the slab to come in contact with the wall plate over that half width. Hence the slabs are pulled up as much as they can be to be in contact with the upper surface of the top wall plate groove. Fitting tolerances or a positive shortening

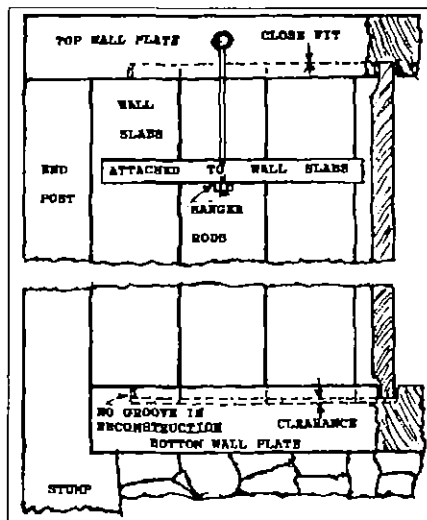


Diagram of the rear wall.
Drawing by Reg Alder

of the slabs would have provided a clearance between the bottom ends of the slabs and the bottom end of the groove in the lower wall plate. The hanger rods are generally at their minimum length, which shows that they were initially designed for a length which would ensure that the wall slabs would be housed up as high as possible into the top grooves. Furthermore, the ends of the rods show that they were never at a longer length.

Now consider if the lower ends of the slabs became rotten and the slabs came out of the groove—if this should have happened it would have been necessary to lower the slabs, not raise them. The present length would have been self-adjusting by gravity (if the supports were not fitted) until such times as the slabs fell out of the top groove. Construction of the hanging system would only have become effective if the slabs could have been pulled up to compensate for a loss in length equal to half a groove depth. If they had been pulled up all the way, as they are now, the slabs would have come out of the bottom groove.

Because of timber removed from the rotten ends of the slabs the contractor did not cut a groove into the new lower wall plate to

accommodate the lower ends of the wall slabs. The slab ends were trimmed to a uniform length and the bottom wall plate lifted to be in contact with the slabs. However, this omission of detail may be self-adjusting in saving the slab ends from accelerated rot for, when the new timber of the lower wall plates shrinks to a stable dimension, a clearance will be provided as the loss in width will be away from the wall slabs—*comme il faut!*

Reg Alder

Postscript

In the March issue on pages 12-13 there is a panoramic photograph of the homestead and its surrounding buildings. The shed on the right has four animal skins nailed to its wall—there has been some conjecture as to what species the animals might have been. In another section of the book from which the photo was taken there is a smaller picture of the shed, and they are fox skins.

Australian National Botanic Gardens

12 December 1992 to
31 January 1993

Extended hours and
Twilight Series

Gardens open 9am to 8pm daily

For information on the above,
please call the information officer
on (06) 250 9540 between
9am and 4.30pm daily.

Apology

We apologise to members who went to the Griffin Centre for an incorrectly advertised meeting on 22 October. General meetings are on the third Thursday of each month.

Paddling the Murrumbidgee

The Murrumbidgee, upon reaching Narrandera, flows out onto a vast flat plain, leaving behind the rolling hills through which it has threaded its way since leaving Lake Burrinjuck. The river in fact parallels the Sturt Highway, aptly named after the first European explorer to paddle down the Murrumbidgee and thence down to the South Australian coast on the Murray. This proximity, and a system of stock reserves, gives good road access to the river as far west as Maude, below Hay. The river, nonetheless, is flanked by an almost continuous state forest. So the paddler wends his way through the red gums which themselves attract a prolific bird population, much removed from the advent of the 20th century and the passing traffic on the nearby Sturt Highway.

Last Canberra Day (March) weekend, about a dozen NPA paddlers launched at Narrandera and paddled off to Darlington Point, some 120 kilometres downstream. The weather was idyllic and the Water Resources people at Leeton had organised a vigorous water release to ensure good speed for us. The rendezvous was the Lake Talbot Caravan Park at Narrandera, a pretty spot overlooking tranquil Lake Talbot. Narrandera is a quaint old town that clearly boomed in the days of gold and is now well worth visiting as a diversion on any trip further west. Our finishing point was to be the caravan park at Darlington Point, some two and a half days later.

The caravan park manager kindly offered to park our car after dropping us off at the beach at Milthorpes Reserve, as Lake Talbot is separated from the river by a major irrigation canal. So we launched into the mid morning sun and soon found ourselves paddling past the old town brewery before the road bridge. Then, of course, we paddled under the splendid Victorian iron railway

bridge at Town Beach before saying farewell to Narrandera. The big decision at lunch time was from which white, sandy beach to swim. Mid afternoon saw us approaching our first weir, Yanco Weir. The high river levels meant that we had some difficulty negotiating our way past the left arm. That evening saw us pulling up at Horn Beach complete with BBQ and picnic tables. We dined that evening with the sound of the Leeton Town Band playing military marches wafting through the red gums. That evening most of us found the soft white sand delightful to camp on.

Next morning saw us paddling past the old wooden Euroley Bridge by 9am. For the benefit of the gathering water skiers at the Leeton Water Ski Club, Jill and her crew gave a superb demonstration of running a plastic canoe into snags in mid river. Large plastic canoes are usually carefully designed to spend most of their time circling around rapids or for that matter anything else. Still they are good at moving large eskys. Kevin and Val had one of the faster fibreglass canoes on the trip, powered by two double ended paddles. Kevin, having in recent years been a lecturer in environmental studies and a past president of the NPA, was a mine of information on the effects of European settlement in the Riverina. His explanations of the land forms we were passing made the trip much more interesting.

Gogeldrie Weir was our next lunch spot. At this weir the NSW Public Works Department has done its best to slow the passing of river users with high steel fences *et al.* So it was a long hour before we had all the boats across to the other side. There we relaxed in the shade of a few willows and enjoyed the cool, passing waters. Then it was back to work paddling past places like Kingfisher Bend, Possum Patch and Punt Bend. By five o'clock we pulled into Cuba

Beach. There again we enjoyed a nice, white, sandy beach to camp on, picnic tables to eat off and a fire in the cool of the evening. Again we pitched our tents on the soft sand, after having pulled our boats well clear of the water—or so we thought.

During the night a large water release came down river and suddenly Tony's teenage son camped down by the water found himself and his bivvy bag on the move. Brian, an early riser, awoke at dawn to see that his kayak had moved on without him and he had to get a passage in Wayne's wee fibreglass canoe in order to retrieve it, which he did. So we all got an early start with the excitement.

Some beautiful old properties front onto the Murrumbidgee: Tubbo is very close to Cuba Beach while Kooba, a large rambling homestead which fronts on to the river, is obviously a very early example of a Riverina sheepstation homestead. It even has banana palms facing the river. We all savoured our last hour or so as we approached Darlington Point. Just before coming into town we all had a close look at the remains of the old paddle steamer wharf dating from last century, when no doubt Darlington Point was a focal point for the river trade. Today the old drawbridge from that era is now a museum piece next to the caravan park and in its place stands a new concrete structure, the last paddle steamer having come this way in 1946.

By 11.30am we had landed and loaded our boats onto the cars for our return to Canberra, some four or five hours away via the Sturt and Hume Highways. But there will be another trip. If this story takes your fancy, why not come on one of the NPA canoe trips listed in the program for this summer and visit a different Australia yourself?

Chris Bellamy

Calendar

JANUARY

- Wed 27 Outings sub-committee, 7.30 pm, 1 Fitzmaurice St, Kaleen. Mick Kelly, 241 2330.
Thursday 28 Environment sub-committee, 7.45 pm, 159 Chuculba St, Giralang. Tim Walsh, 274 1465 (w).

FEBRUARY

- Thursday 4 Committee meeting, 7.30 pm, 21 Hyndes Cr, Holder. Beverley Hammond, 288 6577(h).
Thursday 11 Namadgi sub-committee, 7.30 pm, 87 Shackleton Circuit, Mawson. Syd Comfort, 286 2578 (h).
Thursday 25 Environment sub-committee, 7.45 pm, 43 Fitchett St, Garran. Tim Walsh, 274 1465(w).

MARCH

- Thursday 4 Committee meeting, 7.30 pm, 21 Hyndes Cr, Holder. Beverley Hammond, 288 6577(h).
Thursday 11 Namadgi sub-committee, 7.30 pm, 87 Shackleton Circuit, Mawson. Syd Comfort, 286 2578 (h).
Thursday 25 Environment sub-committee, 7.45 pm, 159 Chuculba St, Giralang. Tim Walsh, 274 1465 (w).

NPA Bulletin

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General meetings

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

NPA Christmas Party Sunday 13 December

To be held at Orroral Picnic Area at 3pm. Bring barbeque or cold tea.

Thursday 18 February: Biodiversity protection

Dr Andy Turner, Assistant Secretary, Nature Conservation Branch of DASET, will discuss the role of National Parks in protecting biodiversity.

Thursday 18 March: Feral fox study

Peter Banks is a PhD student of the University of Sydney who has funding from the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding. He is currently working in the Orroral and Glendale areas of Namadgi. Peter will discuss aspects of his research *The effects of predation by the red fox *Vulpes vulpes* on native fauna in the Australian Alps National Park.*