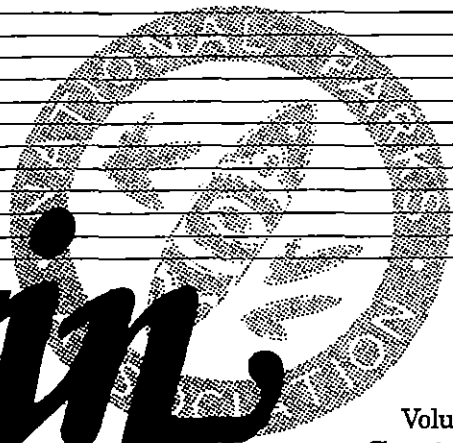


# NPA Bulletin



Volume 34 number 3  
September 1997

**NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED**



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**Yerrabi Track tenth anniversary**

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**National Parks: new visions for a new century**

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**Tidbinbilla before the nature reserve**

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### National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

#### Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage 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 and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

#### Office-bearers and committee

##### President

Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h); 6246 5516(w)

##### Immediate past president

Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)

##### Secretary

Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)

##### Treasurer

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Len Haskew 6281 4268(h); fax 6281 4257

Stephen Johnston 6254 3738(h); 6264 3967(w)

Robin Miller 6281 6314(h); 6201 2191(w)

#### Cover photo

*Approaching the rusting hull of the Svenor at Wreck Bay on Day 7 of the Tasmanian west coast wilderness walk are (l to r) Judith Webster, Annie Tedder and Di Thompson.  
Photo by Pete Tedder*

The NPA (ACT) office is located in Maclaurin Cres, Chifley, next to the preschool and is staffed by Dianne Hastie. Office hours are: 10am to 2pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

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#### Membership

New members are welcome and should enquire through the NPA office.

#### Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

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Concession \$15

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1 April and 30 June—annual subscription

#### NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, line drawings and photographs including colour prints are welcome and should be lodged with the office or Syd Comfort (02) 6286 2578.

#### Deadline for December issue: 1 November 1997.

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

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# President's report 1996-97



Once again NPA faced a number of challenges through the year, had some notable achievements, and continued its normal range of activities for members, the general meetings, outings and the quarterly Bulletin.

One of the major challenges was the use of mountain bikes in Canberra Nature Park. This had two major aspects: the holding of major events and daily, often individual, recreation. NPA has been involved in advising the Minister for the Environment, Mr Gary Humphries, on the location of major events. After site inspections we advised that both first choice (through the bushland of Black Mountain) and second choice (using the Casuarina Trail on Mt Majura) were unsuitable on grounds of environmental damage. We accepted a compromise for the final choice, using the firetrail from the top of Mt Majura into the Majura Pines,

with several deviations, and with measurement and repair of damage. Negotiations for another site for next year's event are continuing.

The event raised the profile of mountain bike use in Canberra Nature Park generally, and in particular the problems of safety and conflict that walkers have with unorganised recreational use of mountain bikes. NPA is taking part in a working group trying to identify clearly the problems and come up with solutions that can be made to work. Mountain bikes at present are permitted only on firetrails but in practice they are used on narrow walking tracks with damage to the tracks and risks to walkers. Parks and Conservation evidently do not have the resources to maintain the tracks or control the bikes.

The second major challenge was our continuing work to achieve the best possible management plans for ACT public land. During the year, NPA, with the Conservation Council of the Southeast Region and Canberra, prepared detailed submissions on the draft management plans for Canberra Nature Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. We also prepared a brief submission on the preliminary draft bushfire (fuel) management plan, and continued with consultations with Parks and Conservation on the

Murrumbidgee River Corridor draft management plan and presented a case for more detail in that management plan at a public hearing of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and the Environment. Members of NPA also took part in a workshop on management plans organised for the Environment Advisory Committee. I would particularly like to thank Ray Polglaze for his considerable contribution to several of the submissions, and Clive Hurlstone, Stephen Johnston, Robin Miller and the other members of the Environment and Namadgi Subcommittees who also made large contributions.

The committee was very pleased to see the new Environment Advisory Committee set up at last to advise the minister, and welcomed my participation in the Namadgi and Nature Conservation Subcommittee.

Although most of our efforts towards promoting the protection of fauna, flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage have been concentrated on the ACT, we also supported Vic NPA in their struggle to protect Wilson's Promontory from development and the NSW Government's declaration of new national parks in the southeast.

The efforts of NPA over a number of years have culminated in some significant landmarks this year. Felling of the Boboyan Pines began and we were very pleased to see the coordination and preparation for rehabilitation so ably handled by the project officer for Parks and Conservation, Ann Connelly.

Parks and Conservation and NPA combined to hold a ceremony to mark the completion of the work restoring Orroral Homestead. It is sixteen years since NPA first set itself the aim of seeing the homestead restored. Many members have worked on the site directly.

## Annual general meeting elects new committee

The Annual General Meeting of the NPA, held on 21st August, expressed warm appreciation of the work of the members of the 1996 committee with particular mention for retiring president, Eleanor Stodart. The following members were congratulated on accepting office for the coming year:

*President* Clive Hurstone

*Immediate Past President* Eleanor Stodart

*Secretary* Max Lawrence

*Treasurer* Mike Smith

*Members* Yvonne Bartos, Len Haskew, Stephen Johnstone, Robin Miller.

Treasurer, Mike Smith, in presenting the financial statements which recorded an operating surplus of \$9094, drew attention to an outstanding payment for the lichen study of \$6380 which reduces the surplus to \$2714.

Following a most interesting address by Anne Connelly on the Boboyan Pines rehabilitation project, members enjoyed a delicious gluhwein supper provided by committee members.

*Continued on page 4*

## President's report 1996-97 *Continued from page 3*

Others have lobbied to ensure that the work beyond our scope was completed. I thank Peter Hann and Craig Richardson of Parks and Conservation in particular for the success of the ceremony, and Mr Gary Humphries for officiating.

Another smaller ceremony was held during the year to mark the establishment of the Yerrabi Track 10 years ago. The track was another NPA initiative.

Throughout the year a varied program of talks was arranged for general meetings. Topics ranged from the lighthearted, in a talk by Tim the Yowie Man, to the more serious such as the pig program in Namadgi by Craig Richardson, and a vision for Namadgi by Dr Colin Adrian director of Environment ACT. Included also were reports from members who had travelled to areas of natural significance around the world, from Iceland to the Antarctic. I thank Len Haskew for arranging the speakers, Adrienne Nicholson for arranging the suppers and Frank Clements for ensuring the loud-speaker system was set up correctly at each meeting.

An ambitious outings program of one or more walks nearly every weekend and once a month on Wednesdays was ably arranged by Max Lawrence. Outings for members ranged from a trip to the Kimberleys, a 10 day walk through south-west Victoria, to many walks in the ACT's natural parks. Canoe and skiing trips, and outings with particular cultural emphasis added the variety. I thank the leaders who have made all the trips possible.

Len Haskew organised a weekend work party on the shearing shed at Tennant Homestead. Clive Hurlstone organised displays to promote NPA and ACT Parks at ACT Alive and the World Environment Day Fair, with new photos to keep the display up to date. The Christmas party, a special outing for all members, was held this year at Nil Desperandum, Tidbinbilla, and despite the problems of access was a great success.

Syd Comfort took over organising

the *Bulletin* by establishing a working group. I thank all members of the working group, in particular Syd himself and Graeme Wicks. Their efforts in editing and typing up material have cut the costs of producing the *Bulletin* significantly, and the decision to print it by photocopying cut costs further. Greenwords is still supporting NPA by preparing the layout at very reasonable cost.

As a necessary backstop to enable all this activity to run smoothly the committee has met regularly, with minutes being regularly recorded by Max Lawrence. In managing the office Dianne Hastie provides an important and valued service to the general committee, to sub-committees and to individual members when needed.

I thank the Treasurer, Mike Smith, for his work in managing the accounts. We are very pleased that we have ended the year without the expected deficit. Several factors have contributed to the turnaround. One has been the generous response of members to the appeal. As well as having a direct effect on NPA's financial position the response to the appeal shows members' support for the committee's work. Another factor has been the saving of costs on the *Bulletin*, and the third has been continued support by both federal and ACT Governments through the Federal Government Grants to Voluntary Organisations (\$4700) and ACT Environment Grants (\$15 000). The grants are backed up by a large in kind contribution from members, in time, efforts and donations. An ACT Heritage Grant, still showing on the books, is earmarked for a specific project, the preservation of the Nursery Swamp Aboriginal paintings. Without the government grants NPA would definitely continue, but we would not be able to provide such a full service of community input to the Government, or to publish such a quality *Bulletin* covering such a range of educational issues about conservation of natural and cultural heritage, or to distribute it so widely.

NPA is finishing the 1996-7 year in a strong position. We know there will be continuing work to ensure that the conservation of natural and cultural values remains of prime importance in the ACT. We anticipate that our main challenge for the coming year will be to work through the implications of the Aboriginal native title claims in the ACT to ensure that the conservation of natural areas is enhanced in a framework of harmony between different cultural groups.

Eleanor Stodart

### Heritage listing for brumby yards

Seven brumby trap yards in Namadgi National Park were gazetted in June to an interim ACT Heritage Places Register.

The citation states that detailed conservation and management planning policies are being prepared, with a recommendation that these policies be informed by Matthew Higgins's 1994 report, *Brumby Running in Namadgi*.

Brumby running is part of Australian folklore and bush culture, and the yards represent a tangible link with this historical and cultural theme. The once extensive activity is now extinct in the ACT mountains.

Graeme Wicks

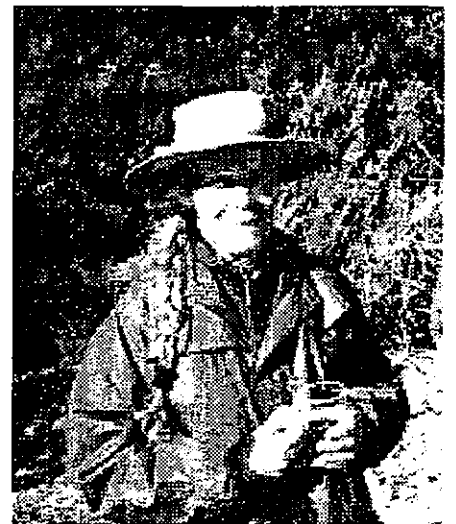
It is with regret that we record the death of Association member Dr. Peter Barrer on 17 May 1997. Peter became known to many NPA members through his membership of the Environment Sub Committee and his scientific work on the Lower Molonglo Valley for which he wrote a comprehensive ecological survey. He willingly shared his knowledge of this area and at the time of his death was associated with the NPA in preparing a further study.

# Yerrabi Track tenth anniversary

*Against the backdrop of Sentry Box Mountain and all the other high peaks of Namadgi, NPA members on June 14 enjoyed the social occasion of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the building of the Yerrabi track. Foul weather right up to Friday night made it appear that the outing would have to be cancelled, but the sun shone even though there still remained a chill wind. The track has worn well and is still popular with the public who come to see the vast panorama of the mountainous area of Namadgi. Photo Reg Alder*



*Yvonne Bartos, Reg Alder and Colin MacAlister enjoying Yerrabi sunshine  
Photo Max Lawrence*



*Joan Goodrum (above) and Andrew Lyne (top) at the anniversary. Photo Max Lawrence*

# National Parks: new visions for a new century

This two day conference organised by the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and the National Parks Association of New South Wales on 18-19 July 1997 was held in Sydney to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the association.

The conference was well worthwhile, well attended and well organised. The NCC and the NPA are to be commended for taking the initiative and for attracting a wide range of speakers. Almost all the papers were of a very high standard and were well presented rather than just being read. The government officers who spoke were frank and gave detailed descriptions of their ideas and policies to prepare for the challenges of the new century. The proceedings will be published shortly and will make fascinating and relevant reading for all those interested in protected areas and their management.

The Hon Pam Allen MP, the New South Wales Minister for the Environment, opened the conference by questioning whether the three million visitors who visited New South Wales national parks in 1994 were really advocates for national parks or whether most remained oblivious to the challenges facing managers. She announced that in conjunction with the 30th anniversary of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service later this year a symposium would be held similar to the recent United States Parks Service Vail Agenda - to examine how New South Wales can best plan the management of its national parks estate into the next century.

Robyn Kruk, Director-General, New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, followed her Minister with an equally stimulating address. She outlined recent improvements in the service, including

- the contracting out of non-core services such as garbage removal;
- greater on-ground presence;
- rangers now require university degrees;
- greater emphasis on plans of management and strategies to deal with the challenge of ecotourism;
- a clearly defined structure which takes into account the service's greater off-park responsibilities.

Ms Kruk freely admitted that conflicts about park use, such as the right of access by recreational groups, were increasing but emphasised that all these were dealt with in an ecologically sustainable development framework.

Peter Valentine from James Cook University gave a paper he and Peter Hitchcock had prepared dealing with such matters as

- how much land needs to be set aside to protect our biodiversity;
- the changing nature of conservation and the role private enterprise can play.

Peter Valentine showed how private enterprise can generate revenue for park management but warned against parks becoming places for the rich and the foreign. He explained how government enthusiasm for commercial operations in United States parks had now grown sour due to over-visitation and inappropriate development and activities.

The next session was headed *Parks - Public and Private, Corporate and Contracted*. Gary Sturgess, former head of the New South Wales Cabinet Office, gave a provoking and at times controversial paper on the need for the conservation community to accept the reality of the political world they now operated in. Governments have not, and will not, match the dedication of new parks with adequate resources. New means of managing protected areas need to

be developed. Overseas, anglers' and hunters' clubs have been driving forces in the creation of reserves. Change is coming and managers and conservationists need to harness this rather than merely oppose.

One of the most depressing papers of the conference was given by Doug Humman, Director, Victorian National Parks Association. Mr Humman gave a lucid and at times frightening account of how the current Victorian Government is threatening the long held basic assumption that national parks are first and foremost for nature conservation. He explained how the Government was allowing the commercialisation of Victorian parks to dominate planning decisions. The case of the development proposals for Wilson's Promontory demonstrates just how vulnerable the parks system is.

John Wamsley of the private enterprise Earth Sanctuaries chain of parks made a sweeping and unsubstantiated claim that traditional national parks had failed in their basic tasks and said privately funded and managed reserves could do much better.

Tourism in national parks was ably dealt with by Penny Figgis, Vice President of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Graeme Woyboys of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and Simon McArthur - a private consultant.

Ms Figgis warned of inappropriate developments within national parks and the danger of management being for commerce first and nature conservation second. She advocated an increase in the supply of national parks; the expansion of private parks, joint management agreements with private land owners and continued emphasis on the fact that 'birds do not sing for us alone' and that 'visitation to a park is a privilege not a right'.

Mr Woyboys outlined the extent of land in New South Wales reserved (5.4 percent) and explained that by the year 2005, 28 million visitors per year were expected. He explained how the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service was dealing with this issue by commissioning a nature tourism and recreation strategy. This will be launched for public comment shortly. Management will be based on ecologically sustainable use, new staff skills will be developed and management resources allocated to cope with the challenges of the inevitable increase in visitor numbers and impacts.

Simon McArthur said that the tourism industry could not afford to destroy the environment but traditional approaches to carrying capacity had failed to predict the impact of visitors. He explained how Kangaroo Island was being used as a test case to develop a system that monitors and manages tourism.

The state and future of Kosciuszko National Park was discussed by Peter Prineas, Nature Conservation Council Chair, Ashley Blondell, Director of Perisher Blue Resort and Robyn Sevenoaks, a member of the Snowy River Council.

Mr Prineas outlined the government subsidies given to ski resorts in Kosciuszko National Park in terms of road upgrades, soil conservation and sewerage operations, and the like. The Nature Conservation Council felt that no additional development should take place within the park and that Jindabyne should be the main accommodation centre.

The errors of the past can be corrected by the Master Plan which will permit a further 987 beds in the park, according to Mr Blondell. Ms Sevenoaks expressed the concern of local government over the increasing urbanisation of Kosciuszko National Park and the effect this was having on regional population centres. She said visitors to the park use shire facilities but do not contribute to their cost. She believes that local government should have

control over the resorts and be able to levy rates within the park.

Jim Starling of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and Adrian Davey, a member of IUCN's Protected Areas Commission, spoke to the topic *Resource Classification and Management Planning - do they matter?* Mr Starling explained the evolution of management planning within the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service and how management plans are used to provide a framework against which proposed activities can be compared to assess their sustainability.

Adrian Davey explained how national parks are only one of the ways in which biodiversity can be preserved and that new methods needed to be introduced to complement traditional approaches. He also emphasised that social acceptance of parks needed to be promoted to reduce unresolved conflicts over land use.

The role of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council and of regional committees was discussed by Robert Pallin, Peter Metcalf and Joy Pegler. It was generally felt that greater community involvement in national parks management was essential and Mr Pallin recommended the establishment of a board structure for the service.

*Parks for Biodiversity and Science* was discussed by Harry Recher of Western Australia and Dan Lunney of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service. Professor Recher gave an alarming report on the lost of species in Australia and the almost hopeless future we face in regard to preserving our biodiversity.

Dan Lunney pointed out that some scientists still do not acknowledge the importance of national parks and are often indifferent to the struggle to have them created and adequately managed. Scientists need to do more to ensure that future generations are given a magnificent system of

parks and reserves that encompass the nation's biodiversity and offer the chance to study parks scientifically in a setting that is also a source of inspiration.

Aboriginal owned and managed national parks and the need for more comprehensive marine reserves was dealt with by Aden Ridgeway of the New South Wales Land Council and Di Tarte of the Australian Marine Conversation Society respectively. Mr Ridgeway summarised the intent of the New South Wales *Aboriginal Ownership Act 1996*. He explained that only parks of cultural significance would be returned to Aboriginal traditional owners. He explained that joint management with the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service would allow traditional knowledge to be used in managing parks. He said that hunting and gathering would be carried out in accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and relevant plans of management. Public access was guaranteed and the land cannot be sold or mortgaged or declared threatened species hunted or collected. Ms Tarte pointed out that temperate waters around Australia are poorly represented in reserves and that all States are negligent in their dedication of new areas. Larger marine national parks are needed urgently and within these should be reasonable 'no take' areas.

The topic *Parks for the public, for cultural heritage and for wilderness* was addressed by Meredith Walker, an heritage planning consultant, Christine Bourne of Public Land Users Alliance and Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation. Ms Walker stressed the need for greater recognition of the cultural values of parks and the need to preserve evidence of human occupation. The other two speakers gave predictable speeches from very different corners.

**Timothy Walsh  
and Stephen Johnston**

# Tidbinbilla before the nature reserve

The many members and friends who attended General Meeting for July were informed and entertained by local historian, author and NPA member, Matthew Higgins, who gave an excellent presentation on the life and times of the Tidbinbilla Valley, in the days before the nature reserve.

Matthew began with some evocative slides and sound tapes that depicted Tidbinbilla as it is today, and he also advised us to climb The Pimple if we had not already done so, and enjoy the magnificent views that it offers.

The Tidbinbilla Valley has had a long period of human occupation with the Birrigai Rock Shelter site showing evidence of Aboriginal occupation over 21 000 years ago. European occupation is much briefer with George and Sarah Webb settling there in 1839. A plaque to commemorate their arrival has been erected in the nature reserve. The Webbs were followed by the Cunninghams and then in the 1890s came the free selectors including the Green, Hatcliffe and Maloney families. Descendants of some of these families still live in the Canberra area and their oral histories (recorded by Matthew) enlivened the presentation. The 1890s saw the first mail run and the opening of the Rock Valley School. This era also saw extensive clearing. By the 1920s the area had become predominantly pastoral with a lot of sheep and some cattle.

Matthew has recorded many fascinating memories of the pastoral era such as the droving of 6000 head of sheep from Wagga to Mt Domain Station by just the one family, including a two year old boy. And the people of those days weren't as concerned about contamination from sheep dips as we are today. It was common practice to place the dip close to a creek so that water could be easily obtained and then in times of heavy rain the dips overflowed into the creeks, which were also the drinking water for

neighbours downstream. One of the oral histories gave the information that 'running water cleans itself within 30 yards'. In times of drought and food shortage it was not unknown for cattle to be 'agisted' in the Cotter catchment. The legality was a relatively minor problem but getting there was a major hurdle as the country was so steep and rough that the horses had to be led! Stock were also taken to summer snow leases in what is now Kosciuszko National Park. Often no tents were taken on the long journey and everyone slept under tarpaulins with the smallest in the middle!

Queanbeyan was the 'town' for the Tidbinbilla locals and the journey was a long five hours by horse and cart. Indeed, the 'tyranny of distance' was a problem faced by all. Matthew told us stories of a midwife crossing flooded creeks to be in time for a birth and of the difficulties of getting help when a serious accident occurred. On the positive side most families were related in one way or another so if a creek flooded, for example, those caught could usually shelter with a relative for the time being.

Despite the relative isolation, the Tidbinbilla community enjoyed a good social life. Woolshed dances were frequent, especially in the days of the 'Queen' competitions and many properties had a tennis court. We heard of one lady, though, who gave up tennis forever after a mouse got into her underwear!

The valley also had its own 'industrial area'. There was a timber mill which supplied sawn timber for sale in Queanbeyan, as well as timber for local buildings and an extension to the Paddy's River bridge. The mill was located near the present day Walking Trails carpark but little evidence of it remains. In the 1940s and 50s eucalyptus distilling was carried out in, to us, would seem rather primitive conditions but because there were no 'overheads' it was considered to be more profitable than farming. The early distillers were Czechs followed



*Bessie Woods at Paddy's River, early 1930s. Photo Matthew Higgins*

by Yugoslavs. Reminders of this industry may be found at Nil Desperandum and near the rock wallaby enclosure.

Eventually the valley had a communications link to the rest of the world via a 'party line' telephone, which if reminiscences are correct was neither private, nor in a very good state of repair. The first bitumen road came with the construction of the Deep Space Tracking Station and the bitumen link to Tharwa came in the 1980s.

The old photographs and the recorded memories that Matthew presented really brought the past alive to those of us present at the meeting. Perhaps some of the most poignant memories were those that were used to conclude the presentation. Matthew asked former residents of the valley what Tidbinbilla meant to them. Here are a selection of the responses;

*...water and running streams were the essence of the place.*

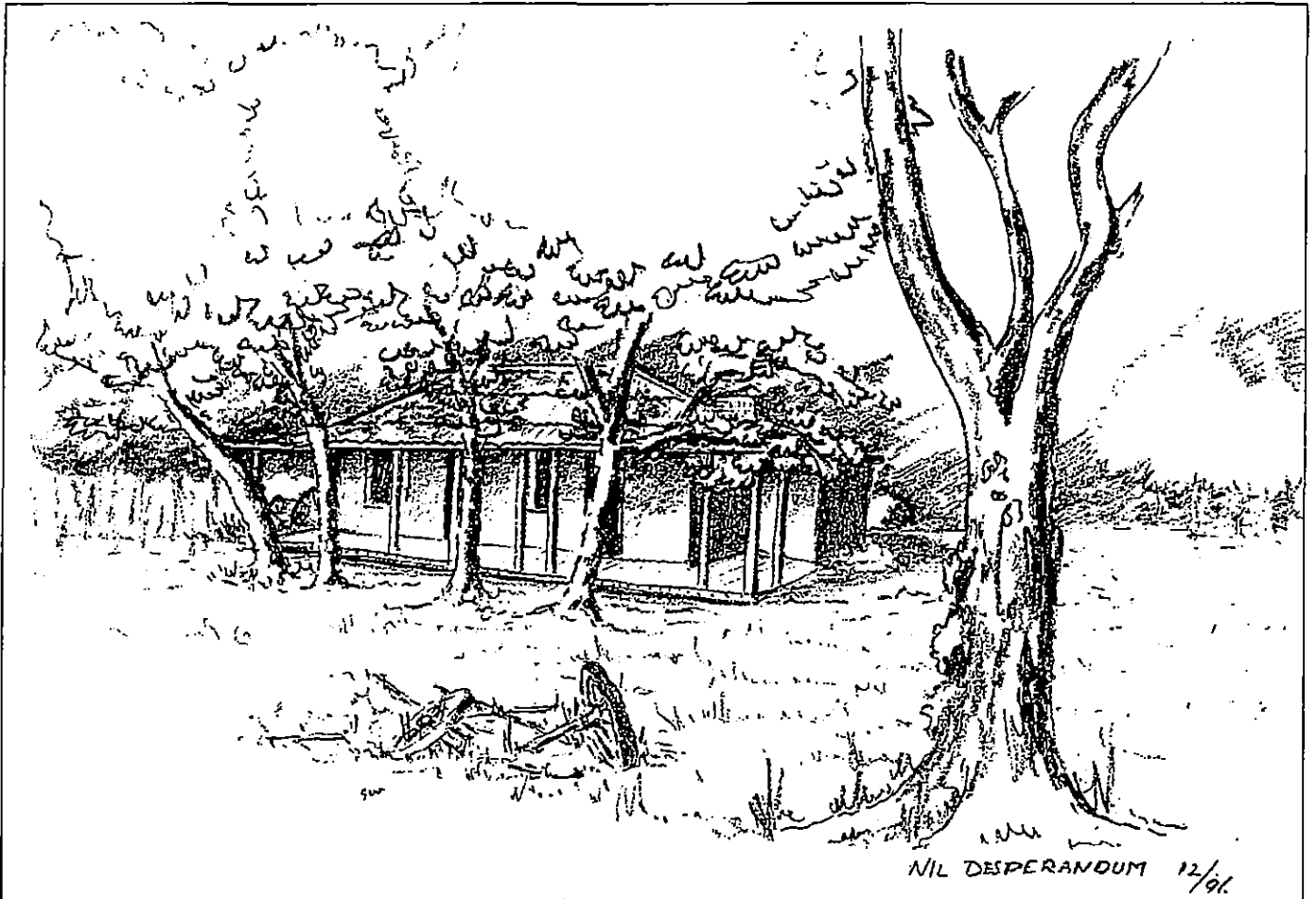
*...the sense of community and belonging.*

*...the views of the main range and the valley.*

**Len Haskew**



# Nil Desperandum



Chris de Bruine made this sketch of Nil Desperandum homestead during the Association's 1996 Christmas party. It was bought at auction later that afternoon by Jan and Phil Gatenby who have kindly made it available to the Bulletin.

Henry Gillman had Nil Desperandum built in 1892 and carved the name above the door. Eccentric and litigious, Gillman also had a poetic streak and of Nil Desperandum wrote:

*Tho' many cities I have seen, now I dwell 'neath the blue-gum tree,  
nor change would I for palace walls my home in forest free.  
Nil Desperandum is its motto - always mine in days that's past  
I've 'graved it on my homestead flag, and nailed it to the mast.*

**NPA Christmas Party 1997 Sunday, 14th December  
at Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve**

Car convoys will depart for the homestead from Tidbinbilla main entrance gates at 11 am and 12 noon. Picnic lunch (BYO), guided walks and Christmas auction.

Further details are in the Outings Program.

## This Creed

My cathedral is the alpine ash  
My chapel is built of granite tors;  
Lyrebird's song is winter's hymn,  
And communion is feast of forest  
scent .

On wet eucalyptus morning.

My prayer is the exclamation made  
On reaching the summit view;  
My aisle is the track that wends over  
And onward, upward and unending.

Baptismal streams bring renewal  
At the end of a long, hard day.  
And in the snowgum camp at dusk  
Is the peace that surpasseth all  
understanding.

M.H.

# Walking in the west coast wilderness — Part 1

In February 1997, a party from the Family Bushwalkers Inc. walked from Moores Valley airstrip on the west coast of Tasmania to Port Davey, taking 10 days. After two days' rest at Melaleuca, where we explored the surrounding countryside in day walks, the party moved to the vicinity of The Narrows crossing of the Bathurst Channel, with the intention of climbing the west face of Mount Rugby (770m) and familiarising ourselves with Bathurst Harbour.

The party included Kathy Saw, Judith Webster, Annette and Mike Smith, Di Thompson, Tim Walsh, David Large, and Pete and Annie Tedder. The trip lasted 16 days, excluding stopovers in Hobart.

In these mini-expeditions to an area as remote as the Tasmanian west coast, one of the key success factors is logistics: by that I mean

efficient transport to the start point, subsequent resupply, and safely extracting the usually tired party at the end.

The wild card on the west coast is the weather, for the region is fully exposed to cold fronts from the roaring forties which on average pass through every 5–10 days.

On this trip we used Par Avion for the initial and final air movements, and resupply at Melaleuca on Day 10. A float plane from Wilderness Air, Strahan, was also used for resupply on the fifth day, landing on the Giblin River for the first time. To cross the open waters of Port Davey to Melaleuca, Par Avion used the 17m vessel *Southern Explorer* on which we travelled in relative luxury after 10 days of walking.

The other factor necessary for a trouble-free and happy adventure was the mutual support and care

each would give the other if anything was to go wrong in such a remote area. So we took the trouble to meet several times informally to talk about gear, rations, the topography and the possible hazards. We also physically prepared by walking together several times before the trip.

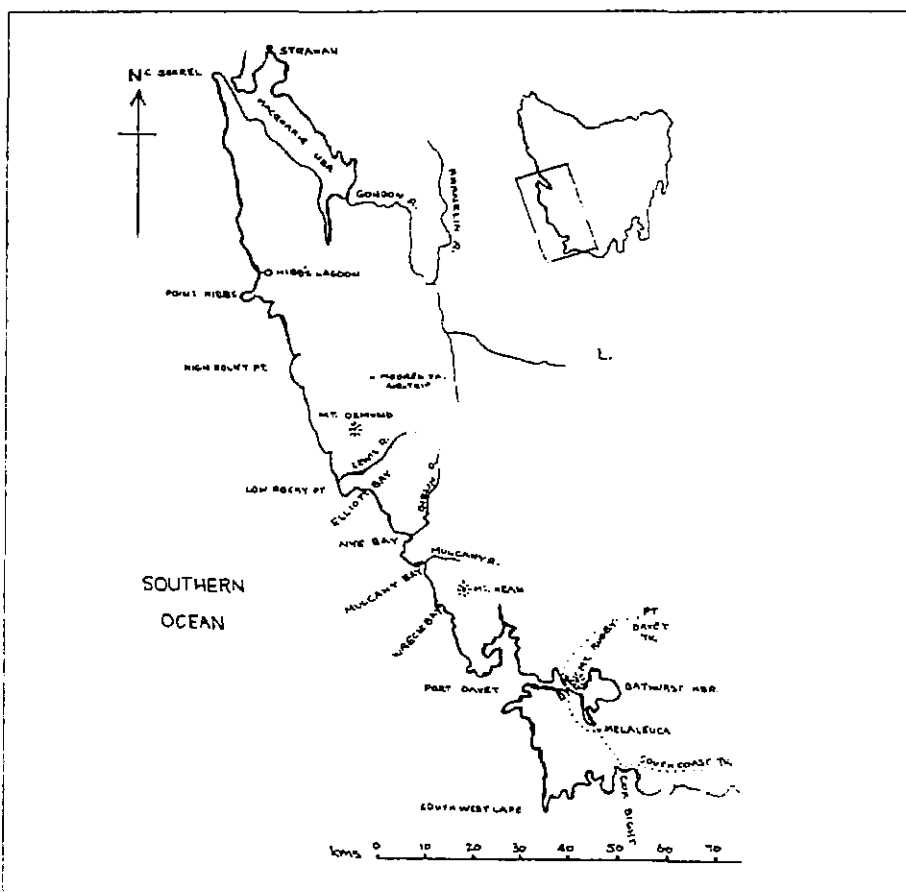
*An edited and greatly abridged version of track notes of the first eight days of the trip follows. Part 2, covering the second eight days, will be published in the next issue of the NPA Bulletin.*

## Day 1, February 7: Moores Valley to Mount Osmund

Our two light aircraft are airborne from Hobart at 1.35pm. Even though I had seen quite a bit of this country before my feeling of excitement is mixed with respect as we pass over the craggy mountains, broken country and thick wet forests. Lake Pedder floats by underneath, and the Frankland Mountains snake down to Scotts Peak Dam. A white slash of quartzite appears dead ahead and the pilot confirms it as our destination. Landing at 2.30pm, the pilots were off as soon as we could unload.

The airstrip does not appear to be maintained. Its heyday was mining exploration in the sixties. I walk away from the party, and the silence emphasises the derelict nature of the place. A leaning windsock, long since reduced to the circular frame without fabric, tells how infrequently this remote airstrip is now used.

We move off at 3.00pm south along the 4WD track. It is hot and humid, and the broad vista is of drab button grass and undulating hills. An occasional copse breaks the monotony. At 6.20pm we are to the east of Mount Osmund, and find a reasonably flat site and water at a creek junction.



# NPA outings program

September 1997 – December 1997

## 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.

## Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The outings covenor is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings to the association's office as soon as you think of them, with a suggested date.

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 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.

## 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

17 September Saturday daywalk 2C  
'The Bog' Refs: Michelago, Colinton 1:25  
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 6247 7285

The walk commences at the end of the bitumen at Gudgenby, crosses Dry Creek and climbs up and over the Booth Range to an interesting frost hollow known as 'The Bog' high on the eastern side. This is the site of an old stock camp, and features a hut (now collapsed) and fencing. The walk is entirely offtrack, involves a total climb of around 800 metres, and includes some patches of fairly dense scrub to get through. Book with leader. Numbers limited. 100kms, \$20 per car.

19 – 21 September three day packwalk 2A/C/E  
Monolith Valley Ref: Corang 1:25 000, CMW Budawangs  
Leader: David Large Phone: 6291 4830

Joint NPA/FBI walk. On Friday start at Wog Wog entrance, walk to Mt Bibbenluke camping area or cave. Daywalk on Saturday to Monolith Valley, returning via Mt Cole. Walk out on Sunday. Packwalking all on tracks, daywalk over footpads, rock and light scrub. Contact leader by 15 September. 250kms, \$50 per car.

20 September Saturday daywalk 4A/B/C  
Cotter Rocks Ref: ACT 1:100 000  
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 6241 2330

Meet at 8.00am at Kambah Village shops. A return walk of 23km from the Orroral gate, mostly along a fire trail and tracks, with some scrub on the final climb to the summit. 100kms, \$20 per car.

24 September midweek daywalk  
Namadgi graves  
Leader: Graham Scully Phone: 6230 3352

The September edition of our series of monthly mid-week walks. This walk will be the first of a number Graham is organising jointly with the Genealogy Society, the purpose being to visit and photograph graves in Namadgi. Other walks in the series will be held at approximately one month intervals October - December, and will be additional to our other scheduled monthly mid-week walks. Contact Graham for details.

27-28 September weekend packwalk 3A/B/C/F  
Mt Lowden – Mt Palerang Refs: Bendoura, Bombay 1:25 000  
Leader: Stephen Johnston Phone 6254 3738

An exploratory, mostly offtrack, walk along some very prominent mountains of the Great Divide – Lowden, Major and Palerang. An interesting range of vegetation, and spectacular views from Palerang. Walk will be deferred if weather unsuitable. Phone leader early for details and bookings. 120kms, \$24 per car.

28 September Sunday daywalk 2A/C  
Tennent Ridge Ref: Williamsdale 1:25 000  
Leader: Frank Clements Phone: 6231 7005

It is thought the Dunne brothers, for whom the Tennent Homestead was built, stayed at a hut high up on the ridge above the homestead while the homestead was being built. This walk visits this site, and entails climbing the first section of the Alpine Walking Track from the Namadgi Visitors Centre. The climb is 630m overall, and is steep in parts. Meet at the Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 40kms, \$8 per car.

3 – 6 October four day packwalk 2A/D/E/F  
Mt Namadgi Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000  
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 6241 2330

Commence at Orroral Friday afternoon, camp at or near Cotter Gap. On Saturday walk to Big Creamy Flat via Pond Creek and Little Creamy Flat, set up camp, climb and explore spot height 1711. Sunday climb Mt Namadgi, inspect rock arrangements, and if time and weather permit, explore towards Mt Burbidge. Return to camp. Monday return to cars via 'the rocky ridge' and Rendezvous Creek. Some tracks, firetrails, but also expect scrub and regrowth with some rock scrambling. Numbers limited, please contact leader by 25 September. 80kms, \$16 per car.

3 – 6 October four day packwalk 2D/E/F  
Moore Creek, William Falls Ref: Yalwal 1:25 000  
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone: 6286 2128

Joint NPA/FBI walk. An interesting and rugged section of Morton National Park. An exploration of Bundundah Creek, including at least two waterfalls. Some scrub, rock hopping and scrambling; climbs to 300m. Should be lots of spring flowers. Contact leaders before 25 September for details. 400kms, \$80 per car.

12 October Sunday daywalk 3A  
Orroral Loop Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000  
Leader: Beverley Hammond Phone: 6288 6577

Climb on fire trail from Orroral Gate. After 10kms descend on Smokers Trail, then return down the valley, visiting yards and ruins of Rolly's Hut. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 80kms, \$16 per car.

18 and 19 October  
Namadgi work party  
Leader: Len Haskew

Phone: 6281 4268

This work party is planned to be a cut and jab attack on briars. We've done a lot of this work in the past with a great deal of success, but, even so, a lot remains to be done. Come for one or both days. If you decide to stay for both, at this stage it would seem that we'll be able to camp reasonably close to our cars. Please phone leader to register your participation.

18 October Saturday daywalk 1A  
Black Mountain Nature Ramble Ref: Canberra Street Directory  
Leader: George Chippendale Phone: 6281 2454

Meet at 9.30am at the Belconnen Way entrance to Black Mountain Reserve, several hundred metres east of Caswell Drive. A morning ramble to learn something of the plants of the Reserve. Suitable for all ages. Bring your morning tea. Finish before lunch.

20 - 24 October packwalk 2A  
Great North Walk Ref: GNW Discovery Kit  
Leader: David Large (from NSW CALM) Phone: 6291 4830

Joint NPA/FBI walk. Four/five day packwalk from Hawkesbury River to Yarramalong. Total walking distance about 45kms, plus side trip to Somersby Falls. Public transport will be used to get to and from the action. Contact leader before Monday 13 October.

22 October Wednesday daywalk  
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2984

The October edition of our series of mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

25 October Saturday daywalk 2 C/D  
Ginini Falls Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000  
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2985

Meet at corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Road at 8am. Walk from Mt Franklin to the 180m falls and return. A demanding and constant 550m descent and ascent through fallen timber. 120kms, \$24 per car.

26 October Sunday daywalk  
Bushfold Flats Ref: Williamsdale 1:25 000  
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Follow the Alpine Track from Booroomba Rocks carpark to Bushfold Flats, visiting Reid's and Russ's Huts, and lunching on Blue Gum Creek. Return the same way, or alternatively return via Tennent fire trail and a short car shuffle. 60kms, \$12 per car.

1 - 2 November weekend canoe trip  
Tallowa Dam (Kangaroo Valley)  
Leader: Kevin Frawley Phone: 6271 2883 (w), 6282 2973 (h)

Flatwater trip up Shoalhaven River arm for overnight camp and return. Impressive gorges, campsites with sandy beaches. Canoe hire in Kangaroo Valley if required. Suitable for fit beginners. Phone leader by Wed 29 October. 430kms, \$86 per car.

2 November Sunday daywalk 2A  
Brandy Flat and beyond Ref: Michelago 1:25 000  
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30am. A pleasant walk on fire trails from Gudgenby back to Glendale with lunch at Brandy Flat hut. Fine views of both the Booth and Billy Ranges. An initial descent followed by a steep climb, but thereafter easy walking. Suitable for beginners. Small car shuffle involved. 90kms, \$18 per car.

8 - 9 November weekend packwalk 2A/D/E  
Southern Namadgi Peaks Ref: Yaouk 1:25 000  
Leader: Mick Kelly Phone: 6241 2330

The walk starts from Old Boboyan Road carpark through pines to Gudgenby Saddle, where we will take a sidetrip (climb!) to Mt Gudgenby summit. From the saddle we will head on into the Naas catchment, and set up camp on Sheep Station Creek. Sunday we will climb Sentry Box, and return to cars via Old Boboyan Road and Hospital Creek hut. Walk is mainly on tracks and trails, but will involve some challenges. Total distance is about 23kms, and there are steep climbs (without packs) of up to 600m. Suitable for fit beginners. Contact leader by 29 October. 100kms, \$20 per car.

9 November Sunday daywalk 1A  
Lowden Forest Park Ref: Batemans Bay Forestry Map  
Leader: Beverley Hammond Phone: 6288 6577

Meet at Canberra Railway Station at 9am. Drive via Captains Flat to Lowden Forest Park in Tallaganda State Forest, and take some of the short signposted walks along ferny creeks before settling down to a nice barbeque or picnic lunch. Bring your own everything (including salt). The Park is the site of an old logging operation, and the Forestry Commission has preserved some relics, including a water wheel which was used to generate electricity. 120kms, \$24 per car.

15 to 23 November extended packwalk 3A  
Hume and Hovell Track (southern end) Ref: H&H guide book  
Leader: David Large Phone: 6291 4830

Joint NPA/FBI walk. Walk from Henty Angel trackhead near Tumberumba to Woomargama. Total distance is 122kms, about 7-8 days walking. Expect to walk up to 20kms per day. Transport to and from the action will be via public transport as far as possible: Countrylink to Tumberumba, Vic Rail from Woomargama. Logistics require that leader receives expressions of interest no later than 1 November.

15 November Saturday daywalk 2A/C/D/E  
The Pimple Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000  
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 6247 7285

Perhaps the best daywalk in the ACT. We shall ascend by the Red Hill track, then the ridge to near Tidbinbilla Peak. Then to the Pimple and up to Tidbinbilla Mountain. Descent via Lyrebird Ridge. Steep climbs and mostly offtrack - not for beginners. Book with leader. 70kms, \$14 per car.

16 November Sunday afternoon tea  
Syd and Barbara's Garden  
Leader: Syd Comfort Phone: 6286 2578

Spend a quiet afternoon browsing and afternoon tea-ing around Syd and Barbara's award winning garden in Mawson. Their address is 87 Shackleton Circuit, and NPA visitors are most welcome after 2.30pm. Take the opportunity for a social get together with your fellow members.

23 November Sunday daywalk

Bungonia Gorge

Leader: Mike Smith

2A/E

Ref: Caoura 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at the netball carpark near Southwell Park, Northbourne Avenue at 8.00am. A steep walk on track down to the Shoalhaven River, then downstream to Bungonia Creek. Follow creek upstream through spectacular Bungonia Gorge. Climb (400m) out via the steep 'Efflux' route. 220kms, \$44 per car.

26 November Wednesday daywalk

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone: 6288 4171

The November edition of our series of mid-week walks. Phone leader for details, which will be determined nearer the date.

30 November Sunday stroll

Brooks Hill Reserve

Leader: Len Haskew

1A

Phone: 6281 4268

Meet at 10.00am at Canberra Railway Station for a drive to Bungendore, and a leisurely stroll around Brooks Hill Reserve which is just above the town. The Reserve is 71ha of crown land set aside to conserve a remnant of native vegetation and its wildlife habitats. It is managed by the Brooks Hill Reserve Trust, who invite visitors to use the Reserve for passive recreation, such as walking (no need for distance or terrain grading!), bird watching, nature study and other forms of quiet enjoyment of nature. We'll have lunch at the Reserve and afternoon tea somewhere in Bungendore. 90kms, \$18 per car.

7 December Sunday daywalk

Reg Alder's 80th

birthday bushwalk

Leader: Matthew Higgins

1A/B

Refs: Yaouk, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6247 7285

Come and help us celebrate the big 80 for our beloved snowy-haired icon of the mountains. Walk will commence at Yankee Hat carpark and proceed to falls on Middle Creek, with side trips. A gentle walk conducive to the celebratory occasion. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 100kms, \$20 per car.

13 December (Saturday)

Tidbinbilla work party

Leader: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

Maintenance and cleaning up work will take place in the Nil Desperandum homestead and immediate environs, not only with a view to getting ready for tomorrow's Christmas party, but also with a view to helping the long term conservation of this wonderful remnant of our bush heritage. Those who wish to do so may be able to sleep overnight prior to the Christmas Party. Phone leader for details and to register your participation.

14 December (Sunday)

Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

Following on from last year's happy occasion, this year's Christmas party will again be at Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Because of access problems (a number of locked gates through private property), it will again be necessary to form car convoys starting from just outside of the main entrance gates to TNR. Convoys will leave from this venue at 11am and 12noon sharp, so don't be late or you'll miss out. Convoys will also be organised for the trip out, starting at 3pm. Bring a picnic lunch, and any goods or gear you want to sell in our auction (and money to buy other peoples' stuff that takes your fancy!). There will also be guided walks around some of the Nil Desperandum environs, which include a eucalyptus still, a garden, and even a very old koala enclosure!

21 December Sunday daywalk

Long Point

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/B

Ref: Caoura 1:25 000

Phone 6288 4171

Meet at the netball centre just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Avenue at 8.00am. Drive to Long Point near Marulan, then walk down a track into the Shoalhaven Gorge. Excellent views of the river on the way down. A swim, and then lunch on a sandy beach. A long haul back up to the cars. 250kms, \$50 per car.

4 January Sunday walk

Mt Gingera via Stockyard Spur

Leader: Col McAlister

3A

Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

A challenging 900 metre climb for fit walkers. Starting from Corin Dam car park we go to Pryors Hut and then (optional) on to Mt Gingera. The first 500 metres is unrelentingly steep but the rewards, particularly the views and changing vegetation, make it all worthwhile. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. 120 kms, \$24 per car.

Victorian National Parks Association Conference

**Victoria's National Parks The Next Century**

to be held at the University of Melbourne

24 - 25 October 1997

Through plenary sessions and workshops, this important conference will consider issues vital to the management of national parks into the next century.

Further details may be obtained from:

PR Conference Consultants

PO Box 326 Deepdene Delivery Centre, Vic, 3103

Telephone (03) 98169111 Facsimile (03) 98169287.

## Treasures in timber

If you are at all interested in our native trees (and non-native trees) and the beautiful timber that we have growing around us, you should get along to the 15th annual exhibition of the Woodcraft Guild of the ACT, 'Treasures in Timber', to be held from 20 to 28 September 1997, 10 am to 4 pm, in the Crosbie Morrison Building, Australian National Botanic Gardens. In conjunction with the exhibition, Botanic Gardens staff will conduct tours of the gardens pointing out species used in items in the exhibition. If you would like to know more, please contact the Guild Secretary on 6281 6548.

Ken Free



*This was called 'rest and resupply'. While some held the float plane steady, others formed a human chain to unload supplies at Giblin River on Day 5. Pictured are (l to r): Mike Smith, Annie Tedder, Annette Smith, David Large (in background), Di Thompson, Tim Walsh and the Wilderness Air Pilot, Graham Bird. Photo by Pete Tedder*

*Day 2, February 8: Mount Osmund to Elliott Bay (14km, 7hrs)*

The ground falls gently towards Low Rocky Point and we get our first glimpse of the sea. The belt of timber along the Lewis River is soon apparent. The trail, which has degenerated, suddenly plunges until a left turn displays the paradox of an iron bridge across the deeply indented Lewis River.

Over lunch, we agree that a campsite on the coast is preferable to this dank site, so we follow a faint track to a point where we can observe Elliott Bay, then down a ridge onto the beach.

After dinner, Judith entertains us with some poems until around 7.00pm, when fatigue and increasing rain sends us off to our tents.

Throughout the day, we had startled several ground parrots and four yellow-tailed black cockatoos. Not much else in the way of fauna, except the ever-present Tasmanian currawongs.

*Day 3, February 9: Elliott Bay to The Pophole (6km, 5 dilatory hrs)*

The Pophole is a tiny cove at the northern end of a long sweep of pebbly beach. A thick fringe of coast

tea tree comes right down to the beach. Annie and I decide to find a route through the scrub to the button grass, because tomorrow walking along the rocks will no longer be an option. Ten minutes later, we emerge onto the button grass plains with Elliott Hill in full view. We return and have a cold wash together as we may be carrying leeches, which are out in force after the rain.

About 5.20pm we are chatting around the fire, when a vigorous squall comes through the camp and the temperature drops rapidly. At the cove, white horses are in full gallop, and the wind has backed to the SW. By 7.00pm, the continuous rain chases us to an early bed, but not before storm guys are erected.

In retrospect, the weather of the last 24 to 36 hours is a benchmark example of the approach of a typical cold front.

*Day 4, February 10: The Pophole-Nomeme Creek on Nye Bay (8km, 8hrs)*

Off by 8.15am. Easily reaching the button grass plains, we push on through occasional light rain to Unmarrah Creek, which is deep-set in a steep-sided gully populated by

tea tree and leatherwood forest up to 20m high. Typically, the creek is guarded by a fringe of thick bauera and tea tree scrub which once pierced, perhaps with some effort, leads into a forest of mature trees with such a thick canopy that little secondary growth is observed and movement down the sides of the gully is easy.

The wonder and beauty of the forest and creek make it a suitable place for lunch. As we emerge from the fringe scrub, moving towards Nomeme Creek, we observe that blue skies are with us and the wind is backing S-SW.

Finally we overlook the bay and observe the belt of timber indicating the creek about 800m distant. Rather than take the inland route – we are fed up with button grass – we head for the beach directly. It is a mistake because it leads us into a thick wet swamp in which progress is slow and tiring.

Several things must be done before tomorrow's resupply operation. The plan is that Wilderness Air will land a float plane on the Giblin River. This is an inaugural landing for them, and an important event for us. Moreover, the day after, we must cross the Giblin River, and preparing for this hazard has been an important part of our planning.

Mike, Tim, Annie and I walk to the mouth of the Giblin River and test the crossing. We are relieved to find it an easy 30–50m chest-high wade with hardly any current. On the way back, the rendezvous for the resupply is checked. It is on a bend of the river where there is a large flat sandy bank between two huge dunes. The river is about 30m wide and no snags can be seen. When their engines are off, float planes have a lot of windage and are very awkward to control by hand. I check the current and make a mental note to ask the stronger members to give this task their priority.

Around the campfire, we discuss the resupply operation and agree on who does what. There is an air of expectancy and excitement in us all.

*Continued on page 18*

# Nursery Swamp Aboriginal rock art site

In 1996 the ACT Parks and Conservation Service commissioned a plan of management for the Nursery Swamp Rock Art Site. The plan was prepared by Dr Kelvin Officer who was able to draw upon his long association with the site including his Namadgi pictures report of 1989.

The plan of management was contributed to and endorsed by the Ngun(n)awal custodians. The recommendations have been received with enthusiasm by staff at Namadgi National Park and 1997 has proved a busy year of implementation.

The recommendations flow from the determination that the site merits a high level of protection due to its:

- spiritual significance to the custodians, and
- scientific significance as a reference site in contrast with the more impacted upon rock art sites at Yankee Hat and Rendezvous Creek.

A major recommendation was to conduct a specialist study into the factors promoting lichen growth on the art, with a view to developing a control program. The NPA was successful in securing an ACT Heritage Grant for the first stage of this study (see NPA Bulletin June 1997). The first observation period took place over 10 days in May 1997. The final three observation periods depend on the news of a Stage 2 ACT Heritage Grant. I am confident of a

successful outcome as a result of Clive Hurlstone's commendable efforts on behalf of the NPA.

The remainder of the recommendations are being implemented by Namadgi staff. They are:

- to establish a monitoring program including photographic and on-the-ground techniques,
- to continue the policy of not promoting the site to the public,
- to contact Dr J Flood and her publishers regarding non-promotion,
- to obscure the access track, particularly where it leaves the Nursery Swamp walking track and for several hundred metres thereafter,
- to contact organised groups encouraging them to use alternate sites and to restrict group sizes,
- to involve the local Aboriginal community in activities relating to the site,
- to provide a two-stage signage approach to the site which both provides interpretation and reinforces policy including restriction of group size to six people, and
- to install a visitors book near the site.

I am happy to say that all these measures have been either initiated or completed.

The plan of management's recommendation to restrict group sizes at the art site relates to protection of the site in several ways. Research elsewhere in

Australia in shelters of similar size to Nursery Swamp has shown that groups of over six can inadvertently come in contact with the art while jockeying for position. The plan recommends a maximum of six people at the shelter and the approach signage will remind groups to divide their groups accordingly.

In addition, staff at Namadgi feel that the object of keeping the access track indistinct would be well served by keeping group size small in the first place. This point was stressed in the letters to organised groups. The plan flags 600 people per year as an acceptable level of visitation after which site hardening would be necessary. This would potentially compromise the site's status as a reference site. The visitors book will be monitored as an index of visitor numbers.

There is great scope for confidence in the future integrity of the site in the extremely supportive early feedback from organised groups.

Recognising NPA members' long standing interest in the art site and the Nursery Swamp area, I welcome any comments or offers of assistance.

**Joss Haiblen, Ranger  
Namadgi National Park**

*(Since this article was written, NPA has been awarded a grant for Stage 2 of this project - Editor)*

## Obituary

### Graham Gladstone Gutteridge

Graham passed away, at home, on 16 August 1997 aged 50 years. A long time member of the NPA, he will be remembered by walkers for his enthusiasm for bushwalking, the cracking pace he often set and his sense of humour on the track. Members will look back with pleasure on the good company he brought to our walks. He was an enthusiastic supporter of NPA work parties and on many occasions helped out with his technical skills. He drew particular satisfaction from seeing the completion of the Orroral Homestead restoration in April this year, reflecting his involvement in this task.

Graham was elected to the NPA Committee in August 1992 and over a period contributed to the work of the Environment Sub Committee. He was also involved in other walking and environmental groups in Canberra. He will be sadly missed.

**Syd Comfort**

## More species added to ACT threatened list

The ACT Government in June added five bird species and the flightless Perunga Grasshopper to its list of threatened species.

In the ACT, the classification *vulnerable* to extinction or *endangered* with extinction indicates the degree of threat to the well-being of a species in the wild. Ecological communities may only be declared as *endangered*.

The new additions bring to 19 the number of species in the ACT listed as being *vulnerable* to or *endangered* with extinction. Natural temperate grassland and yellow box/red gum grassy woodland are both listed as endangered ecological communities.

The newly listed birds are the Regent Honeyeater (endangered), and the Swift Parrot, Superb Parrot, Hooded Robin and the Brown Treecreeper (all vulnerable).

The Perunga Grasshopper (vulnerable) joins the Golden Sun Moth (endangered) to become the second insect on the list.

Reptiles listed as vulnerable are the Striped Legless Lizard and the Corroboree Frog. The Eastern Lined Earless Dragon is listed as endangered.

Aquatic species include the Macquarie Perch and Trout Cod (endangered), together with the Two-spined Blackfish and the Murray River Crayfish (vulnerable).

Plants on the list comprise *Gentiana baeuerlenii* (a subalpine herb unique to Namadgi), *Prasophyllum petilum* (a leek orchid), the Button Wrinklewort, and the Small Purple Pea. All are listed as endangered.

Although listed as a vulnerable species, the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby may no longer occur in the ACT. It was once relatively plentiful in places like Tidbinbilla and Namadgi.

Graeme Wicks

## Wilson's Promontory – The battle goes on

The Management Plans for Wilson's Promontory National Park, (see article in the June issue of the Bulletin) were finally released in early July and show that the Victorian Government has learnt little from the enormous public outcry which greeted the release of the initial plans. The government remains determined to commercialise the park by allowing private funding of major infrastructure developments. In the words of Doug Humann, at that time director of the Victorian NPA, 'this is about a Government prepared to sacrifice Victoria's premier national park and the integrity of the whole park system on an ideologically driven agenda to allow private enterprise the opportunity to establish whatever profit can be made.' Some of the more objectionable proposals include:

- allowing major privately funded developments inside the park; for example the 45 bed privately owned exclusive cabin complex at Tidal River and a lodge near Halfway Hut on the track to the lighthouse,
- the track being put in for part of the Great Prom Walk which will carve its way through the high quality southern wilderness from the lighthouse to Waterloo Bay,
- expansion of the Development Area for Tidal River.

A number of important questions about the Victorian government's proposals remain, including:

- what is the specific design and location of the new 45 bed commercial cabin complex and Halfway Hut lodge? How will this commercial development be serviced?
- what will be the design of the upgraded food services at Tidal River?
- what are to be the additional buildings at the entrance? What

will be their environmental impact and why can't they be put on land immediately outside the park?

- why hasn't the lighthouse reserve been incorporated into the park?
- how will commercial operators be selected and how will their activities be controlled along the Great Prom Walk?

Certain aspects of the plan can be supported and welcomed as useful conservation measures, according to VNPA, but the commercially driven development proposals do not augur well generally for the Prom and the future of nature conservation in Victoria. What is happening in Victoria makes it all the easier for all state and territory governments to allow the incremental commercialisation of our cherished national parks. Once allowed a foot in the park door, developers will always want just one more expansion to ensure 'commercial viability'; as the snow fields continue to show. Do your bit *now* by writing to the Victorian Minister for Conservation, the Hon Marie Tehan MP, Parliament House, Melbourne expressing your concern at her commercial proposals for Victorian national parks, and the Prom in particular.

Timothy Walsh

### Red dot

Does your NPA Bulletin have a red spot on the address label? If it does, this will be the last Bulletin you receive until you renew your membership. If you have already paid and have a red spot, please contact Dianne in the office on 6282 5813.



# PARKWATCH

## Buying back the bush

Acquisition of land for conservation purposes, is an example of a voluntary conservation measure – a non-profit organisation that arranges acquisition through public donation to the Australian Bush Heritage Fund. The fund owns and manages reserves of high conservation value in four states, including two forest blocks at Liffey in Tasmania that were destined to be wood-chipped, fanpalm forest on the Daintree, one of the largest areas of native vegetation in the Bega Valley in New South Wales and some recently purchased bushland in the Kojonup Shire on Western Australia.

Kojonup is one of 35 shires in Western Australia with less than 20 per cent of its original vegetation remaining. The unspoilt bushland on the block is predominantly *wandoo* woodland, which elsewhere has been extensively cleared. It also supports seasonal wetlands, heath, banksia woodland, mallee and sheoak forest and around 200 species of flowering plants. The vast majority of its plant species are unique to south-west Western Australia. Inhabitants of the reserve include bats, numbats, the Western brush wallaby, short-beaked echidna, western pygmy possum and up to 80 bird species.

*Habitat* April, 1997

## What have we lost already?

Australia is one of only 12 'megadiverse' countries that account for 75 per cent of the total biodiversity of the planet. We have more than a million species of plants and animals but less than 15 per cent have been scientifically described. Of particular significance is the high proportion of our species that are *endemic*, that is, found only in Australia. For example, about 84 per cent of mammals and 93 per cent of frogs are found nowhere else in the world. There are also whole families, that is groups of species, that exist only in Australia.

Over the past 200 years the natural environment has been modified dramatically and, in many cases, the rate of species extinction and ecosystem modification is accelerating. Since 1788, 16 per cent of mammals and 3 per cent of birds are thought to have become extinct in NSW. A further 34 per cent of mammals and 22 per cent of birds are threatened. For fish, invertebrates, fungi and micro-organisms, too little is known to allow the losses and threatened losses even to be estimated.

There has also been a significant decline in ecosystem diversity, with the removal of 75 per cent of Australia's rainforests and with native vegetation being cleared in NSW at a rate of 150 000 hectares per year. (Picture this as an area 50km by 30km.)

A loss of biodiversity has been identified as perhaps Australia's most serious environmental problem.

Newsletter, Milton Branch (NSW NPA), May, 1997

## Water supply undrinkable after logging

One of the most troubling ramifications of Victorian logging operations, has been the destruction of the water supply to Apollo Bay, causing 1000 residents and up to 200 000 tourists to buy imported bottled water.

Following the logging of the West Barham – the water catchment for Apollo Bay – water quality dropped from 'crystal clear' to undrinkable according to Judi Forrester of the Otway Herb Nursery.

'Apollo Bay had excellent water until the late 1970s when clearfelling was commenced.'

By the time it was brought to a halt in 1986, approximately half of the catchment had been subject to clear-felling, there was a radical effect on the water quality, with it becoming muddy and with high E.coli levels,' Ms Forrester said.

'They've had to introduce expensive treatment processes, water rates went up to cover costs and the town water is now considered undrinkable,' Ms Forrester said.

'So instead of drinking natural clear mountain spring water, it's like drinking from a chlorinated swimming pool,' Ken Forrester added.

He said that apart from the daily impact on the 1000 permanent residents of Apollo Bay, up to 30 000 visitors come to Apollo Bay in summer and more than 200 000 in a full year – 'and they have to buy water in bottles from 'Europe'.

*The Republican* Issue No 6

## Major improvements to the summit area

Rock extracted from the tunnels during construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme will be used to fill eroded tracks and provide a better walking surface for visitors to the Kosciuszko summit area.

At Rawson's Pass, the old turning circle and parking lot will be reduced to about half its size, then rehabilitated with matting and revegetated with native plants. After extensive research on track materials. NPWS staff have chosen a combination of a plastic material, Geo Web and crushed granite to provide a stable walking track for the summit tracks. (Geo Web is a plastic cellular containment material which has been used extensively for erosion control on Fraser Island, on river banks and in mining rehabilitation). The cells will be filled with crushed granite (tunnel spoil) which when compacted, are expected to provide a very stable erosion-resistant surface.

*Kosciusko Today* Summer 1996/97

## Newhaven gap track

Bushwalkers using the main northern entry point in the Budawangs will now have to walk a further seven kilometres both at the start and the end of their walk, following the declaration of the Budawang Wilderness Area. The NPWS has constructed a car park and campsite at the edge of the National Park at the start of the track to Newhaven Gap. NPWS believes that this new site is more suitable, as it eliminates a long intrusion into the recently declared wilderness areas and should relieve pressures on Folly Point and Hidden Valley which have suffered from heavy use.

Walkers who wish to avoid the additional walk are discouraged from switching to the heavily used southern entry point at Yadboro and are asked to contact Allan Norman on 044-55 3826 to inquire about suitable alternatives.

Extracted from a letter forwarded to NPA by Dianne Garrod.

## Daintree rescue package

A further purchase of 125ha (made up of two freehold lots) in the Cow Bay area, for \$750 000 has been approved, making a total to date of 1400ha at a total cost of over \$12 million. The area is well vegetated lowland rainforest with a frontage to Hutchison Creek. It is known for a large variety of rare plant species and is prime habitat for the endangered southern cassowary.

This very significant purchase will provide a secure habitat for the cassowary population in the Cow Bay area as the pressures of development increase. We are now three-quarters of our way through the rescue program.

*National Parks Association of Queensland, Newsletter, June 1997.*

## Resort or parks?

The principal threat to Australia's parks is resort development. A site within or overlooking a park managed at public expense, such as the Blue Mountains escarpments, the Kosciuszko snowfields, the Hinchinbrook Passage or Kakadu is a developer's dream. The spread of commercialised tourist facilities, as has occurred in America, threatens not only the preservation of the natural environment, which is the purpose of creating parks, but would mean the withdrawal of existing or proposed world heritage listing.

Because there is no ban on resort developments in NSW parks, the establishment of wilderness areas, within which all forms of development are excluded, is essential if the natural areas which are the most effective habitat of endangered species are to be preserved.

*The Colong Bulletin, May 1997*

## Bournda car camp



*There used to be a bridge across Sandy Creek in Bournda National Park but Mick Kelly in leading the NPA Queens Birthday car camp, was out to prove that such a luxury is quite unnecessary. Crossing techniques varied from the maximist approach to clothing demonstrated here by Col McAlister, through the exposed middle preference favoured by Mick to the minimalist technique (not illustrated). These ideological differences were forgotten in admiring the evening over the lake. Photos Max Lawrence*

# Trekking in the Karakorum and western Himalayas Aug – Oct 1996

*From a talk given to the May general meeting*

Over the years while tied down by family, I listened to friends talk about their treks in the Himalayas. Now I have taken the plunge and done not only one trek, but three in a row. Quite mad, but I survived – less 8 kilos!

The treks were in northern Pakistan up the Baltoro Glacier to Concordia from where you have a good view of K2 (weather permitting), – 17 days – and in northern India over Hampta Pass to Manali – 5 days – and from Joshimath to Ghat within view of Nanda Devi – 11 days. I had not previously been more than about one hundred feet higher than Mt Kosciuszko, so doing three in a row not only made full use of the airfare but also the acclimatisation to altitude.

Our first exposure to the way Pakistanis do things came on the Air Pakistan flights to Islamabad, when the hostesses just handed out the meals they thought appropriate without asking the passengers' preference. As the owner of the Pakistan tour company said later, when we complained about some problems on the trek, 'You Westerners are difficult. You are used to freedom.'

In the limited time we had in towns we noticed how frequently men walked down the street hand in hand. They do not have the opportunity to walk hand in hand with women. In fact, you see very few women out and about. In Skardu we had a wonderful shopping expedition for clothes, visiting a tailor who sat cross-legged on the floor before a low table as tailors have done for centuries.

Planes to Skardu in Baltistan, the town nearest the trek, are often cancelled so we drove from Islamabad, alongside the Indus River, north up the Karakoram highway and then east. We drove in one 24 hour shift, our driver having only short breaks from eight am till three am the next day! The Karakoram Highway is based on an old silk route, which must have wound its way over many passes before modern blasting enabled the present route to follow the river closely, along the gorge which it has



The Karakoram Highway, Indus River and two villages perched among their plantations

cut for hundreds of kilometres through its own earlier alluvial and glacial deposits or through solid rock. The road is sometimes a narrow shelf blasted from a cliff, sometimes a rough route over unstable slips, always with the grey, silt-laden Indus roaring along below. Everything – the mountains, the gorge, the fast flowing river – was so huge we lost all sense of scale.

We drove past the easternmost limits of Alexander the Great's expansion. We drove past forest operations where an extensive cable bringing logs down to the highway gave us a glimpse of what might lie behind those high ranges lining the river. We could not see any forests that would make it worth rigging so

many miles of cable.

Wherever a patch of land was less steep, usually on old glacial or alluvial deposits, a village perched, often hundreds of feet above the present river, with access across the river by flying fox or occasionally by a bridge.

Every village had an extensive network of irrigation canals, usually built of dry stone walling, bringing water from side streams, not from the Indus itself. Recent planting of trees, mainly poplar and willow, has been extensive. In every settlement a row of saplings or more established trees lined the road and the gutter doubled as irrigation canal.

At Skardu the Indus valley widens and planes can fly in when cloud cover permits. The unprotected mud brick walls told us how little rain the area receives.

The drive from Skardu up the Shigar then Braldo valley was even more terrifying than the Karakoram Highway had been. The road was a single lane jeep track. Hairpin beds required a three point turn to get around. Heavy rains in June and July

had washed sections of the track away so our scheduled drive to Askole became drive, walk, drive, walk. Jeeps had been stranded between the washaways and so could be used on sections of the track, although most of us felt that we would have been safer walking. And those men drive back and forth each day taking trekking and mountaineering groups in and out!

We trekked up the Braldo river, which became the Biaho, then the Baltoro Glacier in short stages to give us time to acclimatise to the altitude. Some of the men could have gone faster, but I certainly needed the staged approach.

One side river, the Dumordo, could only be crossed by flying fox. We had

a long wait as army supplies had preference – Pakistan is fighting India at the head of the Baltoro Glacier. The flying fox was approached down a hair-raising track across the cliff, but less hair-raising than the alternative track going further upstream. Coming back we used a second flying fox which had an incredible landing on the cliff. To get us out of the travelling box the porters grabbed our clothing and willy nilly we each were pushed and shoved till we had a flat enough spot to put our feet. I don't know how they could grab and haul without falling off their perches into the river, but they did.

Just before reaching the Baltoro Glacier we had a rest day at Paiyu Camp where there is a permanent side stream and some very old trees. It is customary for the porters to rest there and for one of the goats travelling with the group to be killed and eaten. The porters used wood for cooking, although they carried kerosene for us. Often there will be over a hundred people camped at Paiyu as parties take a break both going up and returning. Our party alone had 46 porters and there were only 8 of us. We met several trekking and mountaineering parties along the track, from Korea, Japan, Germany, and England. A Japanese group has established a couple of small plantations of saplings, an important start to countering the demand for firewood.

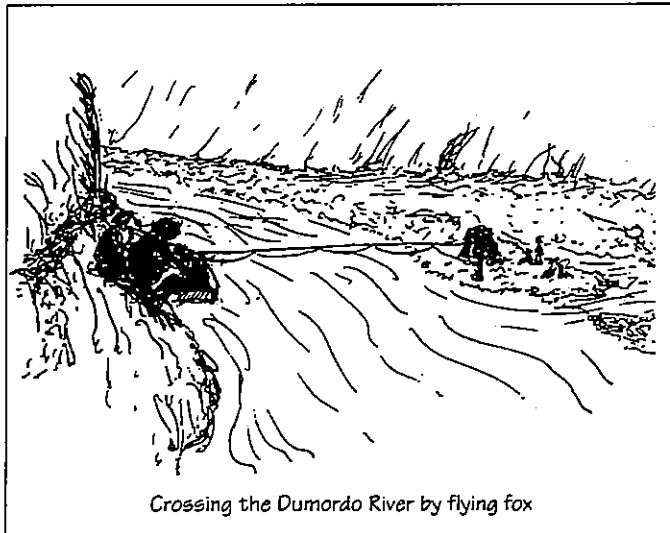
Shortly after Paiyu the tedious walk up the glacier began. The climb onto the glacier must have been about three hundred metres. Then for several days we wound our way up and down the rock strewn ice, mainly along a ridge in the middle of the glacier, following the trail used by the ponies which supply the Pakistan army. A suitable scene for the condemned in Hades would be to walk along a glacier always cresting a rise only to find that the track curved down and away yet

again from your distant goal.

Our second camp along the glacier was on terraces carved out of the steep slope beside it, in the last green area. Here the army released their ponies, donkeys and mules to roam and graze at night. Our sleep was disturbed by the braying of donkeys, and the occupants of one tent by a hoof descending through their fly.

For the next four nights we slept on the glacier itself.

We had had hot weather, some rain and some fine pleasant weather, but as we approached the climax of our trip the clouds closed in again, and we arrived at Concordia with only the base of K2 in view. Named after the Place de la



Crossing the Dumordo River by flying fox

Concord in Paris, Concordia is a meeting place of glaciers.

It snowed that night and the clouds remained low, till next evening when K2 revealed itself in tantalising glimpses. Next morning the clouds had gone and K2 at the head of the Godwin-Austin glacier, Broadpeak and Gasherbrum IV on the side, and the Golden Throne at the head of the Baltoro were all clearly visible.

We had another day based at Concordia so some of our group went up the Godwin-Austin to K2 base camp and the others went further up the Baltoro. Then it was time for the long slog out.

Most of the group went on to Leh in Ladakh and linked up with a few

others for the next trek. Leh, a small city further up the Indus is only about 250km to the south east of Skardu but Kashmir lies between, and to get there we had to fly south to Karachi, then to New Delhi. Fortunately we could fly into Leh, so we enjoyed one flight with superb aerial views of the mountains.

Like Baltistan, Ladakh is in a rain shadow and is desert except where irrigated, but here the Indus valley is wide and the river not so wild. Villages lie along the Indus and on side streams. Leh has an environment centre which aims to direct the improving living standards along sustainable lines by encouraging simple solar technology. It has a very good display warning youngsters of the dangers of too closely following the West, but sadly the attendant said they did not get many school groups.

From Leh we travelled south. Having viewed the world's second highest mountain we now drove over the world's second highest road pass, Tanglangla. The scale of the mountains and valleys was always impressive. The road wound up over slopes of unbelievable size to Australian eyes. We passed men laboriously

sealing the road, breaking stones by hand, spreading layers of stone with the smaller ones on top and then pouring the melted tar out of cans by hand. Not surprisingly the men were black from head to foot. They were doing hard labour at high altitude even though they came from low altitudes. The whole scene looked as though it came from Dante's Inferno.

Gradually the slopes became greener, and then, on our trek over Hampta Pass, we moved out of the rain shadow, and found ourselves walking amongst trees for the first time, and passing herds of sheep, goats and cows and their keepers.

On the third trek, just west of

*Continued on page 18*

## Trekking in the Karakorum

*Continued from page 17*

Nepal, all thoughts of rainshadows were forgotten. Mornings would begin clear, but clouds would quickly form over the snowy peaks and by afternoon it would rain or snow. Fortunately on most days we were camped by then. We passed through a number of villages, and three times actually camped in the villages, which provided much of interest, from the water mills for grinding flour, to the continuous traffic of people bearing loads of hay or firewood or guiding the family cow.

One day it rained all day and we went to school to camp. When we arrived the children in the one teacher school were busy working, sitting on hessian bags on the floor of the verandah. They looked healthy but were very poorly dressed, and they lined up in the rain for parade before leaving.

We passed mossy banks, waterfalls, trees covered in ferns and large rhododendrons, but despite all the rain camps often did not have a generous supply of water. At one the porters placed a series of green leaves in the stream to form a channel and spout so water could run directly into the buckets. Such a simple labour saving device! (But one that could be a little difficult with most gum leaves.)

The whole trip provided a completely new experience to an Australian born and bred. Australian eyes could not come to grips with the huge vertical scale – looking up three kilometres to a nearby peak, for example – or to the scale of the erosion by the lifegiving, destructive rivers. We had to admire how, over the centuries, people had penetrated into these isolated valleys and built irrigation systems or developed the terracing needed to give them a living.

**Eleanor Stodart**

## Walking in the west coast wilderness — Part 1

*Continued from page 11*

Before bed, we enjoy poetry from Judith, and Di tests our tired brains with questions from Master Mind.

*Day 5, February 11: Rest and resupply*

It was a lovely curved approach with the aircraft outlined against the dunes then one float touching down before the other. Quickly, Graham Bird, the pilot, clambers out onto the float and hands over the dry and fresh rations to the women while David, Mike and I struggle with the ungainly aircraft against the current, wind and deep sand. There was no time for anything but a few words between us, some photographs to mark the event and then Graham was off.

*Day 6, February 12: Nye Bay to Alec Rivulet on Mulcahy Bay (11km, 9hrs)*

There is an element of nervousness in the camp. All of us are keen to get the crossing over and done with.

Compulsory swims are not new to the committed bushwalker, but the Giblin River did present some additional hazards: its unpredictability, depth, current and isolation — all these together made it a psychological as well as physical challenge. We had discussed the hazard in meetings before leaving Canberra. Di and Annette, who were not strong swimmers, had practised their swimming with packs in the local swimming pool.

But on the day, the party cross the river with lots of dash and we are all over in 35 minutes. We move off down the rocks before turning inland. As we move into the thick tea tree scrub the humidity is very high. Swapping the lead between Mike and I, it takes us 30 minutes of heavy physical effort to break through into the button grass and we travel only 200 to 300m.

The map does not prepare you for the steep drop into the deep-set gully of the Mulcahy River. Once we enter the scrub, the track falls almost vertically to the open, sandy bed. Two hundred metres to our right, heavy seas are pounding into the mouth sending small waves across the bar and up the shallow river. Although the beach is only 400m away, the passage takes 20 minutes of difficult rock scrambling. It takes Di's persistence to find the campsite which is about 300m upstream from the mouth of the Alec Rivulet.

*Day 7, February 13: Mulcahy Bay to Trepanner Creek on Wreck Bay (10km, 7hrs)*

Led by Kathy, access to the Lower Hut Plains is easy. We gradually work our way onto the quartzite ridge line parallel to the coast and find it much easier going.

Lunch is enjoyed on a small knoll with an exceptional view enhanced by a pod of dolphins harassing a large school of fish. We reach the beach about 2.30pm, and the wreck of the *Suenor* over a kilometre away is now obvious to the naked eye, but it takes us until 3.30 to reach Trepanner Creek. The campsite is on the south bank, hidden behind the fringing scrub. Like all other campsites so far, it is clean and does not appear to have been used recently.

My feet are in poor condition, the outcome of inadequately broken in boots.

*Day 8, February 14: Rest day*

A day of brilliant sunshine, golden sand and absolutely nothing to do. The rusty hulk of the *Suenor* was a natural attraction. Curious eyes wander along the beach and all of us are enjoying a wonderful idleness in this most beautiful bay.

**Pete Tedder**

## Counting, culling and conserving our wildlife

In his address to the June general meeting, Dr. George Wilson from Australian Conservation Services ranged across a wide spectrum of environmental issues. His early work involved the development of techniques for estimating native and feral animal numbers by aerial observation. One method involved flying at 200 feet using a trailed line of measured length as a sighting gauge against which observers counted animal numbers. This data facilitated the mapping of kangaroo numbers over the continent and provided a basis for the setting of cull numbers. Counts made years apart have shown that, despite a continuing culling program, kangaroo numbers have remained remarkably constant. In the light of evidence such as this Dr Wilson has come to the view that a more satisfactory way to manage kangaroo and emu numbers would be through rangeland cropping in which the animal numbers would be controlled by commercial harvesting.

Working in the Department of Primary Industry, Dr. Wilson was involved in the study and control of feral animals and from this experience he highlighted the complex set of inter-relationships between the component species, both

native and feral, in any specific situation.

In discussing the protection of native animals, Dr. Wilson concluded that managers of wildlife in national parks and reserves had met with little success in protecting them, their main contribution being in establishing that many species were in decline. He proposed that we should look to other organisations, perhaps private groups, to address this challenge. Dr. Wilson triggered some spirited discussion by proposing that commercial intervention could be appropriate and, in support, cited the situation in which commercial breeding had relieved pressures on threatened birds and secured their future.

More recently, Dr. Wilson has been involved with the operation of cattle and sheep properties by the Aboriginal landowners. He spoke very positively of this arrangement and of the potential for future progress in this direction.

Throughout, the presentation was supported by the screening of the speaker's slides. Images of the islands of the Torres Strait and of pristine coastal areas of the far north west of the continent provided a fitting conclusion to a stimulating address.

Syd Comfort



*Then President and Vice President, Beverly Hammond and Dianne Thompson in Barbara and Syd's garden during a social afternoon in November 1992. Another social afternoon tea will be held in the garden on Sunday, 16th November. Details are in the Outings Program. Photo Barbara Comfort*

## PARKWATCH

### Calm cuts out history

Conservationists in Western Australia were dismayed and outraged at the recent destruction of a king jarrah tree in the Lowden forest blocks north of Donnybrook. The tree, estimated to be 1000 years old, was felled during Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) logging operations in an area of forest that has been proposed as a National Park. It is believed that the tree had survived previous logging in the area because it had been recognised by early foresters as being too magnificent to log.

Quoting from the *South Western Times* of 27 March, 1997: 'Mr Chandler (regional manager for CALM) said while trees of this size were not common he did not see any reason not to cut them down unless they were located where people could see them or they had significant historical value'....and....'Chandler said if people had told him the tree meant something to them he would have spared it'.

*Habitat*, June 1997.

### Bags and birds, a happy solution?

It looks like plastic, feels like plastic and has the strength of plastic, but it's not. It's old fashioned starch used in a brand-new way. A corn-starch polymer bag in fact. The product sinks and begins the process of decomposition out of sight of patrolling seabirds who may otherwise mistake it for jelly fish. The birds will be the winners if an industry trial to replace plastic bait bags with an Italian-designed biodegradable bag is successful in Australia.

*Australian Geographic* No 47

# Calendar

Activity	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	Thur 4	Thur 2	Thur 6	Thur 4
Reg's Birthday Walk				Sun 7
Environment Sub Committee	Thur 11		Thur 13	
Namadgi Sub Committee		Thur 9		
Christmas Party				Sun 14
Afternoon Social			Sun 16	
General Meetings	Thur 18	Thur 16	Thur 20	
Bulletin Working Group		Tues 28		

## Further details:

Committee and Sub Committees – Secretary

Bulletin Working Group – Syd Comfort: 6286 2578 (h)

Other Events – Outings Program

## NPA Bulletin

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## General meetings *Held at 8pm, Room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic*

**Thursday 18 September. Some Cautionary Tales.** A representative from the Police Search and Rescue Unit, which is responsible for all land searches, both in the ACT and parts of surrounding NSW, will talk about the functions of the unit and some of their experiences which would be of interest to NPA members.

**Thursday 16 October. State of the Environment Reports as a Basis for Sustainable Management Planning.** Commissioner Joe Baker is required to present a report to the Legislative Assembly each year. The report includes an assessment of the quality of the environment and the evaluates the adequacy of existing practices and procedures. Dr Baker will talk about his responsibilities and the opportunities he sees for the ACT's environment.

**Thursday 20 November. Mittagong to Katoomba via the ghost town of Yerranderie.** Earlier this year several association members walked from Mittagong to Katoomba and tonight some of them will share their experiences with us. Judith Webster will show us her slides and tell us about the walk and Reg Alder will tell us something of Yerranderie's history and show some of his pictures from the 1940s, and Mike Smith will talk about mining methods at Yerranderie.