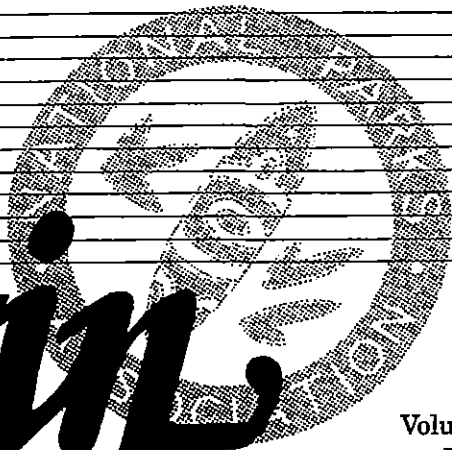
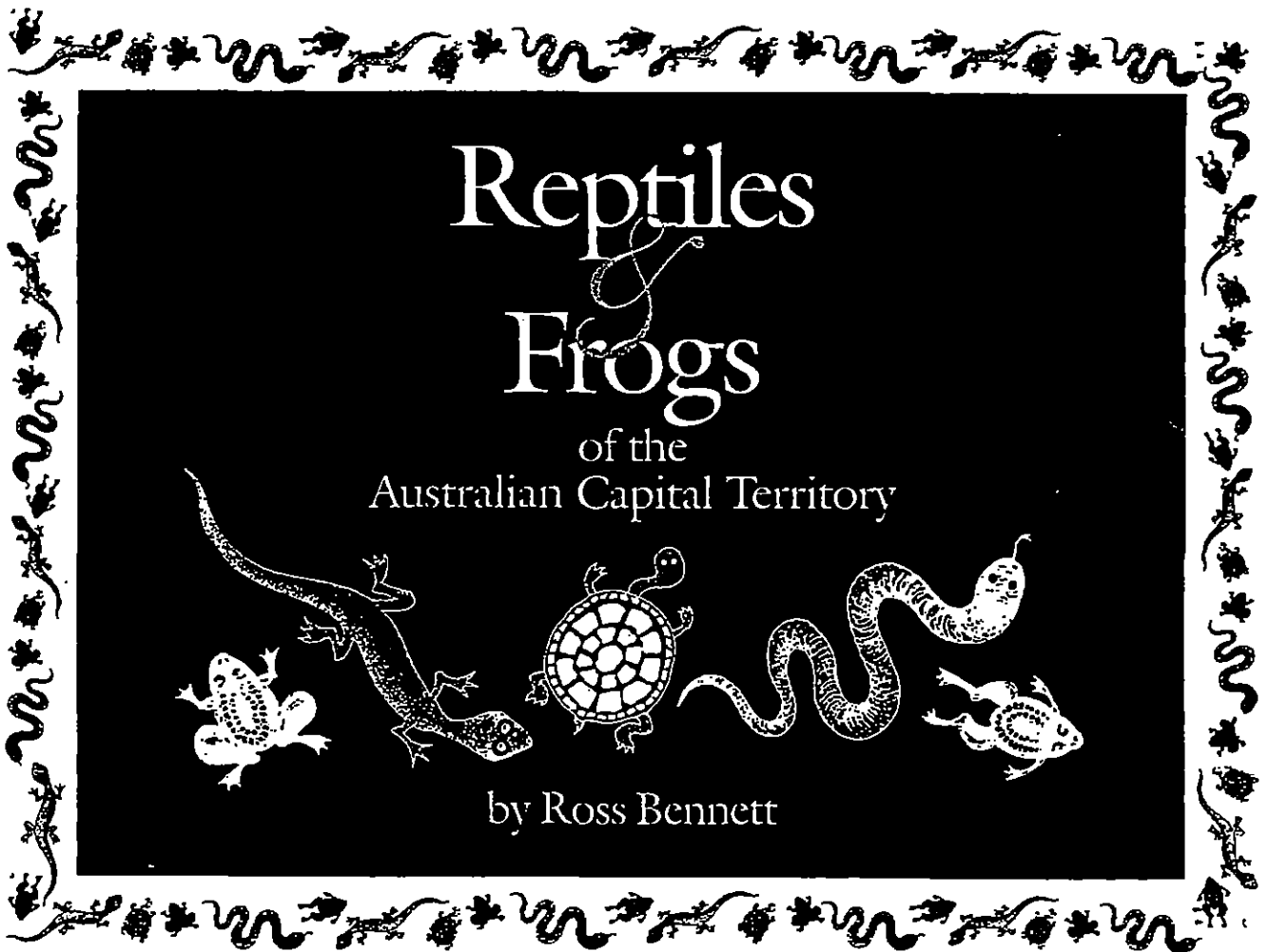


NPA Bulletin



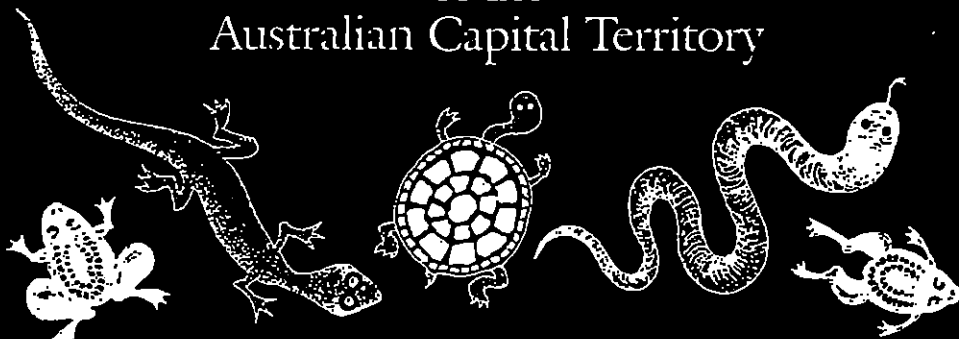
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NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Reptiles & Frogs

of the
Australian Capital Territory



by Ross Bennett

Launch of NPA reptile and frog guide

Native title claim on Namadgi

Quest for the Plains-wanderer



CONTENTS

From the President 3 <i>Clive Hurlstone</i>	Christmas Party 1997 10 <i>Syd Comfort</i>
Optimism for the ACT environment 3 <i>Len Haskeu</i>	Management plan for Molonglo River Corridor 11 <i>Clive Hurlstone</i>
Native title claims to parts of the ACT 4 <i>Robin Miller</i>	Walking on Tidbinbilla 12 <i>Russell Wenholz</i>
Plans for protecting endangered species 5 <i>Eleanor Stodart</i>	Police rescue 13 <i>Len Haskeu</i>
Face to face with a <i>Trachodosaurus rugosus</i> 6 <i>Len Haskeu</i>	Yerranderie – pilgrimage to past memories 14 <i>Reg Alder</i>
My very own snake story 7 <i>Alastair Morrison</i>	Parkwatch 15 <i>Compiled by Len Haskeu</i>
More about the author of the guide 7 <i>Syd Comfort</i>	A bushwalk to celebrate Reg's 80th 17 <i>Matthew Higgins</i>
The Great Eastern Centenary Track 8 <i>Timothy Walsh</i>	Book review 18 <i>Babette Scougall</i>
The disappearance of the giants 9 <i>Fiona MacDonald Brand</i>	New members 18
	The great Plains-wanderer quest 19 <i>Phyl Goddard</i>

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.

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NPA Bulletin

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From the President

This issue highlights the publication by the NPA of *Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory*. Our thanks go to Honorary Life Member Alastair Morrison who made the publication possible, to author Ross Bennett, and MacComas Taylor and Mariana Rollgejser who have put together a truly outstanding book.

The book launch on Tuesday 9 December 1997 by Chief Minister Kate Carnell, at Forestry House was a really successful event. My part in the launch as organiser and MC was starting to make me feel a little tense, but seeing members and guests arriving and enjoying themselves, set me at ease. Beverley Hammond and Adrienne Nicholson

organised the catering and an enthusiastic body of volunteers set up the venue, distributed drinks and tidied up afterwards. Mike Smith worked hard accepting money and writing receipts. Thanks to you all.

The success of the launch was confirmed by media coverage that evening and in the *Canberra Times*. In the following days re-ordering by book shops began as sales took off.

The NPA Christmas party on 14 December at Nil Desperandum was a very pleasant finish to an activity-filled year. With over 90 members and friends attending, it was great to meet new members and greet old ones. The homestead and surrounding area were in good shape thanks to the members of the work

party, who on the previous day had mowed grass, cleaned the house and tidied the grounds. Our thanks go to Max Lawrence, Eleanor Stodart and Adrienne Nicholson for organising the function and to Matthew Higgins for leading a heritage walk. The auction was ably conducted by Robin Miller, Len Haskew and Dianne Hastie, aided by helpers large and small who displayed and modelled auction items.

On Canberra Day, Monday 16 March, ACT Alive will be held in front of Old Parliament House. This is a wonderful exposition of the interests of Canberra's community organisations so make sure to come along. The NPA will be having a display tent so drop by and say hello.

Clive Hurlstone

Optimism for the ACT environment



Dr Joe Baker, ACT Commissioner for the Environment.

The association's November general meeting was addressed by Dr Joe Baker, the ACT's Commissioner for the Environment.

Joe is charged by legislation to provide the Minister for the Environment, by 31 March in each pre-election year, a state of the environment report for the triennium ending on the preceding 30 June.

Joe adopts a 'human health approach' to his duties, looking at the environment in much the same way as a doctor examines a patient. As is the case with our own medicos, Joe is not able to test and report on every aspect of the environment –

rather he looks at a series of core indicators which have been defined by legislation.

According to the legislation, 'environment' means:

the components of the earth, including soil, water and the atmosphere; any organic or inorganic matter and any living organism; human-made or modified structures and areas; ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and their communities; the qualities and characteristics of places and areas that contribute to biological diversity and ecological integrity, scientific value and amenity; the interactions and interdependencies within and between the above categories; and the social, aesthetic, cultural and economic conditions that affect, or are affected by, any or all of these things.

Additionally, Joe is able to comment on the effectiveness and adequacy of the Government's environmental management, and he is the only commissioner in Australia, if not the world, able to make recommendations in his report and comment on the Government's progress in meeting his recommendations.

Joe's report focuses not only on the ACT but also, with their cooperation, on the 17 surrounding shires and municipalities.

When examining each of the environmental themes defined in the legislation, Joe has many key indicators to assess. For example, when reporting on the theme 'atmosphere', some of the indicators considered include, temperature and temperature variability, rainfall and rainfall variability, greenhouse gas emissions, electricity consumption on extreme days, indoor air quality, industrial emissions, and the enforcement of emission control standards for wood fires.

Joe believes that it is not realistic to expect governments to do all the controlling and monitoring but that we must all – individuals, commerce and industry – enter into a partnership, and do our bit.

For me, the most interesting part of Joe's presentation was his optimism and confidence that it was still possible to 'get it right', and that the dire predictions with which we are constantly bombarded by the media, need not be a reality.

Len Haskew

Native title claims to parts of the ACT

In October 1996, a native title claim to parts of the ACT was lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal by Nurri Arnold Williams, 'on behalf of the Ngunnawal people'. The claim covered 'various areas in the ACT identified as apparently unalienated land by the ACT Government', including 'parts of Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Cotter River Catchment Area and ACT Forestry Plantations' and a number of camping and other reserves.

About nine months later, in July 1997, a second claim was lodged with the Native Title Tribunal by Phillip Edward Carroll 'on behalf of the Ngunnawal People including, among others, the Carroll, Bell and Brown families'. The claim was similar in many respects to the first one, but included 'Namadgi National Park in its entirety'.

(A map showing locations of all the claims can be inspected at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, 40 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra City, or bought for \$52 from the Plans Room, ACT Planning & Land Management, Ground Floor North Building, 16 Challis St, Dickson.)

Appended to both claims was a standard list of 'Native Title Rights and Interests Possessed Under Traditional Laws and Customs'. Such rights and interests 'include but are not limited to...

1. the right to live on the land and travel over the land.
2. the right to hunt and fish on or from the land and waters, and to collect food from the land and waters.
3. the right to take items from the land and waters, such as timber, stones, resin and shells and to make such things as shelter, tools and hunting implements.
4. the right to conduct ceremonies on the land and waters.
5. the the right to prevent other people from entering the land and waters, and from removing any items from these areas.'

It was also noted that 'the above rights are subject to any rights or interests created by the State of New South Wales and/or the Commonwealth of Australia not inconsistent with the Native Title Act (1933) or the Racial Discrimination Act (1975)'. This qualification has wide ramifications, and it also has particular significance in cases where claims have been recognised to parks, which often have various statutory constraints on their use in order to meet conservation objectives. In other words, those constraints have influenced the nature of particular rights agreed with claimants, in parks.

Response of the ACT Government

The ACT Government has been sympathetic towards the claims. The Chief Minister, Kate Carnell, indicated at an early stage that she was interested in negotiating a regional agreement for joint control of parks, as an alternative to the 'long and expensive' claims process (*The Australian*, 31 May 1997).

However, the ACT Government is reluctant to proceed towards the settlement of native title to parts of the ACT until agreement is reached between the two separate claimants on what is to be claimed and by whom. The Government hopes that this agreement will be reached in the near future.

Actions by the NPA (ACT)

As a primary objective of the NPA is 'the 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 the establishment and development of Namadgi National Park has been a central concern of the Association, it has been following progress of the native title claims very closely. At an early stage the President and other members of the NPA committee were briefed on the initial claim by a legal representative of the claimants. Soon after this, the NPA wrote to the Chief

Minister (whose department has been coordinating handling of the claims) and to the minister responsible for parks and the environment, Gary Humphries, to stress the importance of open and public processes for addressing implications of the claims for park management. This point was made also to other members of the Legislative Assembly contacted by the NPA.

The NPA also contributed to a public statement on the claims by the Conservation Council of the South Eastern Region & Canberra. This statement set out 'principles for the future management of Namadgi National Park under Aboriginal ownership'. Key parts of the statement were as follows:

- 'The Council supports in principle the recognition of native title'.
- 'If title to Namadgi is transferred to Aboriginal claimants, the Park should be jointly managed by representatives of the claimants and the ACT Government.'
- 'The processes for developing and operating joint management arrangements for Namadgi National Park should be similar to those generally accepted as 'best practice' for park management elsewhere.'
- 'The ACT Government should approach the future of a jointly managed Namadgi National Park with a strong, public and unequivocal commitment to informed and continuing public participation in park management, within the framework of a detailed management plan.'

In amplifying its in-principle support for the recognition of native title, the Council stated that:

'It believes that, in relation to national parks, such recognition is likely to help towards the broad objective of conserving the natural and cultural heritage of Australia for current and future generations. This objective can be achieved, however, only if the fundamental reason for

continued on page 5

Plans for protecting endangered species

Twenty-one plants and animals and two communities have been declared endangered in the ACT, but the declaration needs to be followed up if protection is to be adequate. The Nature Conservation Act requires the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to prepare an action plan for the protection of each declared species. A backlog has meant that these have been rather slow coming out, but in the future each action plan should be ready within a year of the species being declared endangered.

Late last year, the first six draft action plans were released for public comment. They were received very favourably by conservation groups including the NPA committee and they have been finalised and were tabled before the Legislative Assembly in December. Three more were released for public comment in January. A further three, for species of fish, should be ready early this year and another four, for bird species, later this year, leaving five more to come.

Action Plan 1 is for natural temperate grassland, for treeless grassland receiving an annual rainfall of 500mm to 1000mm and occurring below 600m. In the ACT this includes five floristic associations (titled wet *Themeda*,

Poa labillardieri, *Danthonia*, dry *Themeda*, and *Stipa* grasslands) which occur in and around Canberra (other associations of *Themeda* etc are found at Tidbinbilla and Namadgi but these are at higher altitude and have a number of differences). The plan has a quite detailed list of the locations and botanical significance of grassland areas. Some areas such as Crace Hill and West Belconnen are protected in reserves. Other sites such as the Majura Firing Range and St Marks Barton (both of high significance) and Belconnen Naval Station will require memoranda of understanding with the organisations administering the sites.

Action Plan 2 is for the Striped Legless Lizard, *Delma impar*, Action Plan 3 is for the Eastern Earless Dragon, *Tympanocryptis lineata pinguicolla*, both of which are found in particular areas of natural temperate grassland, so these action plans of necessity overlap with Plan 1.

Action Plan 4 is for a leek orchid, *Prasophyllum petilum*, which is known only from the cemetery at Hall and in a travelling stock reserve near Boorowa. Preservation at Hall is to be encouraged mainly by limiting mowing times, height of cut and weight of machine.

Action Plan 5 is for a subalpine herb, *Gentiana baeuerlenii*, which occurs in a very limited location in Namadgi National Park. The limited plant numbers allow only for the possibility of collecting seed if they increase.

Action Plan 6 is for the Corroboree Frog, now recognised as a separate northern species called *Pseudophryne pengilleyi* and now covered under a new declaration which takes account of the change. Frog numbers are declining but fortunately the main breeding area is in Namadgi National Park. Fire fighting, feral animal and weed control will all be managed to take the frogs' needs into account.

The Action Plans 7, 8 and 9 are out for public comment till 6 March. All three are for species occurring in natural temperate grassland; Plans 7 and 8, for the Golden Sun Moth, *Synemon plana*, and the Button Wrinklewort, *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*, are strongly linked to Action Plan 1 (for natural temperate grassland), but they do have special features. For example, the main occurrence of the Button Wrinklewort in the ACT is in Stirling Park which is not one of the grassland sites.

continued on page 9

Native title claims to parts of the ACT *continued*

having national parks remains paramount. They exist because of the recognised value to the nation, now and for the future, of the environments they preserve. This value should determine the use of national parks, whatever their ownership.'

Copies of this statement were sent to the claimants, Ms Carnell, Mr Humphries, and relevant officials of the ACT Government, and the NPA subsequently took part in discussions with both ministers towards the end of 1997, to elaborate points in the council's statement of principles. Both ministers gave a firm commitment in these discussions to open and public

consultation on the development of any future joint management arrangements for Namadgi.

In anticipation of the claims being recognised, and the associated consideration of precisely how Namadgi National Park should thereafter be managed, the NPA is about to commission a paper, for completion by about the end of March 1998, that will review relevant experience to date in Australia, and perhaps overseas, with arrangements for joint management of national parks with indigenous people. The main objective of the paper will be to suggest joint management models suitable for Namadgi. This paper is

expected to provide a basis for well informed recommendations by the NPA to the ACT Government on how joint management of Namadgi should work. The Chief Minister welcomed this planned initiative of the NPA, in the discussions held with her late in 1997.

While the focus to date has been on Namadgi, because it is the largest park in the ACT, the NPA hopes that what is learned from development of joint management arrangements for Namadgi will help towards development of joint arrangements that may be required for other parks or reserves in the ACT.

Robin Miller

Face to face with a *Trachodinosaur rugosus*



Chief Minister Kate Carnell launching the Guide. Photo, Len Haskew

This is not the sort of encounter that one tends to associate with politicians, but Chief Minister Kate Carnell was happy to be photographed holding a Shingleback Lizard at the launch of the NPA's field guide *Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory* on 9th December, 1997.

About 150 people were present at Forestry House, Yarralumla when President, Clive Hurlstone, invited Mrs Carnell to launch our reptile and frog book. Before the Chief Minister spoke, Clive welcomed all present and gave particular thanks to Alastair Morrison whose generous donation made the publication of the book possible.

The Chief Minister began her address by thanking Clive for the invitation and acknowledging Alastair's contribution.

Mrs Carnell then told those at the launch that the book's author, Ross Bennett, has had a lifelong association with all manner of reptiles and amphibians. Indeed, she informed us that as a child, Ross filled the family home with an ever growing collection of lizards, crocodiles, snakes, frogs and tortoises. And not only was it a habit of childhood, – the bag of snakes and lizards that he took along to the

launch, were all members of his present-day household! The Chief Minister noted that Ross has influenced many Canberran, to develop a positive attitude to our native wildlife and magnificent natural environment in his role as a friendly ranger leading spotlight walks in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and through his assistance to those many people who find a snake in their backyard.

Mrs Carnell felt sure that our authoritative and comprehensive book, which combines concise description, with superb photography, will facilitate accurate identification of the reptiles and frogs of the ACT. But more than just identification, it will help to engender positive attitudes in the general community, and this in turn will generate community support for important government actions to protect the environment. The book's publication was fortuitous in that it coincided with several recent ACT Government environmental and conservation initiatives.

'Field guides such as the one we are launching today, help people to learn much more from their visits to Canberra's natural areas. Increasingly, Canberrans are discovering and valuing the natural bushland in their capital city and this field guide will add to the wide range of information on the plants and animals that can be seen here,' said Mrs Carnell.

The Chief Minister concluded her address by congratulating the National Parks Association for sponsoring this new book and for its undoubted, energetic efforts in raising community awareness on environmental issues. 'I encourage you all to buy this book and learn more about some of the most interesting animals that share the environment with us,' she said.

In reply, author Ross Bennett, thanked Mrs Carnell for her positive comments. One of Ross's aims in writing this book, he said, was to demolish many of the furphies that abound about the aggressiveness

and other unfriendly characteristics of cold-blooded creatures. Ross believes that people will eventually become more at ease with snakes and other reptiles if they can put a name to them. In Ross's opinion, being able to name something is one of the first steps in becoming comfortable with it and concerned about it. He said he would be happy if the book helped to overcome the bad PR that has been the lot of our local snake population, in particular. Ross concluded his remarks by thanking the numerous friends and colleagues – (many of them present at the launch) – who had provided him with support, encouragement and assistance during the book's preparation.

Alastair Morrison then took the opportunity to thank all who had helped to produce what he considered to be 'an elegant little book.' He told us how he had first considered using artwork for the illustrations and how difficult it was to find an artist who had a knowledge of reptiles. As a result, slides were used and he was extremely happy with the result, and he considered the graphics to be excellent. Alastair told us that frogs, in particular, are suffering the effects of environmental degradation and that this may be a portent of things to come. He, too, hoped that the field guide would help arouse our awareness and concern for all living things.

The launch concluded with Clive inviting those present to share in light refreshments.

Len Haskew

For Sale

Walking boots – Hi-tec lady lite style, size UK 5½, Eu 38½ and Italian Zamberlan lite, size UK 5, Eu 38.

Skis – short trak/bushwackers for hikers, and stocks.

Rucksack – large lowe alpine specs.

Bum bags – several

All in exc cond. Best offer.

Lyle Mark 02 62862801

My very own snake story

I think that most people who walk in the Australian countryside have had encounters with snakes and only the most dedicated herpetologist fails to start slightly at unexpectedly finding a snake in close proximity. Provided one is properly clothed and shod these encounters are not dangerous even though a light sense of surprise is rarely absent. The following is an account of a meeting I had with a Copperhead Snake in November 1996.

I was out for a walk by myself in Tidbinbilla along the Camel fire-track thinking of nothing in particular when I noticed a slight rustling noise underfoot. Glancing down I realised that there was some movement there. I consequently advanced promptly and at the double for several paces and then halted and turned about to investigate the source of the commotion. I found that it had emanated from a fair-sized, dark brown snake which was looking

distinctly aggrieved. This was, no doubt, an understandable reaction from even the most good-natured snake when walked on by a 13-stone man. The snake had its head raised and its mouth was open.

We both of us held our ground and examined the situation. Then, the snake, no doubt realising that I had no hostile intent even if I had walked on it, gradually relaxed, lowered its head and turning, very slowly and gently moved off the track and into the undergrowth.

I guessed the snake must have been a Copperhead. It was too rotund and sluggish to have been a Brown Snake. It was brownish above and lacked red beneath so it did not appear to be a Red-bellied Black. The plain upper parts and the dry forest location did not seem right for a Tiger Snake.

A little later I sought to confirm the identification when I met Jo Vandermark at dinner. Jo loves snakes and is a great authority on

them. She listened intently to my account of the episode and then enquired very gravely 'Did you examine its lips?'

I thought this funny at the time. I had not, in fact, examined the snake's lips but it was, of course, an eminently sound point. A diagnostic feature of the Copperhead is its possession of noticeable white markings on the lower lip.

This is not, however, the end of this rambling narrative. When the NPA guide to ACT reptiles and frogs appeared, I found that my friends, McComas Taylor and Mariana Rollgejser, had kindly adorned the Association's polite acknowledgement to myself in the introduction to the guide with an illustration of a Copperhead Snake. What remains unexplained is why Ross Bennett's tribute to his father on the next page should be adorned with a Tiger Snake.

Alastair Morrison

More about the author of the guide



Ross Bennett with his friendly Red-bellied Black Snake after the launch. Photo, Graeme Wicks

Alastair's reference to the Tiger Snake illustrated on the dedication page of the Guide prompted me to ask Ross about this. He admits to a special feeling for the Tiger Snake and does not understand why people view it in such an unfriendly light. In the course of collecting venom for serum production, Ross has handled thousands of Tiger Snakes and has yet to see the aggressiveness so frequently attributed to them - this, notwithstanding suffering two Tiger Snake bites. On Ross's admission both were his, not the snakes' fault. By naming his property at Collector, 'Notechis', perhaps Ross has said it all.

No doubt *Notechis scutatus* will have a prominent place in the Australian Reptile Centre, Canberra which Ross is about to open. Located in Gold Creek, Nicholls, the

Centre will be a major educational and exhibition complex focussing exclusively on reptiles.

One gallery will trace the evolution and history of reptiles as recorded through fossil evidence and recent observation. The other major gallery will display live reptiles and take visitors on journeys through the three main biological regions of tropical, temperate and arid zones. There will be 13 principal exhibits displaying some 30 reptiles in naturalistic settings.

A unique feature of the Centre will be the use of the auditorium for presentation of snake tales, with the opportunity for some cuddly 'hands-on' experience. The Centre will be complete with retail and other facilities, and will welcome group and individual visitors.

Syd Comfort

The Great Eastern Centenary Track

A walking track from Brisbane to Melbourne by the year 2001, to celebrate the centenary of the federation of the Australian colonies, has been proposed by an interim committee set up to promote the track. This committee is made up of representatives of the Northern Rivers Economic Development Organisation, Southern Cross University (Lismore), Federation Track Walkers Inc and Geoff Pryor, a consultant to the Australian Capital Region Development Council (ACRDC).

A forum jointly organised by ACRDC and Yass Council was held at Yass on 29 October 1997. The NPA (ACT) was invited to participate. Naturally, the NPA Committee sent along two of the Association's most experienced walkers, Reg Alder and Len Haskew. I was asked to accompany them as driver and to make sure they didn't spend too long in the pub before the meeting.

The idea for the 3,000 kilometre walking track is based on the Appalachian Trail in the USA. A concept paper has been written by Jesse Brampton, project coordinator for The Bibbulmun Track Project in Western Australia and author of *Promises to Keep - An Australian on the Appalachian Trail*. The track is proposed to pass through some of the most scenic country in eastern Australia and be a 'high profile tourist and recreational resource' which, based on the Appalachian Trail experience, could generate up to \$15 million expenditure in rural and regional areas. Other benefits given by the interim committee are:

- employment and training during construction (including work for the dole and green corps schemes)
- employment after construction (management and maintenance, tourism, guiding, retail, transport)
- increased international, national and local tourism
- best practice environmental management and greater awareness of the environment
- community building and cross-regional linkages

- recreational and health benefits
- personal self-esteem, well-being and national pride and unity.

The track is to be simple in style, with minimal impact on the land through which it passes. It is proposed to be financed by corporate sector sponsorship, work for the dole and landcare type schemes, prison and community correction systems, grant funding and volunteer and community input.

The Yass meeting, very much a preliminary affair to introduce the idea in this region, was attended by representatives of local shire councils, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Landcare groups, local nature based tour operators, Scouts, ACT government agencies, Professor Steve Garlick of Southern Cross University, the NPA (ACT) and district residents.

A keynote paper was delivered by Professor Garlick, who explained the possible route for the track, and the work that has been done to quantify the economic and social benefits that it can create. Of particular interest to the NPA is:

- the commitment of those involved to avoid as far as possible routing the track through wilderness areas and to use existing purpose built walking tracks
- the need to respect Aboriginal sites, and, where appropriate, seek to interpret sites
- avoidance of sensitive plant and animal communities
- adherence to existing plans of management and normal consultative processes to incorporate the track into such plans
- provide for a broad cross section of walkers with a wide variety of challenges and experiences.

Professor Garlick explained that existing long distance walking tracks which could be utilised include:

- tracks in the Mount Warning, Nightcap, Mount Mistake area
- Barrington Tops to Myall Lakes Track

- Great North Walk from Newcastle to Sydney
- Hume and Hovell Track
- parts of the Alpine Track
- Upper Yarra from Baw Baw to Powelltown.

In addition, parts of local walks, such as the Lamington/Scenic Rim, Solitary Island, Blue Mountains Historic Crossing, Illawarra Escarpment, Twin Rivers and many others could be used to link local communities, provide resupply and transport points and day walks.

Papers were also given by Warwick Hull, project manager Hume and Hovell Track, Bill Woodruff, Environment ACT and Russ Evans, Twin Rivers [Shoalhaven to Clyde] Walking Track committee.

Short workshops were organised to discuss the wide range of issues raised by the speakers. These included the possible incorporation of equestrian and mountain bike trails, alternative routes, funding, ways of engendering community support, track design, signage, shelters, environmental effects, long term maintenance and a hundred and one other matters.

The outcome of the meeting was, that a regional mechanism under the auspices of the ACRDC is to be established to facilitate discussion and coordination of the general issue of walking tracks in the Capital region, and to establish links with the foundation to manage the Centenary Track proposal.

The issues involved in the proposed Centenary Walking Track, are very much at the heart of the interests of the NPA (ACT). We will, of course, be watching its development with interest and reacting and participating in accordance with our aims and objectives.

Timothy Walsh

Further Reading

Brampton, Jesse, *The Great Eastern Centenary Track - a Project to celebrate the Centenary of the Nation's Federation - Concept Paper*, Hamilton Hill, WA.

The disappearance of the giants

During a recent trip to Western Australia, I delighted in the magnificent forests of the south-west corner of that huge state. However, I was haunted by the thought of what used to be.

Now, there are only tiny pockets of really huge old karri and tingle trees left. The traveller drives through regrowth forest: tall, slender trees, and some not so slender, which are beautiful — but they are not awesome, like the tree in my photograph.

When these old, old trees die and collapse, the world will never see their like again.

Near Pemberton, a hundred-year-old regrowth forest is to be logged again — trees small in girth in comparison to the old growth forest trees.

The reality of this great loss to the human imagination and sense of grandeur in nature, came to me in China, 10 years ago.

Our young, English-speaking guide, a university graduate, took us to a very ancient Buddhist temple. He tapped one of the huge indoor pillars supporting the roof, and said, 'They say this pillar was made from one tree trunk.' When we visited another temple of equal age and structure, I could hear the disbelief in his voice when he repeated, 'They say this pillar is made from one tree trunk'.

He had never seen an old, living tree of huge girth.

Forests in China, are regrowth forests, over and over again for a thousand years or more, as a result of China's ancient history of land clearing and city building.

We are needlessly dooming our future generations in Australia to never experiencing the wonder of viewing a living thing so huge that we are dwarfed and humbled.

In our nation's haste to exploit and make money, few people realise that once these few old, giant trees die, no more will ever be allowed to live for hundreds of years to reach their full potential.

I felt privileged to see these grand old giants, but left the area with a heavy heart.

Fiona MacDonald Brand



Ranger Rowena Howard (right) talks to NPA member Bonnie Fox at the base of a giant tingle tree in the Valley of the Giants, near Pemberton, WA. Photo, Fiona MacDonald Brand.

Plans for protecting endangered species *continued from page 5*

Habitats for the Small Purple Pea, *Swainsona recta*, Action Plan 9, are natural temperate grassland again, but also open woodland, and the major occurrences in the ACT are in grassy woodland on Mount Taylor and secondary grassland in Kambah, which is fortunate, as a major action needed for maintenance, will be burning at intervals of 3–5 years. For natural temperate grassland species, such as the Button Wrinklewort, it

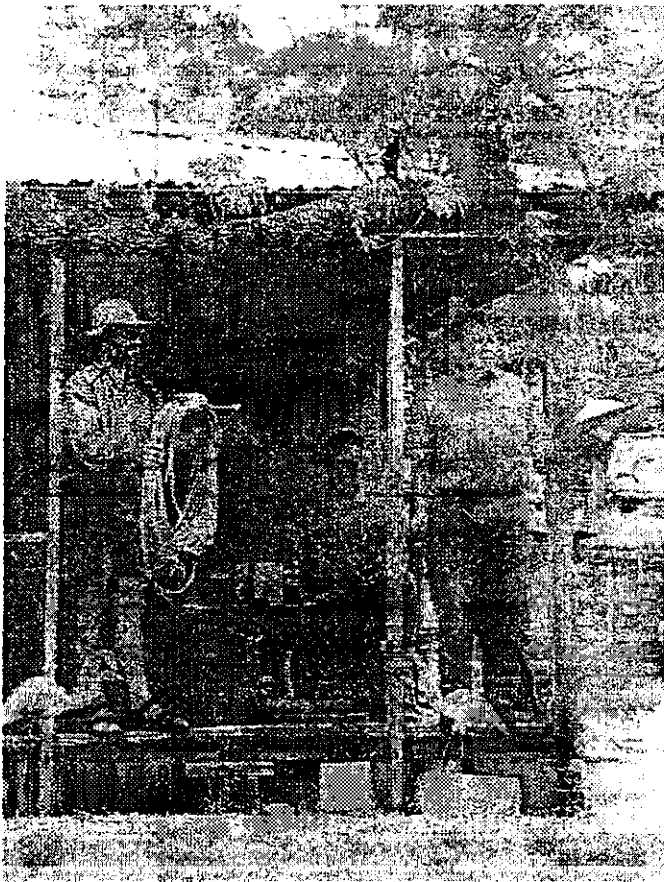
may be necessary for mowing or grazing at critical times to control understorey competition, but burning is not proposed.

Each of the action plans puts forward the need for research and monitoring, and for management to be adaptive. Flexibility is necessary as we do not know exactly what is needed for each species, but care will need to be taken that changes put forward as adaptive management

are based on comparative data and not just a response to natural variations due to differences in the seasons from year to year.

The action plans form an important step towards developing practices that maintain the region's biodiversity. NPA welcomes them, and, most important, the community attitudes which have brought them into being.

Eleanor Stodart



Christmas Party 1997 at Nil Desperandum

Nil Desperandum looked its best for the NPA Christmas Party, thanks to the efforts of a work party on the previous day. Joan Goodrum and Jack Smart enjoyed a break from work, on the homestead verandah.

The youngsters present, and there were quite a number of them, enjoyed the treasure hunt and Matthew Higgin's heritage walk, and showed considerable flair in displaying the items offered for sale. Robin Miller conducted the auction with his customary panache assisted by Tim Walsh, Mike Smith and three very pink flamingoes, the last named eventually surrendering themselves to the auctioneer's gavel.

Eleanor Stodart's painting 'May your spirit ever fly free', photographed here by Reg Alder, was signed by many of the 90 members present as a Christmas greeting to past president, Robert Story, who was unable to attend.

Syd Comfort

Photos by Col McAlister

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Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT

This authoritative and comprehensive book is an up-to-date work for everyone with an interest in these creatures. It combines concise descriptions with superb photography to allow accurate identification of all fifty reptiles and fifteen frogs found in the region.

Additional information describes their distribution and gives an insight into the private and often complex life-histories.

This book is essential for anyone who has an opportunity to explore the world of reptiles and frogs, from Canberra's suburban gardens to the peaks of the Brindabella Ranges.

Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT

This pocket guide enables the less experienced birdwatcher to identify birds in the ACT environment. Every species recorded at least three times in the last ten years has been included.

Canberra birdwatcher and author, McComas Taylor, writes a brief description of birds in the field and notes key features of behaviour and common bird calls.

Renowned bird painter, Nicolas Day, illustrates the different plumage of male, female and young of bird species.

A system of icons indicates habitats, times for expected sightings and status in the ACT. Several good birdwatching locations are described.

Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT

This guide described 60 species of trees of four metres or more, that are known to grow naturally in the ACT. It is written for the non-specialist and has instructions on how to use a botanical key. For easy reference it is divided into three sections—eucalypts, acacias and other species, with similar trees placed side by side.

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

The guide is useful in the neighbouring areas of Goulburn, Cooma and the Kosciuszko National Park.

NPA outings program

March – June 1998

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



8 March Sunday family walk 1B
Gudgenby River Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Eleanor Stodart Phone: 6281 5004

Bring a dip net and magnifying glass to look for creepy crawlies in the river, and a picnic lunch. Please phone leader by preceding Wednesday. 100 kms. \$20 per car.

14–16 March long weekend packwalk 2/C/D/E
Mt Talaterang Map: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 6251 6817 (h), 6279 1326 (w)

Contact leader by Wednesday 11 March. After a long drive with stops at Fitzroy Falls and Cambewarra Mountain, an easy two and a half hour walk to camp at the top of Ngaitung Falls – a spectacular spot with views into Pigeon House Gorge. Next day walk to Mt Talaterang without packs, returning to campsite. Return to Canberra Monday. 400 kms, \$80 per car.

16 March Canberra Day
ACT Alive
Lawns opposite Old Parliament House

Contacts:
6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)
6231 5699

Max Lawrence:
Yvonne Bartos:

We are asking members to help the NPA by calling in to our tent and spending up to a couple of hours answering questions about the Association and its aims, and about the display. You will also have the opportunity to see the other interesting stalls at this popular exhibition. Please phone if you can help.

21–22 March daywalks and/or weekend carcamp 1A
Minnamurra Rainforest, Maps: NPWS brochures
& Barren Ground
Leaders: Max Lawrence Phone: 6288 1370(h), 6272 2124 (w)
and Len Haskew Phone: 62281 4268

We will take the long but enjoyable drive to Minnamurra Rainforest (in Budderoo National Park near Kiama) on Saturday morning, and explore the forest and Minnamurra Falls in the afternoon. On Saturday evening we will camp by the beach at Kiama. On Sunday we will take some of the walks at beautiful Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, lunch at Robertson, view some of the many waterfalls in the area (optional), and motor home. Come for one or both days, or combine with the Jamberoo folk festival which is on the same weekend. Phone leader for details. 500kms, \$100 per car (plus \$7.50 park entrance fee, plus camp fee).

25 March daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

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

28–29 March
Namadgi Work Party
Leader: Len Haskew Phone: 6281 4268

This work party will involve constructing a small length of track at the Boboyan Road end of the Brandy Flat firetrail. Come for one or both days. Work parties are an opportunity for members to get together under fairly relaxed conditions and to do a little bit for Namadgi. Please phone for details.

5 April Sunday daywalk 2A/B/C
Honeysuckle Ridge Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A walk from the former Honeysuckle creek Tracking Station up a track to the 'Ridge of Stone', then along ridge with spectacular rock formations and views over Orroral Valley. Return along somewhat harder route cross country to cars. A 260m climb and descent. 60kms, \$12 per car.

18 April Saturday daywalk 2A/B
Red Hill to Farrer Ridge Map: Canberra Street Directory
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

A pleasant walk from Deakin to Red Hill Lookout and then to Farrer Ridge via Isaacs Ridge and Mt Wanniasa. Great autumn views to Canberra City and beyond, and then Woden and Tuggeranong Valleys. Meet at Canberra Nature Park Depot, corner of Athlon Drive and Sulwood Drive at 9.00am. Short car shuffle.

19 April (Sunday)
Mt Franklin Chalet 60th Anniversary

The Canberra Alpine Club in association with the Parks and Conservation Service is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the building of the Franklin Chalet. The open day commences at 10.00am, the official proceedings (including the opening of the new interpretation trail) commence at 11.00am, and there will be a free sausage sizzle from 12.00noon. NPA Members wishing to attend should book with the Namadgi Visitors Centre (phone 6237 5222) and make their own transport arrangements. If you need more information, contact Ian McLeod (phone 6281 4208).

22 April daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Yvonne Bartos Phone: 6231 5699

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

25-26 April weekend packwalk 2A/C/D/F
Sentry Box Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Leader: Martin Chalk Phone: 6268 4864(w); 6292 3502(h)

Leave Canberra 8.00am for an exploratory walk to the Sentry Box from Old Boboyan Road South. We will aim to dry camp on the mountain so we can get some good views and photos of the sunset and sunrise. Several historical sites will be visited. Experienced walkers only, numbers limited. Call leader by preceding Wednesday for details and bookings. 150kms, \$30 per car.

26 April Sunday daywalk 2A/D/E
Tinderry North Peak Maps: Tinderry, Michelago 1:25 000
Leader: Max Lawrence Phone: 6288 1370(h), 6272 2124(w)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A solid climb of nearly 800m (on the vertical axis!), mostly on the steep Mt Allen and West Tinderry fire trails. Final 2km to the summit is through bush, and involves some rock scrambling. Great views. 120kms, \$24 per car.

2-3 May weekend canoe trip
Kangaroo Valley
Leader: Chris Bellamy Phone: 6203 7355(wk) 6249 7167(hm)

Easy autumn canoe trip in the milder climate of Kangaroo valley, into the Shoalhaven River arm of Tallowa Dam, paddling through dramatic gorges, camping on a lovely beach amongst temperate rainforest, lots of wildlife including serenading lyrebirds, and a cosy evening campfire. Options of walking, swimming and birdwatching. Easy, inexpensive local canoe hire. Suit any fit healthy bushwalker, no prior paddling experience required. Phone leader for details. 400kms, travel costs to be shared.

3 May Sunday daywalk 2A/B
Southern Namadgi Maps: Colinton, Bredbo 1:25 000
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 62884171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Walk from Mt Clear campground to Chalkers Chimney and return via Potters Chimney, old yards and Abood's duny. Possible side trip to the Long Flat. 130kms, \$26 per car.

9 May Saturday daywalk 2A/B/D
Following Mouat over Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Ginini and Gingera

Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 6247 7285

This walk follows the ACT/NSW border, locating some of the border markers installed by Harry Mouat's team in 1914. Also, two brumby yards will be seen. Beautiful snowgums, rocky outcrops, and some excellent views. About 15kms walking, mostly offtrack, some steep climbs. Book with leader, numbers limited. 140kms, \$28 per car.

16 May Saturday daywalk 2A/B
Big Hole and Marble Arch Map: Kain: 1:25 000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston, at 8.00am. A walk mainly on tracks past the spectacular Big Hole to Marble Arch in Deua National Park. Wading across the Shoalhaven River is required, and it could be slippery in wet weather at the Arch. Old footwear for crossing river would be advisable. 180kms, \$36 per car.

17 May Sunday daywalk 4A/C
Cotter Rocks Map: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. A long walk mainly on fire trails from the Orroral gate up to Cotter Gap, then through scrub up to a collection of massive rocks. A dramatic walk through the crowning Split Rock. 100kms, \$20 per car.

23-24 May weekend packwalk 2A/B/D/F
Booth Range Maps: Colinton, Michelago 1:25 000
Leader: Phil Gatenby Phone: 6254 3094

Partly exploratory walk on the Booth Range from Shanahans Mountain. Some patches of thick scrub and the climb up Booths Hill are involved. Phone leader early for details and bookings. Car shuffle. 130kms, \$26 per car.

24 May Sunday daywalk 1A
Kowen Forest Map: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Beverley Hammond Phone: 6288 6577

Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 9.00am. Visit Glen Burn Homestead site, Colverwell Cemetery and other homestead ruins off the Charcoal Kiln Road near Molonglo River. Bring a picnic lunch to eat at Molonglo Picnic Area where the cars will be parked. 20kms, \$4 per car.

27 May daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2984

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

29-31 May three day packwalk 1B/C/D
Snowball Map: Snowball 1:25 000
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering Phone: 6286 2128

This excellent, and not difficult, walk first appeared on the program this time last year, and is repeated by popular demand. From the Pikes Saddle/Dampier Trig fire trail we will explore the source and upper reaches of the Shoalhaven River. Possible side trips to Wambagugga Swamp and Deua Peak. For details contact leaders before 22 May. 350kms, \$70 per car.

31 May Sunday daywalk 1A/B/D
Southern Tidbinbilla Range Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 6247 7285

From TNR Visitors Centre we'll climb to Gibraltar Rocks for great views. Then we'll follow the TNR southern boundary through Devils Gap and up the Pyramid. Return to Visitors Centre. About 9kms, on and off track, some steep climbs. Book with leader, numbers limited. 70kms, \$14 per car (plus TNR entry fee if applicable).

6-8 June long weekend packwalk 2A/C
Quilties Mountain Map: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Contact leader before Wednesday 3 June for details of two and a half day packwalk in the Budawangs. Easy walk in to a base camp on the Endrick River. Visit Styles Pass, the Bora Ground and Round Mountain. A late lunch at Braidwood Pub on Monday. 340kms, \$68 per car.

13 June Saturday daywalk 2B/C
Nursery Creek area Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Martin Chalk Phone: 6268 4864(w), 6292 3502(h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops for a prompt departure at 8.00am. The walk starts from the Nursery Swamp carpark in Orroral Valley, takes in part of the ridge overlooking Rendezvous Creek, and returns to the cars via the top end of Nursey Swamp. 60kms, \$12 per car.

21 June Sunday daywalk 2A/B/D
Mt Coree and the Devils Peak Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Matthew Higgins Phone: 6247 7285

Crunch frost in the northern Brindabellas this winter. We'll climb Coree from near Blundell's Arboretum, then walk to Coree Flats, climb Devils Peak, and return to Blundells. Some history, a good deal of great native forest, excellent views from both peaks. Steep climbs, about 14kms. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90kms, \$14 per car.

24 June daywalk
Wednesday walk
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

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

28 June Sunday daywalk 2A/B
Long Point Ref: Caoura 1:25 000
Leader: Col McAlister 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. Lunch on a sandy beach. A long haul back up to the cars. 250kms, \$50 per car.

Sunday March 29 1989



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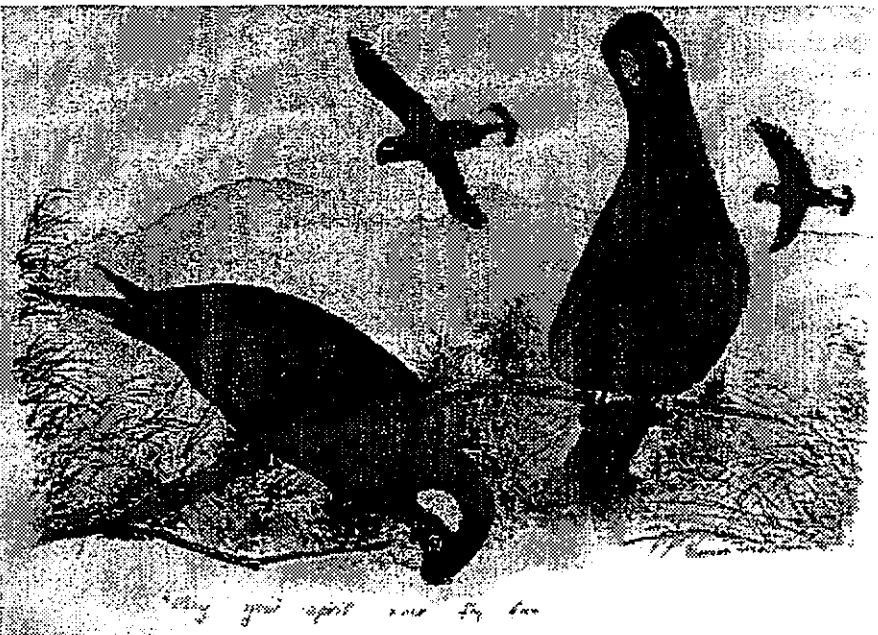
HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Well known local historian and NPA member **Matthew Higgins** will be giving a number of public presentations during the Heritage Festival:

Thursday 2 April 1998 – Matthew will give his 'Skis on the Brindabellas' slide and tape presentation at the Griffith Library Community Room, Blaxland St., Griffith, 7.30pm to 8.45pm. Refreshments provided. Hosted by the ACT Heritage Council.

Tuesday 7 April 1998 – Matthew's slide illustrated talk 'Surveyors at the Snowline' describes the survey of the ACT – NSW border in 1910–1915. See how the surveyors explored along the Brindabellas and other ranges, and see the markers they left behind. The talk will be in Room 2 of the Griffin Centre, Civic, and commences at 7.30pm. Refreshments available. Hosted by the Institution of Surveyors, Canberra Division. Display of historic survey instruments.

'Dams on the Cotter' is the title of the report and display resulting from a recently completed oral history project by Matthew. The display is scheduled to be opened in the upstairs foyer of the ACT Legislative Assembly building during the Heritage Festival. Call in for a look after *Thursday 16 April*.



Management plan for Molonglo River Corridor

When this issue went to press, members of the NPA Environment Committee were working on the NPA's response to the Draft Plan of Management for the Lower Molonglo River Corridor. The Corridor is made up of land on both sides of the river between Coppins Crossing and the Murrumbidgee River.

The late Peter Barrer, an NPA member, in his 1992 flora and fauna study found much to conserve in the riparian and valley plant communities and in the area which forms the habitat of *Aprasia parapulchella*, the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard. Because of its long, narrow shape and its position below unreserved land, the corridor is vulnerable to impact from the use of the adjacent land and from recreation pressures.

The river itself presents the greatest management challenge. Upstream, Scrivener Dam causes highly variable flow rates and releases of cold water, while the stormwater from Woden Valley and Weston Creek enters the river above Coppins Crossing without ponding, so carries a heavier pollution load.

By the time Environment ACT has assessed responses and modified the draft, it will probably be early 1999 before the plan is scrutinised by the ACT Legislative Assembly Planning and Environment Committee.

The NPA will be keen to see an implementation plan which gives the highest priority to stabilising any adverse processes, such as erosion and weed invasion, and to securing the corridor from stock activities, which are not compatible with conservation.

Clive Hurlstone

Walking on Tidbinbilla



Matthew held a meeting – in the bush, in the rain. Photo, Russell Wenholz

15th November last year was one of those days when the weather forecast read 'showers confined to the ranges'. This was the day I chose to join a National Parks Association (NPA) group on one of its organised walks.

The walk – my maiden bushwalk – was titled 'The Pimple' and Matthew Higgins was the leader. It was classified as a '2/A – C – D – E', which translates to mean 10km to 15km on road or track through light scrub and patches of thick scrub with some rock scrambling.

In the NPA brochure it was described as: 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. (No mention of showers confined to the ranges).

We met at the Kambah shops, drove to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve – to a small carpark behind the koala sanctuary. Here everyone – 13 in the group – changed into 'walking gear' and organised backpacks. Most had leather leggings. I was

quickly corrected when I referred to them as spats.

The pace was brisk on the first part of the walk along a well-made track. There was plenty of conversation. This died out, when the track disappeared and the ascent began.

Navigation in this country is largely a matter of selecting the correct mountain spur. Once Matthew Higgins made that decision our direction was simply up. The going became steeper and rockier. The mist developed into light showers and then to rain that was heavy enough for one walker to exclaim:

'You never said anything about a waterfall on this walk, Matthew.'

The rest stops became closer together. Not everyone was having a good time.

Matthew held a meeting – in the bush, in the rain. Three of the party – all experienced walkers – decided to return. The remainder resumed the ascent, more settled, more determined and taking only a short rest at the top of the range, before moving off to the Pimple.

Another half hour and a short rocky climb and we came out onto the uncomfortable jumble of rocks

known as the Pimple. The rain had eased and we were merely in cloud. But as we changed out of our wet clothes and opened our lunch packs, there were breaks in the cloud.

The views were of deep bush valleys and, in the north, on occasions, I obtained glimpses of the city of Canberra.

Conversation resumed over lunch. One walker knew a good deal about dams. Another had walked in the Rockies, the Alps, the Apennines.

After the morning's long ascent, it seemed only a short walk from the Pimple over to Tidbinbilla Mountain. The rain, mist and cloud had dispersed, and there was plenty to see from this point, which was covered in waist-high scrub.

Matthew pointed out the Tinderry Mountains to the south-east, beyond Michelago. To the south: Corin Dam, and behind it, Bimberi. Along the western horizon, the Brindabella peaks and the ribbon of water that is Ginini Falls could be seen dropping out of sight into the Cotter Valley. Then Mount Coree guarding the north; and, eventually, north-east and east, the city of Canberra.

Lake Burley Griffin, some city buildings and the suburbs of Woden and Tuggeranong were identified by members of the party.

I tried in vain to pick out Adelaide Avenue after it comes over the hill (where the Prime Minister used to live), down to the Kent Street overpass to the point where it sweeps around to the south-west towards Woden and becomes Yarra Glen. From this point, in winter, I've often looked up and seen the snow-covered Tidbinbilla Mountain.

But from Tidbinbilla, looking back, Adelaide Avenue is indistinguishable.

From Tidbinbilla the walking was all 'down'. Matthew located the correct spur and the descent began. It continued for about two hours.

continued on page 13

Police rescue

The guest speaker at our September General Meeting was Sergeant Warren Williamson from the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) police rescue squad. Warren joined the AFP in 1980 and has been in charge of the rescue squad for the last two years. He came to the squad with a strong background in recreational skiing and bushwalking.

Warren told us that the history of police rescue squads began in NSW just after the end of WWII. The first rescue undertaken in the ACT was in 1962 when walkers were rescued in the Rendezvous Creek area. A full time rescue squad for the ACT was implemented in 1980.

The emergency-related responsibilities of the AFP within the ACT include: flood operations, evacuation, crowd control, searches, forensic operations, crime scene preservation, disaster victim identification and river, cliff and cave rescue. The direction and duties of the squad have changed over time and the catalyst for these changes has usually been some form of disaster – recent examples include the Winchester murder, the

aeroplane crash near Narrabundah, and more recently the Canberra Hospital implosion and the Thredbo disaster.

At present the squad is manned by five full-time members and thirty two part-time members and also includes eleven police divers. Full-time members are allocated to the squad for a period of three years and then they transfer to other duties. Aspiring squad members must complete a basic rescue course, testing their physical fitness and ability to work under trying conditions, in all environments from heights to confined spaces and swift water. Successful completion of this course qualifies participants to become part time members of the squad and in a further two years they are eligible to apply for a full-time position. Regular training continues in a variety of competencies including the use of heavy rescue equipment, vertical rescue, navigation training, snow survival and improvised disaster training. The latter chiefly focuses on the 'unusual' or 'unexpected', rather than the day to day problems the squad may face.

Only about 30 per cent of the squad's time is taken up with 'bush' search and rescue, the rest is mainly evidence searches or searching for the elderly in the suburbs. In searches for overdue or injured bushwalkers, squad members are trained to establish a police forward command post in the search area and then to lead teams of ambulance paramedics, rangers and volunteers to search for and evacuate lost or injured walkers. To this end, annual search and rescue exercises are conducted in both Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks to test the responses of search controllers and search teams in the field.

I am sure we all left the meeting with a high degree of confidence in the dedication and capabilities of the AFP Rescue Squad. It was particularly interesting to hear of the degree of cooperation with other agencies and to learn that the squad was not bound by state boundaries.

The point of contact for the AFP Rescue Squad is via police communications on 6256 7777, or in the event of an emergency, 11 444.

Len Haskew

Walking on Tidbinbilla *continued*

Matthew worked hard to make it interesting. He identified several species of trees. He showed us piles of stones that he said were Aboriginal graves.

He said that bushwalking was not so much a matter of aerobics as 'knowing where to put your feet'. I agreed with him.

On the morning's ascent I may not have puffed as much as some of the others. (Regular jogging keeps me fit). But in the afternoon's descent, I certainly slipped, stumbled and even fell, more than the others.

Within sight of the carpark, I heard a Kookaburra laugh. Earlier

in the walk, Matthew had halted us to listen to a noise he had assured us was a lyrebird. In the course of the day, the only wildlife I had seen were Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and currawongs – the same cockatoos and currawongs I see in the streets near my home. One of the party thought he might have seen a 'wedgy' – a Wedge-tailed Eagle – but he was not sure.

Back in the carpark, it was take off the backpacks and change out of the 'walking gear'. Before I knew it I was in the traffic of city streets.

Several days later I was driving down Adelaide Avenue to Woden.

Over the hill (past the Lodge where the Prime Minister used to live), down the hill to the Kent Street overpass and into the long sweeping curve. Tidbinbilla loomed large on the horizon.

In the car with me was a person whom it was in my best interests to impress. I nodded nonchalantly at Tidbinbilla mountain.

'I was up there the other day,' I said.

The person was impressed.

Russell Wenholz

Yerranderie – pilgrimage to past memories

Members attending the November general meeting enjoyed a fascinating account of the Mittagong to Katoomba walk and of the ghost town of Yerranderie through which it passes. Judith Webster gave a brilliant day-to-day account of the walk, Mike Smith described mining operations at Yerranderie and Reg Alder related reminiscences of the town extending back to pre World War 2 days. Here is Reg's story.

In my early bushwalking days Yerranderie held quite an attraction to me with it then approaching a sobriquet as a ghost town. The area around the town was first explored by Francis Barraillier in 1802 when he passed it by to be repulsed by the cliffs and waterfalls of Christys Creek on his quest to find a route over the Blue Mountains. Settlement of the area followed 25 years later and in 1871 galena (lead sulphide) was discovered. Silver is found in the presence of this ore, however the richness of the field was not discovered until 1898. Four mines struck rich lodes and a remaining 14 had varying degrees of limited success.

Access from Camden was difficult because of the mountainous route down into the Burragorang Valley and the lack of water was a serious obstacle in the operation of the ore extraction plants. The peak periods of operation of the mines were in 1909-1912 and 1923-1924 with production declining from 1930 with the need for more capital to extend the mines, and labour disputes over wages and conditions. Over \$2 million worth of silver at prices at that time was extracted.

The mines operated sporadically until the 1950s after closure of the road from Camden caused by the flooding of the Burragorang Valley. The Oberon stock route over the mountainous watershed of the Kowmung River made transfer difficult even though it had been upgraded to fire trail standard through a grant to a local landholder whose access to Camden had been cut off. Permission to traverse his



The main street of the company town of Yerranderie in 1938. The building on the left remains but with additions and is now used for accommodation. The two central buildings have been demolished and the area has become part of the camping ground. Trees now obscure the view of the distant ranges. Photo, Reg Alder

property was unpredictable and a fee was demanded to unlock his gate.

My first visit to Yerranderie was during the Christmas-New Year week of 1938 when I was one of a party who had just successfully carried out the first river swim/walk from the source of the Kowmung River at Ginkin through the Morong Deep. The side visit to Yerranderie was to secure supplies and to meet up with companions, who would join us to go on to Katoomba. The town was then still viable with a well stocked store, even to the extent of stocking ice cream without refrigeration. 'Buckets' were purchased and several carried in our billies to be eaten on the banks of the Kowmung – possibly the only occasion that ice cream had been eaten there. One walker replenished his bran supply, a food fad then, from the chook feed bin. There were still enough small holding farmers and fossickers to make the store viable.

My next visit was during Easter 1939 when Yerranderie was the starting point for a round trip walk

over the Bindook Plateau, down Murruin Creek and along the Wollondilly River to Upper Burragorang. None of us had cars and we travelled on plank seats in the back of a tarpaulin-covered lorry. Regulations had only recently been made for it to be an offence for passengers (except workmen) to be carried on lorries. We were told by the driver that no parts of our bodies were to project from under the tarpaulin, especially when we were passing through towns. At the completion of the walk we met up with Paddy Pallin and party who had followed our lead in walking/swimming the Morong Deep. Then, there was a visit a few months later, to explore the Colong Caves, with the safety of a ball of string.

In January 1941, I walked from Nerriga to Tallong and then from Joadja to Wentworth Falls. There had been a serious drought in 1939-40 with permanent springs disappearing and rivers drying up into ponds. The drought broke on my walk and the flooded Shoalhaven

and Wollondilly Rivers caused some problems. However the coastal floods had not reached the Kowmung and, on the way, we visited the Colong Caves. Our tomboy member insisted on going further into the caves. Her candle blew out and we could not afford any further searching with the rapidly diminishing power of our batteries. I then had to walk/run the 15km into Yerranderie for candles and string. The store was still stocked and fortunately a local guide and companion were there. Together we returned and after seven hours in the dark our companion was found unharmed. The plan had been to stock up in Yerranderie, so continuing on our way down Lannigans Creek to the Kowmung I returned to Yerranderie. This was to be my last visit for 56 years.

I always had a yen to return but stories about the road condition and the landholder provided a deterrent to make a visit. Our members' walk last year from Mittagong to Katoomba, with a two-nights stopover and good reports on the road condition, provided a reason for a pilgrimage to past memories. The town is now a private one, with charges to visit and camp. Some buildings, particularly the post office, have been restored for accommodation. The general store forlorn, with its front fallen out and a danger sign erected. Some buildings have disappeared. Most mine machinery and buildings have gone but there is still an atmosphere to the place. The public section of the town, about a kilometre to the east, still has its court house, police station, church and cemetery. A public camping ground is nearby. One of the major impressions of the town, is of how the bush with now-large trees has regenerated after having been clear-felled for mine props and fuel. The vista has changed completely from the 1938 photograph, with Byrnes Gap and the Tonalli Range now obscured.

Yerranderie is still worth a visit – access is from the Taralga-Oberon Road.

Reg Alder

PARKWATCH

Management of national parks by Aboriginal land councils

(This article was prepared by Sean Docker, Land Rights Unit, NSWALC)

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) welcomed the enactment of the National Parks and Wildlife Aboriginal Ownership Act 1996 NSW.

The Act creates a new category of conservation reserve in NSW national parks on land owned by aboriginal people which is leased to the crown and managed by the NSW NPWS.

The rights of the public in Aboriginal-owned national parks will be the same as in other national parks in NSW, while the rights of aboriginal owners are recognised through ownership and management arrangements. This ensures that the objectives of conservation and public recreation such as camping, walking, sight-seeing and picnicking are as important in Aboriginal-owned national parks as on other national parks.

Aboriginal-owned national parks are to be managed by NPWS, but the plan of management is created by the board of management for the particular Aboriginal-owned parks and not the Director General of NPWS, as is the case in other national parks.

The board of management consists of a majority of Aboriginal Owners and includes representatives of local government, NPWS, a conservation representative and a representative of the Aboriginal land council. The Aboriginal owners of national parks, and other Aboriginal people they give permission to, may hunt and gather fauna and flora with the exception of species protected by threatened species legislation. The lease must acknowledge the rights of the public under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The Aboriginal land council may not sell, mortgage, exchange or dispose of the land.

Aboriginal-owned national parks provide a valuable opportunity for the public to enjoy the usual benefits of national park lands as well as the special benefits of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal input into the management of land. For their part some Aboriginal people can have the traditional ownership of their land formally acknowledged as well as having the opportunity to have an input into the management of these lands.

Bushwalker, vol 3, no 2, November, 1997.

Protecting Plumwood Mountain

The desire to secure long-term protection for the rainforest that covers much of her property near Braidwood, spurred Dr Val Plumwood to sign a unique agreement in mid-1996.

The agreement she signed with the NSW NPWS, identifies the property as wilderness and permanently protects it as a 'conservation area'. Under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*, the land is legally protected from development and subdivision.

Val felt such a connection with the place, that she changed her name to reflect the beautiful and mysterious ancient plumwood trees (*Eucryphia moorei*). The initial shoots of these Gondwana relics grow out of the side of massive tree ferns, forming a canopy over rushing creeks. As they grow, they encircle the ferns with flowing, muscular human shaped forms. 'It's like a gallery of tree sculptures,' she says.

Val says she signed the agreement in a spirit of trust and hope for the future, but she says she is not starry-eyed about the guarantee of protection. 'I don't see the agreement as the end of the story. Protection will only be provided in a society that is sufficiently conscious of the importance and beauty of this kind of area.'

National Parks Journal, vol 41, number 6, December, 1997

PARKWATCH

National parks at the crossroads

In one of the biggest shifts of environmental goal posts since coming to power, the Carr Government has abandoned the primary purpose of national parks – nature conservation.

After launching its new-found direction on the Alan Jones breakfast show, the Government released a Draft Access Strategy document (aimed primarily at satisfying those who want more vehicular access) and announced the setting up of regional forums (all but one in rural NSW). The final shape of this document will be based on the outcomes of these forums and submissions from the public. These findings will also tie in with the soon-to-be-released NPWS Strategic Tourism Project Report.

From there, the future management of national parks will be dictated by the declared 'rights' of user groups, such as commercial tour operators, 4WD drivers and horse riders. The preservation of fauna and flora in the last few intact areas of NSW, hardly get a mention.

But the problem will not stop there – the access rights groups are already complaining the strategy document is not good enough. In other words once they have been granted access they will unremittably lobby for more. And if the Government wishes to continue its adaptive stance, it will find itself giving up, bit by bit, conservation policies that protect the last substantial remnants of the natural environment that offer quiet, nature-based enjoyment.

Total Environment, vol 16, no 3, September, 1997

An environmental plus?

In the greatest 'innovation' in New South Wales forestry since the introduction of woodchipping in the early 1970's, the New South Wales Forestry Commission is considering cable logging native forests. What implications does this have for the future of forested and residential areas in the state?

Cable logging is a log hauling method that facilitates the logging of slopes too steep for the conventional bulldozer and log skidder. Aerial cables are used to haul logs to a central hilltop machine. Cable logging invariably involves clear felling of the forest, as any canopy retention would interfere with the operation of the cable.

The Commission argues that cable logging involves less environmental impact than conventional logging. It is widely accepted that considerable soil compaction and disturbance arises with the use of ground-based machines, such as bulldozers and skidders. As cable logging involves at least some degree of aerial suspension of hauled logs, it is likely to have less impact *on a given site*. Whilst *on a given site*, cable logging methods may have comparatively

less impact, it is misleading and deceptive to present the observation without additional explanation.

Firstly cable logging facilitates the logging of areas inaccessible to conventional logging because of their steepness, therefore, more loggings can take place, degrading additional habitat relied upon by threatened species.

Secondly the impact of 're-generation' burns, almost universally associated with cable logging, must be considered. This burning removes ground cover and leads to increased soil erosion. In its own environmental impact statement the Commission admits the likelihood of increased erosion and sediment transport arising from burning.

If cable logging is introduced, there will be a major expansion of logging on steep slopes on NSW native forests. Until now, many steep areas of native forests have been regarded as de facto conservation reserves, because of their inaccessibility. These forests are usually relatively intact and often contain old growth forest of high conservation value.

Bogong, vol 18, number 3, 1997

Marine parks wave away mining

Species recognised internationally as being threatened, such as sea dragons and grey nurse sharks, will soon have a safe haven in the first marine parks to be declared in NSW yesterday.

NSW Environment Minister Pam Allan said mining would be banned and significant protection given to some of the state's most sensitive coastal environments in the parks at Jervis Bay and the Solitary Islands, off the state's North Coast, near Coffs Harbour.

Modelled on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and welcomed by local conservationists, the marine parks have been awarded the status of national park and will be gazetted jointly by the Fisheries Minister Bob Martin and Ms Allan on Friday (2/1/98).

Ms Allan said the Parks would increase the 'nature conservation value' of the two areas, and would boost tourism and employment.

Ms Allan did not expect the native title claims of aborigines for 'sea rights' in the Jervis Bay area to interfere with the park initiative.

'Our legislation does not extinguish native title and this is an area where we have a very close working relationship with the local aboriginal groups,' she said.

NPWS spokeswoman Dianne Garrod said the Jervis Bay marine park would protect a colony of about 10 000 Little Penguins on nearby Bowen Island, seal colonies and the endangered Grey Nurse Shark and Sea Dragons.

'This is an extremely significant announcement that recognises the environmental and recreational values of the bay,' she said.

The Australian, 30/12/97

Correction

The photo of Freddie Johnston's fallen survey tree in the December 97 Bulletin was wrongly attributed. The photo was taken by Martin Chalk.

A bushwalk to celebrate Reg's 80th



*Despite the hike, the champagne was icy cold.
Photo, Di Thompson*



Matthew holds Reg's birthday candle. Photo, Len Haskew

Thirty-two NPA members helped Reg Alder celebrate his 80th birthday on Sunday 7 December 1997. The celebration took the form of a bushwalk to Gudgenby. Concerns about the prevailing hot weather were in the minds of several in the group, but fortunately the day was very kind for the big occasion. A light, cooling south-easterly breeze blew for much of the day, and partial cloud cover kept out the hot sun.

The walk began at the pines carpark and proceeded along the Yankee Hat trail. A diversion took us to Greenfields/Sinclairs hut site, marked by two piles of hearth stones. Then on to the Yankee Hat Aboriginal art site where the group rested a while and viewed the rock paintings. We walked to the boulder-strewn cascades on Middle Creek, a lovely spot, and were surprised to find quite a lot of water still running in the creek and coursing beneath the many large, rounded rocks perched above the stream.

Then at Rustin's Hut site, a little further down the creek, the group had lunch and the 'formal' part of the day began. Short speeches were made by Len Haskew, Fiona Brand, Beverly Hammond and myself, and the four bottles of champagne carried in especially for the occasion remarkably stretched around the group in real 'loaves and fishes' style (complemented by a white and red). Courtesy of Bert Bennett and his absent wife, Jess, there was an array of cupcakes, one of which carried a single candle which Reg, with his bush skills, was able to light despite the breeze.

Reg's responding speech touched on his first attempt at tent-making (calico isn't very waterproof), early walks with The Sydney Bushwalkers, especially in the Blue Mountains, and his subsequent walking career with the NPA. Reg came to Canberra to live in 1970 and has been involved with NPA since that time.

The walk back to the cars saw the long stream of walkers wend its way across the open grasslands of Gudgenby, watched from far and near by the resident kangaroos. (The antics of the many new joeys were most entertaining throughout much of the day.)

It was a gentle, easeful day, and one during which lots of very good feelings were expressed for the birthday boy, NPA's 'snowy haired icon of the mountains'. The sentiment at the end seemed to be 'Reg, you should turn 80 every year!'

Matthew Higgins

Book Review

Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory. By Ross Bennett. National Parks Association of the ACT, 86pp, \$14.95 and \$2.00 postage (\$12.00 for members from NPA Office)

I hesitated when I was first asked to review this book as I have little knowledge of the subject other than the occasional sighting on a bush walk and the (sometimes) accompanying photograph taken. However, in January this year while walking back to Mount Clear camp ground in the southern corner of Namadgi National Park with Fiona McDonald Brand I had a timely 'snake' experience. I trod on the tail of a black snake that neither of us could positively identify. I felt something soft move under my left foot (I was wearing sneakers at the time) and immediately jumped to one side shouting 'snake' to Fiona. We moved a comfortable distance away and looked back. The snake merely lay on the ground with its head resting along the side of a small log, quietly watching us. It had made no attempt to attack the shoe or leg, nor did it attempt to wriggle away to safety. It just lay there; only its eye seemed to move. We stood watching it, wondering, was it injured? too cold to move? possibly dead? I moved to the front of it making a mental note of all its details – black body, about a metre long, yellowish-patterned underbelly fading to white near the head, top of the head brownish, funny white lines on its chin. It was anything but dead, its eyes followed my every movement, yet it still made no sign of aggression. Maybe we were its first 'human' encounter and it was as curious about us as we were about it.

On returning to the camp ground I reached for my copy of Ross Bennett's new field guide, which I'd left in the car. The snake was quickly identified as a Highland

Copperhead (*Austrelaps ramsayi*) as it was identical to the one in the photograph in the book. It was almost as if Ross had photographed 'our' snake – unlike on most occasions when comparing with illustrations/photographs in field guides, when one or two details will be found to be at least slightly different. Ross's statement 'the species is known for its shyness and reluctance to bite, even in self defence' was absolutely spot on, too. I am unable to put Ross's descriptions of the other species in the book to the same test, but no doubt we'll all be doing that on our future bushwalks.

Written by former ACT Parks and Conservation ranger Ross Bennett, the text is wonderfully jargon-free and obviously written for the lay person. Ross says in his general introduction that he aimed at providing enough information in the text to enable accurate identification of species without having to resort to scale count (thank goodness!) or the use of other more complex scientific methods. What I like also about Ross's text is that his enthusiasm for (could I say love of) reptiles and frogs is apparent throughout. No negative messages or warnings here! The tightly controlled descriptions and the excellent page formatting make the book simple to use, even without the common and scientific name index that has been provided. Each group introduction and each individual species has a separate page of its own (brown snake has two) containing a concise description and at least one high-resolution close-up coloured photograph to aid identification.

Altogether it is a very attractive book – full colour throughout on high quality, water-repellant paper with attractive illustrations around the borders of each page. All photographs have been painstakingly airbrushed to eliminate unwanted

background details, leaving behind beautiful vignettted portraits of each creature. While the book is a larger format than our tree and bird field guides (it is 150x210mm), it is very comfortable to handle and is still small enough to fit easily into a day pack. This excellent field guide will be of great value to all people interested in the reptile and frog fauna, not only of the ACT but also of other areas of Australia with similar habitats.

Many people have been involved in the production of this book and it is a good example of teamwork – McComas Taylor managed the project; Ross Bennett wrote the text and supplied many of the photos; Mariana Rollgejser designed it; John Wombey, David Hunter, Will Osborne and Robert Jenkins also supplied photos; Goanna printed it; and last but certainly not least Honorary Life Member, Alastair Morrison's very generous donation made the whole project possible. Since writing the book, Ross has retired from the Park Service and hopes to open his Australian Reptile Centre at Gold Creek shortly.

Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory is available at book shops in Canberra or by mail from the NPA ACT, PO Box 1940, Woden, ACT 2606.

Babette Scougall

New members

Ken Eldridge	Garran
Esther Gallant	O'Connor
Siska Reichel	Ainslie
Sandra Zanker	Waramanga
Brian and Jessie O'Neill	Fisher
Ron Smallhorn	Kambah

The great Plains-wanderer quest

For years now I've longed to see a Plains-wanderer, *Pedionomus torquatus*. I'm not sure why I was so keen; there are after all many rare birds to aspire to see. Anyway, the opportunity to visit Plains-wanderer habitat eventually arose when Canberra Ornithologists Group/Emu Tours organised a trip to the Riverina in December 1997. 'If I see one, you'll never hear the last of it' was a frequent remark in the weeks before the trip. 'What's a Plains-wanderer anyway?' non-birdo friends asked. So, did my dream come true, can I now claim to be one of the few who have actually seen a Plains-wanderer?

First, some little information about this strange, cryptic and now very rare bird. The Plains-wanderer is of great scientific interest; taxonomists have placed it in a family of its own. It occurs only in Australia and only on the eastern side of the continent. Its closest relative is a South American species and Dr David Baker-Gabb of Birds Australia suggests that it may be 'an ancient member of Australia's avifauna, with its origins dating back to when Australia was part of the Gondwana supercontinent'. It measures around 15cm and the field guides show its shape as a sort of cross between a plover and a quail. It is noted for standing on tip-toe with its bill pointing upwards. Uncharacteristically in birds, the female is dominant; bigger than the male and more colourful and, like the Emu, leaves most domestic duties to her mate. In fact she may mate with a second partner, while the first partner is rearing her chicks.

The Plains-wanderer, a ground bird, was formerly common. Its habitat requirements, however, are very specific, namely sparse native grassland with bare ground between plants and it is unable to adapt to heavily grazed areas or where exotic grasses have been introduced. It is, therefore, seriously in competition with human needs and is vulnerable

also to feral animals, raptors, fire and possibly pesticides. A correlation has been established between the Plains-wanderer habitat and threatened grassland plants, but there is no reserve or national park with a viable population. Only an urgent conservation program will save this unique bird from extinction.

The stronghold of its shrinking population is on a few well-run private properties in the Riverina (rice paddies are now a growing threat in the area) so you are unlikely to see a Plains-wanderer without the assistance of Phil Maher of Inland Bird Tours, who has made it his speciality. Because it's too difficult to track down during the day, being very well camouflaged and flattening itself to the ground when disturbed, Phil seeks it after dark using a well-rehearsed strategic approach, though it's not a nocturnal bird. The only other successful method of locating it was to use trained game dogs.

The great manoeuvre commenced at a farmhouse on the endless flat plains of the Riverina. Our minibus load of excited birdos transferred to three 4WD vehicles, one driven by John, the leaseholder, one by Phil and one by Phil's son. Each vehicle sported a spotlight on each side and we set off in a line like advancing troops, moving slowly over the vast paddocks with the six spotlights combing the short native vegetation. Time went by with every now and then a flash of excitement as a roosting bird got caught in the brilliance. No, not Plains-wanderer – Singing Bushlark or Brown Songlark – mostly. Then there was a shout from one vehicle and the three 4WD's gathered into a circle around – still not our objective but nevertheless a first for most of us – a tiny native marsupial, the Fat-tailed Dunnart, which soon scampered off in fright.

An hour went by in this fashion and it was getting late. For some of us oldies this was our one and only

chance to see a Plains-wanderer. Of course we had seen other uncommon species of birds on this tour – earlier that day there were Inland Dotterel, Orange Chat and Banded Lapwing, but it was the wanderer we had come for.

Another shout. The vehicles had become separated but our driver sped up to about 15kph then swung into position with the others to form a circle again, noses inward. And there she was – the extraordinary female Plains-wanderer, with black and white collar around nipped-in neck, a chestnut bib. A cult bird if ever there was one! She stood there bedazzled by the six spotlights like a prima donna who had forgotten the song. She seemed aware of the indignity as she turned this way and that. Her frustration increased; 'I think she'll stamp her foot in anger soon', someone remarked. The scene will be a never-to-be-forgotten cameo for me and all too soon Phil said she had had enough and we drove off. We had indeed been lucky to see the more colourful female and our luck continued, for on the way back to the homestead, we tracked down an adult male and an immature male.

Afterwards the four human females in Phil's son's vehicle felt somewhat sheepish over their prolonged hysterical outburst – he was definitely not a birdo and would rather have been at the local Saturday dance. How do other people react, we asked in our embarrassment. 'Oh, they're all about as bad as you', was the laconic reply. So my long-suffering friends won't hear the last of it, at least not until the next venerable species is ogled (whether by fair means or foul!) – say a Rufus Owl or perhaps even an Orange-bellied Parrot...

There's a point to this story: when you can't climb mountains any more you can get high on the sight of a bird!

Phyl Goddard

Calendar

Activity	March	April	May	June
Committee Meeting	Thurs 5	Thurs 2	Thurs 7	Thurs 4
Namadgi Sub-Committee		Tues 7		Thurs 11
Environment Sub-Committee	Thurs 12		Thurs 14	
ACT Alive	Mon 16			
General Meetings	Thurs 19	Thurs 16	Thurs 21	Thurs 18

Further Details

Committee and ACT Alive – Secretary

Namadgi Sub-Committee – Robin Miller 6281 6314 (h) 6201 2191 (w)

Environment Sub-Committee – Stephen Johnston 6254 3738 (h) 6264 2035 (w)

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

Thursday 19 March. A Pinch of time: a naturalist's musings. We all think about time: how we do so in relation to environmental matters both creates and resolves problems. An Australian natural history exploration, both light hearted and serious, specifically designed for NPA by Ian Fraser. Ian is a local naturalist, author, broadcaster and educator.

Thursday 16 April. Tasmania's West Coast wilderness. Peter Tedder has journeyed to the western coast of Tasmania five times to date. Peter will tell us something about the area and why it attracts him so much. He will also give some practical details about his journeys.

Thursday 21 May. Geared for Adventure. David Edwards, from the Queanbeyan based firm Mont Adventure Equipment will speak to us about recent product developments, particularly a new range of winter season gear and the latest innovations in fabric technologies.

Thursday 18 June. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Nature Tourism and Recreation Strategy. Graeme Worboys, Regional Manager for the South-Eastern Region will discuss this new Strategy which is being developed for NSW National Parks.

Thursday 16 July. Some European Environments and the place of humans in the environment. Phil and Leonie Bubb have travelled, walked and skied extensively in the European Alps. We will see something of their experiences and hear of national parks, reserves, rural villages and building development. Phil will also tell us something of his views of the human place in the environment.