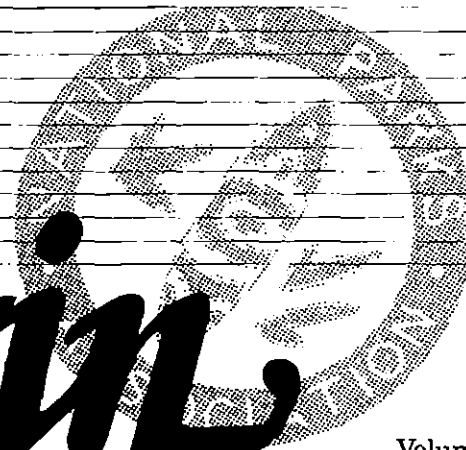


NPA Bulletin



Volume 35 number 4
December 1998

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



President's report

Christmas party

Researching a cure for lichen on rocks

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National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

Office-bearers, committee and convenors

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

*Immediate
past president* Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)

Secretary Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)

Treasurer Mike Smith 6286 2984(h)

Committee members

Yvonne Bartos 6231 5699(h)
Len Haskew 6281 4268(h); fax 6281 4257(h)
David Pfanner 6247 7572(h)
Timothy Walsh 6285 1112(h)

Convenors

Environment Sub-committee Neville Esau 6286 4176(h)
Outings Sub-Committee Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)
Bulletin Working Group Syd Comfort 6286 2578(h)

The NPA (ACT) office is located in Maclaurin Cres, Chifley, next to the preschool and is staffed by Dianne Hastie. Office hours are: 9am to 1pm Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone/Fax: (02) 6282 5813

Email: npact@spirit.com.au

Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606

Membership

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

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NPA Bulletin

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

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

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Cover

Ted Fleming and Phil Gatenby looking towards Mother Woila from the track referred to in "Mount Euranbene and Woila Clearing" Photo Max Lawrence

From the President

At the association's annual general meeting in August, Stephen Johnston and Robin Miller, two very active committee members and sub-committee conveners stood down from their positions and did not seek re-election.

Stephen, an NPA member since before his day job brought him back to Canberra in 1994, had recently been president of the Victorian NPA. He joined our committee in September 1994 and took over from Tim Walsh as convener of the Environment Sub-committee.

This sub-committee has carried a significant load in responding to plans of management for ACT parks and reserves and to other management and conservation issues such as bush-fire fuel management and mountain bike competitions in Canberra Nature Park. There was also involvement in cross-border issues such as plans of management for Tinderry Nature Reserve and the Brogo Wilderness and with accommodation developments in Kosciuszko National Park.

During this time Stephen was our representative on the Australian National Parks Council and president of the council from 1994 to 1996. He has also been a walks leader, a role he plans to continue.

Robin Miller joined the committee during Eleanor Stodart's term as

president and took over as convener of the Namadgi sub-committee from Steven Forst in early 1996.

Since the announcement by Chief Minister Mrs Kate Carnell in May 1997 that the ACT Government would negotiate a settlement of a claim by the Ngunnawal people for recognition of native title over certain ACT land including Namadgi National Park, Robin has played a significant role in developing the principles that we along with the Conservation Council adopted for a positive approach to this issue. He then led development by the sub-committee of the parameters used by Dermot Smyth to write the paper on joint management options for Namadgi National Park "Nourishing Namadgi". As part of the keeping-in-touch process, Robin also hosted meetings with the Director of Environment ACT and with Parks and Conservation staff.

Both Stephen and Robin, who were also members of each other's sub-committees, managed their meetings with good humour and treated the business on hand conscientiously even when they and other members had already had a long day and the agenda looked over-full. Both provided warm and friendly meeting venues in their own homes and managed to finish meetings before 11 pm. Perhaps

most important of all, they both are good letter writers!

On behalf of all members I thank Stephen and Robin for their invaluable contribution on issues of fundamental importance to the association.

Neville Esau has taken over as Environment Sub-committee convener and will be calling regular meetings. Namadgi issues will also be handled by this sub-committee and regular contact with Namadgi National Park staff maintained.

The claim for recognition of native title over Namadgi, and joint management issues stemming from this will be handled by the committee and passed on as required to the Environment Sub-committee.

Our office is now connected to email, so if you would like to receive notices or information from the office by this method please send an email to npaact@spirit.com.au.

By the time this *Bulletin* reaches you it will be the first week of December. The NPA Christmas Party is being held at Caloola Farm and I hope to see you all there. For those members unable to join us on 13 December, best wishes, and may you and your families have a joyful, reflective and safe Christmas.

Clive Hurlstone



Robin Mills

NPA Christmas Party

Sunday 13 December

from 11 am

at Caloola Farm

further details in
Outings Program



Stephen Johnston

Researching a cure for lichen on rocks

Removing lichen from a rock surface and keeping it clean might in the end be a simple process, like spraying it with fungicide. But when the lichen is growing over Aboriginal art a lot of careful research – and negotiation – has to be undertaken first. Damage cannot be undone.

This is why more than a dozen scientists, art experts, an Aboriginal consultant, and others have been involved in a research project, now in its second year, to find the reasons for a lichen invasion at the Nursery Swamp 2, Aboriginal rock art site in the Namadgi National Park, and to recommend action.

The project was commissioned by the National Parks Association after receiving an ACT Heritage Grant to study the factors promoting lichen growth and to develop a control program.

As reported in the *NPA Bulletin* of June 1997, the NPA's grant application was prompted when invading lichen spread over rock art and adjacent sheltered rock surfaces following damage to mature trees and the destruction of nearby understorey in bushfires in 1983.

The study is being undertaken by Navin-Officer Heritage Consultants, of Deakin, with consultants and assistants from a range of institutions and organisations, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Australian National University School of Chemistry, the University of Canberra, the National Library, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Australian War Memorial, and the Western Australian Museum.

The dangers of jumping to conclusions and imposing a simple solution may have already been illustrated at the site, according to the consultants' latest report, the Interim Report No 2 of May 1998.

An area was dry brushed in 1986 and the treatment was extended the following year. However, the report notes: "(Professor) Jack Elix (of the ANU Department of Chemistry) and

(Ms) Simone Louwhoff (a PhD student) pointed out that dry brushing, or any other vigorous disturbance of the "green invasion", is certain to result in dispersal and more general colonisation of the entire site."

As well as taking samples of rock, lichens and other biological material, the consultant team have used a sophisticated data logger and sensors to measure light access, temperature, moisture, air flows and other factors in different parts of the shelter, at different times of the day and night, and at different times of the year. Computers are being used to convert the data into readouts that will give a picture of what is happening.

Twelve periods of monitoring, each lasting between eight or nine days, were successfully obtained from the on-site logger. This was considerably more than the consultants were contracted to undertake. They felt it was important to obtain as much data as they could because of the potential complexity of the site and the ongoing development of the sensors.

"In addition to more pragmatic considerations, the sheer beauty and atmosphere attending the site and its location is a personal incentive for us to continue to return to this most important part of the Aboriginal heritage of the ACT as often as possible," the report notes.

Although most of the data, at the time of the report, had yet to be examined there were some clear trends which, when combined with other observations may well explain the main patterns of biological growth observed.

The report states: "The convergence of studying the distribution of heavy patches of lichen; as well as logged data – in particular light measurements; and the process of obtaining detailed measurements of "sky view" factors for the thermodynamic model of the site, has resulted in a plausible,

albeit obviously greatly simplified scenario, broadly consistent with the facts which may help to explain the lichen distribution and lead to more soundly based management strategies."

("Sky view" factors refer to the area and direction of sky visible at a point on the surface of the shelter.)

It is provisionally concluded that there are three main zones in the shelter – surfaces that:

- receive full sunlight at high levels for a relatively short duration late in the afternoon
- receive only scattered light but have a direct line of view to the sky (and will experience increased radiative cooling compared with those that have no sky view)
- receive only scattered light and have no direct view of the open sky.

The positions of the sensors were changed in late April to locations on the rock face more representative of these three, as yet hypothetical, biological environments. The new series of readings was not complete for inclusion in the Interim Report No. 2.

But it's not all high tech. The report reveals that scientists also make visual observations, are curious, and demonstrate that they are human.

"An example of something that could be either completely irrelevant or quite significant is the role of insects – in particular the strange habits of flies," the report says. "There is a discrete area, towards the northern end of the centre of the rear "wall" where flies prefer to congregate *en masse* to the almost complete exclusion of anywhere else (including the researchers).

"The area is visually distinct in the right light, being slightly more yellowish and darker – the difference in colour perhaps being due to the greater aggregation of fly spots. The white "kangaroo" falls partly within this area.

"The extra nutrients brought into the system by the insects might (or

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Bush regeneration progress at Gudgenby

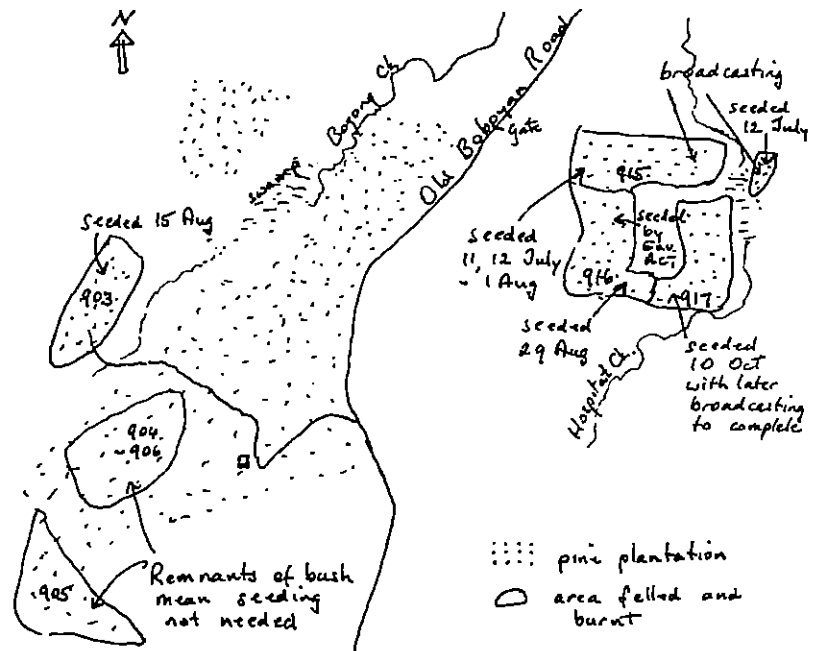
All compartments of the Boboyan Pine Plantation that have been both felled and burnt have now been sown (see map) and Steve Welch reports that seedlings are beginning to come up. Unfortunately they are not all eucalypts and wattles; plenty of briar roses and blackberries are germinating too, making sure there will be plenty of work for us to continue with. Some seedlings are being eaten back, whether by kangaroos or by rabbits, we do not know.

Although we have done better with the planting and seeding than expected, work on the exclosures to protect areas from grazing is well behind, in part because the ground was too wet for fencing for much of the winter. Only one of the smaller protective exclosures has been built by the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) volunteers, and the larger experimental exclosures are on hold.

By the beginning of November, six work parties had been completed by GBRG (in which NPA is well represented by participating members) and one by office staff of Environment ACT. Seedlings were planted at one GBRG work party,

and on two days by the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers. As most GBRG work parties have involved more than 20 people, they have contributed substantially to the excellent progress made with seeding.

There has been some broadcasting of seed over extensive areas and scratching the surface and seeding into holes, but most used was a method of scratching the surface in small areas, spreading a little seed and smoothing over with a bag, repeated at intervals over many parallel transects. Time will tell which technique works best.



Seed sown has been a mixture of three species of eucalypt and three of acacia, with the acacia prepared beforehand by being briefly immersed in boiling water. The eucalypt species were snow gum, *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, broad-leaved peppermint, *E. dives*, and candlebark, *E. rubida*.

Two work parties planned for November, one in the GBRG program, and one for NPA, were to look at germination, carry out weeding and perhaps build another small exclosure.

Eleanor Stodart

Researching a cure for lichen on rocks *continued*

might not) be important factors in the efflorescence of plants and algae. But why only in the one region – pheromones?, conformity?, a desire for company?, food source?, mating?"

Two candidate biocides have been selected for testing in case the lichen needs to be killed at some point in the future. They are copper oxychloride ("Bordeaux mixture") and a simple aqueous solution of zinc sulphate.

A number of suitable test locations have been identified, but on-site consultation with representatives of each of the three Aboriginal groups

who represent indigenous interests in the ACT need to be conducted before any testing within or near the site complex can be commenced.

"Although we have completed all, and somewhat more, of the field work we originally committed ourselves to, there remains much which could be done in the way of observation and measurement, and with each new observation another interesting avenue of research becomes apparent," the report concludes.

"In a complex open environment the final question is really when to

call it a day. At this stage we hope we have caught, to a first approximation, most of the important – and measurable – determinants of the biological problem the site Custodians are faced with managing."

Two of the principal members of the consulting group, Mr Bruce Ford and Dr Kelvin Officer, have agreed to address the March general meeting of the association and outline the conclusions reached from the investigation.

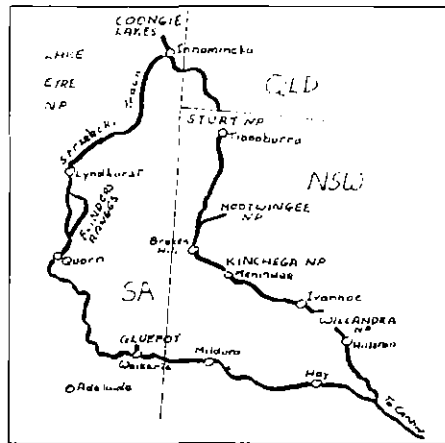
Graeme Wicks

Coongie Lakes and Gluepot Station

Remote Coongie Lakes is a unique wetland environment in the vast arid area of South Australia's Lake Eyre Basin. Listed on the National Estate and a proclaimed Ramsar Wetland of International Significance, the lakes are part of the 13800 sq km Innamincka Regional Reserve. Included in the reserve is the north-west branch of Cooper Creek and part of the Strzelecki Desert and the Sturt Stony Desert. The six lakes, surrounded by desert, are sometimes fed by rain falling as far as 1000 km away in central Queensland and become dry from time to time.

With its many endemic species, the area has been identified by the CSIRO as meeting three of the four criteria for World Heritage listing (one criterion is sufficient). One would expect these values to be enough to warrant permanent preservation of this complex ecosystem, but that is by no means the case. The reserve is in fact listed for multiple use, for example, cattle grazing, and Santos has permission to explore for oil and gas in the Coongie Lakes Control Zone. The threat of water extraction from Cooper Creek for cotton growing is extant and would of course seriously affect the biodiversity of the whole basin.

When a birdwatching tour to Coongie Lakes was proffered, not only was the destination attractive but the itinerary even more so, visiting a number of national parks and reserves en route. Firstly, Willandra National Park; the last attempt to go there saw our group sleeping on the floor of a Hillston pub – an experience by no means unique for travellers on the fair-weather-only road between Hillston and Willandra. We made it this time, although there was water on each side of the road for some of the way. The shearers' quarters made reasonable accommodation, with toilets and hot showers. Over 300 bird species have been recorded in the park and the delightful walk along Willandra Creek was full of



birdsong. The usual Mossgiel road out was impassable but the Trida road to our next stop, Kinchega National Park, was open.

The accommodation in the shearers' quarters at Kinchega was excellent, and the kitchen/dining area was still being improved. This park covers 44 000 hectares and includes two large overflow lakes bordering the western banks of the Darling River. The lakes were lovely and we saw rare freckled duck there but the Darling River itself was a sorry sight. The historic woolshed deserved a much longer inspection than we found time for.

In contrast to these huge tracts of water were the beautiful sandstone gorges of Mootwingee National Park, our next stop, and again we were in luck because the road in is also a fair-weather one. Apostlebirds at the campsite were very demanding, and Major Mitchell cockatoos and ringnecks came to the dripping tap near our tents. We searched for rare Hall's babbler and grey falcon in Homestead Gorge for a whole morning because the latter had recently been seen there, to no avail. The anticipated swim in Mootwingee Gorge didn't eventuate – the drought and dead euros had wrought their havoc on the pool. The several dead euros in the gorge had possibly been too weakened by the drought to get out again. The cold showers at camp were not popular either so we looked forward to the comforts of a night on the town at Tiboorburra in the pub with its famous lewd Clifton Pugh murals – still named the Family Hotel!

A short marked trail near Tiboorburra in Sturt National Park, the Granites Nature Walk at Dead Horse Gully, is notable both for its spectacular heaps of huge boulders from which the outer layer peels off like an onion and also for its cinnamon quail-thrush which we first sighted there. Sturt feels, and is, vast, remote and rather daunting with its sandhills, gibber plains and flat-topped mesas or jump-ups, the hard silcrete top of which crumbles as the less-resistant rock beneath erodes and the silcrete becomes the stony debris known as gibber. The Dog Fence is another feature of Sturt, over 5000 km long, the longest fence in the world, and forming the northern border of the park into Queensland.

Although grey grasswren and other rare birds were on the hit list, we were nevertheless awed by a flock of over a thousand corellas streaming along with the bus, all of us en route to the big dams at Mount King Station. After their drink, and while we ate lunch, they settled on the ground nearby like a white carpet for what, we could only suppose, was a siesta since they weren't feeding. Sturt is not a place for a summer holiday because temperatures can be extreme, and the recommendation is that plenty of food and water be carried in, but unexpectedly there was a tap at our camp at Olive Downs.

The thunderstorm during our last night at Sturt brought little rain so we were surprised when the road to Burke's "Dig" Tree and Innamincka turned into river as far as the eye could see. The outfit was turned around with difficulty and we travelled to Innamincka via Moomba. I had assumed Innamincka was a small town but didn't expect it to be quite so small, consisting only of a hotel, a trading post and a Parks Service building – 16 inhabitants, I think someone said. The mail we posted on a Tuesday would not be cleared until Saturday! A ranger gave us the bad news: roads

continued next page

Can rockclimbing and sightseeing coexist?

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service is developing a new bush camping ground at the old Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station site. As this is very close to Booroomba Rocks, there is likely to be an increase in visitor numbers to that place. I am concerned about the impact this is likely to have on the rockclimbing activities at the rocks.

A few years ago I became aware of instances of rock throwing and rolling which seemed to be occurring at a time of increasing sightseer numbers. I wrote to the ACT Parks and Conservation Service in 1995 setting out my observations on this and other problems (litter, etc). After some discussion we agreed it was a serious but difficult problem and concluded that it might be best to wait and see what "future planning options" might bring. Signs were ruled out as they could put ideas into people's heads. Recently a climber colleague experienced a nasty incident where rocks appeared to be thrown at him.

I decided to again contact ACT Parks and Conservation Service and

make some enquires as to what was being planned for this area. I spoke to Virginia Logan, the current manager of Namadgi National Park. She was happy to take the time to discuss the situation in some detail. She made the following important points:

- Namadgi is experiencing a considerable increase in visitors, including campers, and good park management dictates spreading these campers over a number of sites.
 - the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station site is already disturbed.
 - The current 'informal' camp site at Booroomba Rocks has some problems (fire, access, etc).
 - there is recognition of the problems relating to climbers and sight-seers, and the "historic" significance of the rockclimbing activities at Booroomba Rocks.
- Virginia Logan also indicated that current management thinking includes the following:
- the maintenance of the existing camping area at Orroral River (revegetated and re-opened

toward the end of this year)

- the possible temporary use of Orroral Tracking Station site for camping (although it is exposed)
- making the informal camp site at Booroomba Rocks "fuel stoves" only, and possibly phasing it out, especially to groups
- having the new camping ground at Honeysuckle cater for some of the increased numbers, especially groups, and, hopefully divert attention away from Booroomba Rocks.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service appears to recognise that there are potential problems and is attempting to address them. However I am still concerned for the safety of climbers. To determine if there is a problem and to encourage informed discussion I would ask anyone who observes any problems relating to climbing, or related matters, to contact me and I will attempt to raise any important issues with the Parks and Conservation Service.

Grahame Muller

Coongie Lakes and Gluepot Station *continued from previous page*

from there to both Coongie and the "Dig" Tree were closed.

The 24hour wait until the road to Coongie Lakes became passable was happily spent on a successful hunt for the rare gibberbird in the morning, a sunset cruise on the Cooper in the afternoon, dinner at the hotel and camp at Burke's Grave campground. The next day we were able to get almost to Coongie, staying at Kudriemitchie and making bus trips without the trailer over the sand dunes to the lake. The waders, which are protected by the Ramsar Treaty, were not migrating at the time but it was good to be there among the river red gums and coolabahs fringing the lake and to walk along the north-west branch of the Cooper where it entered the lake, or search for rare birds in the sandhills all around.

Then the Strzelecki Track, one night camping at beautiful Monte Collina bore and another night

(better glossed over!) at Rowdy and Del's at Lyndhurst, with resolute searches in the gibber along the way for rare birds including the chestnut-breasted whiteface which occurs nowhere else in the world. There were 11 wedge-tailed eagles near a dead kangaroo on the track. There had been fears that this species could decline with the advent of the rabbit calicivirus but we saw 96 in 21 days, many of them feeding on road kills. Wedgies may do nicely on the ever-increasing number of tourists speeding along outback roads! Continuing along the Strzelecki Track, the smudge on the flat desert horizon gradually expanded to become the Flinders Ranges where we were rewarded with views of the yellow-footed rock-wallaby in Warren Gorge, and barred from entry into Buckaringa Gorge, now owned by John Walmsley.

The final treat was the privilege

of being the first group to visit Birds Australia's new acquisition, Gluepot Station, which was purchased following the discovery of six globally-threatened species on an area of mallee untouched by fire for many years - a habitat requirement for some of these species including malleefowl. In due course, the 40km x 12km of Gluepot may become part of the huge Bookmark Biosphere Reserve on the NSW-SA border north of the Murray River. Development of camp sites is proceeding.

This was a round trip of about 5000 km, with diverse landscapes, and particularly worthwhile for travellers interested in outback flora and fauna.

Phyl Goddard

Editorial Note. Ramsar is the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. Birds Australia was previously known as the Royal Australasian Union of Ornithologists.

Landcare in the Wimmera

People who read *The Canberra Times* have probably seen my article on the Earthwatch platypus study in the Wimmera last June. However, NPA members might be interested in hearing more about Landcare in the area.

In the upper Wimmera, grazing practices of the past 150 years have resulted in severe gully erosion in many sidestreams, with consequent siltation, increasing salinity of the water, and dryland salinity where removal of the trees has allowed salt-bearing ground water to the surface. Only about one third of the farmers are involved in Landcare but the owner of the property we stayed on for the platypus project was one of the keenest, for good reason—it was his own ancestors who over-cleared the land.



Earthwatch volunteers spread hay to protect areas made bare by rising salinity. Photo Eleanor Stodart

George showed us two places where dryland salinity was serious. Along the banks of the creek near the homestead there had been large bare areas. These were now much smaller owing to fencing off and planting of trees and salt-tolerant grasses. To keep stock off the bare land on each side of the creek meant four roughly parallel fences, an expense defrayed in part by savings on flood gate repairs where the old fences had crossed the creek. Within the newly fenced areas, trees planted around the salt-affected ground, are now 3m or more high. I don't know what size they will need to be before they affect the salinity. Over much of the salt-affected ground salt-tolerant grasses now form a protective cover. We Earthwatch

workers showed our support for George's efforts by spreading hay over the areas still bare, to help retain moisture in the soil and speed the further spread of the grasses. It was interesting to see how modern farmers have completely lost touch with how much a human labour force can achieve.

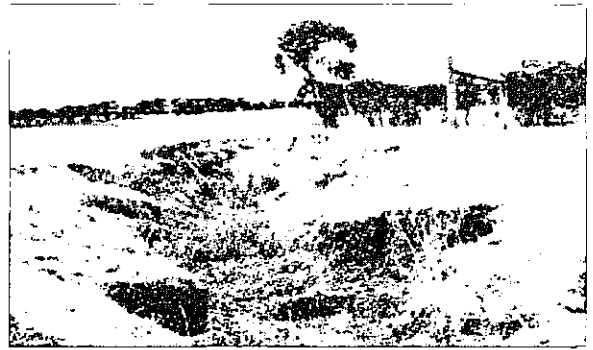
Hay was actually spread more easily by hand than by machine, but hands are what modern farmers generally cannot afford.

In another location George has a salt pan. Preparation for work on that has entailed tracing the salt line underground to a neighbouring hill. George plans to establish a

plantation on the hill to reduce the rising salt water at its source.

The property had numerous erosion gullies, some of which had been tackled, but there were still some beauties to provide headaches for years to come. Where there are well-grassed slopes, banks can

divert water from a gully to less vulnerable areas. The topsoil around the gully is then moved back, the banks graded, the topsoil replaced and the whole area sown. One paddock which George had recently tackled had been planted with a mixture containing phalaris which is deep rooted for a grass and retains some green even in very dry weather. He had also installed two dams in this paddock to spread runoff from downpours over a longer time. Each dam had a metre in height between the outlet intake and the overflow so the volume of water held in that metre (which being at the top of the dam covered a wide area) is released slowly through a pipe of 24cm (for the higher dam) or 30cm (for the lower



An erosion gully typical of many in the upper Wimmera. Photo Eleanor Stodart

dam) pipe. It was in a paddock downstream from these dams that George has his most challenging area of gully erosion. The paddock has several areas with parallel gullies which appear to date back to vineyards early this century, and which drain into a deep unstable gully.

George's problems and his methods of tackling them highlight many of the difficulties Australia faces in trying to repair rural lands. George produces fine merino wool which he can sell, so it is worth his while to increase productivity. Many farmers are not in that situation, even though some of their problems date from practices used when farmers were taking in good profits. Many problems cross property boundaries. Some properties are held in trust or leased in ways that do not provide any incentive for long-term investment. Fences established to suit a farmer's needs in moving his stock often do not easily adapt to a fencing plan to protect creeks.

Even for someone like George, ready and willing to put in effort repairing gullies, it will take many years to work through all the problem areas. In the process, he is creating an artificial landscape, a landscape much better than the erosion gullies and saltpans, but not one that will directly conserve Australia's natural biodiversity. It is to be hoped that with increased productivity on the improved areas, such farmers will be able to leave some parts in a more natural state

continued next page

The McKeahnie Trig

I was interested to read Matthew Higgins's article in the June edition of the *Bulletin* concerning the history of the trig station on Mount McKeahnie and the finding of the vanes that had formerly been attached to the trig post. Matthew mentions that the earliest signatures of bushwalkers on the vanes were those of the 1st Canberra Rover Crew dated 6 April 1953. I was one of the group that made that entry and still have my notes on the walk together with a number of photographs.

There were five of us in the party, John Cameron, Colin Barnard, Peter McNicol, David Knowles and myself. We travelled to Orroral in John's A model Ford via the old Fitz's Hill road which was then much steeper and of course much rougher than the current road. Three of us stood on the car's running board and



*Peter McNicol and David Knowles on McKeahnie Trig. 6 April 1953.
Photo Alan Ray*

jumped off near the top to help it get up. It is interesting that, like the builders of the McKeahnie trig, we found the Orroral road very rough.

Parking the car near the current camping area we walked up the valley, past the Orroral Homestead

(the kitchen and a garage were then still intact) and up over the old Cotter Gap track to the Cotter hut, then a solid slab construction. From there we followed the river downstream to Kangaroo Creek, then up the ridge to Mount McKeahnie.

My notes confirm Matthew's comments about the difficulty of access to the trig. I commented that this was one of the most inaccessible I had ever seen and was built on top of two huge round boulders balanced on top of each other. However after much trouble two of the party, Peter McNicol and David Knowles, did manage to get up and leave the message, on 6 April 1953. They are photographed hanging rather precariously to the trig post which was then still in place.

Regrettably I have not returned since to Mount McKeahnie but was thrilled to read that the message then left is still legible.

Alan Ray

Landcare in the Wimmera *continued*

so that native flora and fauna will still exist in bands throughout our farmland. Connecting links between reserve areas will be essential for the long-term health of our wildlife, as well as for protecting unreserved habitats of conservation significance.

Victoria has a Land for Wildlife program administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in partnership with the Bird Observers Club of Australia. Through this program, landholders are supported and provided with advice on how best to incorporate wildlife habitat into the management of their properties. In March '97 over 4000 properties were participating in the Land for Wildlife registration scheme, with some examples of habitats of conservation significance particularly targeted. Both it, and the Landcare program, need to grow considerably.

Eleanor Stodart

Canberra Ornithologists Group

Beginning 34 years ago when an ACT Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now Birds Australia) was formed, the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) is now a group of some 400 bird watchers. Its objects are: "to encourage interest in, and develop knowledge of, the birds of the Canberra region; to promote and co-ordinate the study of birds; and to promote the conservation of native birds and their habitat". Meetings are held monthly in Forestry House, Yarralumla, usually with two speakers plus slides, which attract audiences of about 100. COG conducts outings in the local area and further afield, including bird watching holidays.

Publications include the monthly *Gang-gang*, in which outings are advertised, along with reports on previous field trips; and *Canberra Bird Notes* which contains both scientific and anecdotal material as well as the *Annual Bird Report*. Data for this latter report has been provided by members and recorded since 1975 and forms a valuable historical record of species and

numbers of ACT avifauna. Another data base is kept for the *Garden Bird Survey* which has been ongoing since 1981. A major publishing effort was *Birds of the ACT - An Atlas* published in 1992, and COG is now the official ACT and regional organiser for a new Birds Australia *Atlas of Australian Birds*. COG is also involved in its own *Woodland Survey* which is monitoring woodland avifauna in the ACT and has participated in many surveys.

COG is now the sole operator of the Natural History Centre (previously in co-operation with Field Naturalists and Herpetologists) and its Hotline for unusual bird reports is changed twice weekly.

Canberra Ornithologists Group, Inc
PO Box 301, Civic Square, ACT 2608

Tel: Shopfront 6247 4996 (open
Wed-Sat mornings if volunteers
available)

Tel: Hotline 6247 5530

Web site: <http://www.canberrabirds.dynamite.com.au>

Phyl Goddard

Mount Euranbene and Woila Clearing

One of the events on the NPA Outings Program last summer was a two day-pack walk in Deua National Park. Starting from Pikes Saddle, our route was to go into Woila Clearing via Euranbene Mountain, and to return the next day via Big Badja Hill. The walk was to prove notable for the size of the hills to be climbed, and for the evidence we found of man-made disturbances to the beautiful Woila wilderness.

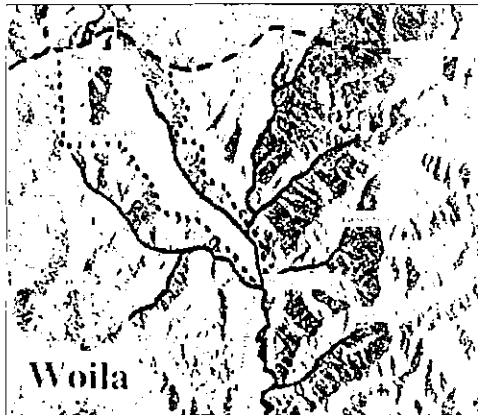
Woila Clearing is only 200 metres above sea level, a long way down compared to the surrounding hills. These include the Great Dividing Range to the west (1362 metres at Big Badja), the Woila to the east and Mount Euranbene to the north. The clearing is on Woila Creek, which flows generally south to its junction with the Tuross River.

Driving to Pikes Saddle, a lonely spot where the Braidwood to Cooma road crosses the Dividing Range, we were worried about the amount of water we would have to carry in. After the long dry summer, we were certain Woila Creek would be dry. The last day of February, however, was anything but summery. Low cloud covered the hills, and Pikes Saddle would have been tricky to find in the fog, if it hadn't been signposted.

We loaded up with water, and by 9.30am had left the car and walked off down the section of the Minuma Range fire trail now closed to vehicles, to an unnamed creek. Surprisingly and encouragingly, the creek had plenty of water in it. Clearly, the drought around Canberra was more severe than around Woila. A couple of kilometres beyond the creek we left the fire trail on a southerly bearing and climbed up to the indistinct and wooded top of Euranbene Mountain. Our route off the mountain was to the south east. It was damp in the fog, and soon the way became scrubby and littered with fallen timber.

Stumbling along, thinking that at

this rate we wouldn't reach Woila Clearing until late at night, we were surprised to come across a cleared track about 500 metres from the top of Euranbene Mountain. The track was wide enough for horses to use, and it seemed a chainsaw had been used to build it – blazes cut in trees, fallen logs cut through and small trees, including the occasional tree fern cut down.



It was hard to gauge how long it had been since the track was cleared, but damage to plants and their subsequent healing, suggested



*Phil Gatenby, left, and Ted Fleming.
Photo Max Lawrence*

that it had been at least a few years. Being naturally suspicious characters, our first thoughts were that we had stumbled on some access route used by agriculturalists of the criminal variety, and that, if we followed it, we might disappear forever without trace. But the track was such easy going, went along the ridge in the direction we wanted to go, and it did seem that it hadn't had any traffic for ages. Besides it was

downhill, so our courage returned and we pressed on. No doubt, if we had turned back to the fire trail and kept going, we would have found the track at some point.

The fog thinned as we got lower and the undergrowth got drier, but the track continued. Soon after lunch the mist cleared sufficiently for views of the Woila and other spectacular cliffs and rocky bits. Along the way we also saw old horse droppings, confirming earlier theories on the use of the track. At 2pm, we reached Woila Creek where the ridge we'd followed from Mount Euranbene ended.

Both Woila Creek, and the side creek joining it at this point, were flowing. We soon found and followed the track again for a kilometre downstream to the clearing where signs of horse party camps were evident, but not recent, and there was also a roughly made wooden table. On a ridge at the southern end of the clearing, overlooking the creek, a start had been made on building a house, but work had long ceased. It seemed that these efforts

were probably of about the same vintage as the track in. The house consisted only of wooden uprights, the start of a stone fireplace, a couple of doors, a few planks and sawn up trees in the vicinity.

There was also evidence of much more recent depredations by man. A couple of trees had been felled by chainsaw in the middle of the clearing – so recently that they still carried their leaves, albeit dry and brown. No walker would be carrying a chainsaw, so the explanation had to be that the culprit had arrived by helicopter, and accordingly there was a good chance he or she was on official business. We could see some evidence of fire high on the range to the east, so the two events were probably connected. We would be looking into this.

Overnight was warm. Next morning I saw an eel about one

NPA outings program

January – March 1999

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



10 December Thursday shopping night – Snowgum

At this once-only opportunity Snowgum is offering discounts of 20% and more on outdoors products to NPA members at its Mort Street shop in the city. Open for NPA til 9.00pm. See the flyer in your December *Bulletin* for more details. Santa lives!

13 December (Sunday) – Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence Phone: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)

This year's Christmas party will be at Caloola Farm. Basically we're looking for things to get under way from about 11.00am on, so bring a picnic lunch. We'll be having an auction, so also bring those surplus odds and ends along. We'll be shown over the facilities at Caloola, and Matthew Higgins has undertaken to tell us something of the local history. For those of you who haven't been to Caloola, head south from Tharwa past the Namadgi Visitors Centre, and turn left immediately after you cross the bridge over the Gudgenby River at Naas (if you get to Fitz's Hill you've gone too far!). Caloola is then about seven or eight kilometres on at the end of the dirt road, through a couple of gates. Members wishing to sleep over at Caloola on the Saturday night should book with Max.

20 December Sunday daywalk – Cathedral Rocks

Leader: Col McAlister 2A/C

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000 Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A climb from the Orroral campground of some 400 metres to hill 1316. Then down about 100 metres to the massive formation of Cathedral Rocks for lunch. Return via Orroral Homestead and track to campground. 70 kms, \$14 per car.

17 January 1999 Sunday Outing – Corin Dam Construction Camp

Leader: Matthew Higgins 1A/C

Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000 Phone: 6247 7285

After viewing a 1960s film on construction of Corin Dam, we will drive to the camp site, and will walk through it guided by 1960s photos (no buildings survive today). After lunch, we'll drive on to the dam and stroll downstream. A leisurely day. Book with leader, numbers limited owing to small size of film venue. 120 kms, \$24 per car.

18 January 1999 closing date for expressions of interest –

Hawkesbury River Cruise

Contact: Len Haskew Phone: 6281 4268

If a sufficient number of members are interested Len will try and organise a Hawkesbury River ferry trip. A coach would take us from Windsor to Brooklyn, where we would catch the ferry back to Windsor. This is a great opportunity for a one way trip up this magnificent waterway, with a fascinating history and much of ecological interest/concern. The cost should be in the vicinity of \$60 per person, and this includes coach and ferry rides, morning and afternoon tea and a light restaurant lunch. At present the ferry only operates on occasional

Sundays, and Len would need an expression of interest no later than 18 January 1999 in order to organise a trip in April or May outside the school holiday period.

23 January Saturday evening adventure – Somewhere in Namadgi

Leader: Martin Chalk 1A/B

Map: (recommended) Phone: 6268 4864(w), 6292 3502(h)

Try something different! Feel the evening settle on the bush, eat in the gloaming, walk by starlight, and sleep in your own bed! This will be a late afternoon/evening walk in easy terrain. The aim will be to experience the bush and navigation at night. Call the leader by the preceding Wednesday for details.

23-26 January four day canoe trip – Murrumbidgee River

Leader: Chris Bellamy Phone: 6249 7167(h)

Nice lazy four day trip on the Australia Day long weekend through red gum forests somewhere west of Wagga, camping on lovely beaches en route. Suitable for fit beginners. Lots of swimming. Canoe hire an option. Costs to be advised. Phone leader by previous Wednesday.

23 to 30 January packwalk – Brogo Wilderness

Leader: Stephen Johnston 3B/C/D/E/F

Maps: Puen Buen, Yankees Gap 1:25 000 Phone: 6258 3833

This is a full week packwalk in the rugged and wonderful Brogo Wilderness of Waddilliga National Park in south east NSW. For experienced and fit walkers. Mostly off tracks, steep climbs and river wading for the ultimate wilderness experience. Numbers limited. Phone leader early for details. Transport and travel costs to be arranged.

30-31 January weekend packwalk – Kiandra to Broken Dam Hut

Leader: Steven Forst 3A/B

Map: Mt Selwyn Ski Tour map
Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Ring leader by preceding Wednesday. Packwalk from Kiandra Cemetery via Four Mile Hut and ruins of the Elaine Mine to Broken Dam Hut. Return via Eucumbene River. 300kms, \$60 per car.

31 January Sunday daywalk – Micalong Creek

Leader: Mike Smith 2A

Maps: Couragago 1:25 000, H&H guides Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at forest picnic area carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.00am. Walk the Hume and Hovell Track from Bossawa campsite to Micalong campsite along Micalong Creek. Return by same route. On formed foot track and forest road. 200kms, \$40 per car.

7 February Sunday daywalk – Dubbo Falls

Leader: Max Lawrence 2C/D/E/F

Maps: Brindabella 1:25 000 Phone: 6288 1370(h)

Dubbo Falls are on Dubbo Creek in the far north of Kosciuszko National Park. We will approach the top of the falls on foot from

Boundary Road (four wheel drive only), and will then explore down to the junction with the Goolbarragandra River if circumstances allow. Numbers limited by the availability of vehicles, and the walk may have to be rescheduled if road and weather conditions unsuitable. Phone leader early to book. 275kms, \$55 per 4wd.

13 February Saturday history outing – A day with Hamilton Huine & Co

Leaders: Pam Ray and Max Lawrence 1A
Map: Gregorys or similar
Phone: 6281 3931 (Pam), 6288 1370 (Max)

In the morning we will visit Cooma Cottage at Yass, the home of Hamilton Huine until his death in 1873 at the age of 76. Then, after a nice lunch in Yass we will visit his grave in Yass Cemetery, and Pam will also show us other notable historical features of the cemetery. Pam, as well as being a longstanding NPA member, is a past president of the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra, and editor of a book on monumental inscriptions in Yass Cemetery and St Clements Churchyard. Meet at Spence shops (off Kingsford Smith Drive) at 9.00am. 150kms, \$30 per car, plus \$4 per person entrance to Cooma Cottage.

13 – 14 February weekend packwalk – Goodradigbee River, Wee Jasper

Leader: Fiona MacDonald Brand 1A
Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Phone: 6247 9538

Contact leader by Wednesday for details. A relaxing and easy weekend on the Goodradigbee River near Micalong Creek. Great campsite with swimming and fishing. 160 kms, \$32 per car.

19 – 20 February weekend carcamp – Wombeyan caves

Leader: Len Haskew 1A
Map: Richlands 1:25 000
Phone: 6281 4268

Contact leader by Tuesday for travel details. Camp with bowerbirds and wallabies. Pleasant strolls along nature trails to views or waterfalls. Explore a cave or two. 300kms, \$60 per car.

24 February daywalk – Wednesday walk

Leader: David Large
Phone: 6291 4830

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

27-28 February weekend packwalk – Murramarang National Park

Leader: Phil Gatenby 2A/B/E/F
Maps: Kialoa, Durras 1:25 000
Phone: 6254 3094

Enjoy the beaches and forests of Murramarang National Park. The plan is to walk from Pretty Beach to Durras, camping overnight somewhere along the way. We also climb Durras Mountain on the first day. Opportunities for swimming, depending on the weather. Contact leader by Wednesday 24 February. 450kms, \$90 per car.

28 February Sunday daywalk – Mt Gingera

Leader: Col McAlister 2A
Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at the carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.00am. A walk from Mt Ginini carpark to Mt Gingera via Pryors Hut and return, a total of 14km. The climb from the hut to the summit is about 200m, but the views are well worth the effort. We will also look at a couple of the original survey marks. 120kms, \$24 per car.

6-7 March weekend carcamp – Mittagong

Leader: Len Haskew 2A/B
Map: Mittagong 1:25 000
Phone: 6281 4268

Contact leader by Tuesday for travel details. Walk Boxvale Track on Saturday. On Sunday we can choose from a wide range of walks within the area depending on the weather. There are also plenty of coffee shops close at hand. 350kms, \$70 per car.

7 March Sunday daywalk – Tolwong Mine, Bungonia

Leader: Mike Smith 2A/C/E
Map: Caoura 1:25 000
Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Southwell Park netball centre on Northbourne Avenue at 8.00am and drive to Bungonia. Descend to the Shoalhaven River by the old flying fox trail. Wade across river to old mine workings. Return by different route to entrance of Bungonia SRA. 500m descent/ascent. Small car shuffle required. 250kms, \$50 per car.

13 March Saturday daywalk – Southern Namadgi Huts

Leader: Col McAlister 2A/B
Maps: Yaouk, Shannons Flat 1:25 000
Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. Visit Brayshaws Hut, Waterhole Hut and Westermans Homestead. Also some old sheepyards and the ruins of Tin Dish School. A pleasant walk through open bushland and along tracks in the Grassy Creek area. 150kms, \$30 per car.

15 March Canberra Day (Monday) – ACT Alive

Lawns opposite Old Parliament House
Contact: Yvonne Bartos
Phone: 6231 5699

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.

20 March Saturday daywalk – Brindabella Range Ramble

Leader: Steven Forst 2A
Ref: ACT 1:100 000 **Phone: 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)**

Meet at picnic area carpark on Uriarra road just off the Cotter road (near Duffy) at 8.30am. A fire trail walk through the tall 'shady' forest between the Cotter River and the Brindabella Road. Nested in a south east facing valley this moist temperate/alpine eucalyptus forest provides for pleasant walking even in summer. Some views of Canberra. 80 kms, \$16 per car.

21 March Sunday daywalk – Naas River

Leader: Frank Clements 3A/B
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Phone: 6231 7005

A repeat of the (cold and wet) 16 August walk. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. Walk from Boboyan Pines carpark to an unusually coloured rock outcrop, climbing about 70 m, then proceeding to Hospital Creek falls and Hospital Hut, before resuming the Old Boboyan Road and going on to Naas River. Return to cars via the road. 100kms, \$20 per car.

22-28 March 1999 seven day packwalk – Limestone Creek to Dead Horse Gap

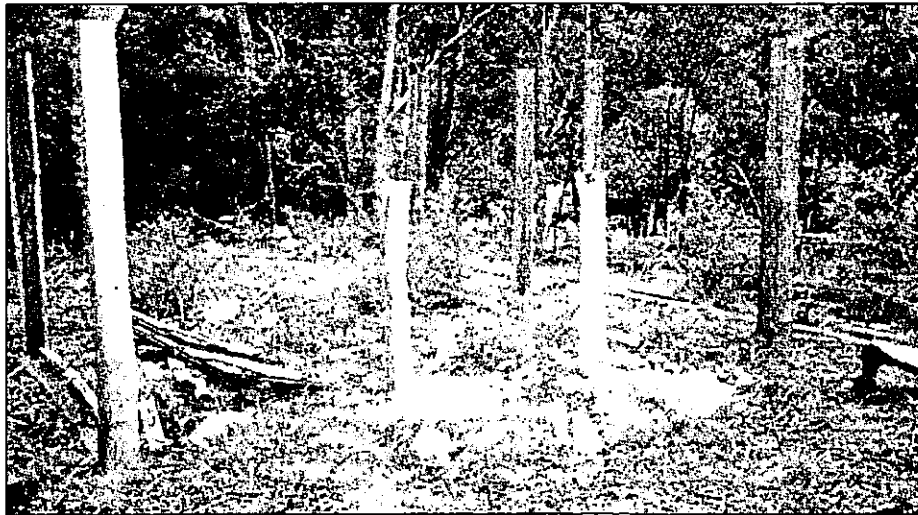
Leaders: Mick Kelly and Max Lawrence 3A/B
Maps: Jacobs River, Kosciuszko 1:100 000
Phone: 02 4472 3959 (Mick), 6288 1370 (Max)

A more strenuous version of this walk was foreshadowed in the previous program and there has been strong interest. If you haven't booked already you will need to go on the waiting list for cancellations.

24 March daywalk – Wednesday walk

Leader: Yvonne Bartos
Phone: 6231 5699

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



Partly built hut near Woila Clearing. Photo Max Lawrence

Two kilometres to the north along the fire trail brought us back to Pikes Saddle.

After the walk, Ted found out from the Narooma Office of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, more about the track we'd followed on the first day of the walk. According to NPWS, the track is part of an old bridle trail linking the coast as far south as Bega and the tablelands north of Euranbene Mountain and beyond. It would seem that the ghosts of these old pioneers have been wielding chainsaws in more recent times. The clearing where we camped is on a sliver of freehold land in the middle of the national park. The part-completed hut is also on this freehold land, and is therefore outside the jurisdiction of the NPWS. We were informed that the eucalypts cut down in the clearing, were felled to allow access for a 'buoywall', used for aerial bombing of a wildfire in the nearby hills.

Maps: Badja 1: 25 000,
Snowball 1: 25 000

Party: Philip Gatenby,
Max Lawrence and Ted Fleming

Philip Gatenby

metre long in the creek. We left Woila Clearing at 8am for the long climb out. Two kilometres on, the going became very steep as we climbed on to a rocky knoll. Soon after this we entered low cloud which ensured the rest of the way to the top was damp and misty. After a further two kilometres, there was another much longer, very steep climb up to another knoll, followed by a descent in altitude of about 70 metres.

We then started to climb again through low wet ferns, which made

for tough going. After another one and a half kilometres steadily upwards through rocks and timber (mainly *E. delegatensis*) we reached the ridge top, formed by an easterly running spur off the Great Divide. Occasional breaks in the fog gave views of the trig point on Big Badja Hill. We reached the Badja fire trail at 3pm and the summit of Big Badja fifteen minutes later for uninterrupted views of low cloud. There is a book on the summit with infrequent entries from both walkers and four wheel drivers.

Loss of the Woila Wilderness

During a recent "Woila Circuit" walk a newly bulldozed track (clearly less than 12 months old) was discovered extending to within one kilometre of Mother Woila.

At least two new helicopter pads have been cut in the area, one as close as half a kilometre from Mother Woila, where a number of large old trees on the top of the ridge have been cut down. There were clear signs of bush-fires in the area but there was something a little strange about them in that they appeared to cover a small area and were clearly low intensity burns. The area is also very remote from the nearest farming or urban development.

I spoke to the current Assistant District Manager at the Narooma

office of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Preston Cope, who said that the track was put through last summer at a time when:

- there were lots of fires in NSW
- there were no aircraft available (the pads were put in later)
- the weather was bad
- there were few staff available
- circumstances dictated quick action to save life and property.

He also pointed out that the track has been "closed", drainage systems had been installed and the track will be allowed to revegetate.

In spite of the assurances that all is now well, this track will allow increased access to the area on foot and by vehicle. This means increased damage and fires. A

number of people have been keen to get details, during the course of my enquiries, so they can visit the area.

Wilderness is a fragile thing. It has different meanings to different people. The Woila area is quite famous for its wilderness characteristics, in the more rigorous sense. A number of publications have carried articles praising its wilderness values (see: "Discovering Mother Woila", Jeff Mosley, in "Wild", Oct, 1997, and "Deua/Woila", in "Wild Places", Prineas and Gold, 1997).

It would be worth knowing if it is the policy of the service, as managers of the wilderness, to doze tracks into all wilderness areas to fight fires no matter what the circumstances.

Grahame Muller

A management plan for Canberra Nature Park

In the September *Bulletin* I described the development of a management plan for Canberra Nature Park (CNP) from its origins in 1988, through the preparation of draft plans and expressions of community reactions to these, to the public hearing on the final draft plan conducted by the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Urban Services on 3 July 1998. This article summarises the Standing Committee's report.

The committee membership is:

Mr Harold Hird MLA (Chair)
Mr Dave Rugendyke MLA (Deputy Chair)
Mr Simon Corbell MLA.

In addition to conducting the public hearing, the committee received a great deal of correspondence and on 31 July 1998 inspected parts of the northern portion of CNP.

The committee endorsed the final draft management plan subject to a number of specific recommendations which are quite significant as they include references to many of the areas of contention raised during the hearing. Generally, they reinforce the positions taken by the NPA and other conservation groups supporting the primacy of the conservation objective of the park. The major recommendations are as follows:

Implementation Plans

Implementation plans for CNP be publicly available at minimal cost. This matter was raised by the NPA at the public hearing.

Horse riding

The Government, without delay, seek expert advice on the whole issue of horse riding in CNP including the effects of horses on conservation areas. This advice, with issues raised in public debate, should be considered by Government before reiterating or amending present policies. Specific recommendations include:

- horse riding not be permitted in Aranda bushland
- horse riding, outside the

Bicentennial National Trail, not be permitted at the Pinnacle

- horse riding at Mount Painter (outside the Bicentennial Trail) be permitted only on the lower slopes after full discussion about the location of trails and after establishment of a code of conduct and the erection of signs
- the Government should continue planning equestrian trails outside the park reserves
- dogs not be permitted to accompany horses.

Mountain bikes

A suitable site outside CNP be determined for a competition mountain bike track.



*Spring morning on Urambi Hills.
Photo Martin Chalk*

Park management

Improved signage be provided to make all park users aware of the activities that are, or are not, permitted. The manager of CNP should have authority to close trails when weather conditions are such that usage would impact on the conservation of the reserve. It is also recommended that Government consider increasing resources, including staff, available to the Parks and Conservation Service for the management of CNP. ACTEW should act to tidy up present unsightly storages of gravel in the park.

Conservator of Flora and Fauna

The committee accepts that conservation is the paramount objective for the CNP and that it is the role of the Conservator to protect

and preserve the natural environment. It appreciates that Environment ACT feels a need to respond to pressures to meet the secondary objectives of providing for public use of the park for recreation, education and research and this, on occasions, may lead to making conservation a lesser priority. So that the conservation imperative does not suffer as a result, the committee recommends that the position of Conservator of Flora and Fauna be separated from that of the Executive Director of Environment ACT and that it be made clear that the duty of the Conservator is to protect and conserve the natural environment.

Clarification of authority

The Government clarify certain areas of authority of the National Capital Authority and Environment ACT. These relate to the power of Environment ACT to prohibit access to public land and the power of an ACT agency to undertake 'work' in a "Designated Area" without express permission of the

National Capital Authority.

Garden city design

The management plan explicitly draws attention to the "garden city" design of Canberra and hence, from this planning perspective, that there is a need to preserve and protect Canberra Nature Park.

Environmental audit

An independent environmental audit of the management of CNP take place on a three yearly basis.

The Standing Committee has identified a number of important matters of principle concerning the CNP management plan. It would be in the long term interests of the national capital and the residents of the ACT for these matters to be given careful consideration by the Government before it finalises the management plan.

Syd Comfort

Issues update

Inquiry into the Perisher Range Village Master Plan

The Commission of Inquiry set up by the NSW Government to look into the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's (NSW NP&WS) proposal to allow further development at Perisher (see report in September 1998 *Bulletin*) has now submitted its report. Its recommendations are dreadful. The commissioners have rejected the conservation movement's arguments that nature conservation be the primary purpose of the Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). Instead they have recommended that further massive commercial development be allowed. This is initially to take the form of a further 1320 beds above the snowline. Ironically, this is 30 per cent more development than the NSW NP&WS itself proposed!

The inquiry's recommendations are based on the supposed need to create an economically viable year-round resort with a capacity to expand in the future. In other words, to create European alpine villages in KNP.

The Commissioners regard the park as an economic resource to be exploited for commercial gain rather than a unique area for nature conservation.

The implementation of this inquiry's recommendations would pose the greatest threat to the KNP since European occupation. The conservation movement must prepare for a vigorous campaign to ensure this does not occur. Members are urged to write to the Premier, Bob Carr, the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Craig Knowles, and the Minister for the Environment, Pam Allen, Parliament House, Sydney, urging them to reject the recommendations of this report.

South-east forests

The NSW Government has announced its decision on the Eden forests. The Premier, Bob Carr, claims to have saved the old growth forests of Tantawangalo and most of Coolangubra, while assuring the future of the local timber industry. The National Parks and Wildlife Service will be given 14 new jobs and the South-East Forests National Park expanded to 134 000 hectares. A recovery saw mill will be built at Eden with long-term timber supplies guaranteed.

The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA NSW) and the South East Forest Alliance have expressed grave doubts about the decision. The NPA NSW says the decision:

- leaves significant areas of giant old growth to the woodchippers, including parts of the disputed Coolangubra Wilderness and key link areas on the escarpment of the Great Dividing Range
- leaves 20 per cent of old growth forests in the region, already decimated by woodchipping, open to further clearfelling
- leaves out any commitment to a defined low impact logging zone, as proposed by conservationists, to protect critical habitat for the endangered koala population and other wildlife
- leaves out any commitment to bring an end to clearfelling in the south-east forests or to cease the export of woodchips which is driving the forest destruction and
- leaves more than half the identified Brogo Wilderness Extension within Wadbilliga National Park (see Stephen Johnston's article in September 1998 *Bulletin*) outside the announced Brogo Wilderness and continues to deny wilderness status to any part of the identified Coolangubra Wilderness.

Wilson's Promontory

The Victorian Government is still proposing inappropriate commercial development in the hundredth year of this national park's reservation. In a renewed campaign to oppose this the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and other conservation groups have prepared an Alternative Plan of Management for the park. This reiterates the principle that nature conservation must not be compromised by human activities in national parks. The alternative plan will form the basis of a walk from Tidal River to the steps of the Victorian Parliament House beginning on 15 November 1998.

Victorian alpine grazing

The Victorian Government has renewed leases for grazing in the Alpine National Park for a further seven years. This is despite an offer by the VNPA to buy out the environmentally damaging and taxpayer subsidised leases. This occurs after yet another two recent scientific reports outlining the deleterious effects of grazing in the high country. Once again the attraction of the man from Snowy River myth to the tourism industry seems to have been put ahead of nature conservation.

Timothy Walsh

Book reviews

Wildflowers of the Snow Country. A Field Guide to The Australian Alps. By Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett. Watercolours by Helen Fitzgerald. Vertago Press, Canberra, 1998. Retail price, approximately \$24.

This is the fifth book written by Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett and illustrated by Helen Fitzgerald about the natural environment of the ACT, but the first to extend over the borders to also cover the snow country of NSW and Victoria. Softback, but printed on good quality paper and strongly bound, it is made to the convenient, large pocket-book format of A5.

The coverage of subject matter has been well chosen, resulting in a book of quite manageable size which is still comprehensive in covering all the common native shrubs, climbers and herbs of the snow country whose identification relies on flowers. Trees, grasses and exotic species and non-flowering species such as ferns are not included. In all, nearly 170 species are described. The book is primarily directed at the layperson and does not call for the reader to have any botanical knowledge.

Each species described occupies its own page, the text being built around a delightful, large painting of the plant and its flowers. The accompanying text is carefully laid out under a scheme of headings - name, colour and so on - which is clear, uncluttered and systematic and should facilitate use in the field. At the same time, each page is artistically satisfying.

To identify the plants the keys used are, first, colour and then the shape of the flowers. Thus, within the colour range, "mostly white or cream", subdivisions such as "spidery flowers", "tube flowers" and "only two obvious petals" are used. For each plant, information is provided under the headings of name, pronunciation, meaning, family, key characters, similar snow country species, habitat and distribution, and other comments.

In addition to the plant profiles, introductory information is provided about the snow country, relevant botanical concepts and an explanation of how to use the book to full effect. There is a comprehensive index of

scientific and common plant names and information about the alpine parks of south-eastern Australia. I think that this could have been supplemented by maps of the area. It is of interest that *Alps Invaders* has been published about the same time as *Wildflowers of the Snow Country* and that as well as each addressing very different sets of plants, different modes of illustration have been adopted: colour photos for the *Invaders* and paintings for the *Wildflowers*. Perhaps this reflects the more utilitarian role of the former and the aesthetic appeal of the latter.

I have not yet had the opportunity of applying the acid test to this book of taking it into the snow country and using it as a field guide. Will it help me to bring order into all those pea flowers - daviesias, oxylobiums and pulteneas? - and the daisies? That remains to be seen, but the sensible balance between layperson's requirements and scientific demands and the pleasure to be derived from studying Helen's paintings will prompt me to put the book to the test when wildflowers grace the snow country this summer.

Syd Comfort

Alps Invaders: Weeds of the Australian High Country. Edited by Geoff Sainty, John Hosking and Surrey Jacobs. The Australian Alps Liaison Committee, 1988. 62pp. RRP \$7.

This attractively produced, spiral bound field guide describes 51 species of weeds which are threatening the native vegetation of our alpine parks in the ACT, NSW and Victoria. Although The Australian Alps National Parks are relatively weed free compared with other environments that have been exploited since European occupation, there are many areas within the parks where native species are under threat. And, as

so many of us know, weeds such as sweet briar and radiata pine have the ability to occupy many work party weekends!

The guide has been produced for anyone concerned about the unique environment of the high country. It is an easy-to-use identikit that requires no special botanical expertise from the user. The booklet is small enough to fit in any backpack and light enough to be carried on longer trips.

The weeds described in the booklet are divided into five categories: grasses, rushes, herbs, shrubs and trees. Each of these categories is colour-coded in the text so that it is relatively quick to make an identification. Excellent colour photographs are provided for each species and the text provides many pointers to precise identification, depending upon the category of the specimen. Each and every description emphasises particular distinguishing characteristics, eg, the distinguishing features of that bushwalker's friend noorgoora burr are listed as *triangular and lobed rough leaves and burrs to 2 centimetres long with hooked prickles*. All the weeds are listed in the first place by the "common" name (this probably is the best way for the general reader) but all descriptions include the scientific name plus information about the weed's "family", its country of origin, its flowers, a more general description, the manner in which seeds are dispersed and notes which give some history about its introduction and the threats it poses. For those who would like to know more an authoritative reference is provided for each weed.

As well as the clear individual descriptions *Alps Invaders* also gives a brief account of the problems caused by weeds and the challenges they provide for land managers. There is also a general indication of where these invaders are most likely to be found.

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Titanium Man and Plastic Man go bushwalking

In July 1995 Stephen Johnston and I decided to do a walk together. I had not been to "Mount Lincoln", and Stephen was the best guide that I knew of for that destination. On the other hand, Stephen had not seen the brumby trap yards in the Jumbuck Flats area, and he wanted me to show him these sites.

We drove out of an early Saturday morning Canberra and soon saw fresh snow on the hills. When we arrived at the Smokers Track carpark, everything was covered in a beautiful, cold white coating.

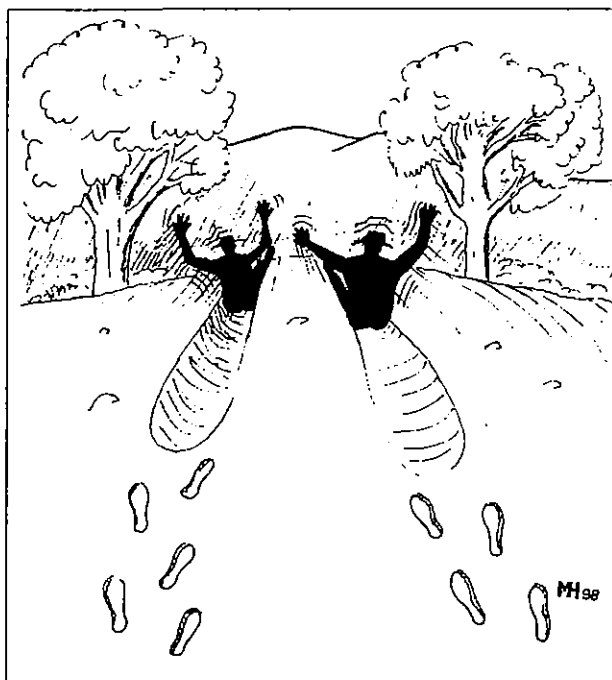
Stephen had been having discomfort with a titanium-rooted false tooth, so he had taken it out. And as Stephen and his broad grin are rarely parted for long, the gap in the upper jaw was readily apparent. A better pirate was never seen; he would have given Long John Silver a run for his Spanish dollars (Long John Johnston, perhaps?)

We set off on the compass bearing that brings you to the first trapyard. Its rails were topped by the white stuff, and there was not a breath of wind. After pausing at the yard a while, we made off over the more open area of the Flats, making our way down to the crossing of Blue Gum Creek and seeing on the way nice specimens of royal grevillea.

After a tricky crossing of the full creek we began the ascent of Lincoln. This ascent provided further insights into Namadgi's botanical prizes, for it is here on these rocky slopes that the rare *Eucalyptus triplex* grows.

As the climb proceeded, so did our trousers dampen. By now we were in full sun and the melting snow on the bushes we passed through soon had us pretty wet. Over-pants at that stage would have been sensible, but when you're hell bent on getting to a summit, common sense is often left panting somewhere down the mountainside.

We reached the top, and glorious it was. All views had snow in them



somewhere. Looking back to the Brindabellas, Gingera was cloud-shrouded and looking wild.

By now it was about 10 am. The sun was out, but the wind was blowing. And a cold wind it was – especially when you are wet from melted snow. Though it was really only morning tea time, I scoffed my lunch sandwiches in an attempt to warm up. I noticed that Stephen was chewing away too.

The Goretex jacket of course had been on for a while, and the over-pants were now very necessary to keep out the wind and retain some warmth in the legs. My over-pants have a rather plastic feel to them, and I always feel a bit like the Michelin man when I have them on. But, plastic or not, they were very welcome that day.

Having absorbed the summit for a time, we decided to head off the mountain. We were on a big slab, and we soon found that the only way off it in the direction that we wanted to go was down a steep, snow-covered face. There was nothing for it but to put that over-gear to good use and slide down the slope. As we slid off we quickly gathered speed.

The only way to brake was to grab hold of scrub branches and slow our descent as best we could. This meant thrusting bare hands through the branches' snowy mantle to make a momentary grab onto the wood underneath.

I don't think I've ever had colder hands than that day!

Eventually we slid off the bottom of the slab and, laughing, staggered around with hands under armpits in an attempt to warm up the frostbitten digits.

We made our way through the bush and got out onto a level slab which, out of the wind, was warm and sunny. After a bit of drying out here, we continued on. Crossing one of the upper branches of Blue Gum Creek we walked up to the second brumby trapyard. Located in a stand of alpine ash, it is a winged yard that is largely intact. The visit was fortuitous, for we found that a tree had fallen against the yard. Clearly a work party was needed to fix the damage. (Not long after, a few fellow Kosciuszko Huts Association members travelled in with me and repaired the damaged rails.)

By the time Stephen and I got back to the car, most of the snow had disappeared. Its transitory spirit had gone again, gone away until the next cold front rolled over the mountains and called it back to dance with Jack Frost.

And as Titanium Man and Plastic Man drove home, they carried with them memories of a great day in the Namadgi mountains. Neither would have missed it for quids.

Matthew Higgins

Kakadu Super Circle, 7-28 June 1998

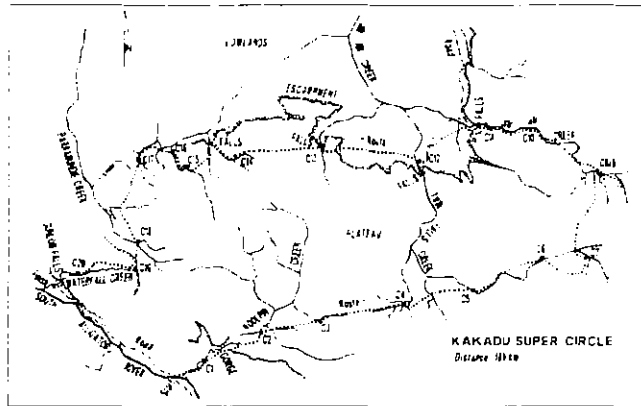
Cold wet fronts, boggy mud, hungry leeches - is this Kakadu? Certainly not! I left that behind this June to try a new experience - bushwalking in the Top End. Golden sunshine, awe-inspiring prehistoric rock art and magical swimming opportunities were the scene. Of course, there can be no bushwalking rewards without some effort and discomfort. We had to slog along in temperatures of 34°C - sometimes with high humidity, endure the spiky spinifex grass and learn how best to cope with frequent attacks by angry green ants whose nests, in bushes and trees, we disturbed in passing!

But let's go back to the origins of this trip. Mike Smith had already done several bushwalking trips with a commercial operator up north and was keen to do another. Eleven of us from Canberra and another person from Melbourne booked for the 21-day Kakadu Super Circle.

On such a walk as this, remoteness is still the major risk, so you need to be fit and confident of your gear. Minor pack weaknesses and major boot troubles occurred within our group. I watched with interest the use of dental floss for stitching boots soles, followed by reinforcement with super glue and finally, somewhat desperately, first aid kit tapes! All these painstaking efforts failed to save one pair of boots from total collapse before the end of the trip!

For dry season Kakadu trips the weather is warm and rain unlikely so a "mossie-dome" will suffice or you can sleep out under the stars. Mosquitoes are not the problem on the plateau that they can be down in the wetlands. Not having to carry a full tent nor much warm clothing helped to offset the weight of carrying twelve days', and then nine days', supply of food.

As regards food, we took our own breakfasts and lunches but paid to have the tucker for the evening meals provided and cooked for us! The cooking was done by our guide,



Marj. Each day Marj distributed the communal supplies for us to carry. At the start of the trip this meant an extra four kilos to our pack weight!



*We sit beneath a boulder (foreground) dwarfed by majestic cliffs set in rainforest vegetation.
Photo Judith Webster*

Our route began by following Koolpin Creek upstream. After several days we struck across the plateau to the Twin Falls Creek system and then the upper reaches of Jim Jim Creek. We crossed brown grasslands, with scattered trees and dried swamps where clumps of bright sedges flourished. Sundew flowers were scattered like pale stars on the sandy soil, their red tips glistening with sticky insect-luring moisture.

In the wet season the plateau must be a vast sponge that drains into the creeks. These converge and swell until they finally thunder over the escarpment in spectacular falls. Now many of the watercourses were completely dry. In others, a gentle flow murmured peacefully over shallow rock ledges into pools with floating borders of yellow fringed lilies. Areas of lush swamp still remained, supporting stands of beautiful paperbark trees while tall

sword grass and pandanus palms crowded thickly along the waterways.

Remnant monsoonal rainforest, with its dark leaf canopy, grew close to cliffs and in narrow creek gullies, providing welcome shade from the heat. The dominant rainforest tree was *Allosyncarpia* - a magnificent species with widely outreaching branches.

As we followed Jim Jim Creek downstream, it soon developed into moulded rock platforms of beautiful colour - deep russet and amber with a sheen like well worn leather. We often camped on rock and it was warm under our sleeping mats. Tiny frogs could be a bit disconcerting when they landed on one's person as a cold wet blob!

On arrival at a campsite, we would all engage in what Marj described as "nesting", that is choosing a spot for our mossie-dome or sleeping mat; doing our laundry and sorting our gear. Once



Aboriginal rock art. Photo Judith Webster

comfortably settled, we would relax reading, writing or swimming. After our evening meal we usually had a quiz and then it would be time to retire.

For restfulness, I preferred the nights when the moon was waning and rose late. Then I could lie in my sleeping bag and admire the vast starry sky. At dawn we were awakened by the cheery serenading of brown and singing honeyeaters. Iridescent rainbow bee-eaters flitted across the surface of the water and flocks of majestic red-tailed black cockatoos flew overhead. Along the more heavily wooded creeks, northern kookaburras cracked a call that was a poor imitation of their southern brethren!

In rocky terrain, the call of the sandstone shrike thrush could be heard or a large raptor be seen circling over some lonely ridge. This was stone country - very dry, rugged and harsh. Only patchy spinifex grew on the hillsides and in the gullies between the jumbled rocky outcrops. We usually avoided walking in the worst of this stone country but could not always do so.

On days of high humidity, sweat poured off us. It dripped off my eyebrows and ran down my nose - our hair and clothing became saturated. It was then we longed for a pool and a siesta and indeed we often took long, drowsy rests. The walk was designed to take advantage of swimming opportunities and allow for side excursions to look at rock art.

and further. At first glance you see a mass of superimposed paintings and only the most recent are identifiable. Marj showed us how to visually trace the underlying outlines and they suddenly pop into focus. I found this awe-inspiring; as though the soul behind the artwork is saying "you are attuned now, I will reveal myself" and there it is - another kangaroo, turtle or flying fox!

On the twelfth day we descended from the escarpment near Jim Jim Falls and crossed the flood plain to reach the tourist area near Twin Falls. At the roadhead at Twin Falls we were re-supplied with food and clean clothing. Our camp that night was only a few hundred metres from the vehicles so we were able to enjoy a delicious fresh food feast and cask wine!

If the focus of the first part of the walk was on the art, the emphasis

One of the highlights of the trip for me was the wonderful Aboriginal rock art sites we visited, particularly during the first part of the walk. The paintings, on the ceilings and walls of rock shelters, can date back 30 000 years

during the second part was on the contrasts of landscape. We stuck more closely to the creeks and the terrain became more challenging as we entered gorges, secret and magical, with towering cliffs, shady trees and deep pools of clear green water. Sometimes we plunged into those deep pools beneath high rock walls. Throughout the trip we delighted in the wonderful swimming. At other times long, sunny river reaches, sparkling sapphire blue and pale aquamarine, invited us to linger. Cascades provided a fun water slide, and another water frolic we enjoyed was forming a synchronised swimming team. Our attempts to execute flower-like formations ended up in half-drowned gurgling mirth!

Now our 21 days of walking were drawing towards their close and visions of hot showers, juicy steaks and chilled wine persistently strayed into our minds. We reached Gunlom Falls where a small bus picked us up and we were driven to Coonda where our fantasies for the "creature comforts" were soon fulfilled at shower block and bistro!

But what are the lasting memories to treasure from a walkabout in Kakadu? A sunlit pool; brilliant orange flowering eucalypt; glimpse of bouncing rock wallaby or grand outspreading rainforest tree? Yes, all these but more importantly the Aboriginal inheritance of ancient rock art... Kakadu still dreaming?

Judith Webster

Book reviews *continued from page 14*

Most of us carry one sort of guide book with us from time to time - usually, I suppose, to gain real pleasure from the accurate identification of a native bird, flower, tree, animal, reptile or some other interesting creature. Identifying a weed is not at all likely to engender similar pleasurable feelings. So why should we carry *Alps Invaders* with us? Managers of the Alpine National Park believe that controlling weeds in the park is of major importance. If locations and densities of weeds are reported to park managers they

can take action to eradicate the weeds or change management practices that may cause weed problems. With this end in mind a *Weed Reporting Form* is included in the booklet.

Alps Invaders is therefore an invitation for us all to play a part in park management in a very practical way. What better reason could there be for buying a copy next time you visit the Namadgi Visitor Centre?

Len Haskew

PARKWATCH

The Australian Alps have moved

Well, not the actual mountains, but the management of the Australian Alps national parks cooperative program certainly has!!

April saw a major change in the administration of the Australian Alps national parks program as Neville Byrne handed over the reins of Program Coordinator to Brett McNamara, formerly a ranger from Namadgi National Park (ACT) who was enticed out of the Brindabellas to take up the challenge.

Every two to four years the responsibility for coordinating this program rotates to a new conservation agency. It is traditional that each of the land management agencies involved in the Australian Alps takes a turn (in rotation) to sponsor the coordination of the Australian Alps program. With this rotation, the job of Program Coordinator also rotates to the new Agency - the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The latest change completes the circle as the coordination of the program returns to the Australian Capital Territory where it started with the first Program coordinator Andre Mayne.

Brett McNamara brings to the position a strong history of involvement in the Australian Alps program, most recently as Convenor of the Community Relations Working Group, continuing the tradition of Program Coordinators being drawn from people who have had a strong interest and involvement in the Australian Alps. *From the Alps, No 18, August, 1988.*

Bonn Convention - progress towards global Albatross conservation

The Australian Government is still taking the lead in global albatross conservation through its pursuit of albatross conservation "Agreements" under the Bonn Convention (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) (CMS). Since successfully proposing the

listing of eleven species of albatross at the Bonn Convention meeting in Europe last year, supported and encouraged by HSI and other NGOs, Australia has taken the lead role in post meeting albatross activities. Negotiations so far have been undertaken through the "Valdivia Group", a coalition of temperate southern hemisphere nations formed to discuss matters on international environmental and related science issues.

Members of the Valdivia Group include Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay. The group was formed as an Australian initiative, and first met in Chile in 1995. The Valdivia Group (Co-ordinating Committee) last met in Wellington, New Zealand on 24-25 June this year. The following is an extract from the "Statement" at that meeting:

"The Valdivia Group expressed unanimous support for an Australian project on southern hemisphere albatross conservation, and acknowledged the adverse conservation status of many albatross species. The Group agreed that southern hemisphere countries and distant waterfishing nations have a key role in promoting the conservation of albatrosses. It further noted that a Regional Agreement under the auspices of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) has the potential to contribute significantly to the restoration and maintenance of albatross populations. The Valdivia Group favours the establishment of an ad hoc group to examine options for regional co-operation to address the range of serious threats to southern hemisphere albatross populations. The Group accepted Chile's offer to host the first meeting of the working group."

Humane Society International, Technical Bulletin No 2, August, 1998.

Hinchinbrook: The End in Sight

Things are looking up for the dugongs and mahogany gliders of Hinchinbrook.

In early May the Senate voted to initiate an inquiry into Port Hinchinbrook. This means that under oath and with parliamentary privilege, experts and government officials can be called to testify to the details of the ecological effects of the development, as well as the procedure and details of the planning process. Hearings are expected to begin mid June.

Meanwhile, the Oyster Point site remains an empty mess. The developer, and the governments protecting his project, have come under fire from some of the world's leading scientists and, sadly, all that was foretold about the dangers of an acid sludge leak came to fruition in March when one of the walls of the holding ponds leaked - proving once and for all that the site is an ecological minefield.

While governments have remained deaf to all of this, investors haven't. The project continues to languish while developer Keith Williams valiantly claims to be backing a winner: having only sold blocks to himself, his real estate agent and his building contractor.

The fight for Hinchinbrook has been a long one but after ten years the end is in sight. We look forward to reclaiming this wonderful wilderness and ensuring it remains for those who come after us.

Wilderness, Issue No 151, June, 1998.

Pine Brush: national estate scandal

Some of the world's largest colonies of Earth's most threatened plants, and debatably the last vestige of the once-vast, clearfelled Lower Clarence riparian rainforest, have been discovered on 492.5 ha of botanically critical National Estate. This land has been misrepresented publicly as 'ordinary', and thrown away for a dollar an acre to be illegally damaged by cattle, logging and bushrock theft, which continue apace.

continued next page

Calendar

Activity	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Committee Meeting	Thurs 3		Thurs 4	Thurs 4
Gudgenby Regeneration ¹	Sat 5			
Snow Gum Gear Night ²	Thurs 10			
Bulletin Working Group ³			Tues 10	
Christmas Party ⁴	Sun 13			
ACT Alive ⁴				Mon 15
General Meeting			Thurs 18	Thurs 18

1 – Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004
3 – Syd Comfort 6286 2578

2 – Outings Program and leaflet
4 – Outings Program

General meetings

Held in Forestry House, Yarralumla, commencing at 8.00pm.

Thursday 17 February. South America A small group of association members, led by Pat and Eric Pickering, spent six weeks during March and April in South America, primarily to walk in Patagonia but also to visit other parts of the continent. Syd Comfort's presentation will describe the trip and include slides of the walks and of the sites visited.

Thursday 17 March. The trouble with being green. Bruce Ford, Head of Conservation, National Gallery of Australia, and Dr Kelvin Officer, Navin Officer

Archaeological Consultants, have been monitoring the rock art shelter known as Nursery Swamp II, to determine the environmental factors leading to the growth of a virulent green lichen that threatens to obscure and eventually obliterate the Aboriginal paintings on the surface. Their work was funded by a grant from ACT Heritage obtained by NPA. We will hear something of their work and how they have discovered a major natural limiting factor on the growth of the lichen which may lead, in the future, to very low impact conservation intervention.

NPA on the internet

The NPA is now on the Internet and our email address is: npaact@spirit.com.au. If you are member of an NPA committee and you would rather receive the necessary paperwork by email, send Dianne your address. If you have an article for the Bulletin you can email it also.

Glasses lost on Sentry Box Mountain

Lost – pair of tri-focal glasses (yes they were expensive). Tortoise-shell brown, with some blue specks. They blend in perfectly with the bush.

Last seen in photograph of me, hanging neatly from the neck of my jumper. So I know I lost them somewhere approx. in the 500m between the last two saddles south of Sentry Box Rock. Map ref. Yaouk 713343 and 713336.

Ph. Di Thompson 6289 5117(w), or 6288 6084(h).

PARKWATCH *continued*

This surprising land deal (concluded under the previous State Government) has shamed many who have been involved (including politicians and government agencies). Conservation groups have also not adequately pursued formal assertions that the significant conservation values lie outside a sham "conservation agreement area".

In 1996, in the Senate, Bob Brown extracted, "We cannot intervene" from Minister Hill, Federal Minister for the Environment. The Greens are now challenging NSW Minister for the Environment Allan's alleged errors of fact to State Parliament.

Hundreds of damning FOI files have now been published privately on the WWW to expose this perfidy internationally. Go to <http://www.nor.com.au/users/gaiaguys>.

It is painstakingly compiled documentation of a scandal so extensive as to impede its own resolution.

National Parks Journal, Vol. 42 No. 4, August, 1998

Grazing Damage Revealed

Parks Victoria has released a damning report that shows just how much damage is occurring in our Alpine National Park due to cattle grazing. Based on both past research and recent measurements, it concludes "Grazing of free-ranging livestock is incompatible with the protection of flora, fauna and natural processes that are fundamental objectives of a National Park..... Any claims made with respect to the benefits of grazing to alpine ecosystems are not supported by scientific evidence. ... The

justification of grazing continuing in the Victorian Alpine region is based on social and political grounds and on the effects on the income of individual graziers. Continued grazing is an undoubted cost to National Park values, and, indeed, compromises national park management." *The report emphasises the damage occurring to alpine bogs and snow patch vegetation, both of which are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee, and also singles out the Mt Fainter region as being severely damaged.*

In spite of the evidence, the licences are on the verge of being renewed. We have not been consulted in the process.

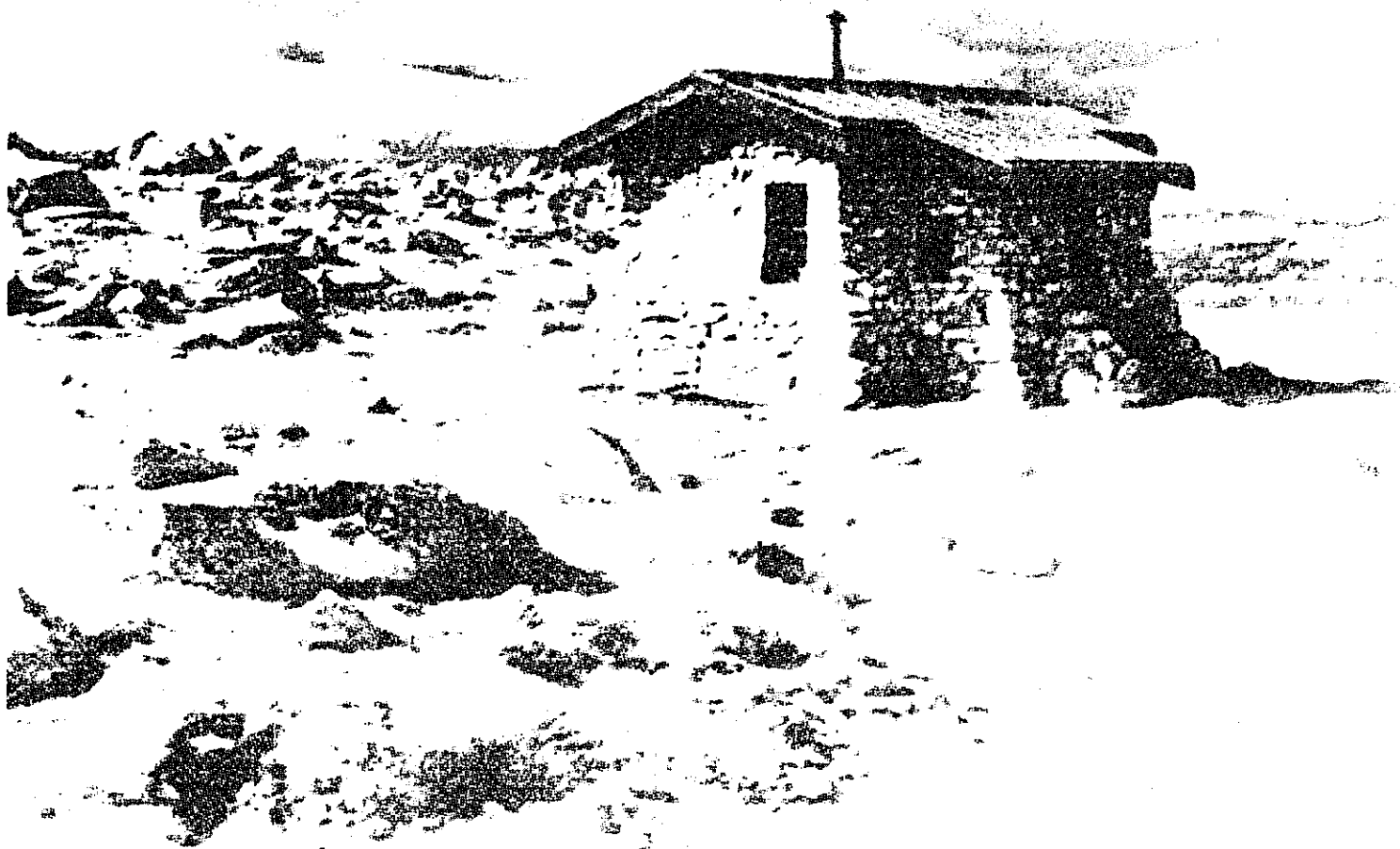
People Caring for Nature, vol 17 No 6, July, 1998.

Len Haskew

National Parks Association (ACT)

New members welcome

Why not invite a friend to join?



Seamans Hut, Kosciuszko National Park, May 1998. Photo Reg Adler

NPA Bulletin

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