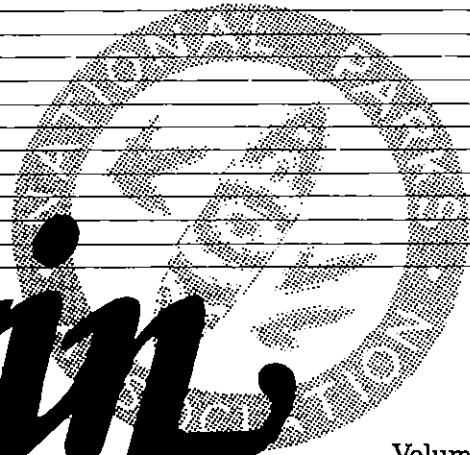


NPA Bulletin



Volume 36 number 2
June 1999

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Conservation and the ACT Budget

Annual General Meeting

Another walk in the wilderness

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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.

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Membership

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

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For new subscriptions joining between:

- 1 January and 31 March – half specified rate
- 1 April and 30 June – annual subscription

NPA Bulletin

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

Deadline for September issue: 1 August 1999.

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

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Cover: Max Lawrence's Sunday group on the Pilot. "Another walk in the Wilderness" on page 12 tells the story. L to R, Front: Wayne Veide, Max Lawrence, Brian Slee; Back: Mike and Annette Smith, Helen Stevens, Peter Tedder. Photo Max Lawrence

From the President

Conservation and the ACT Budget

What better way to spend a wet Saturday afternoon than reading the ACT Budget Papers, fortified, of course, by plenty of tea and cake! The papers are very interesting with much information on conservation and environmental activities. In Budget Paper No.3 there are 18 pages on the environment and the activities of Environment ACT. Of the 58 topics appearing, 40 of them are of interest to the NPA. Here are some gleanings.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission determined that, in 1997-98, the ACT Government spent \$3.2 million above the national average on national parks and wildlife. For the year 1999-2000, a total of \$22 million is budgeted for expenditure on environment and heritage, made up of \$5.2m on environmental management and regulation, \$15m on nature conservation and land management and \$1.8m on heritage. Included in this is an additional \$100 000 for the year 2000 State of the Environment Report.

New capital works of \$1.5m include \$300 000 for weed control,

\$200 000 for Tidbinbilla wildlife enclosures, \$125 000 for improved access to nature reserves, \$100 000 for Boboyan landscape restoration (our special project) and \$225 000 for Gudgenby visitor facilities. The Environment Grants Program will distribute around \$420 000 and Heritage Grants \$230 000.

A new source of revenue for the ACT Government is a water abstraction charge of 10c per kilolitre (around \$30 per household) which will raise \$1.7m in 1999-2000 and \$6.7m in subsequent years.

The proposal to spend \$225 000 on overnight visitor facilities based in and around Gudgenby Homestead is an interesting one. The upgrade of the access road will cost \$35 000 and \$190 000 will be spent on infrastructure improvements in and around the homestead. At the budget briefing which I attended, it was stated that the Gudgenby development is part of the ACT Campground Strategy. The 1997 Campground Strategy Discussion Paper (to which the NPA responded positively) makes no mention of Gudgenby Homestead, only of a future possible low impact campsite at a place to be identified within the former Boboyan Pine Plantation. The idea that Gudgenby Homestead

could be a focus for development has not been publicly canvassed. The homestead's location close to the Gudgenby River presents significant problems for the disposal of sewage and "grey" water. The NPA has taken up with Environment ACT the issue of a lack of consultation on this development and our concerns with specific aspects of the proposal.

No Ruff without Puff

The objectives of the National Parks Association are set out on the contents page of this *Bulletin*. To fulfil these objectives it is necessary for members to participate in the activities of the association such as the Management Committee, the Environment and Outings Sub-committees, the *Bulletin*, Working Groups and other groups.

Making the association's voice heard (Ruff!), putting forward our views and research to the ACT Government and its agencies, producing the *Bulletin*, leading walks and running the association require some effort by members (Puff!). For the future of the association, please give consideration to becoming involved at the working end of the NPA.

Clive Hurlstone

Annual General Meeting

8.00pm

Thursday 19 August 1999

Forestry House, Yarralumla

Business at the AGM includes the President's report on progress during the financial year just concluding, and election of a new committee to steer us through the coming financial year. In addition, there will be the usual monthly business, including a presentation by invited guest speakers.

All office bearer and committee positions are up for filling at the AGM: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Immediate

Past President (ex-officio), and up to eight other members.

Whilst a number of the existing office bearers and committee members have indicated they will be available for re-election if required, there is an urgent need for new people to become involved, not only in the elected committee, but also in the sub-committees which directly address the real issues of concern to NPA.

Membership of committees is both stimulating and rewarding, and offers you the opportunity to make a significant and personal contribution to conservation and the national parks movement.

Come along, have your say, get involved, and help us make a real difference in advancing the things that really matter to us.

We would be pleased to discuss this with you, and to arrange a nomination if you are a volunteer. Please phone Clive (6288 7592), Max (6288 1370), or Dianne at the NPA office (6282 5813) for more information.

Our guest speakers at the AGM will be John Harris, Reg Alder and Fiona MacDonald Brand, who will entertain us with their recent experiences on Lord Howe Island.

The Environment Advisory Committee

For some years in the ACT, the Minister responsible for the environment has had the advice of a committee of experts from outside the relevant government department. At the time of the previous Labor Government, this took the form of the Environment and Conservation Consultative Committee, or E triple C, chaired by Professor Peter Cullen. NPA was represented by Anne Taylor. Fiona MacDonald Brand was also a committee member.

During the first term of Kate Carnell's Liberal Government the committee's term of appointment expired. Eventually a wider system of advisory committee and sub-committees was set up reflecting an awareness of the importance of a wide range of environmental issues. This sub-committee structure has just been revised and another sub-committee added, so it is an appropriate time to outline the structure for NPA members.

The Environment Advisory Committee (EAC), chaired by Professor Peter Cullen, provides strategic advice to the Minister responsible for the environment on emerging and current issues relating to the ACT environment and its protection, in particular, on the following:

- management of public lands;
- development and content of environmental legislation;
- monitoring, investigation, study and research requirements;
- environmental protection relating to chemicals, air, noise, hazardous materials, water and recycling;
- community information, education and interpretation;
- community consultation and participation;
- environmental grants programs; and
- resource management/ sustainable development.

The committee has 11 members appointed by the Minister on the basis of their expertise, and is supported by five sub-committees which report through their chairs. These sub-committees are:

- Environment Regulation and Review Sub-committee, chaired by Mr Alan Bradbury
- Sustainable Energy and Environment Protection Sub-committee, chaired by Professor Ben Selinger (recently formed)
- Landcare Sub-committee, chaired by Ms Val Wiseman
- Nature Conservation and Namadgi Sub-committee, chaired by Dr Arthur Georges
- Grants Assessment Panel, chaired by Professor Peter Cullen

The Nature Conservation and Namadgi Sub-committee is the one most relevant to NPA interests. Its functions are to provide advice to the EAC on strategic matters relating to nature conservation in the ACT; ongoing review of the Nature Conservation Strategy; strategic advice to EAC and Environment ACT on the management of Namadgi National Park and other protected areas in the ACT; input into, and review of management plans and implementation plans for the nature conservation areas in the ACT; advice on strategies for dealing with undesirable impacts on the natural and cultural heritage values of the ACT; and to undertake other activities as requested by the EAC and the Minister.

I am the NPA member on this sub-committee, and have been since it was first set up. In the past year, we have looked at management plans for Tidbinbilla and the Lower Molonglo; at implementation plans for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and action plans for endangered species as they became available for public discussion. We have also kept abreast of issues such

as property management agreements for rural leases, the location of the Very Fast Train and its possible effect on grasslands, and the Aboriginal claim on Namadgi and other parts of the ACT.

Other committees advising the Minister on particular nature and conservation issues are: the Flora and Fauna Committee (reported on by Debbie Worner and Bill Logan at our general meeting of 21 March 1996, see *Bulletin*, June 1996) and the Kangaroo Advisory Committee. Both report directly to the Minister. The Fauna and Flora Committee evaluates whether species, communities or processes as proposed are suitable to be declared endangered. The Kangaroo Advisory Committee assesses problems with kangaroos in the ACT, and has prepared reports on kangaroos on reserves, on rural leases and in an urban context so that government policy can draw on scientific knowledge.

Eleanor Stodart

Bird book reprinted

The very successful *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*, published by the NPA, has been reprinted and is now available from the NPA office and retailers. The recommended retail price is \$16.95 and the price to members is \$13.

Campgrounds in Namadgi National Park

The 1990s have seen a rapid increase in "eco-tourism" and moves to exploit commercially areas set aside for nature conservation. This has led to some scepticism on the part of conservation groups as to the motives of governments when "improvements" have been mooted for our cherished national parks. Thus, when the ACT Parks and Conservation Service issued its draft Campground Strategy in 1997 the NPA scrutinised it closely.

The draft strategy was found to be modest in its aims and sensitive to the overall objectives of Namadgi National Park. As Stephen Johnston commented in the *Bulletin* at the time: "The draft Campground Strategy demonstrates that there is ample room for development of visitor facilities without compromising the integrity and the special attractions of the ACT's parks and reserves."

In accordance with the approved strategy, the Parks and Conservation Service has now completed its provision of new facilities at the site of the former Honeysuckle Creek tracking station and has refurbished the Honeysuckle Creek site. With the existing site at Mount Clear, this provides three car-based

Fees per night

Campground	1 person	2 people	Each additional person	Community & non-profit groups	Children 4 yrs & under
Honeysuckle	\$3	\$6	\$2	\$2 per person	FREE
Orroral	\$3	\$6	\$2	\$2 per person	FREE
Mt Clear	\$2.50	\$5	\$2	\$2 person	FREE

campgrounds in Namadgi. Funds for this work were provided by the Commonwealth and Environment ACT.

From 1 March 1999 a fee based camp permit system has been in operation for these sites. Bookings must be made in advance at the Namadgi visitors centre in person or by telephone or fax. Fees can be paid at the centre on the way to the campground during open hours or by use of the after hours facility at the front gate. A sticker is issued to be attached to tent or campervan. No provision is made in Namadgi for caravans. A three-night limit applies.

The NPA agrees with the introduction of a fee-based camping permit system and is pleased to see that revenue raised will be returned directly to the provision of campground services and maintenance. The association would, however, like to see the ACT

Government make progress in revising the now very dated plan of management for the park. Single issues strategies such as the recently issued ones for bushfire fuel reduction, endangered species and nature-based tourism are being introduced without the basic framework provided by an up-to-date overall plan of management. This will make the ultimate and inevitable revision of the plan difficult. Strategies should fit into a plan rather than the other way around.

For further information:

Namadgi Visitors Centre, Nass Road, Tharwa, ACT 2620

Tel: (02) 6207 2900 Fax: (02) 6207 2901

E Mail:

namadgi_national_park@dpa.act.gov.au

Home Page:

www.act.gov.au/envirom

Timothy Walsh

Joe Turner 1901-1999

Joe Turner, a member of the Sydney Bush Walkers and the Hunter-Manning branch of the NSW National Parks Association, died on the 20 February 1999, 17 days short of his 98th birthday.

The Sydney Bush Walkers was formed in 1927 and Joe was one of its earliest members. He was one of the principal activists in securing the purchase of the Blue Gum Forest Reserve. It was to become the nucleus of the Blue Mountains National Park which was declared in 1951.

At a meeting of the Sydney Bush Walkers in July 1931, the possibility of the purchase of the lease of the Blue Gum Forest was discussed. Raising the money required seemed to be an insurmountable task, but Joe Turner spoke out to say it was a

challenge to the club to secure the preservation of the forest.

Accordingly he moved a motion that a sub-committee be formed to investigate the possibility of acquiring the Blue Gum Forest. The committee consisted of members of the Wildlife Preservation Society, Sydney Bush Walkers and the Mountain Trails Club. Joe was elected secretary. Subsequently when the forest was purchased, Joe was elected secretary of the Blue Gum Forest trustees from 1932 until 1942 when he moved to Armidale. He moved to Newcastle in 1955 and was later secretary of the Hunter-Manning branch of the National Parks Association.

He was also involved in the Flora and Fauna Society as well as

becoming a life member of the Newcastle City Choir. His grandfather, William, arrived in Hobart in 1829, a convict on HMS *Lady Harewood*, convicted twice for the theft of a handkerchief. In 1839, William married a free woman and became a respected merchant.

Joe finished school at the age of 14, entering the Law Book Company as a delivery boy. Later at Priddle and Gosling he was articled as a law clerk to eventually become Managing Law Clerk. He continued to work in legal offices until his retirement in 1968. He instilled in his family of four children a love of the bush and walking.

References

The Sydney Bush Walker, March 1999
Back from the Brink - Andy McQueen, 1997

Reg Alder

Progress at Gudgenby *Photos and text by Eleanor Stodart*



NPA members and Parkcare coordinator, Ann Connolly, watch as Brian Cumberland of Greening Australia shows us how to fill our tubes with soil. This was this year's first work party of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, on 20 February. We seeded about 1800 forestry tubes, in order to have them ready to plant out next spring.

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

OPEN DAY

Sunday 20 June

Details are in the Outings Program



After instruction it was heads down and hands on.



Second Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group work party for the year on 27 March and 1st Canberra Scouts help plant out seedlings prepared by the Society for Growing Australian Plants. The work party on 24 April did more planting, using seedlings grown by Growing Friends of the Botanic Gardens.



Timber! One of the larger wildings felled at the NPA work party on 10 April in the bush along Hospital Creek.



Healthy snow gum seedlings, and a small acacia grow in the shelter of a blackened log, amongst browned off weeds, 27 March.

En guard on Sentry Box Hill

On the first weekend of spring, 1998, Judith Webster, Tim Walsh, Ian Bell and I journeyed to Sentry Box Hill. The mountain derives its name from an upright boulder the size of a small house (The Sentry Box) which guards its northern approach. Early parish maps of the area show the mountain as one of the few features worthy of a name. Its lure for the early settlers must have been similar to that which attracted us.

Our walk-in commenced at the locked gate on the Old Boboyan Road South. This region through the Naas Creek valley is steeped in history. Land Commissioner Henry Bingham passed this way in October 1839 and noted that one James Ritchie had a pasturage lease for 14 080 acres (5698 hectares) and lived on the property with 10 other people. Their self-sufficient life-style is evidenced by the 1626 head of sheep and cattle and seven acres (2.8 hectares) of cultivation they had at their disposal; not to mention their remoteness from both Cooma and Queanbeyan. We walked past the ruins of Bobeyan Homestead which was the home of the Brayshaw family for over 100 years from 1844. A break in our journey at this point gave us pause to reflect on both the serenity and harshness of life in this part of the world. A chorus of magpies and dappled sunlight through a heavy sky made for an enchanting scene. Yet the graves adjacent to the ruins echoed a different existence in years past.

During the rural era of this region sheep would pass this way each spring and autumn on their seasonal migration to and from the summer snow leases in what is now Kosciuszko National Park. Our walk past Bobeyan approximated this old stock route, eventually leading to Bulls Flat Creek and the stock-yards and ringbarked stumps which make for tangible history.

With Bulls Flat Creek behind us we climbed the 100-metre grade to the plain which holds Grassy Creek. By this time the sunny breaks were more prevalent and a forecast promise of clearing weather looked



*The Sentry Box.
Photo Martin Chalk*

good. The headwaters of Grassy Creek are formed by Back Flat—an expanse of grassland which was used by those early stockmen to rest their flocks. Likewise, we rested and fed ourselves before leaving the stock route for the climb up Sentry Box Hill. However, our rest was cut short by a freshening wind and the odd spot of rain.

Our plan called for a two-hour walk up the southern ridge of the mountain, giving us sufficient time on the top to select a good camping site and have a meal before watching the sun set into the clearing western sky. After two hours of steadily grinding away we were among the low cliffs which comprise the southern end of the summit and still some distance from our destination. There was still no sign of the clearing western sky. Indeed, the valley below was partially obscured by a band of low cloud. Spurred on by the need to stay ahead of the weather we gradually picked our way through the cliffs

and the thick heath country that predominates in this area. In the meantime the sun was gradually gaining on the western horizon. At least we assumed this to be the case because that low cloud had now overtaken us and we were enveloped in fog.

By 4:30 pm my thoughts had turned to the hour of remaining daylight and how we could best use it. We were among the granite slabs of the 1700-metre summit and still about 1.5 kilometres from a small saddle that we had selected from the map as our best option for a camp site. We had seen few other suitable sites, for the granite, which was now our footpath, offered little opportunity to secure our tents. Additionally, the wind had moved to the south-west and freshened, the temperature was dropping

and light rain had started to fall. As I placed my feet, left then right, I seemed to recall these conditions in a number of survival stories I had read. I didn't stop to recall their outcomes.

The visibility had now reduced to less than 100 metres and the light rain had started to swirl in the wind. My three travelling companions and I knew the score—keep moving to stay warm and focus on the saddle. Amazingly, as we followed the compass bearing across the granite we came upon two of the survey marks left by Harry Mouat in 1915. He was charged with the task of surveying the water catchment which delimited this portion the ACT border.

At around 5 pm I heard a noise which did not fit the accustomed pattern of my heartbeat, breathing and the patter of sleet on my hood—a voice. I was aware that Di Thomson had planned to travel with a group to the saddle. But I felt sure that there could be no other fools

about on such a foul day. Again the voice—this time another of my group heard it and cooed in response. The voice acknowledged our call. With our navigation confirmed and the destination near, the relief between the four of us could not be imagined.

Sitting around a welcoming fire were six people who had climbed the western slope of Sentry Box Hill. By now the sleet had turned to large, wet flakes of snow. I declined a tempting offer of a cup of tea in favour of getting our camp established before the light failed completely and the snow covered everything.

Within 40 minutes we had our tents up, extra clothing on and had failed to ignite our own fire. Unbelievably, or perhaps not, we had brought sufficient fuel for our cooking stoves but no extra to spend on the wet and cold firewood—waterproof matches and dry paper were not in the race. The day ended not as planned: no spectacular sunset among the granite slabs of the mountain peak, no convivial conversation around a small, enchanting fire. We ate our hot food standing around cold stoves with fingers and toes crying out for warmth. The prospect of climbing into a dry sleeping bag and cuddling up to a wet pack was infinitely more attractive than the most engaging conversation. And as for the sunset!

By 6:45 pm our day had ended to the sound of snow on tent nylon and a steadily increasing wind in the tree tops. I wondered how strong the wind was that had uprooted a number of trees in the saddle. No matter, I was sure that my subconscious would provide plenty of dreams on the matter during the 12 hours until sunrise.

Sunday arrived quietly. No wind, no birds, no clouds and a blindingly

white mantle over everything. I eagerly put on my clothes (a rather cumbersome process within the confines of my vestibule-less one-man tent) in a rush to explore this new world. My haste was slowed temporarily as I pulled on my frozen boots and carefully did up the laces. Just 12 hours earlier this bright and alive scene was wet and grey—as the saying goes: 'What a difference a day makes'.

In short order, we all had emerged, insect-like, from our survival cocoons. After a quick breakfast of a warm drink and some dried food we set off to explore the granite slabs of Sentry Box Hill which had eluded us the day before. The four of us worked our way along the slabs and through the tangles of trees and herbs which live in green slashes between them. In the distance was the slowly nearing outline of The Sentry Box, pushed up against the northern tip of the mountain's summit as if trying to avoid us. Along the way we kept an eye out for the passage of Harry Mouat all those years before and also admired the frozen pools left by the excesses of Saturday. We eventually caught up with The Sentry Box. After a pause to take in the view and some photos we reluctantly set off back to our camp.

Mid morning saw us nearing our humble dwellings. On the way we passed the other group who had spread their wet gear on a slab to dry. As both groups were going to retrace their respective steps from the previous day we bade each other good luck and continued to our camp site.

Within the hour we were packed up and on our way across the granite slabs which constitute the southern approaches to Sentry Box Hill. The unlimited visibility

allowed us to see the expanse of the slabs we had blindly picked our way across during our ascent. Not only was Harry Mouat's legacy visible in its context as a survey marker but so too were the curious stone arrangements which are thought to be of Aboriginal origin. Bordering the slabs are stands of snow gums. Alas, these are now dead—victims of the drought which held this region in its grip in the summer of 1997–98.

After briefly reviewing our situation we saw little point in descending to Back Flat, and took the shorter route to Sheep Station Creek. Our descent point carefully chosen, we left the big sky of the granite slabs and entered the tangled bush of the snow gums and tea tree. After an hour of slipping and sliding through snow-covered timber we emerged into a wonderful open forest of alpine ash. Below us we could see our intended route through the clearing of Sheep Station Creek and the valley of Naas Creek beyond.

Once on Sheep Station Creek the hard work was over. About half-way along the creek, we broke for a late lunch at Lone Pine. Dan and Dalla Jane Crawford were descendants of the pioneers in this region and built Lone Pine in 1910. They had their time there cut short by a tragic accident in which Dan lost a leg. Lone Pine is nothing now but the ruin of a fire place and some well-established exotic trees. As I finished my lunch and admired the drop-log fence, which still traverses the creek, I wondered at the changes the world had seen, and which this valley had not, since Dan and Dalla Jane ate their Sunday lunch at this place. What a difference a day makes, but not so the decades in Namadgi National Park.

Martin Chalk

Work parties for Tennent Homestead

Dave Whitfield, who was formerly the ranger for the Googong Dam/London Bridge area, has been transferred and is now responsible for the area which includes Tennent Homestead. When Dave has settled in he would like to utilise NPA members to assist him with

stabilisation and restoration work. This would involve us in midweek activities. No special skills would be required (indeed the ability to drive a crooked nail could well be an asset). All that is needed is the willingness to spend a pleasant day outdoors during the week. Dave will

contact me about a fortnight before a workparty so I should be able to give volunteers adequate warning. If you would like to be involved please ring me, on 62814268 so that I can compile a list of volunteers. Thanks.

Len Haskew

A crowded Cascade hut



(Constable) B.J. Lang. 1932-1999

rode into the Tin Mine camp, put Carter's body onto a pack horse and took it to Jindabyne. 1952.

The front had brought heavy rain, and we were looking forward very much to the shelter of the hut on the last night of our walk from the Cobberas to Deadhorse Gap at the end of March. We were surprised, and somewhat dismayed at first, to find that the hut was already occupied by 14 people. This dismay soon turned to pleasure when we learned that they were members of the Illawarra Alpine Club, legendary caretakers of the Tin Mines huts and Cascade hut. Their visit had two purposes; to reconnoitre for their Easter work party, and to scatter the ashes of their much-loved family and club member, Bruce (Boris) Lang.

Family members included his widow, Joan, daughter, son-in-law, grandson and grand-daughter. Among the Illawarra Alpine Club members were Rhonda Boxall, author of *Silver Tracks*, the history of the Illawarra Alpine Club, and Pat and Sue Edmonson, of Jindabyne.

Bruce has played his part in the history of the high country by taking part in his club's hut work parties for the past 25 years, and earlier in 1952, as Constable Lang assisted by "Pinky Harris", retrieving the body of Charlie Carter from the Tin

Mines. Some of the story of Charlie Carter, including the difficulties of getting his body back to Jindabyne over the flooded Jacob's River has been written up by Klaus Huenecke in his books, *Huts of the High Country*, and *People of the High Country*.

In the hut and around the fire as the night wore on we learnt that he was only 22 at the time, in his second placement. He knew the area fairly well as his father was the sergeant at Cooma. Eventually he left the police force and took over a liquor store in Dapto. Stories and memories were swapped, and a toast in Akvavit was

made. "To Boris and all the good times".

It was a heartwarming occasion, to be included in the celebration of his life and the grieving at his death, which will remain an unforgettable experience for all of the NPA members in our group. That night the wind swung around to the south and snow replaced rain. We packed up early, said our farewells to his family and friends, and walked out in falling snow, contemplating our own mortality, and savouring our own fitness and the exquisitely beautiful environment we were walking through.

Syd Comfort penned the following lines:

*Ashes on the snow
The spirit
Of a being of the alpine vastness
Lives on
Through ashes on the snow.*

Graham Scully



Pam Ray leading the NPA history outing at Yass Cemetery on Saturday, 13 February. Photo Barbara Comfort.

Congratulations

Association life member Charles Hill and his wife Audrey celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Saturday, 29 May. Charles and Audrey have been staunch supporters of the NPA over many years but Charles's poor health has restricted their involvement recently. Members congratulate them on their golden anniversary.

18 – 19 September weekend packwalk

Mt Talaterang

Leader: Steven Forst

2C/D/E

Map: CMW Budawangs

Phone: 6251 6817(h), 6279 1326(w)

Contact leader by Wednesday 15 September. After a long drive an easy two and a half hour walk to camp at the top of Ngaityung Falls – a spectacular spot with views into Pigeon House Gorge. On the second day go without packs to Mt Talaterang, returning to camp before walking out and driving home. 400kms, \$80 per car.

25 September daywalk

Southern Namadgi

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/B

Maps: Colinton and Bredbo 1:25 000

Phone 6288 4171

Suitable for beginners. A pleasant walk from Mt Clear campground to the Long Flar via Potters chimney, some old sheep yards and Abouds dunny, with a side trip to Chalkers chimney. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 130kms, \$26 per car.

26 September Sunday daywalks and picnic

Multiclub get together

Coordinator: Allan Mikkelsen (CBC) 6278 3164

Allan is coordinating a get together of ACT bushwalkers. A number of walks at all different levels will be arranged in the Orroral Valley to return to the Orroral Picnic Ground for a combined afternoon tea at about 4.00pm. All current and past members of any of the Canberra walking clubs are invited to attend. Walks will include Corter Gap, Legoland, Orroral Homestead, Orroral Tor, Nursery Hill, etc, so there should be a walk for you on the day. Hopefully each walking group will include a mixture from different clubs, so you will have the opportunity to meet old and new friends.

In conjunction, at least one weekend walk in the area, also getting back to the Picnic Ground on Sunday afternoon, will be arranged. If you are interested in a weekend walk, OR can lead a day walk (one of the above or your own suggestion), please contact the coordinator. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.20am.

NPA outings program

June – September 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



12 – 14 June long weekend packwalk

Quiltys Mountain

Leader: Steven Forst

2A/B

Ref: CMW Budawang's

Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Contact leader by Tuesday for details of two and a half day walk starting Saturday. Easy-medium walk with packs to a base camp on the Endrick River. Visit Quilties Pass, the Bora Ground, and Round Mountain. A late lunch at Braidwood on Monday. 340 kms, \$68 per car.

12 – 14 June long weekend carcamp

Murramarang National Park

Leader: Mick and Joan Kelly

Maps: Durras 1:25 000, Batemans Bay Forestry Map

Phone: 02 4472 3959

Weekend will include walk from Depot Beach to Durras Mountain (283m) and return, plus some forest walks. Relaxation will be the main theme, perhaps some birdwatching or fishing for those interested. Please phone leaders by Monday 7 June.

19 June Saturday daywalk

Coree and Devils Peak

Leader: Matthew Higgins

2A/B/D

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6247 7285

Crunch frost in the northern Brindabellas this winter! Joint walk with KHA. We'll climb Coree from near Blundells, walk to Coree Flats, climb Devils Peak, and return to Blundells. Some history, a good deal of great native forest, excellent views from both peaks. Steep climbs, about 14kms. For the fit. Book with leader, numbers limited. 90kms, \$18 per car.

20 June Sunday Open Day

GBRG work party / walk / BBQ

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's primary concern is the rehabilitation of the area in the middle of our National Park formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. Work parties are held each month in conjunction with the parks service, and usually involve weed removal and planting of native vegetation. The June event is a special Open Day, and will involve some work and some walking in the regenerated area. It will be concluded by a BYO BBQ. Activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

23 June daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

27 June Sunday daywalk

Googong Foreshores

Leader: Max Lawrence

2/4A

Maps: ACT 1:100 000, Googong brochure (available onsite)

Phone: 6288 1370

Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8.30am. Walk from Foreshores Carpark (near dam) to London Bridge natural arch and return, all on firetrail and no big hills. Options exist for those wanting a shorter walk (one way car shuffle, or part way and return), but this is an easy walk and the full works is recommended, even for beginners. 50kms, \$10 per car.

4 July Sunday daywalk

Brindabella National Park

Leader: Max Lawrence

1B/C/E

Maps: Brindabella 1:100 000, Umburra 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

This is the rerun of the May outing which had to be deferred because of wet and slippery road conditions. The walk involves a couple of hours driving (including an hour on bumpy four wheel drive tracks) to get to the kick off point for what is quite a short walk. Our destination will be the top of the falls on Waterfall Creek, which plunges well over 200m in very short order on its way down to the Goodradigbee. Phone leader early for details and bookings. Numbers will be limited by the availability of 4WD vehicles. 140kms, \$28 per car.

11 July Sunday daywalk

Mt Macdonald

Leader: Beverley Hammond

1A

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 6577

Meet at 9.30am in the camping area across the bridge over the Murrumbidgee near the pumping station en route to Cotter Reserve. Climb on track through bush to Cotter lookout, then through pines to Mt Macdonald fire tower. Expansive views. Bring lunch.

17 July Saturday daywalk

Mt Clear area

Leader: Martin Chalk

3A/B/F

Maps: Bredbo and Colinton 1:25 000

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

Leave Kambah Village shops at 9.00am. Walk from Mt Clear campground along Grassy Creek to Boboyan divide, then along divide to the Long Flat. Return to Mt Clear campground via Chalkers chimney. A long day that will stretch into evening. Be prepared for cold conditions and failing light. 130kms, \$26 per car.

17 July Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's primary concern is the rehabilitation of the area in the middle of our National Park formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. Work parties are held each month in conjunction with the parks service, and usually involve weed removal and planting of native vegetation. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

25 July Sunday daywalk

Murrumbidgee Corridor

Leader: Col McAlister

2A

Maps: Canberra and Tuggeranong 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

Ideal for beginners. A lovely walk on track from Kambah Pool to a lookout over the Murrumbidgee River about half way to Casuarina Sands. We will have lunch at the lookout, and then return to Kambah Pool. Meet at rop carpark, Kambah Pool at 9.00am.

28 July daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

1 August Sunday daywalk

Mr Nungar

Leader: Max Lawrence

1B

Map: Tantangara 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

Mt Nungar is a notable peak just to the east of the road into Tantangara Dam from the Snowy Mountains Highway. After a steady 400 metre climb through open bush we should be in the snow, and weather permitting, enjoying some great winter mountain scenery. This is not a difficult walk, but arrangements will depend on road and weather

conditions at the time. Ring leader for bookings and details. 300 kms, \$60 per car.

8 - 13 August one week packwalk

The Two Rivers Walking Track

Leader: Mick Kelly

3A/B

Maps: Burrier, Yalwal 1:25 000, CMW Budawang's

Phone: 02 4472 3959

The Two Rivers Walking Track is a joint venture of the Shoalhaven City Council, the NPWS and the Aboriginal community of Shoalhaven. It links the Shoalhaven River near Coolendel south to the Clyde at Yadboro, mostly on established firetrails and tracks. Routewise from Coolendel it makes across to Yalwal and onwards and upwards joining the Braidwood-Nowra road for a short way before heading southwards along the Twelve Mile Road and Tianjara fire trail to Little Forest, dropping down at Rusden Head and heading across Wombat Ridge to Mt Pigeon House and finally via Longfella Pass to the Clyde at Yadboro. Total walking distance about 90kms. Numbers limited to twelve. Transport arrangements and costs to be worked out.

8 August Sunday daywalk

Mt Budawang

Leader: Brian Slee

1A

Maps: Batemans Bay Forestry map, CMW Budawang's sketch map

Phone: 6281 0719

Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8.00am. Drive to base of Mt Budawang via Braidwood and Mongarlowe. A short but steepish walk on firetrail to Mt Budawang summit, for fine views of surrounding country including the Castle and Pigeon House. Return to cars may be by different route using old partly overgrown trail. Afternoon tea and stroll around the gallery at Mongarlowe. 200kms, \$20 per car.

14 August Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's primary concern is the rehabilitation of the area in the middle of our National Park formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. Work parties are held each month in conjunction with the parks service, and usually involve weed removal and planting of native vegetation. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

15 August Sunday daywalk

Mt Gudgenby

Leader: Martin Chalk

2B/C/D/E

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000

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

Leave Kambah Village shops at 8.00am. Walk from Yankee Hat carpark across Bogong swamp to climb rugged Mt Gudgenby for magnificent views. A challenging walk for fit and experienced walkers. 100kms, \$20 per car.

22 August Sunday daywalk

Hospital Hill and Boboyan Trig

Leader: Frank Clements

3A/D/F

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 7005

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. From the Boboyan (Yankee Hat) carpark we climb to Hospital Hill, then north (1km exploratory) to a large rock outcrop. Return to Hospital Hill and then on to Boboyan Trig. Descend to Old Boboyan Road and back to cars. 100kms, \$20 per car.

25 August daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: David Large

Phone: 6291 4830

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

29 August Sunday ski trip

Four Mile Hut

Leader: Steven Forst

3A

Map: Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map

Phone: 6279 1326(w), 6251 6817(h)

Contact leader by Wednesday. A day ski trip to Four Mile Hut for lunch from either Kiandra or Selwyn Quarry, depending on the snow and weather conditions. 300kms, \$60 per car.

4 – 11 September one week packwalk

Barrington Tops

Leaders: Wayne Veide, Max Lawrence

3A/B/C/D/E/F

Maps: Barrington Tops and Gloucester Tops 1:25 000,

Barrington Tops Forestry Map

Phone: 02 6553 4351 (Wayne, at Wingham), 6288 1370 (Max)

We will enter and return via the Gloucester Tops walking trail (approx 20kms), setting up a base camp at beautiful Wombat Creek. Daywalks to Careys Peak, Big Holè, Junction Pools, Edwards Swamp, Basden Falls, Barrington Falls. Transport arrangements and costs will depend on numbers. Expressions of interest to Max by 14 August please, with preference for early registrations as numbers will be limited.

5 September Sunday daywalk

Sherwood

Leader: Doreen Wilson

1A

Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 5215

Meet at carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.30am. An easy walk on tracks and steps from Blue Range Hut to Sherwood homestead historic site in spring glory with daffodils blooming. We'll also look for early orchids en route. 35kms, \$7 per car.

11 – 12 September weekend packwalk

Bibbenluke Mountain

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/D/E

Map: Corang 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

A walk in the western Budawangs from the Wog Wog entrance. Mostly on tracks but with some scrub and a bit of rock scrambling in places. Contact leader by Wednesday 8 September for more details and bookings. 250kms, \$50 per car.

11 September Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's primary concern is the rehabilitation of the area in the middle of our National Park formerly occupied by the notorious Boboyan Pines. Work parties are held each month in conjunction with the parks service, and usually involve weed removal and planting of native vegetation. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

12 September Sunday daywalk

Tidbinbilla Range

Leader: Steve Hill

3A/B/E

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186

We climb to SnowyCorner from the top of the Lyrebird trail (this is steep, but we pass through a great variety of beautiful forest) and then to Tidbinbilla Mountain for a 360 degree view of the things that matter to us as well as lunch. Then we walk north along the ridge to Tidbinbilla Peak and down to Johns Peak. We return to the carpark along the Mountain Creek trail which we meet after the (again steep in parts) descent from Johns Peak. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 70kms, \$14 per car.

Light will make the green go

Complex and ingenious research over more than two years to discover the cause of the green lichen invasion of Aboriginal rock art at the Nursery Swamp II site in the Namadgi National Park seems to have yielded a beautifully simple answer.

The invasion threatened to cover and destroy at least some of the animal and other figures painted on the wall of the rock shelter. The paintings are estimated to be hundreds and possibly thousands of years old.

Lichens have probably been a feature of the site well into prehistory, but were recognised as a potential threat to the art following bushfires in 1983 when mature trees in the area were badly burned and the understorey was destroyed. Photographic monitoring of the art panels since this time has revealed periodic rapid growth in the lichen, despite two attempts to clean the site using dry brushes.

The project to find the cause and cure was commissioned by the National Parks Association after receiving an ACT Heritage Grant.

The *NPA Bulletin* of December 1998 carried a detailed progress report, and members at the association's general meeting in March 1999 heard more up-to-date, and possibly conclusive, information from Dr Kelvin Officer, of Navin-Officer Heritage Consultants, of Deakin, and Mr Bruce Ford, Head of Conservation, Australian National Gallery.

The speakers gave stimulating and wide-ranging talks accompanied by slides and overhead projections of diagrams and maps that covered much more than Nursery Swamp II. They also dealt with other Aboriginal rock art in the ACT, and in other parts of Australia, outlining the significance of the art and the range of conservation problems involved.

They expanded on the complexities of the Nursery Swamp II research, undertaken, as reported in the recent *Bulletin* article, by consultants and assistants from at

least eight organisations. The object of research was not only to find the answer to the lichen problem, but to use the opportunity to develop research techniques and instruments that could be used on rock art elsewhere. There was a significant pioneering element in the work.

Kelvin Officer, who spoke first, gave a detailed description of the Nursery Swamp II site and its art, and outlined the complexity of the problems – finding the precise cause of the simple effect of lichen growing on rock was not as simple as it might seem. Wind, light, moisture, temperature, the presence of insects, and the changing patterns and proportions of these with the seasons, all had to be taken into account – even differences between microclimates within the shelter

This was pioneering research and some of the equipment was specially designed and improvised – accurate but simple instruments that needed to be able to operate for long periods in bush locations far from external power sources.

Bruce Ford showed a comprehensive selection of slides of rock art from areas as widely separated as the Grampians in Victoria, Cape York in Queensland, Kakadu in the Northern Territory and the Kimberley in Western Australia, and detailed the variety of styles and materials used, the special features of different locations and the problems of preservation, and the practicalities of what can be done to conserve such a significant national cultural heritage.

Conservation measures vary widely according to the natural or human threats the particular art surfaces. These range from chemical and physical measures to administrative controls and restraining influences such as fences and boardwalks. Secrecy is also a protection: for example, the exact location of Nursery Swamp II is not publicised.

The time and effort spent on the Nursery Swamp project has gone well beyond what the consultants

were contracted to undertake. All possible factors influencing lichen growth were investigated – geological, biological, meteorological and other – and then, well into the second year of research, a narrow strip of clear rock at the floor level gave the clue.

Perhaps lichen did not grow there because it was subject to more abrasion from wind-blown sand than other areas. Or perhaps, because of the rock overhang, this bottom strip received the most direct sunlight than the rest of the surfaces. Tests showed it was the light.

So the cure may be simple: increase the light and the lichen will disappear. But it's not conclusive yet. More work is still being done.

And the next problem is finding an effective way of getting the right kind of light, at the right intensity, and directing it into the right areas. So what will work? An arrangement of reflectors to redirect sunlight? A system of ultra violet lights – and if so how will they be powered in a way that they can be left untended for long periods in the bush? More research is needed and more technical problems need to be overcome.

But the discovery of the critical part played by the hours of direct sunlight per day on the growth of lichen is a breakthrough that has significance for many Aboriginal rock art sites around Australia – as do the research methods and instruments developed for the Nursery Swamp II project.

Graeme Wicks

Vale

It is with regret that the association marks the passing of three members. Mary MacDonald died on 14 March 1999, on her 82nd birthday, Professor Peter Self on 29 March 1999 and Professor Erwin Koch-Emery on 13 May 1999. The sympathy of members is extended to the families.

Another walk in the wilderness

Driving from Canberra through Jindabyne, we followed Barry Way along the Snowy and then into Victoria, through Suggan Buggan, and then turned west to reach our campsite in the Alpine National Park beside Bulley Creek, a tributary of the Upper Murray. Max Lawrence and Mick Kelly had met the keen interest in their planned walk from Bulley Creek to Dead Horse Gap by each leading a group of nine walkers and departing a day apart on Sunday and Monday 21 and 22 March. Peter Duggan from Caloola drove the first group and Gary Schneider, the second. Overall, the Monday group probably had the better of the weather with their drenching coming at the end of the trip rather than at the beginning, with clear days for the ascents of both Cobberas and the Pilot, and a walk out through a snow-covered wilderness. Apart from the last day when a cold front reached the area, we enjoyed mild conditions.

Setting off from Bulley Creek with day packs, we headed up into the peaks grouped near Mount Cobberas Number 1, Moscow Peak



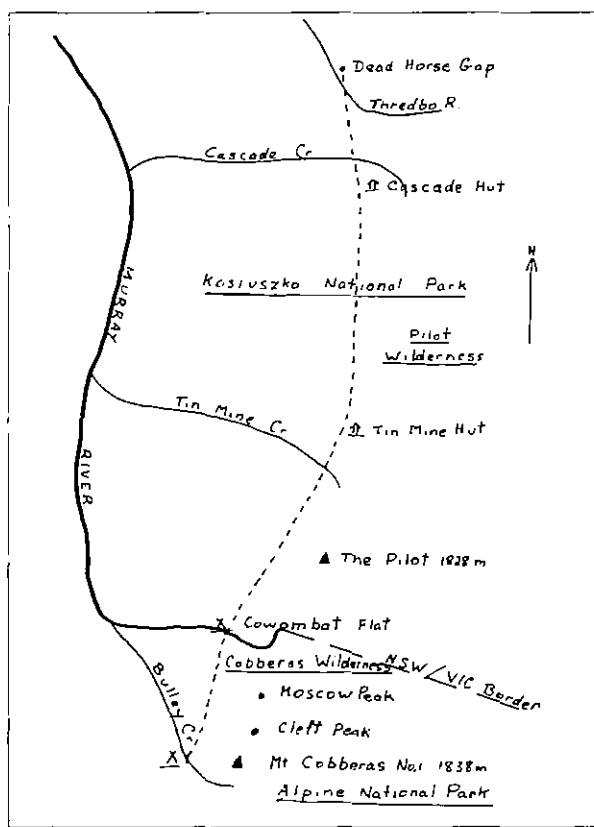
The Sunday group, L to R: David Large, Annette and Mike Smith, Helen Stevens, Brian Slee, Annie Tedder, Wayne Veide, Peter Tedder. Front (and photographer) Max Lawrence.

first, from which we had views to the north of Cobberas No.2 and the Pilot, and beyond them, the outline of Ramshead and the Main Range. In other directions, row upon row of ridges, blue-tinged in their pristine beauty. Cleft Peak is comprised of a forbidding jumble of

rhyolite outcrops, orange-brown, and except in sheltered gullies nearly bare of vegetation. We then walked across snow gum slopes to the peak of Cobberas No.1. The trig marker and the log book are perched on a rocky outcrop and, having scrambled up this, we were pleased to read that Max's group had made this on the previous day. Our return to Bulley Creek was an experiment in GPS navigation only modestly compromised by an element of bushcraft and so provided rather more exercise than conventional observance of contours might have done.

The next day found us on the Cowombat Firetrail walking on a well graded path below Mount Cobberas No.2 and reaching Cowombat Flats in time to explore the area. Nearby are the remains of the RAAF Dakota crash-landed on the flats in the early 50s; only three pieces of wreckage have survived souvenir hunting. At Cowombat Flats the Pilot Creek joins the Murray River and near the junction is a fine grassy and tussocked camp site, very obviously much favoured by brumbies and unfortunately being threatened by Scotch thistle. One can easily straddle the Murray at this point and it is near here that the state border becomes a straight line on the map. The more enterprising members walked to the first survey mark of this part of the border close to the source of the Murray.

The fourth day was the longest of the trip following the Cowombat and Snow Gums Firetrails to Tin Mines with a side trip to climb The Pilot. Those who took this opportunity were rewarded with tremendous all-round views of the surrounding alpine country from the summit. The writer unwisely chose to defer the ascent until the following day, as a day walk from Tin Mines, and





The Monday group, L to R: Ed Raithel, Tim Walsh, Dan Dawes, Graham Scully, Mick Kelly, Richard Miller, Syd Comfort, Gerry Jacobson, Gary Schneider. Absent, Klaus Hueneke. Photo Gary Schneider

Club, an event which Graham Scully describes elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

A light fall of snow overnight and the morning set the scene for a wonderful morning's walk up to Bob's Ridge, where Gary met us and we then went on to Dead Horse Gap where he had parked his van.

This was a marvellous walk through largely unspoiled alpine country, with a variety of walking conditions, fine views, good camping sites and lots of heritage interest. The walk had been planned allowing sufficient time to enjoy all these things. Our thanks to leaders Max and Mick and to drivers Peter and Gary.

Syd Comfort

was beaten by the mist, well short of the top.

At Tin Mines the groups overlapped and spent a night together. Here there is a vast, grassy camp site, a fine flowing creek and a large, well maintained hut. For a few short years in the depression of the 30s this was the living area of the miners who worked the mines on the Tin Mines Creek about a kilometre distant. Ore was dug from an open cut, bagged and taken out by packhorse through Dead Horse Gap. After the main operation closed, some miners stayed on, the most notable being Charlie Carter who died here in 1952. There was some catch-up time here in which to visit Tin Mines Falls, walk to the mine area, try the fishing in the creek or enjoy the hut fire. On one evening the acoustics of the hut were fully tested by a lusty if not always melodious choir, fully equipped with song sheets and uninhibited by the risk of neighbourly ire.

On the following day we enjoyed some fine walking through a variety of vegetation; near rain forest conditions in places but mainly through forest, some mountain ash but more often mountain gum. On nearing our destination, Cascades Hut, we were a little puzzled by sighting a vehicle parked beside the hut. After all, we were in wilderness! In the event, the vehicle signalled a great time which we shared with the 14 visitors from the Illawarra Alpine



Max Lawrence straddles the Murray near Cowombat Flats.



*Mick Kelly and Graham Scully on the track to Bobs Ridge.
Photo Syd Comfort.*

PARKWATCH

Burrin Burrin

Very soon there will be the opportunity for the public launch of Bush Heritage's newest and tenth reserve. This property, named Burrin Burrin, is near Braidwood, just out of Canberra. It has been acquired by Bush Heritage at little expense as a result of an agreement between the executor of a deceased estate and the beneficiary of Burrin Burrin in the estate, the Australian Conservation Foundation. Executive Director of the ACF, Don Henry, says Burrin Burrin has been transferred to Bush Heritage because 'Bush Heritage has the skills and wherewithal to manage the natural values of this property in perpetuity. As much as ACF would have liked to retain Burrin Burrin a more practical solution from the point of view of the ACF and the estate was to offer the property to Bush Heritage'. All parties are delighted with the result.

Bush Heritage News, Autumn, 1999.

Our altered rivers

European settlement may have had more impact on the Australian landscape than previously realised, according to two researchers from the CSIRO and the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology.

Drs Jon Ollie and Peter Wallbrink said new research showed that metres of sand and mud on river floodplains in eastern Australia was deposited over just 30 or 40 years – not over hundreds of thousands of years as had been believed – which meant settlement must have unleashed erosion, sediment deposition and other changes "orders of magnitude greater" than previously assumed. In some cases the rates are staggering.

For example, radioactive traces from United States nuclear weapons tests in the late 1950s were used to date what appeared to be at least 200 years of sediments on the floodplain of New South Wales' Murrumbidgee River – whose catchment is dominated by forestry and dairying.

What looked like centuries of sediment turned out to have all happened since 1960, and nearly a third was dumped by a single massive flood in 1971.

A technique called optically stimulated luminescence used in dating river sediments, suggested a sudden violent change triggered by over-clearing and heavy grazing in river catchments – from stable, slow-flowing and mostly clear rivers to a new pattern of high-energy, 'sandblasting' flows.

The slow rivers dominated by organic material changed to rivers dominated by rushes of abrasive inorganic sediment, with huge consequences for native fish, animals, water plants and insects. 'Regrettably, I don't think the original system is restorable. We can't put back the clock and have it the way it once was.' Dr Olley said. The researchers said it was likely that a new 'landscape' had now formed, and the rate of change was not as acute as it had been shortly after clearing. But Australia's modern river systems were now far more energetic and prone to violent flooding than they had been prior to European settlement.

In the original rivers, the rainfall was held back by vegetation and swampy areas. Today it rushes downstream in defined channels far more quickly and in larger volumes. The Murrumbidgee sediments are now being tested to find out whether it had been clearing for agriculture in the top catchment, or forestry operations in the lower catchment, which was mainly responsible for that river's sediment build up.

Xanathopus, April, 1999.

Monga State Forest

The name 'Monga' is familiar to many Canberrans who care about forests. For 5 years environmentalists in Canberra have been working hard for the inclusion of this stunning wilderness forest into the Deua and Budawang National Parks. Monga's shady rainforest gullies, ancient

Pinkwoods and cathedral oldgrowth forest make this area an essential addition to these National Parks. And located just 1 1/2 hours drive from Canberra, the protection of Monga would be a valuable recreation and educational asset to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations of Canberrans.

Monga has it all!

- Monga is a relic of Gondwana, the southern super-continent that connected Australia with Antarctica, Africa, India and South America. The rainforests of Monga paint a picture of life in Australia when dinosaurs ruled the roost!
- In Monga's cool temperate rainforest Pinkwood trees grow. Pinkwoods can grow as old as 3000 years, meaning that some of Monga's trees were "old folks" when Jesus was a lad!
- Monga's giant eucalypts are as high as a 17 storey building, and have a girth of up to 10 metres!
- Monga, and its unprotected neighbour Buckenbowra, provide a home for at least 17 threatened species.

Monga like many of our forests, has been designated State Forest. Its future involves roading, logging, burning, woodchipping and export. This is not much of a future for a forest that has witnessed first hand continental drift, the rise and fall of the dinosaurs, the evolution of mammals and the lives of generations of Australia's indigenous people. Monga is under logging moratorium until the Southern Region Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) is completed later this year. The unique and diverse ecosystem that gives this area its high conservation values, may or not be protected under the RFA.

Bimberi, Summer, 1999.

NSW NPA Press Releases

Grose Valley Canyon Country Protected

"The National Parks Association congratulates the Carr Government for their support for the preservation

Activities of the Environment Sub-committee

The National Parks Association is first and foremost a non-government conservation organisation dedicated to promoting the conservation of our natural areas and related cultural environment. Our bushwalking activities are conducted to aid this primary objective.

The association's conservation activities take several main forms: working parties arranged through the outings program, the work of the Environment Sub-committee, participation in the activities of the Conservation Council of Canberra and the South-East Region, and membership of the Nature Conservation and Namadgi Sub-committee of the ACT Minister's Environment Advisory Committee.

Working parties are held mainly in the Budawangs, where track maintenance is carried out, and in Namadgi, where we are currently involved in the Boboyan Pine Plantation rehabilitation scheme.

The Environment Sub-committee is the core of the NPA's being. At its regular meetings (on the second Thursday of each month) convenor Neville Esau and his team of

experienced conservation campaigners, and newer members with enthusiasm and knowledge of the latest trends in conservation, consider and act on environmental matters affecting the ACT and beyond. The sub-committee assists in determining the work program of the association's project officer, Ray Polglaze.

In the last few months the following topics have been addressed by way of submissions to governments (Commonwealth, State and ACT) and comments on draft proposals: native title claims in the ACT, draft management plans for Moreton and Budawangs National Parks, conservation plans for ACT rural leases, the Lower Molongolo plan of management, environmental flow guidelines for ACT rivers and streams, the National Competition Policy as it affects nature conservation, ski resort development in Kosciuszko National Park, ACT endangered species action plans, the Snowy River Inquiry, the Namadgi camp ground strategy, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan and the

use of mountain bikes in Canberra Nature Park.

This sample of matters dealt with shows the depth and breadth of our interest.

Members old and new are invited to participate in the sub-committee's activities. Members can either contribute in a general way to the discussion of issues or, more rewardingly, participate in the drafting of submissions and comments on draft plans of management, or join the ad hoc working groups set up to consider specific and often urgent environmental issues.

The Commonwealth Government has severely reduced its funding to national conservation organisations. The ACT Government is considering doing likewise to local groups. One way to defeat these attempts to reduce the influence and effectiveness of organisations such as the NPA is to participate in the Environmental Sub-committee's activities. Now, as never before, we must renew our efforts. Please join us!

Timothy Walsh

PARKWATCH *continued from previous page*

of the scenic and natural values of the upper Grose Valley", commented Tom Fink, President of the National Parks Association. "The NSW Government has returned about 900ha of land near Bell to the Blue Mountains National Park, thereby righting a mistake made more than thirty years ago".

The area in question comprises the Canyon Colliery mining lease, bounded by the Great Western Railway, Bells Line of Road and the rest of the park. The mine has ceased production although the lease extends for another six years.

"This decision saves this bushfire prone canyon area and its delicate low-nutrient soil plant communities from development proposals which would have restricted public access and altered the ecology to the detriment of the local flora and fauna and their habitat".

"The land is an important part of the headwaters of the Grose River and its wilderness - important to the health of the river and subsequently to the Hawkesbury-Nepean system".

A small area of about 50 hectares comprising the mine site itself has already had some restoration work undertaken and the lease has until 2005 to run for the work to be completed by the mine owners. During the life of the mine, bushwalkers and canyoners have had access to the rest of the area.

"Especially, the Association thanks the local member for Blue Mountains, Bob Debus and the Minister for the Environment, Pam Allan who have had to contend with a vigorous campaign by the proponents of a private fenced animal display and breeding development on the land".

"NPA is still willing to help the promoters of the captive breeding establishment to identify a more suitable site, outside the national park".

10 March 1999

Parks worth funding

Preliminary work by Sally Drimyl of Kinhill Economics has estimated that Qld NPs return some 1.2 billion of the State's economy annually and that this is forty times the expenditure. Preliminary work has also shown that at least 6,000 jobs are generated by our NPs. Tourism studies have shown that NPs are the premium drawcard for visitors and that Queensland (because of our range of biodiversity attractions, our rainforests and our reef) is one of the most favoured destinations.

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Book reviews

New guides to native grasslands

Among the various advances in environmental protection over the last 30 years, one of the most significant has been a greater appreciation of our native grasslands and grassy woodlands.

After a slow start, the ACT has been at the forefront of this development.

In the NPA's first book, published in 1971, *Mountains, Slopes and Plains*, lowland grasslands in the ACT rated only a small paragraph in the 75 pages. Six years later, Professor George Seddon in his report for the National Capital Development Commission, *An Open Space System for Canberra*, included a couple of small but significant comments that it was important to reserve viable samples of all the ACT's natural environments and that wetlands and native grasslands were not adequately represented.

Over the next 15 years a number of reports commented on the importance of grasslands and their lack of protection in the ACT. 1991 was something of a turning point with a workshop in February organised by the Conservation Council focusing on the issue and a month later the publication of Dr Kevin Frawley's book for the NPA, *The Conservation of Remnant Woodland and Native Grassland in the ACT*.

In subsequent years there has been a burst of activity in the community and by the Government. Two grasslands reserves have been established as part of Canberra Nature Park at Gungahlin and Dunlop Hills along with the grasslands and grassy woodlands reserve of Mulligans Flat. A comprehensive inventory of the territory's native grasslands sites has been developed and the proposed Gungahlin town site was moved to protect the grasslands habitat of the legless lizard. Native grasses have gained acceptance as attractive garden plants and are increasingly being used for roadside verges and roundabouts.

A perverse mark of the extent of this progress was an isolated sign of a backlash when *The Canberra Times* columnist, Robert Macklin, decried the use of native grasses on roundabouts and complained that they "bear no relation to Canberra plants and look awful." Macklin's remark reminded me of a similarly ill-informed Victorian Conservation Minister some years ago who responded to a question about grasslands conservation with: "The last thing we need is more grass."

Forest and bushlands ... their ecological value had been recognised for decades; wetlands ... they are breeding sites for mosquitoes but also for many species of birds which most people can appreciate, so they are worth preserving. But grasslands! ... Surely they are in growing abundance with land clearing continuing to create many thousands more hectares each year.

The chief problem in trying to overcome this probably still prevalent view is that to the average eyes most grasses – introduced and native – look much the same. This is partly because there *are* marked similarities in the appearance of a number of species, but also because after more than a century of pasture improvement, cultivation, livestock grazing and the spread of seeds by wind, water, humans and animals, many grasslands have a barely distinguishable mix of introduced and native species.

In their superb new field guide to the grassland flora of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the ACT, authors David Eddy, Dave Mallinson, Rainer Rehwinkel and Sarah Sharp advance two other key reasons for the lack of recognition of grassy ecosystems: their economic value for urban and rural use and the subtlety of herbaceous plants.

"For much of the year many of the plants are not noticeable. However, in early spring and early summer, in places where the plants are allowed to flower, they provide a very colourful and attractive display ... The least disturbed areas contain such a high number of wildflowers that they rival the famous alpine floral displays."

Sadly, as the authors comment: "Grassy ecosystems are now highly fragmented and modified and are considered to be amongst the most threatened ecosystems in Australia." The last published *ACT State of the Environment Report* in 1995 estimated that when all the small remnants of grasslands are added together, the territory has only about 1000 hectares of grassland still of significant conservation value, which is around 5 per cent of the grasslands area before European settlement.

In another excellent new field guide published by the Victorian National Parks Association, *Plains Wandering – Exploring the Grassy Plains of South-Eastern Australia*, authors Ian Lunt, Tim Barlow and James Ross estimate that in all regions of south-eastern Australia where temperate lowland grasslands and grassy woodlands occurred, less than 1 per cent remains covered in native vegetation. In Victoria, eight of the 26 mammals (excluding bats) that depended on grassy ecosystems are no longer there and 31 per cent of the state's endangered species are plains species, as were three of the five Victorian plant species that are now extinct.

The publication of these two easy-to-use, beautifully presented guides within the last 12 months reflects – and should foster – the growing consciousness about grasslands conservation. The idea of producing a field guide for the ACT region was one of the recommendations of the 1991 Conservation Council workshop and of Kevin Frawley's book. The 156-page guide with its comprehensive descriptions, clear colour photographs and helpful cross references to species of similar appearance has been worth the wait.

Grassland Flora: a field guide for the Southern Tablelands (NSW and ACT) by David Eddy, Dave Mallinson, Rainer Rehwinkel and Sarah Sharp. Available from Wildlife Research and Monitoring, Environment ACT, enquiries phone 02 6207 2126. RRP \$15.

Stephen Johnston

Monaro history

Earliest Monaro and Burratorang 1790-1840, Alan E J Andrews, Tabletop Press, Canberra, 1998. RRP \$ 39.95 (Hardback)

Alan Andrews will be known to many through his series of books on the qualities, history and exploration of the high country including the companion to this book titled *Kosciusko - The Mountain in History* (1991).

The current volume traces the story of European exploration and subsequent recording of settlement of the Burratorang area by Wilson, Bass, Barrallier and Caley and the Monaro/Snowy Mountains by Lhotsky, Jauncey, Lambie and Ryrie.

This is a complex book, written by an engineer with all the detail of routes, distances, dates and the meticulous recordings of individual journeys one would expect. Quotes from journals, personal diaries, letters and government reports abound. However, Andrews does much more than just describe particular journeys. For instance in the case of Barrallier he also describes in detail the arguments that have taken place, up to the present, about the exact routes taken. He records his own conclusions based on his trips in the area over many years. Indeed the author's intimate knowledge of the areas he is writing about is profound and, to the average bushwalker, humbling!

Andrews explains the pressures on the young colony of Sydney which forced freemen and their convict companions to test relentlessly and then overtake the limits of settlement set by the government. This was done in order to find new farming and grazing lands. Canberra readers will be interested to note that by the summer of 1824-25 stockmen were moving their cattle into the Limestone Plains. The roles of Joshua John Moore, Robert Campbell, James Ainslie, George Thomas Palmer of Ginninderra and John Palmer of Jerrabomberra are explained.

References to the Aboriginal inhabitants of the regions under consideration are scant, no doubt mirroring the explorers' own views of the Aborigines as being, at best, a source of local names and directions, and at worst, a hindrance to safe passage and settlement.

This is not a book that many will want to read from cover to cover in the one sitting. It is a book to be used as a reference volume to check routes, confirm names and dates and to follow up lines of inquiry that have arisen in other readings, such as Hancock's classic and sadly out of print *Discovering Monaro - A Study of Man's Impact on his Environment* (1972).

Anyone with forebears in the region will find the references to the holders of particular parcels of land especially fascinating. It is illustrated with a good selection of photographs of the areas under discussion and contains a comprehensive list of notes and references, a detailed bibliography and a full index. Extracts from a range of poets pepper the book. Well known are Charles Harpur, "John O'Brien", "Banjo" Paterson and Douglas Stewart; less well known but no less worthy are "Cockatoo Jack" and F. Lancelott, amongst others.

Exhaustive use has been made of the official and semi-official accounts and statistical returns of Lhotsky, John Lambie and Stewart Ryrie. The book is rich in maps, plans, charts ancient and modern, as well as extracts from journals and official reports. Indeed one can sometimes get lost in the sheer mass of detailed information given and the overlapping nature of some of the narration. However, many people's fascination with the story being told, of areas so dear to the hearts of NPA members, will ensure that they take pleasure in using this book.

This is another fine publication from the Klaus Hueneke stable of high quality books.

Timothy Walsh



Daphne Curtis at the launch of Memories Before Namadgi.
Photo Syd Comfort

When Namadgi was home
Memories Before Namadgi. By Daphne Curtis, self published, 1999. 252 pages. RRP \$30.

A quick thumb through this soft covered, A4 format book reveals a host of information from a variety of sources. A more leisurely examination is no less rewarding. *Memories Before Namadgi* is an assemblage of recollections, observations, facts and photos which combine to describe a way of life which was observed only two and a half decades ago in the heart of what is now Namadgi National Park.

Both the author and her husband come from families long associated with the mountains of the ACT. The aim of the book is to contrast this history with the end of the rural era in Namadgi, which occurred during the author's residency at 'Mount Clear'. The book centres on the people, events and history of the Grassy and Naas Creeks, Bobeyan and Mount Clear areas of Namadgi. Drawing on personal accounts, extracts of diary entries and financial records (many of which are photo copied in the book) the author presents information in a series of

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South West Wilderness

*And once again I go
Drawn to your wild sea shore
Why do I love you so?
Down in my heart's deep core*

*More often than not it rains
Grey showers blow in from the sea
Blurring the headlands and isles
But still you reach out to me*

*Honed by savage storm and gale
The ages put their test
Until, at last, when scoured clean
The elements take rest.*

*A quiet sea now swirls
Searching the sheltered cove.
It sighs—and dark help heaves,
Though spent the force that drove.*

*The summer twilight lingers
Then night will cast its spell
And Southern Lights pulse signals
Whose secrets I'll not tell*

*Day dawns like a jewel
Sun glints on crags so bright.
The azure sea a scalloped frill
Drapes on your beaches white*

*In the gullies deep and green
The tawny creeks flow full
And fragile blooms of Leatherwood
Drift in the drowsy lull.*

*While on the wide expanse of plains
Beneath a vault of blue
The "Button" stems nod sagely –
They know a thing or two...*

*A lazy fly drones in the peace
And gentle breeze plays on my cheek
Yesterday so wild and fierce
Today so soft and meek*

*But then the wind will swing
Dark clouds build up again
The light will fail and air turn chill
The vanguard to the rain*

*The seasons here are wild and free
Unfettered and untamed
Power moulds your beauty
And my heart has claimed.*

Judith Webster

Book reviews continued from page 17

unconnected chapters. The reader is then free either to use the book as a reference source (although no index is provided) or to read it in full. Either way, the reader will gain an appreciation of the living conditions on the Curtis's sheep station some 25 to 40 years ago. Daily routines, weather, housing conditions, stock prices and schooling arrangements are just some of the things which are described. This level of fine detail will also allow bush walkers to develop a deeper understanding of those who used to call the Mount Clear/Horse Gully Hut area home.

However, the book goes beyond personal recollections and family anecdotes to describe the locations of long forgotten hut sites (unfortunately, the information is sometimes just short of that necessary for accurate location), the original alignment of the Bobeyan Road, the names of various paddocks and the construction dates of many of the fences and yards still visible today. Also covered is an abbreviated genealogy of many of the families associated with the pioneering days of Namadgi.

Throughout the book, line drawings and photographs (both black and white and colour) amply illustrate people, huts and hut sites, rural implements and events.

The colloquial writing style tends to frustrate a quick skim of this book. However, the best way to glean the detail is to read its independent chapters slowly. *Memories Before Namadgi* will prove to be compelling reading for those interested in a better understanding of the region and a source of information for the historian.

The author has rather conservative views about the process and results of the resumption of 'Mount Clear'. Nevertheless, she states that she is keen to convey a sense of the past to today's users of the area. This book goes a long way towards fulfilling that wish.

The availability of the book is limited. At the time of writing copies were available from the Namadgi Visitors' Centre and by contacting the author at PO Box 17, Binalong, NSW 2584.

Martin Chalk

PARKWATCH continued from page 15

Yet tourism and recreation themselves pose threats to our NPs, not currently equipped to meet tourism and recreation requirements, nor, more importantly, sufficiently staffed and resourced to manage visitor impacts. The degradation of World Heritage Fraser Island is a prime example of the result of unmanaged visitation. A large injection of funding for management is an absolute imperative.

NPA of Queensland News, February 1999.

What do Australians feel about wilderness?

In 1996 the Australian Heritage Commission commissioned market research into people's attitudes and understanding of issues relating to wilderness and wild rivers.

The study found that most people

strongly value wilderness areas and are concerned about their conservation. The Wilderness Society can feel justifiably proud of its significant part in encouraging this strong recognition and concern among the Australian public. There was strong and widespread agreement with statements such as 'wilderness areas should be conserved for their own sake, not because people want to use them' and 'we have a duty to future generations to conserve wilderness areas'. Only 12% of respondents thought that "economic development is more important than conserving wilderness areas". A majority of respondents considered that indigenous people should be consulted on wilderness issues.

Wilderness News, March, 1999.

Compiled by Len Haskew

Calendar

	June	July	August	September
Committee Meeting	Thur 3	Thur 1	Thur 5	Thur 2
Environment Sub-committee ¹	Thur 10	Thur 8	Thur 12	Thur 9
General Meetings	Thur 17	Thur 15	Thur 19 ²	Thur 16
Gudgenby work parties ³	Sun 20	Sat 17	Sat 14	Sat 11
Bulletin Working Group ⁴	Tue 22			

Further Details

- 1 - Neville Esau 6286 4176
2 - Annual General Meeting

- 3 - Meet Boboyan Pines carpark
10am, Eleanor Stodart
6281 5004
4 - Syd Comfort 6286 2578

General meetings

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

Thursday 17 June. Visions for a New Millennium. A senior representative of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will talk on the outcomes of the Visions for the New Millennium process and current plans for parks in the south-east of NSW.

Thursday 15 July. Wetlands Management and Issues. Brendan Edgar, Director, Wetlands Unit - Biodiversity Group, Environment Australia will talk to us about the role of government in managing wetlands and also about the RAMSAR Convention.

Thursday 19 August. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Lord Howe Island. John Harris, Ecologist and Environmental Educator at the University of Canberra, will talk to us about his recent trip to Lord Howe Island with NPA members. For further details see page 3.

Thursday 16 September. Southern Forests. Andrew Wong, Forest Ecologist and Campaigner with The Wilderness Society will speak on tall forests from Nowra to Narooma and the Southern Region Regional Forest Agreement.



New members

Cathie Boyd, Narrabundah

Ms L Wishart Lindsay &
Dr R Lindsay, Hughes

Barney Barnett, Curtin

G & P Crossley, Farrer

Christopher Paterson, Hackett

Gabriela Taloni, Weston

Siobhan Carrigan, Aranda

Mim Jambrecina, Downer

Ciska Anderson, Evatt

Roderick Bain, Watson

Anne and Greg Marks, Curtin

Olivia Dickerson, Curtin

Kerrie Tucker, Canberra City

Madeleine Huckstepp, Hall

The Cooke Family, Waramanga

Kathryn and Ian Fry, Curtin

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc. (FNAC) was inaugurated in 1981 with the objective "to foster an interest in, an awareness and an understanding of nature". It operates independently of other field naturalist groups throughout Australia.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month with a specialist speaker, after which coffee and biscuits are provided. A wide range of topics is covered such as astronomy, geology, land care, volcanoes and weather, as well as flora and fauna, and the talks are usually illustrated with slides. A monthly newsletter is issued, recently renamed *Field Natter*. Outings/walks are leisurely, with time to inspect (and often be instructed on) features of interest en route. Outings are also occasionally arranged for long weekends with transport in a hired minibus.

FNAC counts both amateur and professional naturalists amongst its membership and successfully informs and educates in a friendly social atmosphere.

The Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc.

GPO Box 249
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6258 4724

Phyl Goddard

Anniversary edition of the NPA Bulletin

The year 2000 is the 40th anniversary of the inauguration of the National Parks Association of the ACT and to mark the occasion a special commemorative edition of the *Bulletin* is planned for March 2000. Fiona MacDonald Brand has offered to convene a group to organise the contents of this publication and would welcome ideas and assistance from members. Fiona can be contacted on 6247 9538.

National Parks Association (ACT)

New members welcome



NPA exhibition at ACT Alive on Monday 15 March. Photo Reg Alder

NPA Bulletin

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