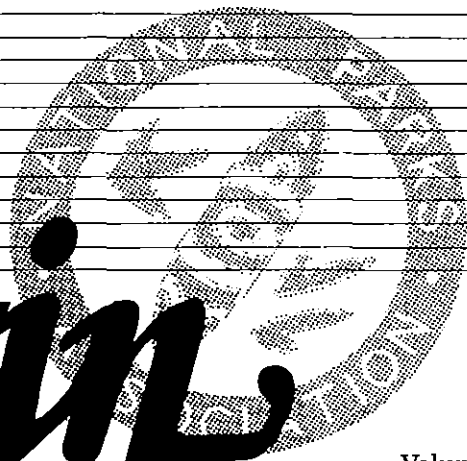


NPA Bulletin



Volume 36 number 3
September 1999

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Annual Report

A management plan for Ginini Flats

Commercial input possible at Gudgenby



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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

<i>President</i>	Vacant
<i>Vice President</i>	Vacant
<i>Immediate Past President</i>	
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<i>Secretary</i>	Max Lawrence 6288 1370 (h)
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Neville Esau	6286 4176 (h)
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Membership

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

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

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Concession \$15	

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 December issue: 1 November 1999.

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

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Cover: Tidbinbilla under snow. Photo Reg Alder.

From the President

Annual report – August 1999

In the past 12 months the National Parks Association of the ACT has maintained a high level of activity in pursuit of its conservation objectives, provided a comprehensive outings and talks program for members, and has been granted a significant amount of funding by the ACT Government for park and conservation advocacy.

The number of *members* of the NPA has remained steady. Membership participation in outings program activities has grown, but growth in member involvement with the environment sub-committee activities has not taken place.

Since the last AGM the *Committee* has not been joined by any more members and the planned absence of Committee members through the year required some job sharing. The Committee fulfilled its administrative role, including the dispersal of information and tasks to the sub-committees and members.

The reprinting of the NPA guide *Birds of the ACT* and a new recruitment pamphlet were organised and completed. Discussions on publishing a guide to Canberra Nature Park and history of Namadgi were held and a decision was taken not to proceed at this time.

Financial support

The NPA has received substantial financial support from Environment ACT: last year as a service contract for \$15 262 to provide advocacy for conservation and management of parks, assistance with *NPA Bulletin* production and promotion of Namadgi National Park; this year as a grant of \$26 250 for projects on Conservation Management of ACT parks and other public land.

Promotional activities

Promotional activities organised by the Committee included three staffed displays at ACT Alive, Tidbinbilla Easter Extravaganza

and World Environment Day. An NPA display is presently in the ACT Public Library system.

The quarterly *NPA Bulletin* continues to maintain a high standard, thanks to all those enthusiastic contributors and the refining and editing by the *Bulletin* working group led by Syd Comfort.

General meetings

The nine general meetings held at Forestry House, the best meeting venue in Canberra, were addressed by guest speakers organised by Len Haskew. Meetings were attended by 20 to 50 members. Speaker highlights were, Syd Comfort on walking in southern Chile and Argentina, Jeff Underwood on the brush-tailed rock wallaby recovery program, Kelvin Officer and Bruce Ford on Aboriginal rock art in the ACT and further afield, Alistair Henchman on NSW parks in the future, and Brendan Edgar on the Ramsar Convention and wetlands in Australia.

Outings

The Outings Sub-committee gave the NPA an astonishing variety of activities in which to participate. Cruising on the Hawkesbury, canoeing, cultural history, a Saturday night walk, short walks in cool forests and really good pack walks. Our thanks go to the outings leaders and convener Max Lawrence.

This year *hands-on conservation activity* involved four well-attended work parties for briar removal in the Hospital Creek regeneration area and pine wilding removal to the south and west of Boboyan pine plantation. Many members participated in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group which held eight work parties and seed potting sessions.

Environment Sub-committee

The Environment and Namadgi Sub-committees became one with

Neville Esau becoming convener in November. The regular monthly meetings were augmented with working group meetings and a meeting with Parks and Conservation staff from Namadgi National Park which kept us informed of park activities and gave sub-committee members the opportunity to ask questions about a range of issues.

The Environment Sub-committee was involved in the following activities:

- NPA representation along with the Conservation Council before the ACT Assembly Standing Committee on Urban Services and the Environment hearing on draft variations to the Territory Plan No. 89 (Murrumbidgee and Molonglo river corridors);
- a submission on the impact of national competition policy on the Nature Conservation Act (ACT);
- a submission on the Ginini Flats Wetlands draft management plan;
- a submission on the out-of-date details in the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management.

The NPA's Research Officer, Ray Polglaze, completed the following projects assisted by members of the Environment Sub-committee:

- a response to the Purdon Report on Land Management Agreements for ACT rural leases.
- an NPA working paper on the features needed to make Land Management Agreements effective.
- a submission on the Draft Environmental Flow Guidelines for ACT rivers.
- a submission on the Draft Water Resources Management Plan for the ACT.

The Sub-committee's ACT activities were supplemented with attendance of public hearings of the inquiry into

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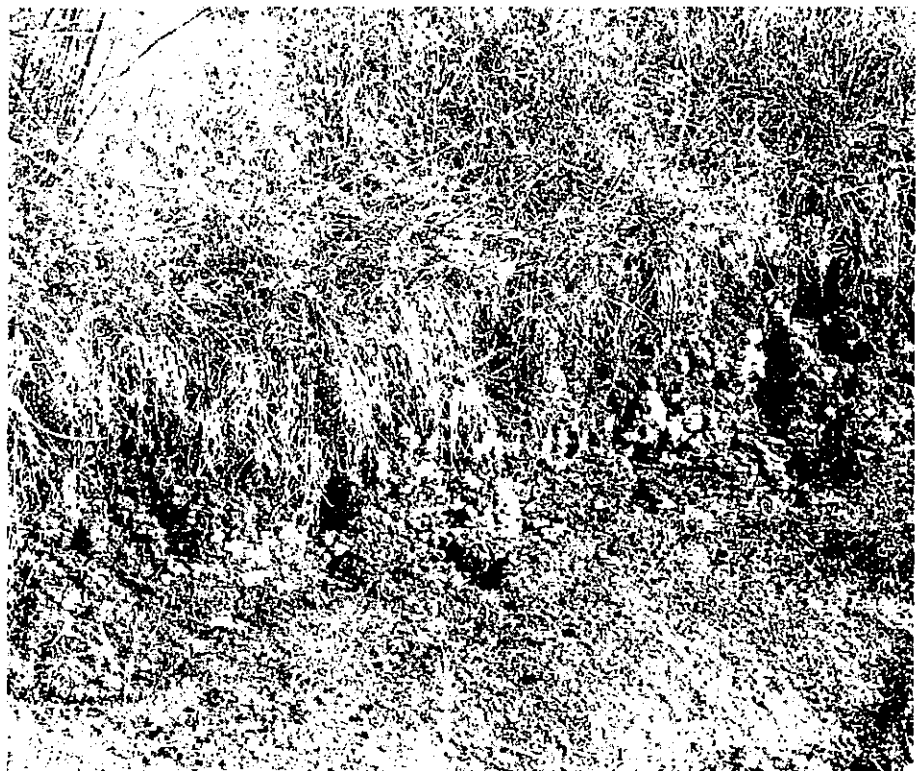
A management plan for Ginini Flats

The Ginini Flats subalpine bog complex has a greater expanse of sphagnum moss than any one of the numerous bogs within Kosciuszko National Park. It is home to the northern corroboree frog, an endangered species, and is an important stopover for the migratory Japanese snipe.

In December 1995 it was nominated as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention, an international agreement for the protection of habitat for migratory waterfowl and other avian life. The Ramsar site includes four adjacent but separate bogs: West Ginini Flats and Ginini Flats draining to the north into Ginini Creek, and Cheyenne Flats and Morass Flats draining to the south into Stockyard Creek, and surrounding woodland and tussock grassland which the corroboree frogs use when not breeding. West Ginini Flats has a large trench through it, dug in 1938 to study the peat profile, and two areas which were mined for peat and are now visible only as lower areas, as natural rehabilitation has been effective. The main dangers to the area are pigs, bushfires and overuse and pollution by people and their vehicles.

Even though Ginini Flats falls within Namadgi National Park, its nomination as a Ramsar site has meant that a specific management plan is required.

Environment ACT obtained funds through the 1998-99 Natural Heritage Trust Grants to engage a consultant to prepare the plan. Atech Pty Ltd, the successful applicant in a field of four, had limited time in which to prepare the plan and consult with community groups. Their presentation at the Namadgi Visitor Centre on May 7 was attended by representatives of Environment ACT, Environment Australia, NPA (Clive Hurlstone, Neville Esau, Tim Walsh, Reg Alder, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Eleanor Stodart) and Ngunawal elders. The field day on May 11 was attended by Namadgi staff and NPA members Reg Alder, Fiona



Freezing and melting of moisture in peat causes frost heave, loosening particles that are then easily eroded. Photo Reg Alder.

MacDonald Brand and Eleanor Stodart.

The draft plan was released in early June, later than planned, and comments were required by June 18. At NPA's Environment Subcommittee meeting on 13 May expressions of interest were sought to form a working group to prepare our response to the draft management plan. The working group (Clive Hurlstone, Neville Esau, Tim Walsh, Stephen Johnston, and Eleanor Stodart) met on June 8, one week later than initially planned, and the draft response was presented to the Environment Subcommittee meeting on Thursday June 10 with requests for comments by the following Tuesday, and the final submission was delivered to Atech on the 17th.

The draft plan included some expected and some more controversial elements. General opinion both within and outside NPA was that it was at best a preliminary draft. The NPA working group limited its response to the major issues, with just a brief comment on the need for good editing. We could

have commented on the structure of the plan, but that would have taken more time and resources than we had available.

The major issues and our comments were:

- *Recommendation to close Mount Franklin Road and Mount Franklin carpark.* After some discussion weighing the disadvantage to walkers against the increased exposure to fire that goes with easy access, and the clear evidence of four-wheel drive use of the ski run, the group decided that NPA should support the closure if we were really serious about protecting the wetlands most effectively. The present locked gate and carpark are in quite a bad position relative to the Flats; and the Mount Franklin carpark is the nearest location on the road that is in the ACT and outside the catchment for the wetlands.
- *Recommendation to revegetate ski run.* Supported; also that the natural process be reinforced by spreading of seed from local trees and planting of seedlings.



Namadgi Park rangers, Atech Pty Ltd consultants and NPA members inspect Ginini Flats wetlands. Photo Reg Alder.

- *Recommendation for walking track to wetlands.* Opposed, as such a track would increase the number of people walking over the bog. Signs at Mount Franklin should be limited to direction to Mount Ginini and Mount Gingera and announcement of limitations to camping. Signs at the wetlands could inform people of the sensitivity of the area.
- *Recommendation that camping be prohibited in the Ginini catchment.* Supported.
- *Recommendation to remove Stockyard Arboretum.* Again the working group weighed up the advantages of retaining the arboretum for its historical value and the problems of continued vehicular access which would be needed to control wildings (the track goes across Cheyenne Flats) and decided to support the removal. In time, when seedstock from the introduced trees is exhausted and wildings no longer appear, the track should be revegetated.
- *Feral animals.* The draft plan had

a rather odd recommendation for fencing and trapping to remove pigs. Pigs do cause damage, even with the present program of control, but a fence for trapping would cause more damage, and NPA did not support this proposal. Feral horses also will need to be monitored as they occur at Murray's Gap.

Annual report – August 1999 *continued from page 3*

The Perisher Range Master Plan, meeting attendance and a submission on the Draft Alpine Strategy, and a submission on the Draft Plan of Management for Morton and Budawang National Park.

With a substantial grant and planned projects a busy year lies ahead for the Sub-committee.

My thanks go to NPA Office Manager Dianne Hastie and Research Officer Ray Polglaze, to Committee members Past President Eleanor Stodart, Secretary Max Lawrence, Treasurer Mike

- *Recommendation to protect the area from fire (including controlled burns).* Supported.
- *Aviation beacon.* NPA recommended that Parks and Conservation should liaise towards introducing a non-polluting power source. One issue we did not comment on was whether there was need for intervention to improve rehabilitation of the trench (see Reg's photograph of frost heave in bare dirt in the trench). The draft plan concluded that as work to stabilise the trench would cause damage and natural regeneration appears to be working (though very slowly), it would be better to leave it to nature.

The consultants had to place this management plan in the context of the present Management Plan for Namadgi. As that was written in 1986, before self-government, their citations are accurate reflections of the plan, but not of today's legislation. The map reproduced from that plan is also out of date. However, the final draft will now have to be considered by Environment ACT and it will be some time before we see the result.

Eleanor Stodart

Smith, Yvonne Bartos, Len Haskew, David Pfanner, and Timothy Walsh. This year I would like give an extra thank you to Eleanor for taking on the task of managing the reprinting of *Birds of the ACT* and to Len who has been very busy away from the NPA but took on minute taking and other tasks as well as organising the guest speakers.

In conclusion I wish to thank all members for their continuing support of the National Parks Association.

Clive Hurlstone

Gudgenby plans may have commercial input

The NPAACT wrote to the Minister for Urban Services, Brendan Smyth, expressing concern at an item in Environment ACT's New Works Program (\$225 000) estimates for work in the Gudgenby homestead area. It appeared to NPA that this was not in line with the Camp Ground Strategy, the Nature Based Tourism Strategy nor with national park management principles.

This led to an invitation by the Director, Environment ACT, Dr Colin Adrian, to discuss the matter. These discussions took place on June 7 between Clive Hurlstone, Neville Esau and Timothy Walsh of NPA and Colin Adrian and Rob Baxter of Environment ACT. At these discussions it was suggested that a site visit be made. This took place on June 16.

Clive, Neville and Tim represented NPA, and Environment ACT was represented by Colin Adrian, Bill Woodruff (Operations Manager), Rob Baxter and Brian Weir (Tourism and Marketing) and Virginia Logan (Manager, Namadgi National Park).

Rob Baxter explained that Environment ACT wants to:

- maintain the house in good physical condition
- provide public access to the site
- provide a higher-grade camping facility in Namadgi than exists at present.

He explained that the homestead requires attention to prevent

general decay and that the present caretaker is only able to do this on a minimal basis. He explained that to allow the house to decay would mean costly site restoration at a later stage. It was pointed out that willows have infested the river since the Boots (the last owners) moved out and that rabbits were overrunning the area. The house is deteriorating.

Mr Baxter sees the site having a number of possible uses: B&B, hostel, education and/or field study centre, or as a base for nature tours. Some of these may involve a commercial concession. Use would be made of the services already provided to the site (electricity, phone) and could be complemented by a small-scale domestic sewerage system discharging on the other side of the small hill to the north.

The homestead, according to Mr Baxter, could be linked to a camp ground on the river flats. He compared the camp to that provided at Woods Reserve.

Neville expressed the view that any consideration of future uses of the homestead site must take into account the fact that at the moment it is a liability and not an asset and that doing nothing should remain an option.

Colin Adrian said that he would like to see interested parties take part in a study of all possibilities. Virginia and Bill agreed that it would be useful to have prepared a recreational use plan for the Gudgenby Valley, similar to the work done for Orroral, to take into account

the need for such things as increased public access, toilet facilities at Yankee Hat carpark, walking tracks to key areas, and increased camp facilities. This would allow planning for the valley as a whole to be undertaken. Virginia also said the service has started to remove willows and saw the need for greatly increased action against rabbits.

Rob, Virginia, Tim and Neville made a thorough inspection of the homestead grounds and walked up the hill behind. There is a weed problem, in addition to poplars and willows, around the house.

The significance of the area to Aboriginal people was discussed.

Both parties felt the visit was worthwhile. It seems that Environment ACT has done more background work on this matter than appears in the public record but are anxious to proceed with the NPA's support.

NPA representatives remain wary of the general proposal to provide increased visitor facilities at this site, especially given that some commercial input appears inevitable.

However the NPA must remain part of the process at this stage. Environment ACT realise that they cannot proceed without adequate public consultations and an agreed planning process. To this end the Minister has replied to our initial query and indicated that his department welcomes NPA input into the process underway.

Timothy Walsh

Publications to assist heritage conservation

The Australian Heritage Commission has recently released a kit to assist local communities conserve their heritage places. The kit comprises three publications: *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, *Natural Heritage Places Handbook*, and *Protecting Local Heritage Places*.

In December 1996, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment launched the Australian Heritage Charter.

Sponsored by the Heritage Commission, the charter was adopted by the Australian Committee for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) which is now responsible for its administration.

Its purposes are to provide assistance to everyone interested in natural heritage and to achieve a uniform approach to conservation of places of natural significance. The charter relates in its structure and

logic to that of the better known Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter). The natural charter is contained in a slim volume of some 18 pages and sets out standards and principles for the conservation of places of natural heritage significance.

The Natural Heritage Places Handbook follows on from the charter in order to provide supplementary explanation,

More progress at Gudgenby

Text and photos by Eleanor Stodart



Left: Looking towards Franks Hut across the most recently felled and burnt area. Green Corps members seeded here immediately after the burn in the hope that chemicals in the fresh ash will improve germination rates.

Right: Shade cloth is added to the enclosure near Hospital Creek to protect seedlings from early sun on frosty mornings. This protection should help them grow much faster and so speed the establishment of at least one small island of mature trees.



Publications to assist heritage conservation *continued*

examples and advice that would help people apply the charter to particular projects or conservation programs. The book is built around a 10-step process for natural heritage conservation, which moves through from the gathering and studying of evidence in step 1, to monitoring results and reviewing the plan in step 10. Numerous practical examples are provided.

Protecting Local Heritage Places – a guide for communities, is a “how to do it” guide for all those interested in caring for their heritage, and particularly aims to help local communities look after their own heritage.

The book addresses the three types of heritage commonly

recognised – natural heritage, historical cultural heritage and indigenous cultural heritage – and applies the standards of the Natural Heritage Charter, the Burra Charter and the Draft Guidelines for the Protection, Management and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Islander Cultural Heritage Places.

It is thus consistent with the other two books in the kit. The book is attractively laid out, well illustrated, contains detailed case studies and generally presents material in a readily accessible form. It contains extensive listings of heritage organisations and references, and a useful glossary.

The NPA of the ACT does not appear in these listings, an omission that reflects on the authors, but also points up the need for our organisation to develop greater visibility.

Taken together, these three publications provide an accessible and valuable resource and reference well worth space on the bookshelf of all those interested in heritage conservation.

The kit is available free from the Australian Heritage Commission, the contact being Clare Henderson on (02) 6217 2116 or by email clare.henderson@ea.gov.au

Syd Comfort

Implementing visions for a new millenium

Outcomes of the *Visions for a New Millenium* conference held last year are being incorporated into the corporate plans of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. They include integrated landscape management, managing the public reserve system and enhancing the protected area system. Current issues in the south east of the state include consolidating the South East Forest National Park and the Eden forest agreement, the South East Forests plan of management, wilderness assessments, and the involvement of Aboriginal people in park management.

Reviewing the conferences outcomes in a talk to members at the June meeting, the service's Manager, Southern Region, Alistair Henchman, said the Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) process was "probably the most significant park process in Australian history".

The CRA process is the major process in expanding the reserve system to ensure that it is comprehensive, adequate and representative.

While the reserve system is being expanded, the service is also encouraging initiatives to ensure conservation occurs outside the reserve system.

These initiatives involve reform of native vegetation management, water reforms, coastal policy, threatened species initiatives, ecologically sustainable forest management, the NSW biodiversity strategy, voluntary conservation initiatives and public education.

A basic aim of the public reserve system management is to manage for conservation of natural and cultural heritage while allowing for appropriate use. This includes establishing new parks, drawing up plans of management, and working with local communities and other stakeholders.

Mr Henchman said the service was improving work on monitoring visitor impacts in high use and sensitive areas, such as the Budawangs, and improving asset management and risk assessment to ensure liabilities are minimised and

risks for individuals match their expectations.

The CRA for Eden is complete, while that for the Southern Region is still under way.

Expanded area

The South East Forests National Park was one outcome of the Eden CRA. Parks in the Eden area now total 243 00 ha, 33 000 ha being added in December last year. The park includes an important new nature reserve north of Nimmitabel to be known as the Dangelong Nature Reserve.

Mr Henchman said the Eden Forest Agreement was important because it will focus management on specific indicators so that management activities can be related to conservation outcomes. The availability of better data about the parks than ever before provides the basis for more scientific management.

The South East Forests plan of management is currently being drafted. A community consultation process has identified the issues that need to be addressed in the plan. These include access, fire management, pest species management, visitor facilities contributing to local economies, and Aboriginal involvement. The draft plan is expected to be on exhibition later in the year.

Aboriginal land use

"As you would be aware, the first of the national parks listed under Schedule 14 for handback to Aboriginal people occurred with Mootwingee National Park and Historic Site being handed over last October," Mr Henchman said. "In this part of the world, Jervis Bay National Park and Biamanga National Park have been listed on the schedule.

"At this stage, we are having preliminary discussion with local Aboriginal people about the process and their willingness to enter into formal negotiations."

In the meantime, the service was negotiating a number of informal joint management arrangements

with local Aboriginal communities. These have included providing access to Montague Island Nature Reserve to allow for traditional ceremonies, and involvement of the Aboriginal community in the design and construction of boardwalks and visitor facilities in the Mimosa Rocks National Park.

"At Mumbulla Creek Falls we have set up a steering committee of Aboriginal people to oversee the redevelopment of visitor facilities in Biamanga," he said. "This has involved two years of discussion with local Aboriginal people, establishing trust, and the finished product will be a tangible demonstration of the benefits of working together."

To partially address possible issues arising from the 1994 native title legislation, the NSW Government has made an agreement with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council allowing for indigenous land use agreements over national parks.

"Working closely with these Aboriginal groups, and in particular elders, has been a fascinating and challenging experience. Personally, it has been a great opportunity to gain some small insights into the way the indigenous people have viewed the landscape. I am very enthusiastic about where closer co-operation will take us in the future."

Regional issues

The service has been restructured at the executive level with the creation of four regional directors. The aim is to give a better focus in the executive to issues in regional NSW.

The new NPWS Director based in Queanbeyan is Tony Fleming, who has operated in the Canberra region for many years. He is responsible for both the Southern and Snowy Mountains Region as well as the Southern Zone.

Footnote: Alistair Henchman has longstanding links with the region, having started his education at Ainslie Primary School - where he was one of Len Haskew's pupils.

Graeme Wicks

The active life of Olive at 80

Longstanding NPA member and keen participant in all our activities, Olive Buckman, turns 80 on 18 November 1999, the Year of the Older Person. Her life to date warrants reflection.

Olive arrived in Canberra in October 1963 to take up the position of Director of the YWCA. This followed what can only be described as a frenetic career in welfare and community work in postwar England, Europe and the Middle East.

After a happy childhood as a member of a large family who enjoyed camping and other outdoor pursuits, Olive won a scholarship to the Oxford College of Arts and Crafts.

The start of the Second World War found Olive the first female draughtsperson, later engineer, in the Post Office's engineering department. Whilst employed with the post office (which involved a six-mile cycle to work every day), Olive's spare time was taken up with hockey, table tennis, scouting, civil defence and voluntary nursing. Holidays were spent cycling, walking and climbing while youth hostelling.

At the end of the war in Europe, Olive volunteered for work with the Scout International Relief Service, with the 8 million displaced persons in Germany. In a camp for 3000 Poles, she ran the hospital, drove an ambulance and helped restore some humanity and hope to those treated so badly during the war.

A spell with the Control Commission for Germany was followed by two years as a volunteer with the Save the Children Fund, as director of a convalescent home for the children born in captivity of parents who were displaced persons.

Back in England in 1950, Olive joined the UK Education Department's Youth Service as a full-time youth leader. This involved running football, cricket and tennis teams and arranging and leading youth groups on walking and climbing tours to many parts of Europe.



*Olive climbs a mountain.
Photo supplied.*

More voluntary work followed in Austria and Egypt looking after the welfare of British national servicemen. In Austria this included taking them on climbing expeditions. Somehow squeezed into all this were holiday trips to Luxembourg, Switzerland, Norway, France, Spain, Cyprus and Jerusalem.

In her final seven years in the UK, Olive worked as a youth officer responsible for organisations with over 6000 teenage members. It was during this time that Olive became involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme – something she was to introduce for girls in Canberra. She also continued to take courses herself in leadership, abseiling, canoeing and light-weight camping.

On arrival in Canberra Olive set about reviving the "Youth" element of the YWCA. Membership numbers at the YWCA increased rapidly. She did much to encourage Canberra youth to take up bushwalking, camping and orienteering and to appreciate and care for the environment.

In 1966, Olive undertook a two-year course nursing aide course at Canberra Hospital, graduating with the only high distinction in Canberra. This led to appointments at the Canberra Boys Grammar School, Frensham School for girls at Mittagong, Canberra Girls Grammar School and the John James Hospital.

This work did not prevent Olive pursuing her love of travel and wild places. In 1970 she trekked in Nepal, in 1973 she rafted the Grand Canyon, in 1978 she trekked in New Zealand, in 1980 the Andes and Patagonia and in 1991 and 1993 she visited the sub-Antarctic islands and Antarctica itself.

In 1970, Olive finally joined the NPA, although she had walked with the association as a guest since 1963. She was soon asked by Secretary Sheila Kruse to respond to requests to the association for public speakers and to supervise guides' and scouts' first aid and conservation awards. As well, Olive organised and led hundreds of day walks (she instigated mid-week walks) and longer camping tours to the Flinders Ranges in 1976 and the Warrambungles and Carnarvon Gorge in 1977.

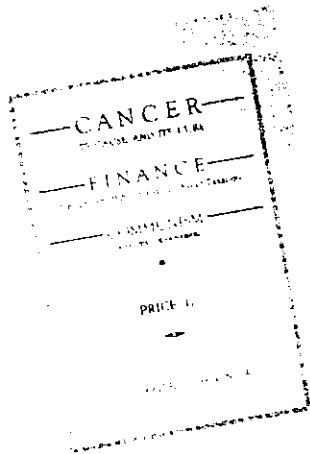
At the age of 50 Olive took up backpacking and lists Wadbilliga, Ettrema, Boolijar, Woila and the Warrambungles as a few of her favourite places. At last count she has been on over 50 backpacks!

Olive has also contributed significantly to NPA activities by writing numerous articles for the *Bulletin* (including many pioneering ones on first aid in the bush), leading holiday walks for Parks and

continued on page 17

Did you notice my footprints?

As fifth year medical students at Melbourne's Children's Hospital, both Margaret and I had been involved in the care of Heather, a very sick little girl from Benambra. In conversations with her father, Mick, we had mentioned our hope to walk via the Tin Mines to Kosciuszko. On 3 January 1952, Mick made abundantly good his offer of unstinted assistance by giving overnight board and driving the four of us in his ageing Chevrolet next afternoon to the Limestone Creek hut.



That was an adventure in itself in an old 2WD vehicle over progressively degraded and eroded tracks. Any difficulties Mick encountered with the car or the track were solved by "She'll be right", and when the car reached a point beyond which further progress was impossible, it was a case of on with the packs and a walk by moon and torchlight to reach the hut in profoundly low spirits by 10:30 pm.

The old Tin Mine track had been long disused. Easy to follow over higher dry spurs, it had become very indistinct in swampy areas or grassed hollows where old timber bridges had survived and much of the really boggy country had been corduroyed.

The route followed closely the alignment of the present high grade 4WD track, and in 1997, in company with Rob and Jenny Horsfield (Rob has walked the whole AAWT non-stop), I noticed that traces of the old



A young Ted Fleming on Mount Jagungal.

bridges or corduroy were still to be discerned.

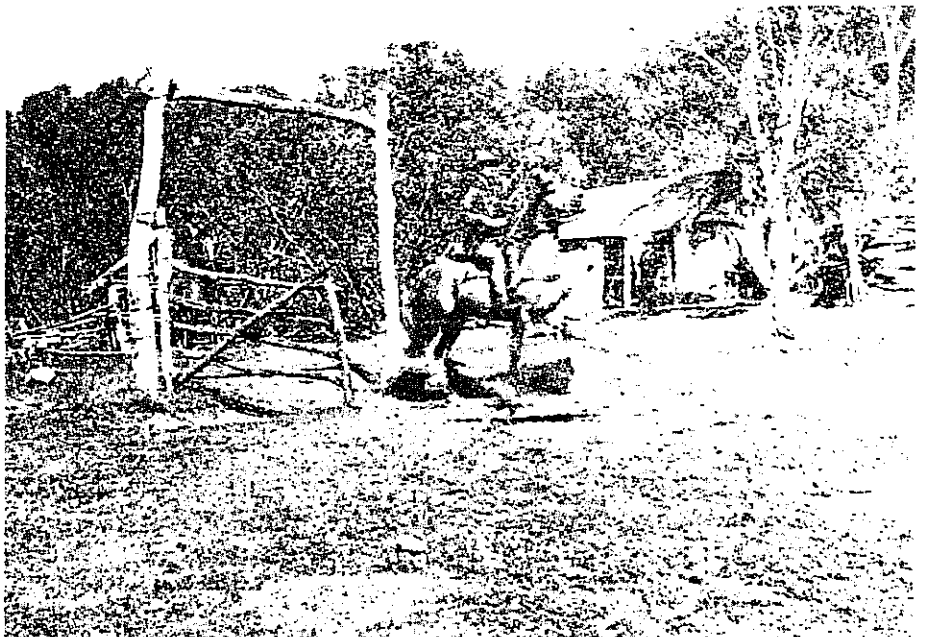
In 1952 we climbed Moscow Peak and Cobberas 1 and 2, to be greeted by a monumental mid-afternoon thunderstorm on top of Cobberas No 1 (then known as the Big Cobberas)

The Dakota wreckage at Cowombat was still almost complete and we, like Max Lawrence, had our obligatory photos taken astride the embryo Murray (or Indi) River, with one foot in each state.

Due to a slow start, we had insufficient time to climb the Pilot in 1952, and late in the afternoon of January 6th, we passed the old tin mine diggings to reach a leaning mining lease post emblazoned with CHARLES CARTER, and shortly after reached a fence, a gate and two men out chopping wood. A steep descent led us to a group of six huts – the Tin Mines.

Charlie Carter was peeling spuds in his hut which, he said, had formerly been the mine storehouse. On learning that we were medical students, he expounded at length on his cancer cures, showed us the many "cancers" on his legs and arms, and sold us copies of his discourse *Cancer, Finance and Communism*.

We three males in the party went into protective mode as the



The real Dead Horse Gap – the stockmen, the hut, the fence and the gate.

28 November Sunday daywalk

Our most southern point

Leader: Matthew Higgins

3A/C

Map: Bredbo 1:25 000

Phone: 6247 7285

A walk to the recently rediscovered survey mark indicating the ACT's most southerly point. We'll walk via a number of other sites relating to the area's earlier grazing history. About 16kms, on and off track. Numbers limited, book with leader. 140kms, \$28 per car.

Saturday 4 December

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Christmas Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark. Bring a picnic lunch.

Sunday 5 December

Lake Bathurst

Leader: Rob Forster

Phone: 6249 8546

Guided tour of historic sites on Lake Bathurst near Tarago, including visits to two homestead gardens, and inspection of local museum (vintage cars, railway waiting room). Stroll around the village. Morning refreshments and lunch provided. Cost \$20 per person, plus transport (150kms, \$30 per car). Meet at Lake Bathurst Function Centre 9am, or Canberra Railway Station Kingston 8am. For details and bookings, please phone leader before 19 November.

Sunday 12 December

NPA Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370

Our Christmas Party this year will be at Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Because of access problems (a number of locked gates through private property), it will be necessary to form car convoys starting from just outside of the main entrance gates to TNR (near the works for the new visitors centre). Convoys will leave at 11am and 12 noon sharp, so don't be late or you'll miss out. A continuous shuttle will work for departures, so within some limits, you'll be able to leave pretty much when you want to. Bring a picnic lunch and refreshments, and let's celebrate Christmas together. Also, don't forget to bring along donations of gear and goodies for our fun-raising auction!

NPA outings program

September – December 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



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

Note that the walk originally scheduled for these dates has been rescheduled to 23-24 October. See below for details.

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 Flat) carpark.

12 September Sunday daywalk

Tidbinbilla Range

Leader: Steve Hill

3A/B/E

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6231 9186

We climb to Snowy Corner 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.

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 Ngairyung 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.

19 September Sunday daywalk

Southern Namadgi

Leader: Col McAlister

2A/B

Maps: Colinton and Bredbo 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

This walk has been brought forward from the 25 September date shown in the previous NPA program. Suitable for beginners. A pleasant walk from Mt Clear campground to the Long Flat via Potters chimney, some old sheep yards and Abouids dunny, with a side trip to Chalkers chimney. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. 130kms, \$26 per car.

22 September daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

25 September Saturday daywalk

Brandy Flat Hut – Farewell to Jack

Leader: Max Lawrence

1A

Map: Michelago 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 1370

This is our chance to say au revoir to our old friend Jack Smart, who departs for Melbourne next month. This walk is an easy 5kms each way, all on track. We'll have a leisurely picnic lunch with Jack at beautiful Brandy Flat, so come prepared. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am, or, if you prefer, at the Glendale car park about three quarters of an hour later. 90kms, 418 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.

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, please contact the coordinator. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.20am.

2 – 4 October extended long weekend packwalk

Kosciuszko National Park (Khancoban area)

Leader: Di Thompson

Phone: 6288 6084

Di is proposing a three to five day pack walk in this interesting but not often visited by Canberra people corner of the park. Please phone Di for more details.

27 October daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Ken Free

Phone: 6295 8894

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

31 October Sunday daywalk

Monga State Forest

Leader: Len Haskew

1/2A

Maps: Monga, Araluen 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 4268

Join the *Friends of the Mongarlowe River* and drive/walk through the amazing ecological diversity of the Monga State Forest, which is the site of some of the finest old growth forest in southern NSW. We can confidently expect to see the Monga Waratah in bloom. The *Friends* make no charge for their conducted tour, but it would be an appropriate gesture if participants made a donation. Please contact Len by 12 October so that transport can be rationalised. Because of the nature of the roads the trip may have to be postponed if it is too wet. 200kms, \$40 per car.

6 November Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Help restore the bush at Gudgenby. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Boboyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

7 November Sunday daywalk

Pigeon House

Leader: Col McAlister

1A

Map: Milton 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

A steep climb in parts with the final section on steel ladders attached to the cliff. Magnificent panoramic views to the rugged cliffs and gorges carved by the Clyde River and its tributaries. Stunning views of Byangee Walls and the Castle. Afternoon tea at Braidwood. Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8am. 400kms, \$80 per car.

13-14 November weekend packwalk

Lowden to Palarang

Leader: Stephen Johnston

4BCDE

Maps: Bombay, Bendoura 1:25 000

Phone: 6258 3833(ah)

Very varied vegetation and some good views feature on this mainly on-track walk along the Mt Lowden to Mt Major ridge, camping by Bombay Creek before climbing Mt Palarang. The first day is quite long. Car shuffle involved. Phone leader early for details and bookings. 100kms, \$20 per car.

13-14 November weekend car camp

Weddin Ranges, Olive's 80th

Contact: Max Lawrence

1A/B

Maps: Grenfell, Marsden 1: 50 000

Phone: 6288 1370

Joint activity with FBI. Come and celebrate Olive Buckman's 80th birthday in one of her favourite national parks. Camp at Seaton's camping area near Ben Hall's Cave, short walks Saturday afternoon and Sunday, gourmet meal and celebrations Saturday evening. Please book before 6 November. 450kms, \$90 per car.

20, 21 November work party

Upper Hospital Creek Work Party

Leader: Eleanor Stodart

1D

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000

Phone: 6281 5004

We will continue up Hospital Creek from where we reached last April, felling the smaller pine wildings, and recording the location of any too big to handle for later chainsawing by the ranger. The pines are well spread out, so there is plenty of opportunity for walking as well as working. Attend either or both days. Please ring leader by preceding Wednesday. 100kms, \$20 per car.

24 November daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Mike Smith

Phone: 6286 2984

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

26-28 November car camp

The Worlds End Millennial Car Camp

Leader: Phil Bubb

2A/B

Refs: Khancoban 1:50 000 and Harry Hill's *Best Bushwalks in KNP*

Phone: 6248 6769

Fax: 6230 0298

Email: philbubb@canberra.hotkey.net.au

Visit Worlds End before the end of millennium holocaust to see the crash site of the Southern Cloud. Camp at Three Mile Dam near Kiandra on Friday and Saturday nights, with a champagne and sausages BBQ on Saturday night to practice for New Year's Eve. A Sunday gambol to Four Mile Hut, or maybe Gooandra Homestead. To assist planning, please contact leader a week ahead. 300kms, \$60 per car.

27-28 November weekend packwalk

Mt Terrible, the Chimneys and Boggy Plain

Leader: Phil Gatenby

2A/D/F

Maps: Thredbo, Mt Kosciusko 1:50 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Partly exploratory walk, mostly off track in the headwaters of the Thredbo River and Little Thredbo River. Patches of scrub, a few steep climbs and splendid views (weather permitting). Contact leader by Wednesday 24 November for details and bookings. 400kms, \$80 per car.

3 October Sunday daywalk

Old Currango

Leader: Brian Slee

1B

Map: Rules Point 1:25 000

Phone: 6261 3509(w), 6281 0719(h)

Depart Kambah Village shops 8am. Drive to Port Phillip Fire Trail, via Tantangara Dam, and walk north from there through open forest (a few soggy gullies). Lunch on verandah of historic homestead with great views of the highest (snow covered?) Brindabella peaks. Daffodils in bloom. Afternoon tea Adaminaby. 300kms. \$60 per car.

9 October Saturday daywalk

Black Mountain Nature Ramble

Leader: George Chippendale

1A

Map: Canberra Street Directory

Phone: 6281 2454

Meet in the car park in Caswell Drive opposite Wangara Street Aranda at 9.30am. In a leisurely morning ramble around some of the tracks in this corner of Black Mountain Nature Reserve George will introduce us to the colourful and varied botany of the forest. Bring morning tea and wear a hat. We will be joined on this excursion by members of U3A and Friends of the Australian Botanic Gardens.

8-11 October extended weekend walk/drive/camp

Huts and Historic Sites of Namadgi

Leader: Graham Scully

1A/B

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Phone: 6230 3352

email: scullymob@netspeed.com.au

Joint NPA/Kosciuszko Huts Association activity. This combination car camp and walk has been designed especially for the less experienced and newer members of both NPA and KHA, and is graded easy. We start by driving to Mt Gimini and walking with packs for 5kms via two brumby yards to Priors hut for overnight camp. On Saturday we return to cars and drive to the southern end of Namadgi and inspect the site of Tin Dish school, and recently restored Brayshaws and Westermans huts, and thence drive to camp at Mt Clear campground. Sunday sees us walking to the site of Bobeyan homestead with historical commentary by Steven Brayshaw, thence driving to the Gudgenby valley for a walk of a few kms (with packs) to Franks hut and Hospital Creek hut for overnight camp. We finish on Monday with a drive and walk to Orroral Homestead, and visit a rock art site. Help is available to plan your gear, and some camping and walking gear can be loaned to those who need it.

9 October Saturday work party

GBRG Work Party

Contact: Eleanor Stodart

Phone: 6281 5004

Help restore the bush at Gudgenby. All activities commence at 10.00am at the Bobeyan Pines (Yankee Hat) carpark.

16 October Saturday daywalk

Mt Tidbinbilla from Bendora

Leader: Stephen Johnston

2B/C/E

Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Phone: 6258 3833 (ah)

A challenging 880m climb for fit walkers up the long distinctive western ridge of Tidbinbilla Mountain, featuring high cliffs and great views of the Pimple (also Stephen's way of avoiding the TNR entrance fee). Phone leader for details and bookings. 100kms, \$20 per car.

17 October Sunday daywalk

Box Vale Track, Mittagong

Leader: Col McAlister

1A

Map: Mittagong 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

Suitable for beginners. A lovely walk along the route of a historic railway, passing through cuttings, embankments, and an 80m tunnel. Views into the Nattai valley. Side trip to the Forty Foot Falls. Meet in the carpark at the ACT Netball Centre, Northbourne Avenue Lyneham, at 8am. 360kms, \$72 per car.

23-24 October 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 20 October for more details and bookings. 250kms, \$50 per car.

23-24 October weekend car camp

Jounama and Yarrangobilly

Leader: Eleanor Stodart

1A

Map: Yarrangobilly 1:100 000

Phone: 6281 5004

On Saturday a ranger guided tour of the Jounama pine plantation (being felled and regenerated to bush) will give us many pointers for our work at Gudgenby. Camp at Yarrangobilly Village and visit caves and thermal pool on Sunday. Contact leader by preceding Wednesday. 380kms, \$76 per car plus caves entrance fee.

24 October Sunday daywalk

Mt Orroral

Leader: Mike Smith

2D/E

Map: Rendezvous Creek: 1:25 000

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at the Kambah Village shops at 8am. Climb 760m from Orroral gate to unnamed peak generally known as Mt Orroral. A difficult climb for experienced walkers. Short car shuffle involved. 110kms, \$22 per car.

stockmen who were camped in one of the other huts greedily eyed off Margaret.

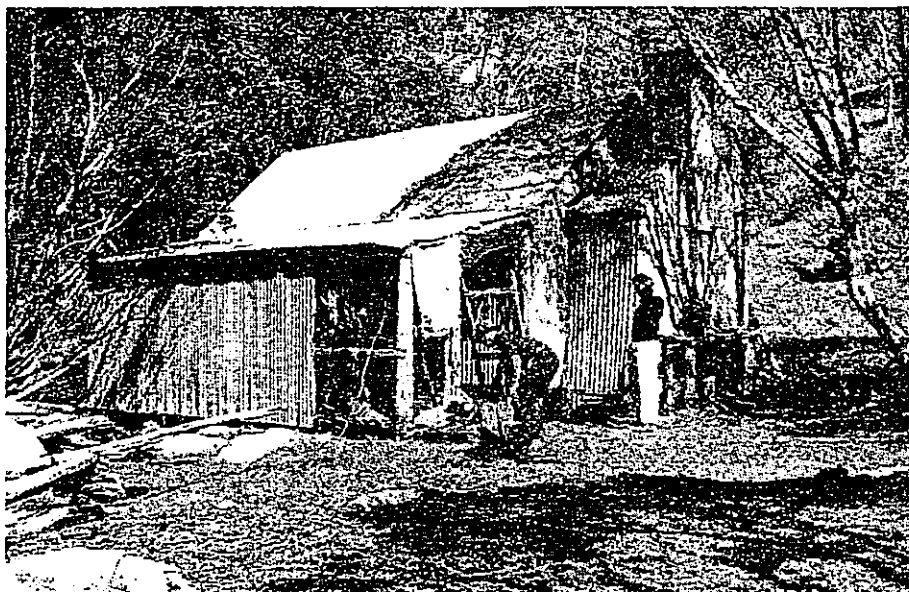
Scattered about was Charlie's "mining equipment", much of it proto-Flintstonian. He had three or four drives into the hillside between where the large hut and the pit toilet now stand. Each was about 15 feet deep, topped by primitive hand winches and accessed by equally primeval step ladders.

Charlie, aged 79, would descend, fill four buckets, attach them to the four hooks on the winch-rope, ascend and wind up the buckets, empty them and throw them back into the shaft and rejoin them via his ladder.

Like many miners he "knew" of a fabulous reef nearby but, because of an earlier perceived betrayal, would not share his secret with anyone, but could not start to mine it without help – his version of Catch 22.

No track then existed between the Tin Mines and Dead Horse Gap. Charlie and the stockmen gave vague instructions about the bridle tracks they used, but we were soon to find that the difference between bridle and brumby tracks was subtle in the extreme, and referred more to their spelling than to their ground appearance.

Accordingly, as western clouds mutated to towering cumulo-nimbi with menacingly lowering bases, the rain started. A dank, misty veil shrouded anything beyond about 50 metres, and we realised we were technically lost. For the next two



Dead Horse Gap hut.

soaking days all we could do was to keep heading north in the belief we could not possibly miss the Dead Horse Gap.

In retrospect, our route must have lain about one or two kilometres to the west of the current 4WD track. To our left we were ever conscious of enormous drops into the Indi valley as we struggled through dense, thigh-high undergrowth, over rocks and fallen logs and up and down an apparently unending succession of spurs and creeks. Late on the second day there appeared far below us the huge valley of the Dead Horse Creek and my track notes read:

That descent! Will any of us forget it! Incredibly steep and through thick, thick forest with a huge carpet of undergrowth and scrub.

We were about two kilometres west of the Dead Horse Gap and had overshot the old Leather Barrel Spur track. In 1952 there was no Alpine Way, no Thredbo and only a bridle track down the Crackenback River to old Jindabyne, and the actual saddle (the Gap) was crossed by a north-south fence in the middle of which was a gate.

On the Kosci side of the saddle was stockmen's hut – large, comfortable and warm, while several horses were tethered outside, and shortly after our arrival, Len, Neville, Noel and Bruce, stockmen from Jindabyne, turned up with their afternoon catch of trout from the Crackenback.

The amber colour of the overproof rum bottles clustered above the big open fire place (in which we cooked the trout) glittered from the flickering light of candles dripping their wax down the sides of adjacent companion rum bottles. Warm, dry, well-fed and indulging ourselves in the human companionship unique to the mountains, this had to be a very special experience.

Standing on the sealed road at Dead Horse Gap in 1997, memories of it all flooded back, and with them a feeling of deep good fortune and gratitude to have known a little of the High Country before "progress" altered it for ever.

(Illustrations supplied by the author.)



Charlie's wheelbarrow.

Ted Fleming

PARKWATCH

Mount Jerrabomberra – The last stand

You may have heard of Mt Jerrabomberra ... close to the ACT border. It is the last mountain in the ACT region which has never been logged or grazed, thus the understorey is still intact and is the only known area of its type left in Australia. The mountain covers an area of about 300 hectares, and is privately owned land, now under threat of subdivision and residential development.

In the 60s it was proposed that the mountain become a national park, in the 70s a flora and fauna reserve, in the 80s a cable car tourist centre. Finally, in 1992, Mt Jerrabomberra was listed on the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission because of its significant stands of rare and vulnerable native plant species.

The woodlands and grasslands on Mt Jerrabomberra and its lower slopes have retained, so far, all of the species of plants that used to grow together over the ACT and southeast NSW. The mountain area is covered with a variety of native vegetation climaxes, including dry sclerophyll forest, savannah woodland, native grassland, acacia thicket regrowth, sub-alpine flora, herbfields and heaths. The main community on Mt Jerrabomberra is a mixed *Eucalyptus macrorhynca* (Red stringybark) and *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* (Red box) grassy woodland, an association which is vulnerable in NSW. According to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, the vegetation community on the mountain is a benchmark or template for education and research.

Not only is Mt Jerrabomberra important for ecological reasons, it is an important aboriginal heritage area.

Sustainable Times, July 1999.

Should Kosciuszko be saved?

NPA has made a submission to the Premier and the Minister strongly rejecting the COI (Commission of Inquiry) Report (the future of Kosciuszko National Park (KNP)) on the following grounds:

the protection of the ecosystems within KNP is the most significant use of the park, not "snow sports" as stated in the COI, the proposed development is primarily an urban (village) real estate and commercial development, rather than a skiing development more validly related to the nature-based recreational objectives of the park; the proposed development contradicts planning strategies of the Department of Planning, which point to the existing town in the region (not the ski resorts in KNP) as the sites for major accommodation and commercial development; the environmental carrying capacity of the park has not been assessed prior to consideration of the proposal for additional urban development; additional information placed before the COI was still insufficient to amend the defects which has caused the local council and the COI itself to find the Environmental Impact Statement inadequate.

National Parks Journal, April, 1999.

Saving more of the north east forests

The Government's scientific advisers reported that, in order to achieve scientific reserve criteria in the north east, new reserves covering 1.2 million hectares were necessary. Under the provisions of the Forestry and National Park Estate Act, 1998 only 380,000 hectares were reserved, an area only 50,000 hectares above that recommended by the timber industry. About 206,000 hectares of recognised wilderness on public and private lands protected since 1991 by a logging moratorium, were left outside the NPWS estate and an additional 238,000 hectares of old growth forest were made available to the loggers.

Some of the excluded areas however may yet be saved. There are two categories of forest outside parklands the status of which has not yet been determined. These consist of 126,640 hectares of "areas for further consideration" and 176,678 hectares of "additional areas for reservation". The former are areas proposed by government agencies at the time of the forest decision in 1998, while the later are areas proposed by the North East Forest Alliance.

About 160,000 hectares of NPWS recognised wilderness were not included for "further consideration" by the Government in 1998 during the Comprehensive Regional Assessment. However, 125,364 hectares of these lands are Crown leasehold and a further 23,045 hectares are leasehold lands within state forests. For these two categories of leasehold land the Government has committed to protecting these lands in the reserve system, if they meet wilderness criteria (Premier's Office, 23 March 99). Of the above area 137,416 hectares already meet that test, including 18,695 hectares of leasehold within state forests. This commitment ensures that the remaining bits of Chaelundi State Forest in the NPWS identified Guy Fawkes wilderness are safe whilst the logging moratorium holds. Of the remaining lands not protected, only 2,000 hectares are NPWS identified wilderness and the rest are 4,350 hectares of State Forests leasehold (including Chaelundi wilderness) and freehold lands that cannot be subject to a logging moratorium.

The North East Forest Alliance's minutely researched paper (by Dialan Pugh and Carmel Flint) entitled *Last chance for Public Comprehensive Regional Parks* shows 303,318 hectares for reservation in some 250 areas. There are 46,749 hectares of wilderness within the 303,318 hectares and these areas adjoining

continued on page 17

The attractions of Joadja

A question often asked, particularly if you are in the Mittagong area, is "Have you been to Joadja lately?" and "How do you get there now?" The NPA walk along the Box Vale Tramway recently was no exception to the question in the discussions along the track.

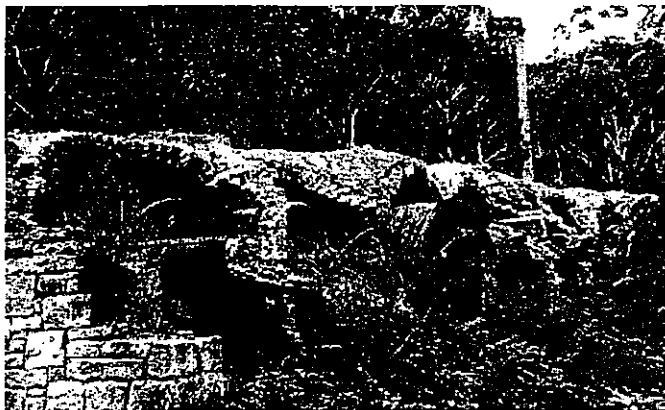
It is somewhat of an embarrassment to me to confess "Not for 58 years". The problem of access was not much different then, as it has been over the intervening years.

I did not keep a diary then in the detail of one of my companions on our walk from Joadja to Wentworth Falls, so I will relate an edited version of Winifred Duncombe's experience of Joadja.

"In Mittagong we shopped and bought everything I hadn't already brought along from Sydney. I had 17 pounds of food in my pack, the other four girls had 15 pounds each and Reg had 25 pounds. We had supper in a cafe and Edna bought a new pair of walking shoes off a man with a long black beard right down to his chest. Mary bought a gaudy shirt about three sizes too big, and Joan stepped into the scene and told her she was mad, and after telling Joan to mind her own business settled for a smaller and more subdued colour. Joan wanted a new pair of shorts and asked if there were any shorts for ladies. The shopkeeper said that these were the only ones he had and wanted to know what the difference might be.

"We finally set off in the taxi for Joadja at 5:30 pm and on the way the driver asked if we had permission to camp at Joadja because there was a chap there with a gun waiting for people who dared to camp there. Reg told him that he had written asking for permission and saying not to bother to reply if it would be all right.

"After following a track for some miles it gradually became more rough, threatening to land us over a cliff with the driver telling us he didn't think we were on the right track. We finally arrived at the ruins of a tremendous shed with huge engines and a big wheel, everything falling to rust and below us lay the



The shale ovens at Joadja, 1941. Photo Reg Alder.

Joadja Valley looking beautiful in the dusk. Down the cliffs from the shed, a skip railway like the Scenic Railway at Katoomba ran down a steep slope to the valley floor. It was just on dusk that we started down, loaded with parcels of all sizes, and in addition to my pack, I had a cardboard box with a dozen eggs in it.

"At the bottom we met the man of the place and he wanted to know what we were doing there - hadn't we seen the notice at the top telling people to keep away. We said we only wanted to camp the night, were not shooters and would be away early in the morning. Reg said that he had written for permission, but, apparently, it had gone to the wrong person. The chap was a very handsome young American with dark curly hair. He said, "It is private property and you can't camp here but I suppose you can stay over till the morning." He even relented enough to allow us to have a look around in the morning.

"Mary and Joan fell violently in love with him at first sight and after tea wanted to go exploring but no one would go with them. After about an hour they came back giggling and

wouldn't say what they had been up to. Later, in my tent, they told me that they had met another American, even better looking than the first one and were thinking of excuses to make another visit the next morning.

"Next morning they dolled themselves up in their best and went off exploring on their own, while the rest of us went down the creek to the old township, which was a very busy centre fifty years ago. Joadja was developed for its shale and a huge plant was started up for extracting kerosene. Today, the tall chimney stacks and rows of huge ovens are still standing but falling into ruin, together with complicated railway systems, rows of houses laid out in streets and almost entirely grown over with silver poplars, maple and pine trees. It is a weird place. We wandered around all the morning and even climbed up the railway line to under the cliffs, where the shale was mined. There are tons and tons of machinery lying around, huge boilers and tanks. It appears at the time there was not enough demand to make it a paying proposition and millions must have been spent.

"Joan and Mary didn't want to go on that day and wanted to stay another night, proposing to go over the tops rather than following Joadja Creek and the Wingecarribee River. We talked them out of that. There had been a shower of rain that night and everything was beautifully green, the grass was up over our knees and full of seeds.

"At 11:30 it was pretty hot as we walked out down Joadja Creek along the pretty valley floor."

Joadja is still private property and access for a fully guided 1 1/2 hours can be gained on Wednesday to Sunday. Tickets cost: adults \$20, pensioner/concession \$15 and children under 12 years \$5. Bookings are required and can be made at the Mittagong Visitors Centre (4871 2888). Visitors can remain for a picnic lunch, if desired, after the inspection.

Reg Alder

Development of the genus *Eucalyptus*

The genus *Eucalyptus* was first described in literature by Charles Louis de Brutelle L'Heritier, a French magistrate who was murdered in August 1800, and the mystery was never solved. He based his description on a specimen of *Eucalyptus obliqua* collected at Adventure Bay in Tasmania by David Nelson, 26 January 1777, during James Cook's third voyage. Of interest, too, is that Nelson was on the *Bounty* with William Bligh. He was one of the loyal crew. I am fortunate to have seen this specimen at the British Museum of Natural History, in South Kensington, London. The name *Eucalyptus* is derived from the Greek *eu*, well and *kalyptos*, covered, referring to the bud cap, or operculum which covers the stamens. *E. obliqua* was not the first eucalypt discovered or collected, although it is the type species for the genus; it is simply that L'Heritier used Nelson's specimen when he was studying in London in 1786-7.

There may have been earlier collectors, but the first recorded collection of eucalypts was by Daniel Solander, with Joseph Banks, at Botany Bay. Solander tentatively named them as *Metrosideros*, a genus he had just seen in New Zealand; one of these was *Metrosideros gummifera*, which was legitimised by Gaertner in 1788 as *Eucalyptus gummifera*, Solander ex Gaertner, which is the "Red Bloodwood", now to be known *Corymbia gummifera* (Gaertner) K.D. Hill and L.A.S. Johnson. This species, of course, is the nearest bloodwood to be seen by ACT people, at the Eurobodalla coast. Hill and Johnson revised the bloodwood group in *Telopea* 6: 185-504 (1995), where they included 33 new species. There are 113 species now recognised.

The bloodwood group, now known as species of *Corymbia*, is the first lot of eucalypts to be reorganised. Perhaps we will soon see two or more genera recognised, one of which will still be *Eucalyptus*, which will include stringybarks, peppermints, scribbly gums, snow guns, ashes and some others. So, we will see most of

our ACT eucalypts remain as *Eucalyptus*.

The first real attempt to organise our eucalypts was made by an Englishman who had never been to Australia. This was George Bentham, the doyen of English botanists, and he gave descriptions and a key to identification for 135 species in his *Flora Australiensis*, vol. 3 (1867). That might seem insignificant, considering we now acknowledge somewhere near 700 species. However, it needs to be remembered that Bentham worked mainly with specimens sent to him by the great Melbourne botanist Ferdinand Mueller, plus whatever specimens were held at Kew, England. It is interesting to know, too, that Mueller sent all Melbourne specimens to Kew by ship, in the 1860s, and not one was damaged or lost. Beat that with today's mail!

Then, in 1934, William Faris Blakely published his *A Key to the Eucalypts* in which he had 605 taxa (species and varieties). I knew Mr Blakely when I was rather young, first meeting him in 1936. When I wrote Volume 19 of the *Flora of Australia, Eucalyptus, Angophora*, in 1988, I had 513 species, and seven species of *Angophora*. This makes it seem as if we lost a lot of species since Blakely! However, many of Blakely's taxa were the same as some others, and he also included a number of hybrids. This is why, when people ask—how many eucalypts are there, I cannot answer accurately. Since 1988, many more new species have been described...I have not tried to keep up with them.

Another publication of importance was *A Classification of the Eucalypts* by L.D. Pryor and L.A.S. Johnson. A lot of people in Canberra and elsewhere would have known Lindsay Prior, who died recently, and I also knew Lawrie Johnson having worked with him in Sydney years ago. He died in 1997. In this publication, Pryor and Johnson suggested that *Eucalyptus* be divided into seven genera, but they never formalised this arrangement. That is, they intentionally did not obey the International Rules of

Botanical Nomenclature, as they were making a suggestion which could be debated. And, debated it was for quite a few years. Pryor and Johnson gave detailed reasons and discussion in their publication, and it is far too long to duplicate here. So, for those interested, see their book, particularly pages 16-19.

Angophora is still being maintained as a separate genus. And, for me, whatever all the eucalypts end up being named, I will still call them eucalypts!

George Chippendale

A successful book launch

Visitors to Tidbinbilla, particularly to the picnic area within the reserve, are very likely to have a close encounter with some of the resident emus, perhaps the ever-hungry adults with less than impeccable eating habits, or a family group of protective father and clutch of engaging youngsters.

These are the characters around whom NPA Past President Eleanor Stodart has woven her latest children's book, *Straggles of Tidbinbilla: the story of an emu growing up*.

The book was launched in mid May at the Macarthur House offices of Environment ACT by Urban Services Minister Brendan Smyth. He recalled Eleanor's first book, on the subject of snails, which was published when he was a boy involved in a family newsagency.

In congratulating Eleanor on her contribution to children's literature through the authorship of 22 titles, he drew attention to the fine drawings that complement the narrative and descriptive material.

Eleanor has explained that she began writing nature-based books for children because she perceived an absence of books of this type when she sought them for her own children.

Published by Envirobook and produced in an attractive soft-covered format, *Straggles of Tidbinbilla* is available at the recommended retail price of \$9.95.

Syd Comfort

Nightwalk to Westerman's Homestead

When planning summer walks I try to allow for warm conditions. In the past, outings to the mountains have been thwarted by total fire bans, and trips down the Murrumbidgee have been hot and sweaty – hence the idea of a walk in the cool of the evening. However, all of us who seek the simple pleasures of the natural world have to take the good with the bad.

Japararas might convince the rain to stop. One by one we deferred to the greater power and dragged on our wet weather gear and set off for our next port of call, Waterhole Hut. The 2km descent to the hut should have taken no more than 30 to 40 minutes. However, our ETA came and went and all I could see was never-ending forest. Like all navigators, I was never lost.

At 8:30 we packed up. The walk to Westerman's Homestead in the half dark was new to all of us. The normal navigation features along the way were there, but were not always in reach of our senses.

As the western horizon grew darker we entered that part of the Grassy Creek valley in which Westerman's Homestead is located. In unfamiliar circumstances one's senses can be heightened to a high degree and this was certainly the case with we four travellers. Against the dark eastern sky, the silhouette of pines and then a roof became apparent. Then, just occasionally, a dull light appeared in the window of the old homestead. As we neared the building the orange glow became clearer – faint but steady. Gradually, other shapes came into view. Three four-wheel drive vehicles next to the hut suggested a KHA work party while voices and laughter from inside indicated friendly welcome. The surprised occupants did indeed prove to be a work party and they gladly gave us a guided tour around the remarkable renovations. Floors, ceilings and chimneys now combine to make Westerman's a very cosy place.

After a short stay we left their warm hut for the night – I suspect they doubted our judgement.

Large holes in the clouds and an intermittent moon allowed us to occasionally travel without torch light and to discuss the merits of astro-navigation. Some shadows passed by and others moved stealthily into the trees. We all commented upon our good fortune not sharing a land whose creatures viewed night travellers as a meal rather than a curiosity in.

As 10:00 pm approached so did Brayshaw's Hut. Although damp from movement through the long, wet grass, we felt satisfied that we had shared with each other, and the bush, things seldom allowed modern humans.

Martin Chalk



Westerman's Homestead at dawn, December 1998, showing newly restored chimneys. Photo Martin Chalk.

There was no risk of heat stroke on Saturday 23 January 1999. It started with steady rain and scudding cloud. Nevertheless, stubbornness and improving conditions in the afternoon saw Yvonne Bartos, Max Lawrence, Ian Bell and I set off for Brayshaw's Hut.

By 5:30 pm we were on foot in bright sunlight, bound for a circuitous approach to Boboyan Hill, via the clearings on the northern side of Pheasant Hill. This creek line is a very sheltered spot and one which none of us had had the opportunity, or reason, to explore previously. The mixture of open forest, lush grassy clearings, old ringbarked giants and drop-log fences created that experience which is comfortably familiar in Namadgi.

Within the hour we were atop Boboyan Hill wondering whether

However, later reflection allowed me see my error. It had a great deal to do with arithmetic and magnetic variation.

Eventually, we popped out of the forest, a little away from Waterhole Hut, and made our way to the hut for a late meal. As we ate in the sunset, the four quadrants of the heavens were each their own show. The west was slicks of grey cloud edged in orange set against a pale blue and white sky. To the north, Sentry Box Hill was embraced by a battleship-coloured thunderstorm. Around to the east, the setting sun cast the timbered hillside orange-green against the grey of the thunderstorm. Lightning and rainbows were eventually added to complete the display. To the east, a peaceful mixture of mid-blue and blue-grey sky served to calm the senses.

Pigging out on Mount Tennent

It had been yet another one of those weeks chasing my tail at work. On a Saturday morning, early in July last year, there was obvious need for me to take the kids' advice of years ago: "Go for a walk up the scrub, Dad, and, then, maybe we can put up with you for another week." The weather wasn't that usual crisp clear July day; rather, there was high cloud with the promise of a slow deterioration over the next few days. The kids were out and my long-suffering wife was at work.

After a discussion with our ever attentive old cat, I decided to visit the summit of Mount Tennent. I parked in a little spot beside the Honeysuckle road below the gate—not obvious to most and can only accommodate one car. That extra climb from the gate to the normal parking area after a day climbing Mount Tennent brings a certain creativity in considering alternatives.

I went into Bushford Flats first. This beautiful spot is about 250 metres above the Honeysuckle valley, and was an old sheep lease which hasn't been seriously grazed for some 15 years. Even though I had been there several times before, its magic had not evaporated. There were enough blue sky breaks in the high cloud to make for a very pleasant lunch spot about one kilometre down the track, which offered a panorama of tree-covered hills that surround Booroomba Rocks to the west, and plenty of native birds for company. A couple of old buildings remain which were used to support the sheep grazing. None are particularly ancient, being built during the 1940s and 50s, and they seemed to have been last used during the early 1980s, I think, I commend this spot as a destination on a future NPA walk through the area.

While lunch was nice, the reality was there remained 450 metres to climb. I decided to bush bash straight up the NW spur of Tennent to find the junction of the old track

up from Honeysuckle and the first part of the Alpine walking track up from the Namadgi Information Centre on the eastern side. It is an attractive area with rocky boulders and a mix of eucalypts, acacias and some bush cover.

A bit under half way up the spur, I became aware of a somewhat stressed presence. About 30 metres ahead I saw four feral pigs. From their stance, it seemed they ruled in this patch, for they exhibited some indignation upon my arrival at the scene. Not the biggest pigs I've seen and no tusks, but they still put the Rottweiler into the toy poodle class. There they were, mum, dad and the two fairly mature kids right on my compass bearing. As always in these situations, the nearest suitable rock seemed miles away and the trees looked too fragile for a safe haven. After a few minutes of hesitation, focused grunting and stamping of hooves from the pigs, and suggestions about a finding different place to move from me, they decide to move off; kids first, then mum and, when he was confident all was OK, father pig, with an assertive little trot belying his substantial weight. What a way to have a pig out...

I continued on, initially jumping out of my skin as a silver-eye flew by and a bit later the pounding of feet from a cuddly swamp wallaby caused some brief stress. Luckily they don't have ceilings in the bush. So I arrived at the peak of the spur, leaving only 170 metres still to climb and I settled down in a nice clearing and thought afternoon tea was deserved. I was starting forget about pigs with the view of a snow-covered Mount Gudgenby to the south as a calming influence. But a loud shriek of what transpired to be laughter caused me to believe I should have brought Prozac, not tea. The laughter turned out to be eight uni students who had come up from the Namadgi centre. I caught up with them on the summit, one was from New Zealand, another from Canada

and only one was a local Canberran. Many questions were asked from them about how to get to various peaks.

By now the weather was turning less pleasant, as forecast, with a 40k nor'wester building and the snow-covered peaks started to disappear under cloud. A little rain seemed to be falling over Mount Blundell. So down we went, together initially, then the uni mob headed off to the right to go back to the Namadgi centre and me down the track to the car on the Apollo Road nearly 700 metres below. It's a nice trek, actually, as the forest constantly changes as you get lower; heaps of parrots in the trees and a couple of lyrebirds near the creeks—and no pigs. Into the car for home. When I got home I found the heater in good shape having being secured all day by Cat.

Steve Hill

New life members

NPA members at the annual general meeting on August 19 voted unanimously to confer life memberships on two distinguished and longstanding members – Olive Buckman and Jack Smart.

Formal presentations will be made in the near future.

An article on Olive's active life appears elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

Jack has also been a very active member over many years. The President, Clive Hurlstone, said Jack had been active in developing the NPA walks program and had led many walks, and was still an active walker.

Jack will depart Canberra for Melbourne soon. Members can say au revoir on the September 19 daywalk. Details are in the Outings Program.

Graeme Wicks

Summit road to be blocked

Mount Durras

It was first used by the Aboriginals as a food source, both plant and animal, and a source for implement making. It was a viewing site for looking along the coastline, to Doolagarl Mountain, the home of the hairy man, and to the Budawang Mountains.

Next it was used by the European settlers for logging, and the logs were shipped out from Pebbly Beach.

One European settler cleared the long, sloping summit of the mountain to make a farm. He built a homestead, planted an orchard, and grazed cattle.

Roads were built to the summit and a trig marker was installed to aid in the surveying of the district.

Later, holiday makers walked or drove to the summit to admire the view.

In the 1980s a national park, Murramarang, was declared, incorporating areas from Durras Lakes along the coast to Kiola. Logging ceased, farming ceased, roads were closed, and the bush was allowed to regenerate.

People in greater numbers walked to the summit on the closed roads which soon closed in to become a single track.

Sadly, one road was left open and four-wheel drive vehicles continue driving to the summit and along the



This road to the Mount Durras summit will be closed. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand.

summit, and drivers showed their "skills" by driving in circles to tear up the ground.

The NSW Parks and Conservation Service is aware of this misuse of the area and intends to block this one remaining road, build a car park and encourage people to walk the remaining distance to the summit.

As you can see by the photographs, the road blockage can't come quickly enough to save this lovely place from continued abuse by thoughtless people.

Fiona MacDonald Brand



NPA outing, Mount Durras, June 1999. Photo Fiona MacDonald Brand.

PARKWATCH

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13 national parks. Most of this land is in the Binderry-Mann, Chandlers Creek, the western part of Washpool and Werrikimbe areas. The leasehold areas under logging moratorium include Mann, Macleay Gorges, Washpool and Guy Fawkes areas. Wilderness assessment processes in the north-east will further add to areas of protected forest. It appears that the initial assessments of forest protection levels in the north-east were too negative.

Article prepared for NPA by Keith Muir, Director Colong Committee, 7 July, 1999.

The active life of Olive at 80

continued from page 9

Conservation, attending working parties and Clean-up Australia days, staffing displays and conferences, giving talks to general meetings and frequently administering first aid on walks.

Olive has also been an active Family Bushwalkers and Walking for Pleasure member. She has continued to undertake courses in first aid, search and rescue and survival techniques.

Olive approaching 80 remains an active member of NPA. Although her physical health has not been good for a number of years and she underwent a hip replacement in 1998 she still undertakes long day walks and enjoys car camps. She continues to welcome new members with warmth and enthusiasm as she has always done. She continues to give her much appreciated regular talks and slide presentations to Canberra homes for the aged and other organisations. In 1987 she published the first part of her autobiography *Life is a Mountain*.

Olive's life, work and contribution to the National Parks Association demonstrates the power of positive thinking and the benefits of lifelong physical activity.

Timothy Walsh

Book review

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. The year 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 ACT 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 Sharpe 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.

Stephen Johnston

Calendar

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	Thur 2	Thur 7	Thur 4	Thur 9
Environment sub-committee ¹	Thur 9	Thur 14	Thur 11	
General Meetings	Thur 16	Thur 21	Thur 18	
Christmas Party ²				Sun 12
Gudgenby work parties ³	Sat 11	Sat 9	Sat 6	Sat 4
Bulletin Working Group ⁴			Tues 2	

Further Details

- 1 - Neville Esau 6286 4176
- 2 - Outings Program
- 3 - Meet Boboyan Pines carpark 10am, Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004
- 4 - Graeme Wicks 6286 4729

General meetings

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

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

Thursday 21 October. The Ngunnawal People. Ann Jackson Nakano, historian, journalist and published author wrote the evidence for the Ngunnawal Native Title Claim to Namadgi National Park. She plans to publish a 2-volume history of the Ngunnawals and the first volume on the people of our area will be on sale in December. She will speak to us on the topic: *"Is this the Wrong Mob?"*

Thursday 18 November. Greening Australia. Mark Thomas is the Chief Executive of the Greening Australia national organisation. He will give an outline of the organisation and its work across the country. Also, he will be accompanied by a representative of the Greening Australia ACT and SE NSW regional office who will talk about Greening Australia's work in this region.

Come to the party

Come to this year's NPA Christmas party on Sunday, December 12 - to be held at Nil Desperandum once again.

Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the other activities, including the traditional auction.

Those wishing to stay overnight Saturday should contact Max Lawrence. See further details in the Outings Program.

New members

Tom Griffiths, ANU
Janet Neale, Belconnen
Sebastian Verrills
R Berrill, Chifley
Matt Plucinski, Queanbeyan
David Michael, Kambah
Jon Hall, Bungendore
Maxwell Smith, Kambah
Peter Read, Watson

David Bruce-Smith, Weetangera
William Hogan, Curtin
Jenny Gibson, Ainslie
Michael Evans, Garran
Lyndall and Hal Hatch, Jamison Centre
Andrew Bond and Penny Amberg, Kingston
Lynn Dalgarno, O'Connor

Friends of the Grasslands Inc

The disappearance of lowland native grasslands occurred so insidiously over the years since white settlement of the Australian continent that only in recent years has the urgent need for protection of the remaining fragments become generally recognised. Sheep and cattle, fertilisers, introduced grasses and urban development have reduced these important ecosystems to 0.5 per cent of the original coverage in south-eastern Australia.

Native grasslands once supported a rich and diverse wildlife population; many of the surviving species are now under threat.

In November 1994, Friends of Grasslands Inc (FOG), an active group dedicated to preservation of remaining remnants of local lowland native grasslands, was formed. (See Stephen Johnston's review on the opposite page of two recent books on grasslands and NPA's input to native grasslands conservation.)

FOG offers frequent outings (at least monthly), with more in the peak flowering season than in winter. Their newsletter is published bi-monthly and the current issue mentions events such as: looking around Yarrowlumla Shire Council Greenway Network to see parts of the 22km-long trails set aside for conservation and other purposes; a Halloween Cemeteries Tour (long-undisturbed areas such as cemeteries and roadside verges can turn up native plant treasures); or what about "January 2000 - Y2K Bug Identification in the Southern Tablelands" - sounds intriguing.

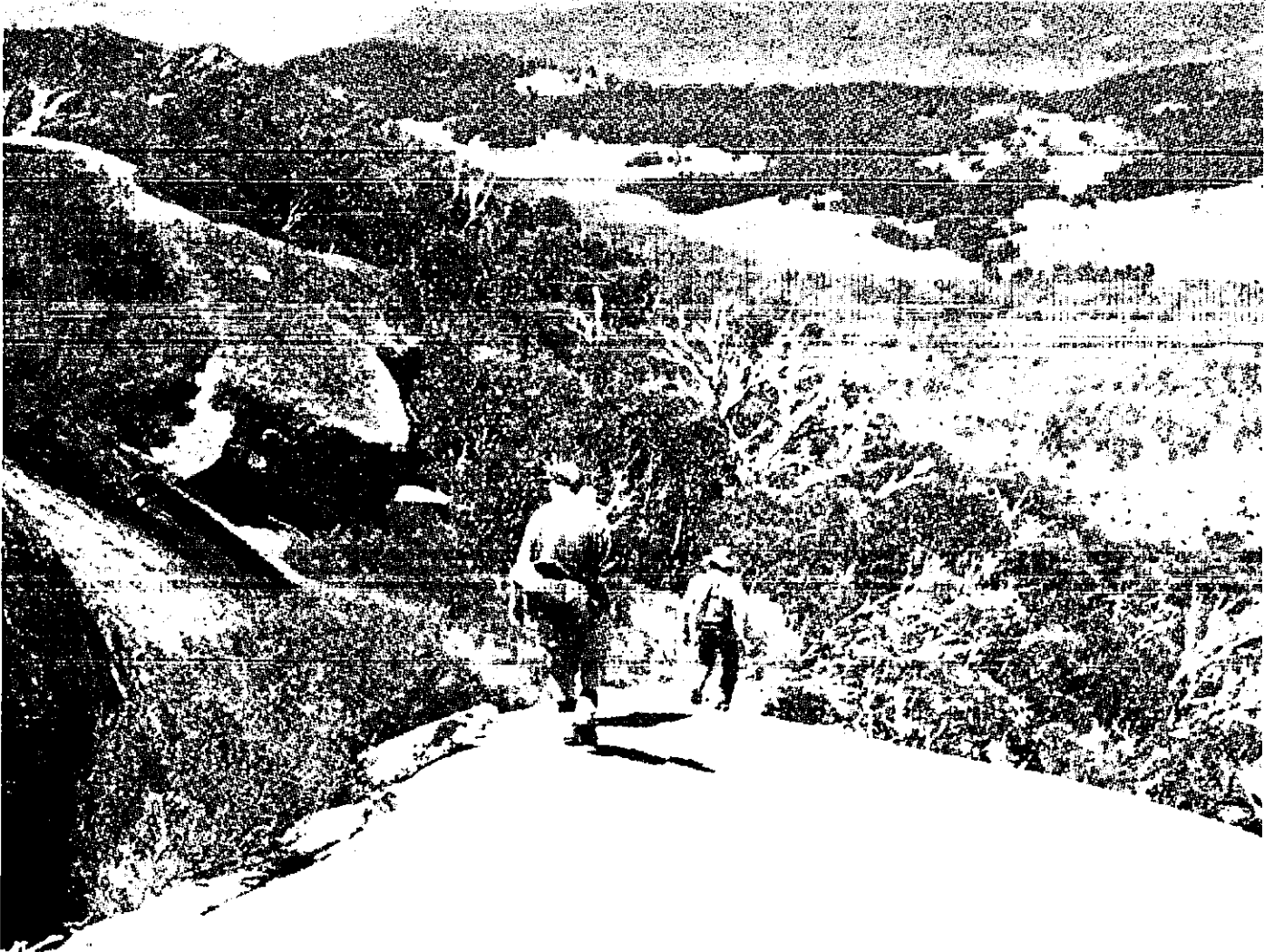
The outings program also includes slide shows, work parties and workshops, with a major Grassland Conservation Workshop organised by FOG earlier this year. In fact, reading the lively *News of Friends of Grasslands* was incentive enough for the writer to decide to join FOG and help swell its membership to over 100.

Friends of Grasslands Inc
PO Box 987, Civic Square, ACT 2609
Tel: (02) 62527374 (w) (02) 62414065 (h)
Web site: <http://www.geocities.com/Rainforest/Vines/7769/index.html>

Phyl Goddard

National Parks Association (ACT)

New members welcome



Mick Kelly and Phil Gatenby walk down Mount Gudgenby on an NPA walk in November 1997, when the Boboyan Pines (in the background) were still flourishing. Photo Max Lawrence.

NPA Bulletin

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