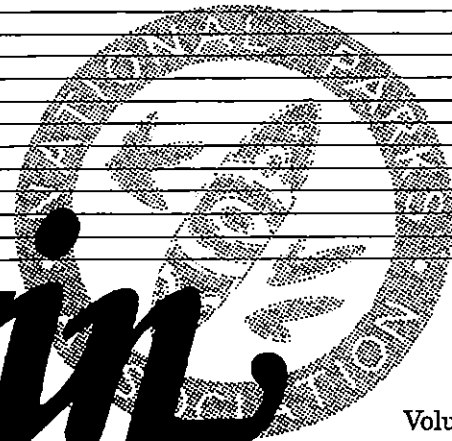


NPA Bulletin



Volume 34 number 4
December 1997

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Draft Tidbinbilla Management Plan

Winter wanderings in Namadgi

Mapping and weeding to save grasshopper



CONTENTS

From the President 3 <i>Clive Hurlstone</i>	Walking in the west coast wilderness – Part 2 12 <i>Pete Tedder</i>
Biography: Clive Hurlstone 3	The Boboyan Pines project 14 <i>Syd Comfort</i>
Draft Tidbinbilla Management Plan 4 <i>Cathy Tighe</i>	Victoria's National Parks – The Next Century 15 <i>Timothy Walsh</i>
New strategies and plan chart a positive course 5 <i>Stephen Johnston</i>	Prophecy is fulfilled 16 <i>Martin Chalk</i>
Book launch: <i>Reptiles and frogs of the ACT</i> 5	Patagonia, Trekkers Dreamland 17 <i>Basia Meder</i>
Winter wanderings in Namadgi 6 <i>Max Lawrence</i>	Book review: <i>Australian Alps Walking Track</i> 18 <i>Babette Scougall</i>
New members 7	From roots to soaring petrels – weeding on Lord Howe Island 19 <i>Eleanor Stodart</i>
Mapping and weeding to save a grasshopper 8 <i>Graeme Wicks</i>	
The Enduring Life of Franklin Chalet 10 <i>Brett McNamara</i>	
Work Party News 11 <i>Len Haskew</i>	

National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers and committee

President

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

Immediate past president

Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004(h)

Secretary

Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)

Treasurer

Mike Smith 6286 2984(h)

Yvonne Bartos 6231 5699(h)

Len Haskew 6281 4268(h); fax 6281 4257

Stephen Johnston 6254 3738(h); 6264 2035(w)

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

Cover photo

Hazel Rath near Tom Brayshaw's hut site. (See article, 'Winter wanderings in Namadgi', p6.) Photo by Max Lawrence.

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

Telephone/Fax: (02) 6282 5813

Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606

Membership

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

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household members \$30 Single members \$25

Corporate members \$20 *Bulletin* only \$20

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 March issue: 1 February 1998.

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

This bulletin was produced by the NPA Bulletin Working Group with assistance from Green Words. Funds provided by the ACT Government under the ACT Environment Grants Program assisted in the production of this issue.

Printed by Copy-Qik Printers, Canberra, ACT on recycled paper.

ISSN 0727-8837

From the President

The National Parks Association, a Community Organisation

The National Parks Association (NPA) is part of the broad community; it is not an exclusive group of people. Our membership ranges from school students to retirees, with a diversity of lifestyles, employment and personal interests. What brings us together is our commitment to the aims and objectives of the NPA, which principally believes in the need for and enjoyment of national parks and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage.

The questions 'How many members do you have?' and 'How representative are you?' at times have been asked, most significantly when NPA has responded to government inquiries, appeared before a committee of the legislature, or made representations to a Minister or Member of the House of Assembly on environment planning or other areas in which we

have an interest. At the moment our membership numbers are stable, despite the gain or loss of 60 to 100 members each year. If the membership of the NPA were to shrink significantly, we may appear to be a community group of declining importance and a narrowing base.

The second question is more difficult but we are able to answer it with confidence. I think all members have the opportunity to participate in the sub committees, which are the policy development forums of the NPA, to put points of view in more informal ways such as discussions while taking part in the NPA's activities program, or to express their views through the *NPA Bulletin*.

The message which we must heed from those two questions is that the number of members and participation by members are important matters. If you know

people who would support the aims and objectives of the NPA, let them know what an active and worthwhile organisation it is, and give them a membership application form. If you have a point of view or would like to be involved with the detail of the conservation and park issues facing the NPA or have ideas for the activities program get in touch with some of those co-ordinators, whose names appear on the lower half of the preceding page. If you are thinking of not renewing your membership please reconsider or write to let us know why.

Finally and with less gravity, I hope to see you all at *Nil Desperandum* on Sunday 14th for our Christmas party. If you really cannot make it then I look forward to seeing you next year. A happy and relaxing holiday and best wishes to all for 1998.

Clive Hurlstone

Biography

CLIVE HURLSTONE aged 53 came to Canberra in the early 1950s and was educated here. Clive is married to Judith and they have two sons. He has lived in Weston Creek for 25 years, and worked for CSIRO in plant science for 30 years.

He has been interested in the environment and natural history since school days. In the 70s to early 80s he was involved with a group of scientists, who believed in the need for social responsibility in science, and who took part in many campaigns and inquiries, both nationally and locally (eg. Ranger Uranium Inquiry and the Molonglo Parkway). His interest in environmental protection was stimulated by wood chipping at Eden, the campaign to save Lake Pedder and the growing destruction of the coastal environment.

Clive joined the NPA in 1986 after reading the *Bulletin* in the CSIRO library and meeting members at work.

His first NPA walk was to Cotter Rocks led by Steven Forst. He started to attend general meetings regularly and was elected to the committee in 1991 when Beverley Hammond became President. He acted as President to fill the gap left at the AGM in August 1994, until Eleanor Stodart took over in February 1995, when he stepped into the Vice President's position, which he held until August 1997.

Clive works full time and said that he was only able to take on the President's position because of the strength of the committee and sub committee system, and the knowledge, commitment and support of the members. He looks forward to

the next 12 months with some trepidation expecting that it will be as busy for the NPA as the past year.



Draft Tidbinbilla Management Plan

This is a summary of the joint response by the NPA ACT and the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra (CCSERAC) to the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve draft management plan.

The NPA ACT and CCSERAC are generally supportive of the draft management plan which gives a commitment for the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural values of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. However, there were several concerns raised in the joint response, regarding the emphasis on tourist development and the relationship between the draft plan and other plans and strategies.

Of particular concern, is the apparent elevation of the Nature Based Tourism Strategy, to equal importance with the draft management plan. The Nature Based Tourism Strategy views TNR as a site for increased tourist development. This is inconsistent with the principles of the draft management plan which aims for conservation of the area. Neither document provides specific detail of the scale of, or proposes any limits to, any likely tourist development. The NPA and CCSERAC do not oppose commercial activity in principle, but believe these issues need to be addressed, particularly as the Nature Based Tourism Strategy has not been made widely available for public consultation.

The NPA ACT and CCSERAC believe TNR should continue to attract interstate and overseas visitors and there may be scope for limited development. However, the notion that the needs of visitors and the tourist industry should be emphasised rather than maintaining the conservation values of the area is rejected. The first priority should be protection of conservation values and this needs to be addressed.

One of the major difficulties with planning for TNR is the multiplicity of legislation and policies developed by the Commonwealth and ACT governments. Compounding this problem is the existence of two distinct and different land areas

within TNR, the special purpose reserve and the national park, with different purposes and requiring different management objectives. These factors have resulted in a range of plans and strategies dealing with specific issues. The NPA and CCSERAC are concerned that the draft management plan, although viewed as the principal policy document, may be compromised by other plans and strategies which may not have been made available to the public for comment and which may have different objectives.

The NPA believes TNR should be guided by one management plan rather than any other plan which may allow for increased tourism development and not provide for maintenance of conservation principles. NPA believes that the draft management plan should be the primary document, and that the reference to the Nature Based Tourism Strategy be deleted from the preface.

The two different land areas of TNR have special characteristics, and management issues regarding each zone need to be addressed separately. The NPA has reiterated a recommendation in the March 1995 submission that most of the ridge lines and adjacent slopes in TNR become part of Namadgi National Park which would recognise the values of the area more appropriately, but if this is not acceptable, then the preference would be to designate the area Tidbinbilla Nature Park and the special purpose reserve Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, both under the management of TNR staff. NPA believes this arrangement would better reflect the nature of the two areas.

The NPA and CCSERAC commended the approach in the draft management plan that conservation requirements would be given priority over recreational use.

The view is that there is no need for more vehicular or walking tracks in the national park zone. Existing fire access for fire control is adequate and the strategy of using existing fire breaks and backburning rather than construction of new tracks is supported. Likewise, the NPA believes the walking tracks for the public are adequate and there is no need for more to be constructed. The possibility of the development of facilities such as transmitters is opposed. However, if this were to go ahead, only existing sites should be used.

The draft management plan states that the TNR is appropriate for commercial activity providing it is carried out with sensitivity to the environmental attributes of the area and minimal or avoidance of negative impact, but provides no supporting arguments and only very broad parameters for consideration. The NPA and CCSERAC consider the most contentious issue to be the possibility of new structures being built, particularly overnight accommodation. This is opposed because of potential adverse impact on the values and character of TNR, and is completely unnecessary due to the close proximity of Canberra to the reserve. It is suggested in the plan that any plans for development would be made available for public consultation, but it does not provide specific details of when and where this will occur. The draft management plan does not provide details of limits to development, make provision for guidelines, or provide examples of the type of development which would not be permitted.

Of particular concern is the proposal for a new visitor information centre at the entrance to TNR. It would seem from statements in the draft public works implementation plan, that this has been pushed ahead without the chance for

Continued on page 5

Tidbinbilla Management Plan

Continued from page 4

comment from the public, and without any valid reason for a new development. The NPA and CCSEAC believe the existing visitor information centre is adequate and there is no need for a new development, and particularly not one situated near the entrance which would spoil the presently clear view of the valley.

The NPA and CCSEAC believe the draft management plan needs to make provision to maintain existing facilities and upgrade them to accommodate increased use by the public only where this will not compromise the undeveloped character of the area.

On the issue of introduction of entrance fees, it was recommended that the revenue be used by the Parks and Conservation Service for park management and species conservation activities and that the budget allocation should not be reduced accordingly.

Another area of concern relates to the lack of detail regarding measurable parameters and implementation of management operations in the draft management plan, and other plans, such as the Murrumbidge River Corridor and Canberra Nature Park management plans, which will result in a lack of management accountability. It is recommended that all management action be measurable so that the service and the public can assess whether objectives have been achieved.

Cathy Tighe

FOR SALE

One pair Hi-Tec Utah walking boots, size 10.

Worn only twice

\$60.00

Matthew Higgins 6247 7285

New strategies and plan chart a positive course

Two new draft strategies – the ACT Nature Conservation Strategy and the Campground Strategy for ACT Parks and Forests – and the new Bushfire Fuel Management Plan provide plenty of reason for optimism about the future of the ACT's remarkable nature conservation estate.

While the NPA has expressed some concerns about aspects of the Bushfire Fuel Management Plan, overall, these documents demonstrate a real depth of understanding and sensitivity for the complexities of conservation management which reflects very positively on Environment ACT.

Their release coincides broadly with the conclusion of the management restructuring and reforms of the Territory's nature conservation management agencies. The NPA has been very concerned about the serious impact on staff morale of this protracted period of uncertainty. With the establishment of Environment ACT it is vital that there be now a period of stability so the staff can perform their important work, confident about their own and their organisation's future.

It is to be hoped that we will see the implementation over time of the recommendations of the Nature

Conservation Strategy. The strategy's sound approach needs to be reflected in all aspects of the Territory's environmental management, not least in the last major plan awaiting development – the revised management plan for Namadgi National Park.

The NPA has been critical of the lack of specificity and prescription of draft management plans that have been released over the last two years. Nevertheless, the plans recognise the primacy of nature conservation needs.

The draft Campground Strategy demonstrates that there is ample room for development of visitor facilities without compromising the integrity and the special attractions of the ACT's parks and reserves. Its approach is exemplified by the recommendations that camping be prohibited at the Booroomba Rocks picnic area when an existing hardened site near the former Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station is developed and that group camping be accommodated at the former Orroral Tracking Station rather than through an expansion of the campground on the Orroral River.

Stephen Johnston
Convenor

Environment Sub Committee

Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory

by Ross Bennett

Book Launch

The National Parks Association of the ACT last month mailed invitations to members and others to attend the launch of Ross Bennett's book, *Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory*.

The ACT Chief Minister, Kate Carnell, MLA, will launch the book at Forestry House, Yarralumla, on December 9.

Priced at \$12 for members and \$14.95 for non-members, the book will be on sale at the NPA's Christmas party and at general meetings, and can be ordered from the association's office, with postage extra. It is also available from bookshops.

Winter wanderings in Namadgi

On the morning of 30 July 1997 ten hardy NPA walkers under the leadership of Graham Scully set out in brilliant winter conditions from Caloola Farm to spend three days visiting sites of historical interest further up the Naas Valley.

Faced with six crossings of the Naas, our destination for the first day was Max and Bert Oldfield's hut. This hut is located in a beautiful little valley hanging on the Booth Range high above the Naas – about 200 metres above in fact, as we found labouring our packs ever upwards in the glorious winter sun. The hut itself is a small and rudimentary iron clad construction with a flat roof, dirt floor and stone fireplace. It is in quite good shape, largely due to the cooperative efforts of Namadgi Park staff and the Kosciuszko Huts Association. It is also in remarkably original condition – the old kero frig still has its stock of reading material, ranging from westerns and Womens Weeklies to a Bible. These items are an integral part of the hut, and if they were to be lost through souveniring, theft, or any other form of vandalism the effect would be a permanent reduction in the value of



*Graham Scully and Laurie Westcott in Max and Bert's Hut.
Photo by Max Lawrence.*

the hut as a heritage item.

We did find though that the hut was too small for our group, and this meant use of the outside fireplace. There was no trouble avoiding the smoke, however. The cold air oozing down the valley behind the hut picked the smoke up and wafted it steadily and relentlessly straight down the creek, over the waterfall just below, and out into the void of the Naas Valley. The hut might be close to the water in the creek, but

it must have been a cold hole on winter nights.

As we huddled around the fire our intrepid and thoughtful leader produced a portable cassette player from his pack and played us an oral history interview of Max Oldfield by Matthew Higgins. It seems the hut was built in 1967 by the Oldfield cousins after they inherited the lease from their fathers, who managed the run from the colder Bog hut site even further up on the Booth Range. The Bog hut site has been visited at least a couple of times on NPA outings, most recently by Matthew Higgins in September.

As expected, the next morning we emerged from our frozen tents to a big white frost, but the sun rising over the Tinderries reached us early and soon things were thawing out. This day's expedition was to be a walk with day packs further up the Naas, into Reedy Creek, and back to the hut. After several kilometres and another crossing of the Naas we arrived at Tom Brayshaw's hut site. Although built as recently as 1962-63, the hut now comprises a collapsed pile of iron and timber slabs, some of which were originally taken from the site of a much older hut built by selector Hines early this century.



'Historians' at Max and Bert's hut. Photo by Max Lawrence.

Nearby is the grave of Mrs Mathieson, now marked by the original headstone and footstone and a more recently erected star picket. Mrs Mathieson was the wife of a stockman who found her murdered in mysterious circumstances when he returned from one of his trips. The date of the murder is unknown, but Mathieson was employed by James Booth, who sold the run to Garret Cotter in about 1860. The preservation of the lonely bush grave site for upwards of 130 years provides a very poignant link with our early pioneers.

Our walk up Reedy Creek was along the approximate route of a road nature has almost fully reclaimed, but which must have been a busy route for the little community living on the flats up the creek. We were able to locate the site of the hut where Harry Cotter (born 1860) lived with his wife Mary and their ten children. Not much remains today of their occupation, but we were able to find an old washing dish, some hearthstones, and various pieces of rusting metal.

On the third day of our outing we took a leisurely stroll back down the hill to the Naas, and then some of



Crossing the Naas. Photo by Max Lawrence

us were able to explore new ways of getting our feet cold and wet on the six river crossings. We all had a very pleasant three days, and we were certainly much more 'in touch' with the rural pioneers of our beloved Namadgi. We were also very much aware of how little remains of this important era of our history, and how fragile that remainder is. Let us be very careful to look after it.

In preparing for the trip Graham

drew on reports by Matthew Higgins: *Voices from the Hills: Namadgi Oral History Project*, and *Namadgi Sites*. Both projects were sponsored by the Kosciuszko Huts Association.

The crew were: Graham Scully (leader), Frank Clements, Jerry Jacobsen, David Large, Eric Pickering, Hazel Rath, Laurie Westcott, Barry Ridgeway and Tim Walsh.

Max Lawrence

New Members, July to November

Laurie and Robin Westcott	Weetangera
Stuart Whitten, Carolyn Young, Kirrilie Horswille and Paul Rowberry	Cook
Paul, Matt, Leah Satrutynski and Sue O'Loughlin	Kambah
Brian Fuller	Pearce
John Hopkins	Fraser
Ann McDevitt	Wanniassa
Helen and Jim Stevens	Pearce
Maureen Howard	Lyneham
Kathy Tracy	Belconnen
Sharon Pretty	Holt
Helen Hansen	Garran
Steve Galliford	Torrens
Barry McHugh	Civic Square
Brian Slee	Curtin
Brian Fuller	Pearce

Building up Victoria's snow country

Large-scale proposals to turn parts of Australia's scarce, ancient and weathered alpine peaks into bustling European-American type resorts regularly emerge, with development plans for Mt Stirling and Mt Hotham being the most recent in Victoria.

The Government has approved the doubling of the lifted ski field capacity at Mt Hotham in the Mt Loch-Swindlers Spur area. The top lift stations are only metres from the Alpine National Park Boundary and impact on the Park's remote and wilderness values. They are clearly visible from strategic points inside the park, including from Mount Feathertop.

In addition to this now completed expansion of ski terrain, the Mt Hotham Skiing company's wider integrated plan includes substantial residential sub-division and village redevelopment at the Mt Hotham resort, construction of hundreds more condominiums, nine hole golf course and polo field at nearby Dinner Plain resort, and controversially, a high altitude (1300 metre) international jet-capable airport at neighbouring Horse Hair Plain.

ParkWatch, June 1997.

Mapping and weeding to save a grasshopper

The difficulty with the *Keyacris scurra* wingless grasshopper is that its food seems to be largely restricted to two types of button daisies, and these buttons do not do well in improved pastures or in competition with exotic weeds.

As a result the grasshopper now exists in the ACT only in small, isolated 'islands' of relatively undisturbed grassland and grassy woodland.

If these habitats go, so does Key's Matchstick, as *K. scurra* is known in the vernacular.

The species gets its name from its appearance – it looks more like a piece of match than a stereotypical grasshopper – together with the name of the scientist, Dr K H L Key, who first wrote about it.

In a 1994 paper by D A Driscoll, it was described as a 'threatened' species.

The strategy for the just-completed Green Corps project to protect a *K. scurra* community at the Kambah Pool reserve, had two prongs. These were, to map and document the five-hectare site for its natural and artificial components, and to remove the weeds. The purpose of the initial mapping was to provide a register of its state at the start of the project and so allow subsequent changes to be accurately noted.

The Green Corps team submitted their report on the project, together with maps showing vegetation and weeding activity, to Murrumbidgee River Corridor rangers on November 13.

Weeding and mapping

The area is fenced, so there was no problem from grazing stock, and although it is part of a popular recreational area, walkers mainly keep to a defined track and are unlikely to trample either the grasshoppers or the button daisies.

The Green Corps strategy of mapping and weeding was based on a report prepared in 1995 by the CSIRO, for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service which had a major role in the project.

According to the report, a survey of 700 hectares of woodland and grassland in the northern ACT confirmed *K. scurra* on seven sites with a total area of 25 hectares. The survey discovered three new populations, but two previously known populations were found to be extinct. Another population was reported in the Namadgi National Park.

The Green Corps project was a continuation of experimental control and monitoring programs for St John's wort at the site. Biological control has significantly stunted the growth of individual wort plants.

The Green Corps started work on June 10. The mapping on a scale 1:500 took 10 days. The site, which was known to contain endangered and locally rare plants, was divided into 100m by 100m sectors and then 5m transects, and everything significant was documented.

Checkerboard pattern

Two button varieties – *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* and *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (which has flowers very like those of a typical daisy and which seems to be the grasshoppers' favourite food) – and kangaroo grass were mapped, along with the occurrence of weeds.

The most invasive weed was found to be the St John's wort (in the long-stemmed, narrow-leaved strain), followed by phalaris, and various minor weeds.

The weeds were removed by hand or by systemic weedicide, often a weed at a time, so that neighbouring native grasses were not damaged.

This was done over eight days in a checkerboard pattern of cleared and uncleared 10m squares. This has ensured that impact will be in progressive stages, and means that the effectiveness of the strategy can be assessed before weeding is resumed next year.

A survey of the grasshoppers by the Green Corps team was carried out in early spring, and the results of the weeding activities will be monitored progressively by the CSIRO.

More species found

The Green Corps group working on the project had 10 young members and the team supervisor, Judd



Attempting to flush out specimens of Key's Matchstick are (l to r) the ACT Parks and Conservation Service ranger liaising with the Green Corps team on the project, Darren Roso, the Team Supervisor, Judd Boeker, and team member Laurence Cooke. Photo by Graeme Wicks.

Boeker of the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV), which administers the Green Corps program nationally.

The Kambah Pool area is a 'rich site with other little gems' besides *K. scurra*, Judd says. While carrying out their work, his team found another species of wingless grasshopper.

Judd says many people have probably seen the grasshopper without realising that it was a living insect.

'When they jump out of the way, you can easily mistake them for a piece of straw or grass kicked up by your boot,' he says.

This is an experience some NPA members might have had – the Kambah Pool – Casuarina Sands walking track passes through the site.

Since working on the project, Judd has found small, as yet undocumented colonies of the grasshopper in other locations. There are lots of colour variations, especially between different communities, ranging from a grey, winter-grass colour to orange and light green.

After completing the major work on the grasshopper project, Judd's team moved to erosion control work for Canberra Nature Parks (Northside) at Mulligan's Flat Nature Reserve.

Unanswered questions

K. scurra has been studied and documented over the years but many basic questions about it and how to manage its habitat are yet to be answered.

These are questions like, the effects of fire and grazing on the grasshopper populations, the type and density of food plants it requires, where it lays its eggs, where it spends the night, and factors influencing mortality at its various stages of growth.

Among things known about the grasshopper are, that it breeds in September–November, males reach adulthood in May and the females mature in the spring. Hatching is from spring to February.



The Green Corps team killing weeds between transect lines, by poisoning them or removing them by hand. Photo by Judd Boeker.

Programs in the ACT

The grasshopper habitat work was part of round two of the three rounds of Green Corps projects so far allocated for the ACT. They comprise one for the Namadgi/Tidbinbilla National Park and two for the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. All are carried out with the advice and approval of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Round one, commenced in March, was focused on Namadgi and Tidbinbilla. The major activity was maintenance of walking tracks, with high priority given to the walking track in Namadgi National Park, and management of erosion in the parks. Improvement of the platypus habitat and reduction of fire threats in the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, and the removal of invasive flora from both parks were other round one activities.

The aim of the round two project was to assist with the protection of the habitat of the wingless grasshopper within the Murrumbidgee River Corridor as well as with erosion control on Mount Painter. Wingless grasshopper surveys, weed control, vegetation mappings and erosion control comprise the major activity. The round two project commenced in May.

The round three project involves the revegetation and maintenance of indigenous riparian plants and grasses along the Murrumbidgee

River Corridor. It is planned to exclude stock and remove exotic weeds from revegetation sites.

Conservation training

Announced in the 1996 Federal Budget, the Green Corps program gives Australians between 17–20, with an interest in the environment, an opportunity for accredited training whilst taking part in environmental projects.

Green Corps projects are designed to give young people a full-time training position for between six and 12 months. Team members receive accredited training in bush regeneration techniques, habitat protection and restoration, and environmental rehabilitation.

Projects focus on areas where environmental and heritage restoration and conservation is a high priority.

The Federal Government provided \$41.6 million over three years for the Green Corps program. In that time, it is expected that 3500 young Australians will have taken part in the program.

The Government contracted the ATCV to administer and manage the Green Corps program nationally for the first 18 months. The Government will seek expressions of interest for the remaining period of the program.

ATCV is responsible for selecting participants, establishing and supervising projects and providing field support.

Graeme Wicks

The Enduring Life of Franklin Chalet

Surrounded by storm-blasted snow gums which have withstood the ravages of time, a picturesque mountain setting is the backdrop for a quaint ski chalet, found high on the Brindabella Range.

Built by the founding members of the Canberra Alpine Club in the summer of 1937-38, the Mount Franklin ski chalet represents an important and tangible link in the development of Australian skiing. Standing proudly as the oldest surviving club-built ski lodge in the Australian Alps national parks, the chalet and site are unique in a regional context.

Today, Franklin provides an insight into an aspect of our alpine heritage and typifies an outstanding example of cooperation between a community-based club and the ACT Government. The Canberra Alpine Club and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service are committed to the long-term management of the site and the significant values it represents, in terms of the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the pioneering spirit of club members.

Next year marks the 60th anniversary of the official opening of the chalet. The joint managers are keen to highlight and promote this significant occasion and the rich heritage values the site represents.

Under the Mount Franklin Chalet Conservation Plan, developed in



Mount Franklin chalet in July 1995. Photo by Brett McNamara.

cooperation with the Canberra Alpine Club and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, the plan identified the need to publicly display and interpret examples of the unique history of the chalet and environs. One avenue of achieving this objective is through regular 'chalet open days' held as part of our ranger-guided walk program.

Recently, the Canberra Alpine Club and the ACT Parks and Conservation Service completed a joint project of collating a representative collection of photographs of over 50 years of skiing in the Brindabellas. The photos, known as *The Franklin Collection*, provide an unprecedented window of opportunity to view a bygone era of Australian skiing. The collection is available for research upon request

and for general public viewing, and complements the endeavours to advance the significant heritage values of the chalet during 'open days'.

Periodically the chalet is also open for inspection during 'snow-weekends'. With heavy snow conditions closing the Mount Franklin Road at the adjacent carpark, the chalet is a welcome sight, allowing visitors not only the opportunity to seek shelter, but to gain an insight into and appreciation of a way of life and standard of skiing accommodation unfamiliar to many people today.

An exciting project planned for the site is the implementation of an ambitious interpretative strategy for the area. In essence, the project is designed to encapsulate the history and human experiences of Mount Franklin through an integrated series of outdoor and indoor interpretative display panels and signs. An integral component of the project will be *The Franklin Collection* which will form the basis of a self-guided walk with strategically located interpretative signs. When completed, visitors will have the opportunity to glean a little of the history and social experiences of Franklin.



Living room, Mount Franklin chalet.

Photo by T. Gibson.

Continued on page 11

Franklin Chalet

Continued from page 10

Completed recently was the second phase of improving security at the chalet. The work undertaken modified some of the existing shutters by facing the whole shutter with 'Lexan' to increase the effectiveness of the security barrier which as a result, admits more natural light to the otherwise gloomy interior; other shutters will be modified so they can be temporarily removed as the need arises.

An initiative of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, and one the service is keen to foster and support, is the display of Franklin ski memorabilia items. This project is designed to publicly display and promote ski equipment from a bygone era which were once used at

Franklin. Canberra Alpine Club members have kindly donated a number of old skis and other pieces of ski equipment and memorabilia. These items are certainly welcomed by visitors, in terms of increasing their understanding and appreciation of the complexities involved in 'brumby skiing', from the very simple 'strap your feet in and go' to the advent of 'ankle release' and 'safety bindings'.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service would certainly appreciate any further contributions of Franklin memorabilia, whatever they may be, from either current or former club members or people who once skied at Franklin.

As you can see a number of exciting projects are planned or are currently underway at Mount

Franklin. As 1998 approaches and the 60th anniversary of the chalet, plans are well underway to elevate the occasion with a major open day to mark such a significant event. It is envisaged that as a highlight of next year's ACT Heritage Festival, Franklin chalet will take prominence in promoting the unique cultural heritage values of the Australian mainland's oldest club-built ski lodge.

If you would like to discuss any of the above projects in detail or would like more information regarding the plans for the 60th anniversary, please contact me on ph. 6247 8153.

Brett McNamara
Ranger, Namadgi National Park
ACT Parks and Conservation
Service.

Work Party News

Many readers will recall a work party weekend in the Boboyan Pines area 'tagging' rabbit warrens to make them more readily visible when park staff were conducting their eradication programs. The people who participated will, no doubt, be pleased to know that a bulldozer has at last been made available and that the warrens we tagged have now been destroyed. Shortly there will be a monitoring procedure put in place which will give an indication of how effective the rabbit eradication program has been. Throughout the ripping and rehabilitation process the park workers have been very careful not to disturb any sites that may have had cultural significance.

At the end of August we had a very successful work party in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. The object was to remove pine wildings in the area between Kambah Pool and Jews Corner. There was a great rollup of volunteers and literally hundreds of wildings were removed – they ranged in size from those that could be pulled out by hand to three trees that required the attention of the ranger's chain saw. Cutting out

wildings is quite satisfying as you immediately see the results of your work. An added bonus for many of us was discovering a very scenic part of the river right on our doorstep.

October saw us back in the Boboyan Pines area attacking the rampaging briars. This task doesn't have the immediate appeal of removing pines, but it is nevertheless important and our activities are much appreciated by the park managers.

Forthcoming work parties are planned for 13 December to tidy up the area around *Nil Desperandum* for our Christmas Party and early next year we will be involved building a walking track in Namadgi – see the Outings Program for details.

For those of you who have not been involved in work parties previously, come along and give one a try. Participants all seem to enjoy their day out in the open and there is the added satisfaction that something worthwhile has been achieved. No special skills are required, except a readiness to knock off promptly when the frequent smokos are called.

Len Haskew



*The August work party took on the pine wildings. Here the 'boss', Len Haskew, tackles a rather large one.
Photo by Olive Buckman.*

Walking in the west coast wilderness - Part 2

In February 1997, Kathy Saw, Judith Webster, Annette and Mike Smith, Di Thompson, David Large, and Pete and Annie Tedder did a 16-day walk on the remote west coast of Tasmania, starting from the rarely used Moores Valley airstrip. An edited and greatly abridged version of track notes of the first eight days appeared in the last issue of the NPA Bulletin. The walk continues.

Day 9, February 15: Wreck Bay to Bond Bay (13km, 8hrs)

5.30am - Kathy wakes us. It is dark and we pack by torchlight. At 7.30am promptly, Kathy leads us up the ridge line to emerge onto the button grass within 200m of our camp. It is brilliant sunshine.

Two routes suggest themselves and may be termed the 'high' route, using the De Witts as a natural pathway, or the 'low' route through the pass which is the watershed between the Towterer and White Horse Creeks. Our immediate attention is to avoid the swampy ground of Towterer Creek. This imperative sees us veering to the higher and drier ground.

We make good progress in the light rain which is now falling, and after lunch we move at first through thickish scrub along White Horse Creek, and walk across the low hills to the bay. We cross the mouth of the creek and enjoy the walk around Larsen's Rocks to the shelter, arriving at 3.30pm.

Presumably, the two-sided shelter has been built on the site of the hut now marked on the map. A tank supplies fresh water, although there is no shortage of small creeks along the beach. We could find no trace of the track in surrounding thick bauera, cutting grass and tea tree scrub. Wood is scarce but most disappointing is the litter of beer cans, broken glass and rubbish, including a bath tub, strewn around the site and along the beach. A quick search up and down the beach does not offer an alternative site so reluctantly we set up our camp. Later, we half fill a heavy duty plastic bag with beer cans and broken glass and this will be taken out tomorrow.

Day 10, February 16: Bond Bay to Melaleuca by the Southern Explorer

Around 12.30pm an indistinct white blob is seen, just where the boat ought to be, and a few minutes later, there is no doubt. Don, the *Southern Aurora's* amiable skipper, comes ashore to ferry us on board. A welcome surprise waits on board: fresh bread and a delicious salad lunch. As the boat weighs anchor, there is not much conversation.

We call at Schooner Bay to collect Gerry MacNally and two other bushwalkers from the Launceston Club who have been exploring the area between Spain Bay and Noyhener Beach over the last six days. We swap yarns about the area which Annie, Judith, Kathy and I last visited in 1995.

As the boat moves along the Channel, I take the opportunity to inspect Balmoral Hill, the Narrows and Mount Rugby through my binoculars. The west face of Mount Rugby, which we intend to climb in a few days' time, is uniformly steep but the outstanding feature of this route is the huge rock slabs which can be slippery.

It is a happy party that finally arrives at Melaleuca in the late afternoon. The boat trip had been a perfect ending to the first part of the expedition and the weather for the crossing could not have been better. We collect the fresh food and our day packs with clean clothes from the airfield shed, settle in and have the luxury of discussing what we will eat that night. Everyone is in high spirits and we drink a toast to the safe and trouble-free completion of the last 10 days.

Annette unselfishly volunteers to cook mince and vegies, assisted by David and Mike.

Days 11 and 12, February 17-18: Rest days at Melaleuca

Melaleuca owes its existence to the tin ore found underneath the soil. The ore body has been worked since prior to World War Two, when Charles King took up the lease. His son, Deny King, continued working the mine after the war and the mine is still being operated by the Wilsons who move the ore out in their yacht *Rallinga*. Deny King's house is now preserved by his daughters and is well worth a visit as is the bird



Refreshed after two days' rest at Melaleuca, the group set out on Day 13 for The Narrows. Pictured are (l to r): Tim Walsh, Mike Smith, David Large, Kathy Saw, Annette Smith, Judith Webster, Annie Tedder and Pete Tedder. Photo by Di Thompson.

observatory built to count the incidence of orange-bellied parrots, now an endangered species.

When King built the airstrip in the '60s, the area became more accessible to walkers, and the unique natural attractions of the region led to the South West National Park being placed on the World Heritage List. From here, the bushwalker can walk either to Cockle Creek along the South Coast Track, or north along the Old Port Davey Track and across the Narrows to Scotts Peak Dam on Lake Pedder. A campsite and two huts are provided for walkers. Nearby, a ranger's hut has radio communication to Hobart.

Day 13, February 19: Melaleuca – The Narrows, (13km, 6hrs)

At the Narrows we find the boats and launch them from the wooden slipways. With Tim and Mike rowing, we are all over in 45 minutes and arrive at the campsite near Farrel Point after six hours easy, if rather muddy, walking.

Day 14, February 20: Unsuccessful attempt on Mount Rugby

The 7.30am start was postponed due to occasional rain. We set off at 9.00am for the boat, and Annie and Kathy row Tim and I 500m to the far shore of Ila Bay.

And then the rain starts, fairly heavily and does not let up; the wind picks up sending a small chop down the bay and I begin to worry about the girls' ability to get back when we are all on the Rugby side of the bay. As Mike skilfully lands the last boatload in the now increasing wind and rain we all simultaneously reach the same unhappy decision — abort.

Day 15, February 21: Side trips to Balmoral Hill and Mount Beattie

All up before sunrise. We work solidly and are away on time. Sunrise is hidden behind an eerie blanket of mist with visibility down to 50m. The boat is launched, and quick as a flash Mike, David Kathy and Di disappear into the swirling mist... Out of the mist, quietly, comes a large yacht, the *Sea Eagle*,



On Balmoral Hill, Day 15, the group had a 360-degree view of hills and water. The Bathurst Channel is in the background.

Pictured are (l to r): Mike Smith, Tim Walsh, Judith Webster, Pete Tedder, Annette Smith, Kathy Saw, Annie Tedder, and Di Thompson. Photo by David Large.

under power and a male voice calls, 'Is Kathy Saw there?'

The voice identifies himself as Paul Rand, an old mate of Kathy's from her orienteering days.

As the crossing proceeds, Paul and Margaret Rand join us in their dinghy, having anchored *Sea Eagle* in Clytie Cove nearby. As to their knowledge of Kathy's presence, they had visited Melaleuca yesterday and had read our entry in the log.

The mist burns off and blue sky greets us. Tents are erected in a hurry and we leave at 10.30am for Balmoral Hill.

We walk easily along the ridge top to avoid the thicker scrub and grass along the shore. At the top, our prize is a 360-degree unobstructed view of the countryside and particularly of the Bathurst Channel, glittering under the bright sky. This view will stay in my memory for a long time. After a latish lunch back at camp, only Mike, Annette and I leave for Mount Beattie (7km) in mid afternoon. It is an easy walk with a good view across Bathurst Harbour to the Western Arthurs and straight down Melaleuca Inlet as far as Cox Bight. In the afternoon, it is disappointing to see the sky cloud over but a pleasant surprise comes in the form of the Rands bearing beer and champagne for pre-dinner drinks.

Day 16, February 22: Return to Melaleuca (13km)

It rains in the night and it is a dismal day as we leave for Melaleuca – low strato-cumulus

with frequent rain squalls. The track is predictably muddy and we push on to the airstrip with only two brief stops, arriving at 11.50am. The cloud ceiling is well below the surrounding hills, so our private thoughts are concerned with whether or not we will get out by plane today. We are greeted by the sight of a party of 12 walkers. They tell us that they have come from Cockle Creek, arriving yesterday, and have been waiting since 10.00am. They will have priority – so, assuming the worst, we claim the new hut, change into dry clothes and check our rations.

In the hut the mood is one of quiet resignation mixed with an alertness for the sound of any incoming aircraft. We hear it, all rush out and are disappointed on seeing the green livery of TASAIR landing another party of walkers. Ten minutes later, the hum of approaching aircraft is heard and to our relief, the red livery of Par Avion is seen. Tonight, after 15 days, it will be hot showers and lots of beer after all.

As we gain height, my mood is one of quiet pleasure at the end of our fifth successive Tasmanian adventure. Beneath us, the bright red, green and blue waterproofs of those starting out along the South Coast Track are brief torches of colour in the otherwise drab brown of button grass. As we follow the coast at low level, Annette and Di are animated as the beautiful coastline reveals itself in all its moodiness. Judith sleeps.

Pete Tedder

The Boboyan Pines project

Ann Connolly, project officer for the Boboyan Pines rehabilitation, addressed the August general meeting of the association. This article has been prepared from the notes which she used for that address.

Background

The Boboyan pines were planted in 1966 on 380 hectares of degraded grazing land. The area was included in the Gudgenby Nature Reserve in 1979 and then in Namadgi National Park in 1984. In 1983 wildfire damaged about half of the plantation. The 1986 Namadgi Management Plan called for the removal of the pines and rehabilitation of the area with native species. 1996 saw the commencement of this work.

First season of field operations

ACT Forests began upgrading roads in the plantation in December 1996. Sections of the road leading to the Hospital Creek compartments had to be widened, overhanging branches removed, and drains formed. A major task was the laying of a pipe and new crossing over Bogong Creek. In the subsequent dry weather, logging truck traffic created bull-dust in the Hospital Creek area and upgrading of the road during operations was necessary. The crossing along the Old Boboyan Road became wide and deep requiring a concrete crossing to be laid in the following spring.

The plantation comprises 17 compartments and in the first season five of these covering 119 hectares were felled and a start made on a sixth. In addition, Namadgi workers have felled scattered trees which are not marketable, in a further compartment. Most of the felling has been done by ACT Forests with some being done by a chainsaw gang contracted by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

From the outset there has been a recognition of the importance of monitoring the impact of operations

on the ground and on water quality. Before work in each compartment begins, on-site inspections identify possible problem areas. The project officer then visits regularly to check if problems are developing and, if so, corrective action is put in hand. Water quality monitoring began in November 1996 with data being collected at six sites about every two weeks. Turbidity and pH are the essential measures but temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and low phosphate are also measured.

Second season of field operations

In November 1997, ACT Parks and Conservation and ACT Forests will confirm the compartments to be felled, with work expected to begin in late December '97 or early January '98. Further roadwork will be done on the Old Boboyan Road as far as Franks Hut and to compartments beyond this. Rehabilitation work planned covers both site preparation and revegetation. The service is looking to burning the slash in four of the compartments already felled. This would provide a seed bed and assist in the control of pine wildings. CSIRO and ACT forests have provided advice on burning in each compartment.

Revegetation is expected to commence with the selective sowing of seed in a way which will permit evaluation of the techniques adopted and the testing of the impact of herbivores. Sites will be selected after the burning of the slash. The ANU Research School of Biological Sciences will assist with the setting up of shelters to protect seedlings against cold photo inhibition.

Seed collection and sowing trials

The quantity of seed collected to date is 255 kilograms, somewhat less than half the estimated requirement of 600 kilograms. The indications are that the coming season will not be a good one for seed

collecting. A 50 square metre fenced plot has been established to test for the best season in which to sow seed.

Interpretation and volunteer groups

A display on the Boboyan project has been set up in the Namadgi Visitors Centre, a handout prepared for the public and a sign erected on the logging site. The employment of a Green Corps group and the establishment of a Boboyan volunteer group are being pursued. Volunteer tasks could include the sowing of seed, planting of seedlings, construction of fences and the control of weeds. A wide appeal for volunteers is being considered with the NPA expected to take a leading role.

Research

CSIRO landscape ecologists from the Division of Wildlife and Ecology (ACT) are preparing recommendations for the rehabilitation of the area. A workshop held in July drew attention to factors such as the need to be realistic about what can be done and how long it will take, the effects climate could have on the plant communities which develop and the need to recognise naturally grassy areas which should not be sown or planted with trees.

Throughout the address, Ann drew attention to the high level of co-operation between the Parks Service and ACT Forests which is evident in the project and stressed the importance of this for a successful outcome.

Update

Since delivering her address, Ann has advised that tenders for further seed collecting are being called and preparations for the autumn burns are proceeding. In order to have access to a range of consultation and advice on the project, a Boboyan Pines Plantation Working Group is being established. Invitations to join this group were extended in October and to date three replies, all acceptances, have been received.

Syd Comfort

Victoria's National Parks – The Next Century

Stephen Johnston, Ray Polglaze and Timothy Walsh attended the Victorian National Parks Association's conference on 24–25 October. A field trip took place on 26 October.

The aim of the conference was to 'look at issues crucial to the future management of Victoria's remarkable conservation reserve system'. Given the current Victorian Government's grim determination to commercialise Victoria's parks system, the conference could not have been more timely or the topics discussed more urgent.

The conference was opened, halfway through, by the Victorian Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Hon Marie Tehan MP. Besides announcing the purchase of several small threatened grassland areas and the possibility of a marine national park in 1998, the Minister had little good news for Victorians. Along with her two senior parks bureaucrats, who also spoke at the conference, she seemed to have little understanding of the role of national parks in nature conservation. As with conservative governments throughout Australia at the moment, management buzzwords are replacing real commitment to expand and protect conservation reserves.

Very different language was used by most of the other speakers! Bing Lucas, the internationally known and admired former director of national parks in New Zealand and now vice president of International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) gave a lucid speech on national park activities worldwide. He drew attention to the perilous position of many national parks in the USA where commercial activities have been allowed to expand due to the political influence of their promoters, and to the detriment of nature conservation. He then described several interesting developments in the Pacific where trust funds set up by

conservation groups are being used to encourage the preservation of natural vegetation to the benefit of the local people.

Dr Karen Edyvane, a South Australian scientist, delivered a brilliant talk entitled 'A representative system – the forgotten areas' which pointed out graphically how marine protection in Australia has been dominated by the Great Barrier Reef and has neglected the equally, if not more, important waters of the temperate zone.

Barry Traill of the Victorian Trust for Nature painted a bleak picture of the rate at which birds in Victoria are becoming extinct because of the massive reduction in native grasslands and woodlands. New reserves are desperately needed as are innovative means to persuade private landholders to conserve the native vegetation still existing.

Dr Ken Marriott, a private recreational consultant, pointed out that national parks could not be all things to all people. The increasing leisure time available to people means that other venues for walking the dog, picnics, cycling and so on must be provided if national parks are to continue their nature conservation role.

Others to participate in the panel discussions at the conference included Don Saunders, Robyn Kruk, Jaimie Kirkpatrick, Jeremy Reynolds, David Foster and by videotape, Ros Garnett, the 91-year-old founding secretary of the Victorian National Parks Association. On Saturday afternoon four workshops were held on park stewardship and protection, people and parks, parks and biodiversity and Aboriginal aspirations.

The proceedings of the conference were summed up by Doug Humann, director of the Australian Bush Heritage Fund. Hope and disappointment were his theme. Doug expressed disappointment that Australian governments were not heeding the warnings of overseas experience in regard to the pitfalls

and irreversibility of commercialisation of nature conservation areas. He pointed out that Tourism Victoria had a strategy to push for commercial development in national parks but that Parks Victoria appeared to have no vision, no passion for nature conservation and no commitment to public consultation. He emphasised the need for constant, clear statements on the purpose of national parks and what was allowed to take place in them. The profit motive must never drive the management of national parks; they must be properly resourced by government.

Once more the message is that the network of national parks associations must strive mightily to preserve and extend what has already been achieved. This can only be done by a large, active, vocal and vigilant membership.

Two field trips were arranged to 'forgotten' areas of vital conservation importance; remnant Box and Ironbark woodlands near Heathcote and native grasslands of the Merri Creek catchment.

I attended the day-long excursion to learn about the threats to the remnant Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands. These are considered the most threatened and least reserved woodland habitats in Victoria. They are chock-a-block full of rare and endangered plant and animal species and are high in biodiversity. They are threatened by all the usual culprits: grazing, feral animals and plants, mining, fire trails, residential subdivision, eucalyptus oil extraction and timber harvesting including devastating firewood collection. The scientific evidence for the preservation of these critical habitats is well proven. Conservationists in Victoria are now lobbying the Victorian and Commonwealth governments to fulfil their long-standing pledges to create adequate reserves for these vital areas.

Timothy Walsh

Prophecy is fulfilled

On 15th June a small group of NPA walkers set off along Grassy Creek to try their hand at time travel. No Dr Who and his Tardis, no General Theory of Relativity, only keen imaginations, a biting breeze and structures such as Brayshaw's Hut, Westerman's Homestead and the remains of old fences were at hand to aid their task.



Martin Chalk and the early property marker near border marker E2. Photo by Col McAlister.

Everyone seemed to gain from the experience – stories shared, ideas about century-old rural lifestyles tested and historical sites revisited. Interestingly, at Westerman's Homestead, Ian Bell, a guest of mine for the walk, found a piece of newsprint dated 17 August 1917 plastered to the wall.

During the course of the walk Max Lawrence frequently remarked on the fragility of these historical sites. A bushfire or vandalism could spell the end to days such as these. The importance of Max's words rang true when we visited Harold Chauncy's 1910 property survey mark on the Boboyan Divide and the nearby border survey mark left by Freddie

Johnston in 1915. Those with cameras were keen to record these relics, as their wonderful forest setting was clearly a threat to their survival. Little did I know how near the end was.

Some three weeks later I returned to these marks to photograph them in the snow. Chauncy's was in place, proud and erect, advertising the location of what was once a boundary on Thomas Westerman's property. Satisfied with my work, I set off for Johnston's border survey mark.

I found the location without difficulty but not the tree. Puzzled, I looked further afield, ever conscious of not ruining a potentially good photo by leaving foot prints all over the snow. After a short time I found the cairn which had cued Max and me, in our search for the mark three weeks earlier. I looked in the direction of the tree – nothing. With considerable disappointment and some sadness I realised that Max's words had come true. The old tree had succumbed, not to bushfire but to wind. Two very windy periods had occurred since we visited the site and I suspect one of these was the cause of Freddie



Freddie Johnson's border marker E42. Photo by Col McAlister.

Johnston's handiwork now lying face down in the snow.

So, those who obtained photos of Johnston's border survey mark on that cool day in June, care for them. They may be useful and valuable.

Martin Chalk



Freddie Johnston's now prostrate survey tree on the Boboyan Divide. Photo by Olive Buckman.

14-15 February weekend car camp 3A
Kosciuszko Ref: Mount Kosciuszko 1:50 000
Leader: Len Haskew Phone: 6281 4268

We will leave Canberra Friday evening and set up camp at Sawpit Creek. On Saturday we walk the Main Range circuit from Charlottes Pass, taking in Mt Kosciuszko summit, Lake Albina, Carruthers Peak, Blue Lake and the Snowy. On Sunday we will do a shorter walk in the morning, perhaps to Porcupine Rocks, returning to Canberra after lunch. Join us for one or both days. Phone leader for details, and book early so a reservation can be made at the campground. 400 kms, \$80 per car (plus camping fee and KNP entry).

21-22 February weekend packwalk 1A
Goodradigbee River, Wee Jasper Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Fiona MacDonald Brand Phone: 6247 9538

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

25 February daywalk 1A
Wednesday walk
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

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

28 February daywalk 1A
Mt Domain Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Leader: Len Haskew Phone: 6281 4268

Meet at picnic area carpark on Uriarra road just off the Cotter road (near Duffy) at 8.30am. A short walk with a climb of 680m. The walk starts at the Fishing Gap firetrail and then proceeds along a roughish track to Mt Domain and a good (but distant) view of Ginini Falls if they are flowing. The distance is less than 10km, so we can take the climb slowly. 70 kms, \$14 per car (plus entrance to TNR if applicable).

28 February to 1 March weekend packwalk 3A/D/E/F
Euranbene Mountain and Woila Clearing Refs: Badja,
Snowball 1:25 000
Leader: Phil Gatenby Phone: 6254 3094

Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this partly exploratory walk in Deua National Park. Camp at a clearing on Woila Creek. A climb of almost 1100 metres on the second day. 360kms, \$72 per car.

1 March Sunday daywalk 2A/C/E
Cathedral Rocks Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Col McAlister Phone: 6288 4171

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. A climb from the Orroral campground of some 400m to hill 1316, and then a descent of about 100m to Cathedral Rocks – an immense rock formation. A bit of a scramble

up the rocks to magnificent views across the Orroral Valley. Return via Orroral homestead and track to campground. 70 kms, \$14 per car.

7 – 8 March weekend packwalk 2A/D/E
Corang Circuit Ref: Corang 1:25 000
Leader: Mike Smith Phone: 6286 2984

Contact leader by Friday 27 Feb for details. A walk from the Wog Wog entrance to the Budawangs via Corang Peak to camp near Canowie Brook. Next day follow Corang River (some scrub bashing) to Corang Lagoon for lunch and another swim, and then return to Wog Wog along the track. 250 kms, \$50 per car.

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

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

14 – 16 March long weekend packwalk 2/C/D/E
Mt Talaterang Reference: CMW Budawangs
Leader: Steven Forst Phone: 251 6817 (h), 279 1326 (w)

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

16 March Canberra Day
ACT Alive Lawns opposite Old Parliament House
Contacts
Max Lawrence: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)
Yvonne Bartos: 6231 5699

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

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

Phone leader well ahead to enable bookings to be made at campsite. We will take the long but enjoyable drive to Minnamurra Rainforest (in Budderoo National Park near Kiama) on Saturday morning, and explore

the forest and Minnamurra Falls in the afternoon. On Saturday evening we will camp, probably at nearby Jamberoo. On Sunday we will take some of the walks at beautiful Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, lunch at Robertson, view some of the many waterfalls in the area (optional), and motor home. Come for one or both days. 500kms, \$100 per car (plus \$7.50 park entrance fee, plus camp fee).

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

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

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

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

March packwalk (dates to be negotiated) 2A/B/C/D
Orroral to Kiandra Ref: Tintangara 1:100 000
Leader: Graham Scully Phone: 6230 3352

A seven day walk for those who savour the pauses as well as the going, through the Cotter, Bimberi, Oldfields Hut, Old Currango, Currango (for a hot shower and bed), Tintangara Dam, Hains Hut on the Murrumbidgee, Wild Horse Plain to Kiandra. Good trout fishing. Expressions of interest to leader. Number limited to eight.

PARKWATCH: Wilderness or Wilderless

The recent debate about the closing of the Newhaven Gap road should now be put in perspective. This event, together with the Grose Wilderness nomination proposed by the Confederation (of Bushwalking Clubs – NSW) in February 1966 could mean that we bushwalkers will have to walk further to our favourite places. I'm sure we can expect to hear about more road closures in the future.

I have been reading a few of the old issues of *The Bushwalker*, and it's quite enlightening to see how the old time bushwalkers took it in their stride (no pun intended) to walk from Katoomba Station along Narrowneck. Or from Blackheath Station to Perry's Lookdown to start a walk that we now do in a couple of hours. I'm sure they had a feeling of great satisfaction arriving by steam train on Friday night, walking down Perry's Lookdown in the dark to spend a few hours in the magnificent Blue Gum they had so recently saved from the axe. Whereas we complain about walking a few extra kilometres to our favourite spot. In the years to come I'm sure we will come to accept these changes and realise the extra effort is worth it!

NPA outings program

December 1997 – March 1998

Outings guide

- Day walks** carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.
Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY.
Car camps facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

Other activities include nature rambles, environmental and field guide studies and ski tours.

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The outings covenant 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



13 December (Saturday)

Tidbinbilla work party

Leader: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)

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

14 December (Sunday)

Christmas Party

Contact: Max Lawrence

Phone: 6288 1370 (h), 6272 2124 (w)

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

21 December Sunday daywalk

2A/B

Long Point

Ref: Caoura 1:25 000

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone 6288 4171

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

4 January Sunday walk

3A

Mt Gingera via Stockyard Spur

Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Leader: Col McAlister

Phone: 6288 4171

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

11 January Sunday daywalk

2A/B/C/E

East Booroomba Hill

Refs: Corin Dam, Williamsdale 1:25 000

Leader: Stephen Johnston

Phone: 254 3738

Phone leader for details and bookings. A circuit walk down the Alpine Track to Bushfold Flats, then up the ridge of the unnamed hill east of Booroomba Rocks to a rock slab on the summit which gives great views

of the whole Blue Gum Creek area. Mostly offtrack – could be fairly scrubby in patches. 60kms, \$12 per car.

18 January Sunday walk

2/A

Brindabella Range Ramble

Ref: ACT 1:100 000

Leader: Steven Forst

Phone: 279 1326(w), 251 6817(h)

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

24 – 26 January long weekend packwalk

4A/E

Scabby, Kelly and Burbidge

Refs: Rendezvous Creek,

Yaouk 1:25 000

Leader: Stephen Johnston

Phone: 6254 3738 (h)

A classic three day Namadgi circuit from Boboyan pines to Mt Scabby, along the ridge to Mt Kelly, side trip to Mr Burbidge, and back to the cars. Phone leader early for details and bookings. 100 kms, \$20 per car.

28 January daywalk

Wednesday walk

Leader: Yvonne Bartos

Phone: 6231 5699

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

1 February Sunday walk

2 A/B

Fishing Gap to Cotter River

Reference: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000

Leader: Mike Smith

Phone: 6286 2984

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30am. Drive to Tidbinbilla, walk on fire trail to Fishing Gap. From there a track drops down to the Cotter River, where we will have a leisurely lunch before returning. 60 kms, \$12 per car.

7 February Saturday daywalk

2A/B/C

Ginini – Gingera circuit

Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000

Leader: Martin Chalk

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

Meet at picnic area carpark on Uriarra road just off the Cotter road (near Duffy) at 8.00am. Walk from Mt Ginini car park to Mt Gingera via Mt Ginini and Pryors Hut (avoiding Little Ginini mountain). From Mt Gingera we will return to cars via Snowy and Cheyenne Flats. 130 kms, \$26 per car.

8 February Sunday daywalk

1A

Orroral Valley East

Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Leader: Beverley Hammond

Phone: 6288 6577

Meet at 9.00am at Kambah Village shops. Walk the newly marked track from Orroral campground to Nursery Swamp carpark and Orroral homestead. Short car shuffle. 70 kms, \$14 per car.

Patagonia, Trekkers Dreamland

Torres del Paine National Park, Chile

Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia is located on the eastern slopes of the Andes Cordillera, in Chile. The park is 400 km north of the regional capital, Puenta Arenas, and 150 km from the nearest town, Puerto Natales. The uniqueness of the park was recognised in 1978 when it was given a world heritage status by UNESCO.

I had been dreaming of trekking in Patagonia for a very long time. The Torres del Paine circuit is the longest and one of the most popular treks in the park. The full circuit, about 86 km, is nonally done in seven days. Side trips and rest days might stretch the walk out to 10 days or more.

The craggy mountains of the park made a breathtaking sight when I first viewed them from the road. I crossed the bridge on the Ascencio River then followed the track to the mountain group called Macizo Paine. This is the heart of the park with most unique features including some of the most spectacular peaks in the world, composed of granitic rock 12 000 000 years ago.

The *torres* themselves are three distinctive pinnacles of hard Andean rock. The summit of the imposing tallest 'tower' stands some 2900 metres above sea level and overlooks the intensely glaciated and barren surroundings.

Next, the path leads across bare country full of white daisies and *calafate* berry bushes near the Paine River and then climbs over ridges and a pass with a wonderful panorama of Lake Paine below. An exciting experience quickened my pulse in the evening. Sitting with friends around the campfire I saw a huge white puma! She observed us for a few minutes before she disappeared into the surrounding forest. It was an amazing moment. Next day, after a few hours walk, we came to the spectacular Dickson

Lake with its impressive backdrop, Dickson Glacier.

Following the trail, passing by the Dogs River through a rich beech forest, I reached the John Garner pass, at 1300 metres, the highest point on the circuit. The view of the enormous Glacier Grey, a fractured mass of ice 17 km-long choking the valley, was an awe-inspiring one. From here, a steep track descends into light beech forest towards where Glacier Grey disgorges into Lake Grey, sending numerous icebergs to gradually drift south across the lake's turquoise waters.

Another part of this trek leads to the magnificent Cuenos del Paine. There are interesting jagged turrets of a resistant layer of sedimentary black shale covering the granite base.

After two weeks in this amazing place, with its diversity of flora and fauna, I left Torres del Paine National Park with the feeling that it fully deserves its world heritage status.

Basia Meder



The Torres del Paine, Patagonia, Chile. Photo by Basia Meder.



The Cuernos del Paine, Torres del Paine National Park. Photo by Basia Meder.

Book review

Australian Alps Walking Track

Australian Alps Walking Track: Walhalla to Canberra: Map Guide, produced by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee in October 1996. Price \$4.00.

As the Australian Alps Walking Track has not yet been marked on either the NSW or ACT topographical or commercial walking maps and as some sections of the track are incorrectly marked on Victorian maps, the Australian Alps Liaison Committee has produced this booklet as an interim measure. It should be of value to walkers and map makers alike.

Twenty-four pages in length and A4 in size, the booklet covers the full length of the 560km track in 16 'sketch' maps. Consequently the scale used is rather small, ranging in size from 1:100 000 to 1:180 000. Warnings are given on all maps – 'Not to be used for navigation', and a list of relevant topographical maps (mostly 1:25 000) is provided at the foot of each map. The main purpose of the booklet is to allow walkers to transfer the official route of the Australian Alps Walking Track onto

their own more detailed walking maps. Once out there, of course, walkers can deviate from the official Alps Track as much as they like, but now they'll all know when they aren't on THE track.

Two pages of very general advice is provided at the beginning of the booklet, but little detailed text about the actual route is provided. Maps 1 to 7 and 10 to 14 have no text at all, while maps 8 and 9 (from Mitta Mitta River to Cowombat Flat Track – 80kms) share two pages, and directions from the route on maps 15 and 16 (Murrumbidgee River to Murrays Gap to Namadgi Visitors Centre – 78kms) fit onto a mere three-quarters of a page. Therefore, John Siseman's *Alpine Walking Track* will still be essential reading for those intending to walk the track. For the ACT section of the track the Liaison Committee suggest Ian Fraser and Margaret McJannett's *Over the Hills and Tharwa Way* and our own NPA Track Notes published in NPA of the ACT's Bulletins be read.

While it is very flattering that the

Liaison Committee used an edited version of the article I wrote on the section of the walk between Namadgi Information Centre and Booroomba Rocks for this booklet, I wish they'd taken the effort while they were shortening my article to swing it round so that it followed the same direction as the rest of the book, (that is, from Victoria to Canberra). At first reading, it was quite disconcerting, knowing from the title that the Track was described from Victoria to the ACT, to discover they'd changed direction for the final day. Then on re-reading one discovers that they'd done it deliberately and just added a small clue in the heading to clarify the situation. Interestingly, when preparing for our NPA articles we walked the track from Booroomba back to the Information Centre – the easier down-hill way. I then had to sit down at home and struggle with describing the route in reverse order. If only the Liaison Committee had known. They could have used my original notes!

One more small point, I wish the authors had not claimed in the title that the track goes to Canberra. If they'd said Tharwa (or Namadgi) instead, at least people unfamiliar with the ACT end of the track would have to look up a map to find out that it is an out-of-town ending and that no public transport would be available to them. Either the walk goes from Melbourne to Canberra (which it doesn't at either end) or it goes from Walhalla to Tharwa (or Namadgi Information Centre).

Overall, it is a very well-produced booklet, in four colours and on quality paper, which will be very helpful to those who embark on this major Australian walking adventure, and well worth the four dollars it costs.

Babette Scougall

NPA Bulletin 1997

All four 1997 issues of the *Bulletin* were prepared and distributed by the *Bulletin* Working Group with Green Words continuing to be responsible for the layout of each issue. In addition to reducing the cost of production of the *Bulletin*, this arrangement has facilitated the development of a closer relationship between members and their journal.

The members of the *Bulletin* Working Group whose efforts have made this possible have earned the appreciation of the committee and members of the Association. Roger Green and his staff at Green Words and Dianne in the NPA office are also to be congratulated on fitting

into the arrangement in such a helpful way. I would be delighted to hear from any member who would like to become involved with the *Bulletin* in any way in the coming year.

There would be no *Bulletin* without the contributions of our writers and photographers and to them and to all who have assisted in preparation and distribution in 1997, I extend my personal thanks. To our readers, I would like to express my appreciation for your continuing support.

Syd Comfort
Convenor

Bulletin Working Group

From roots to soaring petrels – weeding on Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island is a World Heritage Area with serious weed problems. Climbing asparagus fern winds over native vegetation stifling it, in a limited but densely affected area around the settlement, and the ground asparagus fern forms a dense ground cover over a much wider and expanding area. Guava trees have become established in pockets in the southern end of the island with the potential to spread into inaccessible mountainous terrain. Bitou bush and bridal creeper are present but not rampant.

In May I once again organised a group to go to the Island and do some weeding. Included were NPA



John and Lois Perry really get down to it, grubbing out underground stems of asparagus fern. Photo Eleanor Stodart.



A providence petrel prepares for take-off by climbing up on Eleanor's shoulder. Photo Lois Perry.

members, Lois and John Perry. We tackled the same area of climbing asparagus fern as last year, by physically digging it out, a very demanding process as it spreads by underground stems and can shoot from small remnants. Stems that disappeared under tree roots were scraped and anointed with Round up.

We were very pleased to see significant improvement in the small area where we worked, but more important was the work being done by the islanders themselves. The Lord Howe Island Board has surveyed residents with the aim of preparing a weed strategy, and with a Federal Government World Heritage grant has begun a program of cutting off the climbing asparagus fern above ground with a follow up spray of the regrowth in about six months when it should be vigorous and most susceptible to poisoning. Such a program has been successful on the north coast of New South Wales. Work has also been done poisoning and cutting out the guava trees. It was very satisfying for my group to see this work underway and the recognition that a sustained program was needed.

Between bouts of weeding we had time to do some walks and sightseeing, enjoyable in itself but also providing opportunities to talk about what we were doing.

Climbing Mount Gower is exciting for its physical structure and for the tameness of the wildlife. From a low branch a currawong of unique island race oversaw our lunch on the mountain top, and woodhens (not so long ago on the verge of extinction) walked right up to us looking for crumbs (they can be seen but are much shyer near sea level). But most exciting were the providence petrels. By making a loud noise you can call them out of the sky where, by the thousand, they perform skilful aerobatics with the greatest of ease. When they land you can pick them up. The one I picked up decided to treat me like a tree and climbed up my arm and onto my shoulder to take off. Because they burrow in amongst trees they often have to climb the trees using beak and feet to grip before they can take off. It is worth a special trip to Mount Gower when the petrels are in residence (about April to October).

Eleanor Stodart

NPA Christmas Party 1997

Sunday, 14th December

at Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

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

Further details are in the Outings Program.

Calendar

Activity	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Committee Meeting	Thur 4		Thurs 5	Thurs 5
Reg's Birthday Walk	Sun 7			
Launch of <i>Reptiles and Frogs of the ACT</i>	Tues 9			
ACT Christmas Party	Sun 14			
General Meetings			Thurs 19	Thurs 19

Details of Namadgi and Environment Sub Committee meetings are available from the convenors.

Further details:

Committee and Sub Committees – Secretary

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

Other Events – Outings Program

NPA Bulletin

If undelivered please return to:
National Parks Association of the ACT
PO Box 1940 Woden ACT 2606

Print Post Approved
PP 248831/00041

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

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

Thursday 19 February. Discover the Canning Stock Route. This must be one of the world's best 4WD Tracks. Eleanor Stodart and Reet Vallak will present some reflections on the history of the Canning and show us some of its wildflowers.

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

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