

NPA Bulletin



Volume 38 number 3
September 2001

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Annual general meeting

Report on Gudgenby Homestead

**Rethinking salinity control in the Murray/
Darling Basin**

CONTENTS

NPA annual general meeting 3 <i>Syd Comfort</i>	Some Gudgenby bush regeneration trivia 11 <i>Eleanor Stodart</i>
Volunteer of the year – environment category 3 <i>Eleanor Stodart</i>	Quarry rehabilitation a gigantic task 12 <i>Graeme Barrow</i>
From the President: annual report 4 <i>Clive Hurlstone</i>	Update on Namadgi management agreement 13 <i>Syd Comfort</i>
Report on Gudgenby Homestead 5 <i>Robyn Barker and Timothy Walsh</i>	Parkwatch 14
The story of Green Guard – a new environmentally friendly way to control locusts 6 <i>Len Haskew</i>	My favourite place 16 <i>Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine</i>
Transgrid devastation and repair work 6 <i>Eleanor Stodart</i>	Allan Fox, OAM 17 <i>Fiona MacDonald Brand</i>
Rethinking salinity control in the Murray/Darling Basin 7 <i>Syd Comfort</i>	Over the plains and far away 17 <i>Len Haskew</i>
Corn Trail 1st April 2001 8 <i>Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine</i>	2001 – International year of the volunteer 18 <i>Reg Alder</i>
The bird fancier 9 <i>Reg Alder</i>	Save the bilby 18 <i>Fiona MacDonald Brand</i>
Black Mountain orchids in the spring 10 <i>Jean Egan</i>	Book review 19 <i>Graeme Wicks</i>
When a fire is not a burn 11 <i>Syd Comfort</i>	Calendar 20
	New members 20
	General meetings 20

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>	Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592(h); 040 778 3422 (w)
<i>Vice President</i>	Neville Esau 6286 4176(h)
<i>Secretary</i>	Judy Kelly 6253 1859(h)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mike Smith 6286 2984(h)

Committee members

Robyn Barker	6253 9964(h)
Jacqui Cole	6262 2152
Steven Forst	6251 6817(h); 6279 1326(w)
Max Lawrence	6288 1370(h)
Janet Neale	6258 2397(h)
Timothy Walsh	6285 1112(h)

Convenors

<i>Outings Sub-committee</i>	Max Lawrence 6288 1370(h)
<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Syd Comfort 6286 2578(h)
<i>Environment</i>	
<i>Sub-committee contacts are:</i>	Neville Esau 6286 4176(h)
	Robyn Barker 6253 9964(h)
	Tom Heinsohn 6253 9964(h)

The NPA (ACT) office is located in MacLaurin Crescent, Chifley, next to the preschool. It is staffed by volunteers but, at present, not on a regular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. Mail from the post office box is cleared daily.

Telephone/Fax: (02) 6282 5813

Email: npaact@spirit.com.au

Address: PO Box 1940, Woden ACT 2606

Internet: <http://www.spirit.net.au/~npaact>

Membership

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

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household members \$40	Single members \$35
Corporate members \$30	<i>Bulletin</i> only \$30
Concession \$25	

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) 62862578.

Deadline for December issue: 1 November 2001.

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 & Images.

Printed by Ausdoc On Demand, Canberra, ACT.

ISSN 0727-8837

Cover photo: Mount Gingera. Photo Martin Chalk

NPA annual general meeting

A well attended annual general meeting of the association was held in Forestry House on the evening of August 16 with President Clive Hurlstone in the chair. The minutes of the preceding annual meeting were passed and Clive gave his report on the year just ended. This report is reproduced in full on page 4.

Treasurer Mike Smith circulated copies of the audited financial statements and presented his annual report. This showed that the association had sustained an operating loss of \$3 050 for the year. This loss can be attributed to an outlay of \$3 069 for legal advice. The financial report was accepted by the meeting. Copies of the financial statements are available from the Treasurer.

Fiona MacDonald Brand and Neville Esau paid tribute to the work of President Clive Hurlstone for his dedication in leading the association through what had proved to be a difficult year. This was warmly endorsed by the meeting. Clive spoke feelingly about the work of those members of the retiring committee who were standing down: Eleanor Stodart after many years on the committee as President and Past President, Len Haskew who had returned to

The following office-bearers and committee members for 2001–2002 were elected:

<i>President</i>	Clive Hurlstone
<i>Vice President</i>	Neville Esau
<i>Secretary</i>	Judy Kelly
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mike Smith
<i>Committee members</i>	Robyn Barker Jacqui Cole Steven Forst Max Lawrence Janet Neale Timothy Walsh

the committee as Secretary and David Large, the retiring Vice President, leaving the committee due to ill health.

Upon the completion of the formal proceedings, members were treated to a very entertaining account of a staged walk of the Australian Alpine Walking Track presented by Judith Webster and Graham Scully. In 1998 Graham conceived the idea of walking the 680km of the track in stages of about 110km and since then has lead a group which included Judith, over four stages starting at Walhalla and reaching Dead Horse Gap in May of this year.

Two stages remain to complete the walk to Tharwa. Judith based her description around a fine set of slides which gave a very detailed picture of the walk right down to blistered toes and leached legs. Tim Walsh and Norm Morrison, core members of the group, also contributed a word or two.

Adrienne Nicholson maintained the traditions of AGMs by arranging a very warming supper at which we enjoyed the company of association members and the offerings of "goodies" provided by many of them.

Syd Comfort

Volunteer of the year – environment category

In this Year of the Volunteer, the Volunteer of the Year Awards were announced on 14 May. There are seven categories within these awards. One is Environment and the winner of that category was Vernon Bailey. You might have heard him on radio or seen him on TV. He is the sort of person who would back away from such awards except for the fact that he can use the publicity to tell people about his work and encourage others to join in.

He is a retired medical practitioner who has spent his life serving others, often children living in poor villages

in Third World countries. In retirement he has taken up the challenge of manually removing thistles from Mount Painter and Red Hill. He has shown many disbelievers both in the Parks and Conservation Service and in the park care groups themselves that persistence works. By cutting down the thistles before flowering each year he has greatly reduced their numbers.

There are five nominees for the Environment Category. Unfortunately we were not even told about the work of the others at the presentation

ceremony. As a result I cannot tell you anything about three of them, but I can tell you about the fifth.

NPA Committee unanimously agreed that our President, Clive Hurlstone, would make a good nomination because of the many hours each week he puts into running the Committee, assisting with submissions and helping at work parties at Gudgenby, and because he has constantly worked towards smoothing out NPA's difficulties.

Eleanor Stodart

From the President: annual report

The last year has been a busy one for the National Parks Association of the ACT, with more members participating in our organised activities, sub-committees and working groups. While many familiar faces have continued to make a major contribution it is reassuring to see newer members becoming more involved in meeting the association's objectives.

At the last Annual General Meeting reelected Committee members were joined by Judy Kelly and Timothy Walsh, and Len Haskew returned to the Committee to take on the position of Secretary. The larger committee worked well, absences were easily accommodated and all scheduled meetings held.

Neville Esau has been coordinating the management of the office which has been operating with the assistance of volunteers. Our membership register and database have been upgraded and we are carrying out a survey of organisations that receive complimentary copies of the *NPA Bulletin*.

Promotional activities

The Committee decided to prepare a new NPA promotional display for community events and for circulating through public libraries. Eleanor Stodart has organised a working group to carry out this project. Our old display had its last outings at ACT Alive and the World Environment Day Fair. A new web page to give internet access to information on the NPA ACT is also being prepared.

The *NPA Bulletin* Working Group, together with contributors and photographers, gave us another four great editions. This is quite a task. Editors Syd Comfort and Graeme Wicks drove the production. Their coordination, assistance to contributors to meet deadlines and editing continue to make our journal the success it is. Thanks to Syd and Graeme and the team.

General meetings

It has been my task to organise speakers for the general meetings this year and we were most fortunate to have really good speakers and presentations. Two talks were by members: Judy Kelly and Phil Bubb on Coolah Tops and Dianne Thompson on camel trekking. Other speakers spoke on climbing Mustag-Ata in Western China, genetic engineering of crops, native fish, the Environmental Defenders Office, biological control of locusts, salinity in southern Australia, managing alpine parks and managing parks in the southeast region.

Outings

The Outings Sub-committee and walks leaders put together a marvelous variety of outings in which we could participate. Some of the highlights included a day walk to Tinderry Twin Peaks, a pack walk in the Grose Valley and a November car camp to the Warranbungles and Mt Kaputar. My thanks go to the leaders and convenor Max Lawrence.

The National Parks Association hands-on conservation activity continues to focus on the regeneration of bush in the Boboyan pine plantation site by working with the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group. Tree planting and woody weed removal have been the main tasks this year.

Environment Sub-committee

The past 12 months has seen a continuation of issues and projects from last year, the major ones being:

- the Molonglo River Corridor Management Plan;
- the extension of Gungahlin Drive onto O'Connor Ridge;
- development associated with Gudgenby Homestead;
- new wilderness areas in southeast NSW;
- implementation plans for ACT park management plans;

- bush conservation associated with plantation forests; and
- integrated catchment management plans for the ACT.

The signing of an agreement for the joint management of Namadgi National Park by the ACT Government and representatives of the local Aboriginal community has focused interest on a new plan of management for Namadgi in which the NPA will have a role.

Two important new issues for the sub-committee were the control of feral horses in Kosciuzsko National Park and the Transgrid clearing of powerline easements across three national parks.

The last year has also seen productive collaboration with the Conservation Council of the Southeast Region and Canberra and the NSW National Parks Association on a range of conservation issues.

My thanks to all Committee members: Past President Eleanor Stodart, Vice President David Large, Secretary Len Haskew, Treasurer Mike Smith, and Committee members Jacqui Cole, Tim Walsh, Neville Esau, Steven Forst, Judy Kelly, and Max Lawrence.

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

Clive Hurlstone

THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE

invite all members

to attend

THE NPA CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday 9th December at Nil Desperandum

Details are in the Outings Program

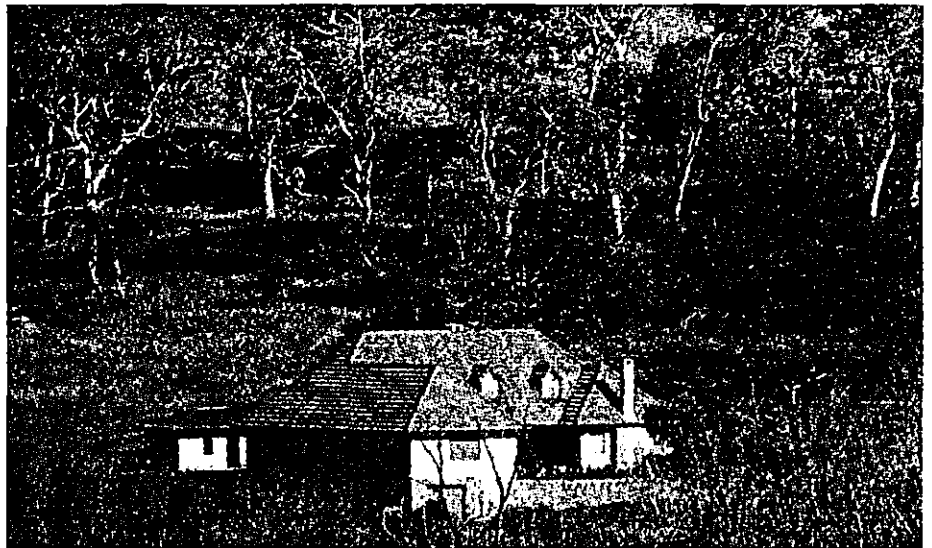
Report on Gudgenby Homestead

The future of Gudgenby Homestead in Namadgi National Park has been debated within the association for a number of years. Views have ranged from the need to remove it completely to its use as rangers' accommodation. The matter came to a head with the release by Environment ACT of a preliminary assessment (PA) to cover the upgrading of the sewerage system at the homestead. The PA was released on 11 August, submissions being due on 31 August. It appears that the ACT Government plans to turn the homestead into a substantial commercial guesthouse. The NPA has always upheld the widely accepted view that commercial accommodation should not be placed within national parks. Despite the very short deadline given the Environment Sub-committee is working on a comprehensive submission to Environment ACT.

The PA proposes installation of a new waste water treatment system to cope with additional visitation to the homestead site; the addition of new bathrooms to create five double rooms with ensuites for a maximum of 10 guests; utilisation of the homestead and immediate surrounds as a day-use facility; a carpark for 25 cars; and landscaping of the immediate site.

In preparing our submission, Sub-committee members are able to draw on discussions, correspondence and submissions carried out by the NPA over the last year. These include:

- A discussion on possible options for the future of Gudgenby Homestead at the July 2000 general meeting. The meeting proved to be a constructive debate with input from a wide range of members. Use as a ranger residence was seen as the best option.
- Release of the ACT Government's Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the ACT in December 2000. The strategy outlined the ACT Government's intention to investigate adaptive reuse of Gudgenby Homestead including



Gudgenby Homestead – March 2001. The poisoning of the willows makes the homestead more observable from the Old Boboyan Road. Photo Reg Alder

developing low-key guesthouse and food and refreshment facilities. The strategy appeared to be driven by a development and marketing paradigm rather than one of wise management, sustainability and restraint. There was virtually no consideration of the impacts of artificially pumping more and more people into fragile areas. There was no mention of environmental or archaeological impact assessments regarding various development proposals. We found it very disappointing to see that "potential environmental concerns" were listed as a threat to the strategy.

- Letters on Gudgenby Homestead and the Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the ACT were published in the March 2001 Bulletin. This included a letter concerned about the effects of commercial development on Aboriginal sites in the Gudgenby area and copies of letters written by the Kosciusko Huts Association to Brendan Smyth, Minister for Urban Services about the future management of Gudgenby Homestead and the Minister's reply.
- In March Sub-committee members prepared a significant response to the Nature Based

Tourism Strategy for the ACT detailing concerns about the proposal to utilise the Gudgenby Homestead as an accommodation facility. Our response highlighted the values of the Gudgenby area including its natural history and ancient Aboriginal cultural heritage. Serious environmental impacts such as incremental development, artificially attracting damaging concentrations of visitors to natural areas and fragile archaeological sites, pollution such as sewerage and car park run-off threatening the aquatic ecology of streams and increased motor traffic were discussed.

Recent work on the Gudgenby Homestead issue and nature based tourism will help the Sub-committee to develop a strong submission. This is important because world-wide experience, especially in North American national parks, shows that commercial developments such as *the one proposed for Gudgenby* inevitably develop a life of their own. They soon expand to threaten the very natural and cultural values for which the park was originally dedicated. We must not let this happen to Namadgi.

**Robyn Barker and
Timothy Walsh**

The story of Green Guard – a new environmentally friendly way to control locusts

David Hunter, from the Australian Plague Locust Commission, was the guest speaker at the May general meeting of the association.

The Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC) was established in 1974. Its role is to manage outbreaks of the Australian plague locust, to assist states to manage outbreaks in their area of responsibility and to improve the effectiveness and safety of locust field operations.

The ALPC in conjunction with the CSIRO Entomology has developed a biological control using a naturally occurring fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae*. These spores are produced and suspended in oil by a commercial partner in the research, Seed, Grain and Biotechnology located in Wodonga (Vic). The product is known as Green Guard and is applied by spray aircraft to locust bands and swarms.

Previously, locusts had been controlled by chemical methods, but the search for an effective biological control had several stimuli:

- the *reluctance* of a younger generation of landholders to use chemical insecticides;
- increasing restrictions of *market access* if chemical insecticides are detected in a product; and
- the production of organic beef, especially for the Japanese market.

Green Guard is a certified organic product.

The fungus only attacks locusts and grasshoppers and is harmless to all other kinds of organisms. David was questioned about possible side-effects on native species from “sub-lethal” impacts but his assurance was that Green Guard had absolutely no effect on non-target invertebrates or native vertebrate fauna.

Trials of Green Guard between 1997 and 2000 showed that *Metarhizium* causes locust bands to decline by more than 90 per cent between seven and 15 days after treatment. Ambient temperature is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of Green Guard; warm weather with

maxima of 25 to 33°C seems to give the greatest measure of success. The fungus is much less effective when maximum temperatures are below 20°C, although there has been a promising trial at Jimenbuen near Dalgety, with higher concentrations of the fungus.

After spraying, the spores have a relatively short life, depending on weather conditions, about two or three days in extreme conditions, to a maximum of about a fortnight under more favorable conditions.

Metarhizium is slightly more expensive than chemical insecticides at the moment, but trials are still in progress to reduce the concentration of the spores and so reduce costs. Given the success of the field trials and the fact that most locust outbreaks originate inland where the production of organic beef is the major industry a submission is being prepared to apply for registration by the National Registration Authority so that the product can be marketed in Australia and overseas.

Len Haskeew

Transgrid devastation and repair work

The news that Transgrid, the NSW electricity transmission company, had rather overdone clearing under the powerlines that cross the Brindabellas into Namadgi National Park broke on 26-27 May. Officers in Environment ACT had known about it some time before that, and were then checking out the legal ramifications. However, in March when the work was done they had not been informed that work had started and had only discovered what was happening when the work was nearly finished. One could say that a bulldozer successfully invaded the ACT from over the border!

Transgrid accepted responsibility for repair work. In the ACT the work done up till now consists of redistributing soil and plant materials back across the easement

and putting the felled trees across the bare slope to reduce erosion. Wherever forest roads cross the power lines old power poles are being placed beside the road to prevent access by 4WD vehicles. In June when some of this work was being done regrowth of bracken was already apparent on some of the bare ground. It was fortunate that we did not have heavy rain in the mean time. More work will take place in early summer when the land has dried out.

In NSW, where the soil surface was scraped bare, rice straw was being laid down and seeded with non seeding ryecorn, to hold the loose surface.

The whole clearing exercise must have been rather expensive and one wonders why a less damaging method was not used in the first place. Suggestions have been the loss of

corporate memory with downsizing and outsourcing, and that there was such a mess of interlacing stems from previous felling that access was difficult. What is certain is that clearing under the powerlines was left until the danger of the powerlines starting fires in hot weather (when they hang very low due to the combination of high ambient temperatures and heat generated by the increased loads serving air conditioners) was extreme.

The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee Number 5 is holding an inquiry into the Transgrid clearing and is to report by the 18 September 2001. The National Parks Associations in the ACT and NSW and the Conservation Council will be very interested in the outcome.

Eleanor Stodart

Rethinking salinity control in the Murray/Darling Basin

Former CSIRO scientist and now executive director of the Australian Association for Natural Resource Management, Dr Baden Williams, spoke at the NPA's June meeting on salinity in the Murray/Darling Basin. This article provides a summary of his most stimulating address without, unfortunately, the support of the range of diagrams and data sheets which he displayed.

The basin, bounded by the highlands on the east and the Darling on the west, covers an area of some 1 000 000 square kilometres of catchment, all draining through the narrow outlet in the south west. The quantity of salt in the basin is not known but is huge. The salt has three sources, connate salt, salt from weathering of rocks and cyclic salt. Connate salt was trapped in the sediments on the sea floor when the area was below water in the geological past and is now stored in the bedrock of the basin and cannot be leached out. Chemical weathering of rocks and minerals produces further accumulations of salt. Cyclic salt accumulation is a continuing process by which salt blown in from the oceans is washed down by rain and deposited on the earth at annual rates of 100 to 150kgs per hectare in the west of the basin and 40 to 50kgs in Canberra.

Surface water

The basic problem is not so much the salt per se but salt that is moved by water; we can live with salt if it is not carried into roots and streams. This movement can be brought about through surface water or through ground water. The study of surface water in the Murray/Darling Basin is based on the collection of data in 19 catchment areas in which the movement of salt in the rivers is measured. Some of these such as the Lachlan catchment and some Victorian rivers show sharply increasing trends.

Ground water

Whether ground water movement will result in saline conditions depends on the rate of ground discharge to the surface compared with the rate of evaporation. Currently some 150 000ha in Victoria and western NSW suffer from dry land salinity but it is predicted that this could increase by 1 000 000ha in the next 50 years. In the past surface recharge was largely picked up by root systems so that little salt entered the groundwater. European occupation has changed the soil profiles, removing top soil with its organic component, thus affecting drainage and buffering and destroying the integrity of the system. Now water moves rapidly down leading to drying of the upper levels and increased recharging, resulting in what were once deep water tables now being near the surface. Only small amounts of water entering through the soil are needed to change water table levels 1mm of recharge can result in a rise of 10-20mm in water table level. Some relief to this process can be achieved by the planting of deep-rooted plants such as lucerne but there are limits to this and in any case this treatment is not appropriate to productive, cropping land which will continue to be needed. We will never be able to go back to the old system.

Irrigation

Irrigation has also contributed to salinity problems; some 200 000ha are now salinised from irrigation. In the basin, irrigation takes water out of the river and it is drained back taking with it a load of salt: the river is used for both supply and drainage. Leaks from irrigation channels lead to the loss of up to 50 per cent of water and much of this is taken into the soil resulting in raised water tables. Before locks were constructed on the rivers, floods swept away accumulated salt but this does not now occur and the locks Tare here to

stay. However steps are taken to hold back saline water and release it when it may be flushed out. In California and Pakistan separate drains have been built to carry away the salt. A pipeline from the Murray to the sea is estimated to cost \$6 billion and the benefit to cost ratio has been seen to be too low to justify this expenditure.

Solutions

Governments have concentrated on developing policies rather than on the implementation of them. Catchment management authorities do not have the legislative authority nor the money to do this nor are most landowners involved in the these authorities. Until landowners can be convinced that there is benefit for them they will not participate in implementation schemes. Landcare has been very successful in raising awareness of many problems affecting the countryside but has had limited success in implementing solutions. Brendan proposes that there is a need to get a "bottom up" solution and to take a holistic approach to property management. He supports Government involvement in private land through the development of property management plans. Expert advice could be made available to develop plans which are economically attractive, restore the land to a healthy condition and provide a "fair go" to the landholder. He considers that rural people have experienced difficult times and been forced to draw down capital through land degradation, to survive. The management plans should not only address salinity but be holistic and in this take account of the landscape values which the country holds for us all. He concluded his address by describing the success of such a farm plan developed by an individual farmer in the Holbrook area of NSW.

Syd Comfort

Corn Trail 1st April 2001

Perhaps the date of this walk held something in store for us! Twenty-nine NPA walkers assembled at Kingston railway station in perfect, though slightly misty, weather to undertake the Corn Trail. We met up with 13 of the Friends of the Mongarlowe group at the top of the Clyde Mountain, ready to embark on our expedition. The walk was a joint NPA and Friends of Mongarlowe walk to be led by the Friends. They gave a brief outline of the walk at the outset, then Mike Smith, the NPA organiser replacing Len Haskew, took his 4WD to the bottom of the trail to help transport walkers out after the walk. Later he walked in to meet the party at the lunch spot on the Buckenbowra River.

Off we set. After approximately 1.6km we came to our first information board. This advised us that the trip could take anywhere from 4½ to 7 hours depending on our level of fitness. This information we needed to bear in mind! After another hour of walking one of the NPA walkers slipped and sprained an ankle (it was subsequently found to be broken) on a slippery downhill track. The injured walker was (wrongly) advised that as we were about half way there, it was best to continue. The time was then approximately 11:30 am. After another seven hours, at approximately 6:30 pm, the injured walker together with those who remained with her, emerged at the bottom of the trail to be ferried back to the cars at the top of the Clyde. However, most of the party had gone on ahead and emerged at the bottom of the trail much earlier to meet the bus arranged by the Friends of Mongarlowe. The accident put considerable strain on members of the party who stayed with the injured walker, not to mention the injured walker's own considerable discomfort.

Much of this could have been avoided, if the walk had been advertised (as it should be) not as a 12.5km, Grade 2A (road, firetrail walk), but as a 18-20km walk Grade

GENERAL

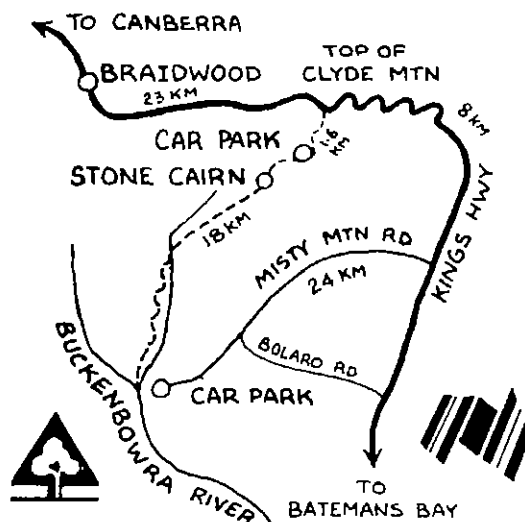
Estimated length of walking time to cover the 12.5km is between 4½ and 7 hours. An amount of food is recommended to be carried, no drinking water to be found on the top half of the track and a reasonable degree of fitness is required. Perhaps something warm and water-proof, also.

The top of the escarpment (800 metres A.S.L.) can often be covered in mist while the lower slopes are bathed in sunshine. The track is marked by stone along edges and cairns at strategic points.

Misty Mountain access road, to the bottom carpark, is 24km of dirt and to be approached with caution during wet weather.

Remember - use fire with maximum care and keep the forest clear of litter.

LOCATION MAP



Extract from Corn Trail pamphlet.

3C (light scrub) walk. Members of the group would have been more aware of the length of the walk still ahead, and would, therefore, have pressed to take the injured walker back. The brochures provided by the Forestry Commission are also misleading, stating that the walk is 12.5km in length, yet the map indicates that it is approximately 20-22km. If members had been aware of the greater distance, numbers may have been reduced and the party could have stayed in closer proximity to one another, instead of being widely spread.

Notwithstanding all of the above it was a pleasant walk if a bit longer than expected. The trail winds from

the top of the Clyde Mountain down to the head of the Bolero River. It was first pioneered by the settlers of the valley to trade produce with their neighbours on the Southern Tablelands. The major crop was corn (and hence its name!) which was transported by packhorse to the towns of Araluen and Braidwood. The trail also used to bring cattle down from the escarpment for agistment on the coast and also by gold prospectors. The trail was the first link between the coast and tablelands but by the 1920s it was overgrown.

As a Bicentennial project in 1988, the Corn Trail was reconstructed. The entire project took four years. Ten months actual construction time was necessary to rebuild the lower 6km, whilst the top section was completed in two months. The preliminary research and actual rebuilding was carried out by the Historical Tracks Research Group comprising over 400 members. Substantial help was also given by the

NSW Forestry Commission, who constructed the access roads and parking areas.

At its upper end the restored Corn Trail commences with a disused vehicular track winding southward along a gently rounded montane plateau. Silvertop ash (*Eucalyptus sieberi*) are found here together with black-trunked grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea Australis*). Everflowering coral heath (*Epacris impressa*) is also present together with Hairpin Banksia (*B spinulosa*). The trail then leaves the old wheel ruts behind to dip eastward across the rim of the plateau before swinging south again and down.

continued on page 9

The bird fancier

The Bird Fancier – A Journey to Peking, by Alastair Morrison, Pandanus Books, 270 pp. \$32.

One of the earliest photographs of Alastair Morrison shows him clutching a wooden duck. As a child he took a great interest in the bird books in his father's library, and this led him to a lifelong fascination with birds.

Some 50 years ago he drafted his life story from childhood until the time he left Peking. Then in 1993, after failing to find a publisher, he had it printed privately. Pandanus Books, of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the ANU, has now published it for the general public.

The book is a fascinating story of Alastair's travels through Britain,

Scandinavia, Iceland, Europe, South America and Asia in search of bird specimens for the British Museum. On the way he met a remarkable range of people, making many friends and acquiring an encyclopedic knowledge of birds. It is hard to ask Alastair a question about birds of which he has no knowledge.

It was during a visit to Peking, before war enveloped China, that Alastair met his future wife, Hedda. At the end of hostilities he returned to China and they married, thus making a wonderful combination of bird fancier and photographer. The story ends when they move to Sarawak.

Reg Alder



Alastair Morrison at the launch of his book, The Bird Fancier, on August 8. Photo Reg Alder

Corn Trail – continued from page 8

Here there are dense thickets of *tristania* and a little dry temperate forest. The crowded, spindly stems of the *tristania* required much clearing to make the trail passable.

The bulk of Mount Budawang can be seen here, as well as sandstone peaks, including Pigeon House and Castle Mountain further north. To the east, various parts of the coastline and foothill ranges are discernible. The Corn Trail ridge then slopes away southward and it is here that the early trail builders displayed bush engineering skills in laying out the route. Reasonable grades were maintained by side cutting to the east or west of each hill, or by zigzagging downwards in one tight switchback or another. Views to the west are across to the Buckenbowra Gorge and the cleared farmlands of the lower Buckenbowra Valley are glimpsed to the south.

The vegetation changes as the trail descends with heavily barked silvertop ash trees mingling with the more attractive mountain grey gums (*E cypellocarpa*). To the east, rainforest growth appears in a

tributary gully and then the trail drops to the main valley floor. Here is an ideal lunch spot as the hanging vines, ferns and mosses and gurgling waters indicate the approach of Buckenbowra Creek.

Further on the trail winds among gullies and through hairpin corners which cross tiny creeks. Traces of rainforest become narrow belts and the track goes through cabbage fan palms before continuing on through forest from which hardwood logs were harvested in 1983. It is evident here that regeneration of eucalypts and lower story shrubs is rapidly obliterating traces left by the timber cutters. The valley ahead then narrows and plunges into the gorge too steep for logging. The trail then descends quite steeply past large, mossy boulders to the Buckenbowra Creek and the long-awaited car park.

The Corn Trail is a priceless slice of heritage. Its main sections remain as pristine as the day the first European made the crossing. The only interference with the natural environment is the trail itself, and under Forestry Commission

management timber cutters never reached the rainforest or the principal ridge. Resurrection of this old pack trail is a commendable achievement and one for which the Historic Trails Research Group should be commended.

If preparing to walk the trail, be aware that it is quite overgrown in places. You'll need sturdy non-slip footwear, sufficient water and a good level of fitness. Walkers should ensure that they allow sufficient time for the walk so that it is completed in daylight and that a car shuffle has been arranged. Then a good time can be had by all!

Thanks go to the Friends of Mongarlowe and Mike Smith for coordinating the transport and providing support to one our members. May this walk be enjoyed by many NPA members in the future, bearing the above comments in mind.

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

Max Lawrence informs me that the most recent edition of the Araluen topographical map shows the Corn Trail. – SFC

Black Mountain orchids in the spring

This is the first of four articles, one for each season, on local orchids to be presented by orchid enthusiast Jean Egan. Jean has also provided the photographs.

As I write, I am looking out on a cold foggy winter morning reminiscent of a Turner painting. However, in my garden the *Hardenbergia* and the wattles are beginning to show colour, and on Black Mountain tiny orchid leaves are poking through, signalling spring is just around the corner.

Although you can find terrestrial orchids almost all year round on Black Mountain, spring is the time when they are the most numerous.

One of the earliest to be noticed, about mid-September, is the dainty blue *Cyanicula caerulea* (formerly known as *Caladenia caerulea*) found on the well-drained slopes, while in damp gullies, and more difficult to spot, the Greenhoods (*Pterostylis*) have been flowering for some time. These include *P. pedunculata*, *P. nutans* and *P. aff. longifolia*.

As *Cyanicula caerulea* start to wither they are replaced by the well-known pink Ladies' Fingers, *Caladenia fuscata*, the multi-headed *C. cucullata*, and the beautiful purple *Glossodia major* (if you search diligently you may find *alba* forms of the latter). At the same time the first of the Donkey Orchids (*Diurus semilunata*) appear.

By the second week of October, three more *Pterostylis* species are in

flower, all very small (some may even say insignificant). *Pterostylis mutica* can be found in slightly damp locations, *P. aciculiformis* favours the much drier rocky slopes while *P. bicolor* is found on the lower grassy slopes.



Glossodia major.

The third and fourth weeks of October usually have the most species of orchids in flower. Other than the early *Pterostylis*, all of the above may still be found though the earlier ones will have diminished in numbers. But to make up for that the delightful Spider Orchid, *Caladenia tentaculata*, and the Bearded Orchid, *Calochilus robertsonii*, are now in flower, and a close look in grass tussocks will reveal *Lyperanthus suavolens*. On a warm sunny day the Sun Orchids (*Thelymitra*) open. These include *T. juncifolia*, *T. pauciflora* and, if you are lucky, *T. megalyptra*, all three blue, and in damp areas the pink *T. carnea*.

By now few *Diurus semilunata* will be left, but the easily distinguishable, larger graceful *D. sulphurea* should be abundant. So should the musky smelling *Caladenia gracilis* in its many forms. Enjoying the same locations as *C. gracilis*, but not so numerous, is the elegant *C. congesta*, with a bright pink flower and black labellum.

One of the last of the spring-flowering orchids to open is the Onion Orchid, *Microtis parviflora*. Even when fully open it can be mistaken as still being in bud, as



Caladenia tentaculata.

the flowers are green and only 2-3mm across. However, what they lack in size they make up for in numbers; being colony-forming, they can be numerous in low lying grassland areas.

Each year I find more orchids to add to my list. Often there are only one or two specimens in quite obscure locations. However the ones mentioned here are relatively easy to find and identify. Most can be found by just following the Green Trail from the Wangara St/Caswell Drive entrance to the reserve.

Happy hunting!

Jean Egan



Caladenia gracilis.



Diurus semilunata.

NPA Bulletin

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED

NPA outings program

September – December 2001

Outings guide

Walk gradings	Terrain grading
Distance grading (per day)	A – Road, firetrail track
1 – up to 10km	B – Open forest
2 – 10km to 15km	C – Light scrub
3 – 15km to 20km	D – Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
4 – above 20km	E – Rock scrambling
	F – Exploratory

Day walks carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY OR AS INDICATED IN PROGRAM.

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 convenor 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 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, to the nearest dollar, of THIRTY cents per kilometre DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS in the car, including the driver, be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for return journeys.

15 – 16 September weekend packwalk

Coronet Peak

Leader: Phil Gatenby

3A/C/D/F

Maps: Coronet Peak, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Phone: 6254 3094

Although not as high as many of the nearby peaks there are great views from the top of Coronet Peak. The walk to the peak starts and finishes in the the Orroral Valley. It will also involve exploring some of the other sights of the upper Cotter valley. For bookings contact leader by Wednesday 12 September. 85kms, \$25 per car.

16 September 2001 Sunday daywalk

Bungonia Tops

Leader: Col McAlister

1A/B

Map: Caoura 1:25 000

Phone: 6288 4171

An easy loop walk taking in the three main lookouts with breathtaking views (Bungonia Lookdown, Jerrara Lookout and Adams Lookout). A side trip to view Bungonia Gorge and the Shoalhaven Gorge from Mt Ayre. Time and energy permitting, an optional side trip towards Jerrara Falls and Bungonia Falls. Meet at 8.00am at the Netball Centre carpark, Northbourne Avenue Lyneham. 220kms, \$72 per car (including \$6 park entry fee).

22 – 23 September weekend carcamp

The Rock and Galore Hill

Leader: Col McAlister

1A

Phone: 6288 4171

On Saturday morning drive to The Rock via Wagga Wagga, and climb 'the rock' (about 365m above the surrounding plains) in the afternoon. Drive on to Lockhart where we will spend the night at the caravan park or other accommodation. On Sunday morning climb Galore Hill (215m above the plains) and return to Canberra in the afternoon, perhaps by a different route. Opportunity for other visits such as Monte Cristo homestead at Junee, Bradmans birthplace at Cootamundra, and the motor museum at Binalong. Phone leader for details and bookings before 9 September. Approx 650kms, \$195 per car.

**26 September midweek daywalk
Wednesday Walk**

Leader: Mike Smith
Phone: 6286 2984

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

**29 September – 1 October long weeked
packwalk**

Mt Talaterang
Leader: Steven Forst
2/C/D/E

Reference: CMW Budawangs
Phone: 251 6817 (h)

Contact leader by Wednesday 26 September. 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 with daypacks, returning to campsite. Return to Canberra Monday, 400 kms, \$120 per car.

**29 September – 1 October long weekend
carcamp**

Bournda National Park
**Leaders: Margaret Aston and Adrienne
Nicholson**
1A

Map: Wolumla 1:25 000, Bournda NP guides
**Phone: Adrienne 6281 6381,
Margaret 6288 7563**

Yes! Now that NPWS have their work finished in the campground we are able to reschedule the outing originally planned for the June long weekend. Camping by Lake Wallagoot in the Bournda National Park with most mod cons including shelter shed and hot showers. Coast and forest walks and bird watching. Do as little or as much as you like to enjoy this restful scenic area. For details and bookings contact either Adrienne or Margaret by the preceding Wednesday. Leaders will be going down to Bournda Friday pm. 400kms, \$120 per car, plus camp fees.

30 September Sunday daywalk

Yaouk Hill Summits
Leader: Steven Hill
2C/D/E
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Phone: 6231 9186

A chance to see fabulous views from a surprisingly spectacular mountain range in the region, and to see the southern end of Namadji National Park from a different perspective. We park opposite Sentry Box Hill and climb up a spur which offers several viewpoints before wandering along the scenic ridge to the Trig. The climb of nearly 600m is steep in parts, is off-track, and involves some mild rock scrambling. Meet at Kambah Village Shops carpark at 7.30am for a stupendous day. 170kms, \$50 per car.

**6 October Saturday afternoon walk
Farrer Ridge**

Leader: Margaret Aston
1A
Map: ACT 1:100 000
Phone: 6288 7563

Meet at corner of Hawkesbury Crescent and Wagga Street Farrer at 1.30pm. An 8km easy afternoon walk around Farrer Ridge and across to Mt

Wannassa. Bring a nibble. Kangaroos, birds, wildflowers and good urban views can be expected.

6 – 13 October one week packwalk

Wee Jasper to Tumut
Leader: David Kelly
3A

**Maps: Blowering, Bobbys Plains, Couragago,
Lacmalac 1:25 000; Hume and Hovell Track
book by Harry Hill.**
Phone: 6253 1859 (ah)

A walk on the Hume and Hovell Track from Wee Jasper (James Fitzpatrick Trackhead) to Tumut. Distance 78kms, including ten along the Snowy Mountains Highway into Tumut. The walk follows a constructed track maintained by the NSW Lands Department through forested ranges mostly at about 1000m elevation, with some facilities at campsites. Highest daily climb 720m. Maximum ten people. Book with leader at least a week ahead. Transport to be arranged, possibly returning by bus from Tumut.

7 October Sunday daywalk

Shanahans Mountain area
Leader: Martin Chalk
2B/C/E/F
Map: Colinton 1:25 000
Phone: 6268 4864(w), 6292 3502(h)

Meet at Kambah Village shops carpark at 8.30am. The walk commences from the Mt Clear campground and proceeds uphill over the southern spur of Shanahans Mountain to the headwaters of Shanahans Falls Creek. We will then descend through open forest to the clear grassy valley below Shanahans Mountain for a restful lunch. The return will be via the ridgeline to the southeast of the valley, aiming to join the Horse Gully Hut fire trail at the ford over Naas Creek. A pleasant day with some views and a variety of country. 160kms, \$48per car.

**13 October Saturday morning nature stroll
Black Mountain**

Leader: George Chippendale
1A
Map: Canberra Street Directory
Phone: 6281 2454

George's Thirtieth Annual Black Mountain Nature Walk! Come and enjoy the beautiful springtime flora and benefit from his expert commentary. Wear a hat and bring morning tea. Children welcome. Walk begins about 9.30am and ends about 12.00. Plenty of time to talk. Meet at carpark opposite Wangara Street in Caswell drive.

**13 October Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

Contact: Eleanor Stodart, Syd Comfort
Phone: 6281 5004 (Eleanor), 6286 2578 (Syd)

Meet at Namadji Visitor Centre Tharwa at 9.15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Planting seedlings and other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pines area. Tools will be provided.

**14 October Sunday morning walk
Westbourne Woods**

Leader: Ian Brooker
NPA contact: Max Lawrence, phone 6288 1370
Get some on-the-ground background for Dr John Gray's presentation on Charles Weston at next Thursday's General Meeting by attending today's regular public walk through beautiful Westbourne Woods. Meet at 9.30am at the gates to Royal Canberra Golf Club at the top end of Bentham St

Yarralumla. Walk is free, and takes about two hours. No dogs please.

15 – 17 October three day packwalk

Budawangs National Park
Leader: Mick Kelly
2A/C/D/E/F

Map: Corang 1:25 000
**Phone: 4472 3959 or
email kellymob@sci.net.au**

Three day packwalk camping at Cooyoyo Creek campsite for two nights, leaving a full day to explore Monolith Valley and the tops of Mt Owen and Mt Cole. Joint walk with the Batemans Bay Bushies. Numbers limited. Contact leader by 5 October. 250kms, \$75 per car.

21 October Sunday afternoon walk

Mt Arawang
Leader: Margaret Aston
1A
Map: ACT 1:100 000
Phone: 6288 7563

Meet at the top end of Kathner St Chapman at 1.30pm. An easy 8km walk around Cooleman Ridge and Mt Arawang. Bring a nibble and binoculars.

21 October Sunday daywalk

Mt Morgan
Leader: Steve Hill
3A/E
Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Phone: 6231 9186

A chance to see fabulous views from one of the most spectacular mountain tops in the region, including over much of Kosciuszko and Namadji National Parks. From Yaouk we climb up the Lone Pine trail before turning off to the summit and touring many of the wonderful viewing spots up there. The climb of nearly 700m is steepish in parts, but is mainly on track and no serious bushbashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village shops carpark at 7.30am for a fabulous day. 210kms. \$70 per car.

24 October daywalk

Wednesday walk
Leader: Col McAlister
Phone: 6288 4171

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

27 – 30 October four day packwalk

Bundundah/Danjera area
Leader: Mike Smith
2C/D/E
Map: Sassafra 1:25 000
Phone: 6286 2984

A four-day three-night packwalk in Morton NP. Day 1, camp at the junction of Boolijah and Danjera Creeks after short but spectacular scramble down into gorge. Afternoon will be free to explore up Danjera Creek or just relax at great swimming hole. Day 2, cross over tops to hidden camping cave on Bundundah Creek including crawl through the 'Wombat Hole'. Afternoon we will check out a magnificent area of (flowering?) rock orchids across the creek. Day 3, a leisurely stroll back to the Boolijah/Danjera campsite with side trips to Danjera Falls and other lookouts. Day 4, climb out of gorge and return to cars for lunch (hamburgers, etc) in Nerriga.

Short daily packwalks but some scrub bashing, scrambling and climbs of 300m involved. Contact leader at least a week ahead for more details and/or to book in. Access by 4WD vehicles will be required. Numbers limited. 400kms, \$120per car.

28 October Sunday daywalk

Monga National Park
Contact: Len Haskew
Maps: Monga and Araluen 1:25 000
Phone: 6281 4286

The annual Monga Waratah walk, led by the *Friends of the Mongarlowe River* to see the famous waratahs in bloom. The actual area that we will visit will not be known til nearer the date of the walk (by some strange coincidence the culvert/bridges between Monga village and our usual parking spot have collapsed!). Meet at Canberra Railway Station Kingston at 8.00am. Because of the nature of the roads the walk may have to be cancelled if it is very wet - if in doubt, ring Len on the Friday or Saturday before the walk. The *Friends* make no charge for the conducted tour but it would be appropriate if each participant made a donation. 250kms, \$75 per car.

31 October Wednesday walk

Boxvale Circuit
Leader: Ken Free
2A/E
Map: Mittagong 1:25 000
Phone: 6295 8894

This walk includes the route of an historic railway, passing through cuttings and an 80m tunnel (please bring a torch). Should be many waratahs, orchids and other wildflowers. The walk also includes Forty Foot Falls, the Nattai River, and the very steep 'Incline', which follows the route of the old cable tramway where the coal skips came up the side of the Nattai Valley. This is not a difficult walk, but you do need to be fit. Meet in carpark at the ACT Netball Centre, Northbourne Avenue, Lyneham at 8.00am. 360kms, \$110 per car.

3 November Saturday daywalk

Shoalhaven River Views
Leader: Len Haskew
2A/B
Map: Burrier 1:25 000
Phone: 6281 4286

This 12km loop walk commences about 21km south-west of Kangaroo Valley village. Start with an easy climb to Moolattoo trig and then reasonably level walking to three other viewing points overlooking Lake Yarrunga, the Shoalhaven River and valley, and Morton National Park. Meet 8.00am at the Netball Centre carpark, just past the Dickson traffic lights on Northbourne Avenue. 450kms, \$135 per car.

3 - 4 November weekend packwalk

Mt Murray
Leader: Phil Gatenby
2A/C/E
Maps: Yaouk, Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
6254 3094(ab)

A walk to the ACT's third highest peak (over 1850 metres high). Mostly off tracks through forest, with a total climb of about 650m. There may be some rock scrambling involved on the climb up to Mt Murray's summit. Contact leader by the Wednesday before the walk. 200kms, \$60 per car.

4 November Sunday daywalk

Black Mountain Orchids
Leader: Adrienne Nicholson
Phone: 6281 6381

Few of our temperate climate orchids could be describes as 'spectacular', but there are many of them and they can be interesting for those prepared to search for them and look closely. With the article in this *Bulletin* as inspiration, let's see what we can find on Black Mountain this spring. Easy, rambling and searching - bring a magnifying glass or hand lens if keen. Meet at Caswell Drive parking area (opposite end of Wangara Street Aranda) at 10.30am.

10 November Saturday daywalk

Mt McKeahnie
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering
4A/C/D/E
Map: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Phone: 6286 2128 (bookings)

Joint walk with FBI. A long circular walk. Smokers Gap to McKeahnie Trig and on to the mountain for lunch. Down to Smokers Trail and back to the starting point. First and last parts of the walk will be on track or footpad. The longer middle part will be through scrub with steep climbs and rock scrambles. There will be a need to keep up a good pace. Total climb about 900m. 60kms, \$18 per car.

10 November Saturday work party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contact: Eleanor Stodart, Syd Comfort
Phone: 6281 5004 (Eleanor), 6286 2578 (Syd)
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre Tharwa at 9.15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Weeding, wilding removal or other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pines area. Tools will be provided.

11 November Sunday daywalk

Micalong Creek
Leader: Col McAlister
2A
Map: Bobbys Plains 1:25 000; H&H brochure
No. 3
Phone: 6288 4171

Walk the Hume and Hovell Track from Bossawa campsite to Micalong Creek campsite and return. A lovely walk along Micalong Creek with waterfalls and the wildflowers, hopefully, in full bloom. Meet at the carpark on Uriarra Road just off the Cotter Road at 8.00am. 220kms, \$60 per car.

12 - 18 November one week carcamp / packwalk

Wollomi National Park

Leader: Graham Scully

Phone: 6230 3352

Monday: drive to Dunns Swamp and set up camp.
Tuesday: daywalk around camp area and visit several pagoda formations. Wednesday, Thursday: overnight packwalk to Mt Coricudgy and return.
Friday, Saturday: drive to Nullo Mountain and overnight packwalk to Mt Pomany and return.
Sunday: drive home. For more details and bookings, please phone Graham.

18 November Sunday daywalk

Shanahans Mountain, Shanahans Falls Creek, Naas Creek
Leader: Pat Miethke
2A/B/C/D/E, plus wet feet!
Map: Colinton 1:25 000
Phone: 6241 2798 (h)

Steep descent down Shanahans Mountain. Stroll along Shanahans Falls Creek to the rocky junction with Naas Creek. Wade up Naas Creek's rocky creekbed, or struggle along its banks. Easy track walk out to Mt Clear campground. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Short car shuffle involved. 160kms, \$48 per car.

24 November Saturday daywalk

Bulls Head to Bendoura Arboretum
Leader: Rob Forster
2A
Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Phone: 6249 8546

Meet in carpark off Uriarra Road near corner with Cotter Road at 8.30am. A pleasant walk through splendid forests on firetrails to Bendoura Arboretum for lunch. Return by a different route. 110kms, \$32 per car.

24 November Saturday daywalk

'Mt Herlt'
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering
2A/C/D/E
Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Phone: 6286 2128

Meet at Kambah Village at 8.00am. From Orroral valley we follow the Nursery Creek track and then the footpad to Rendezvous Creek. We follow the creek downstream before climbing southwest to some magnificent rock slabs. They are like the slabs on Gudgenby. The range here is unnamed, but some refer to the general area as the Mavis ridge and the rock slab area as Mt Herlt. Total climb around 500m. Joint walk with FBI. 100kms, \$30 per car.

25 November Sunday daywalk

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

Meet at Southwell Park netball center on Northbourne Avenue Lyneham at 8.00am and drive to Bungonia. Descend to the Shoalhaven by the old flying fox trail. Wade across river to the old mine workings and smelter with its high brick chimneys. Return by different route to entrance of Bungonia SRA or, if good swimming weather, walk upstream to the 'Blockup' and return by same route. 500m descent/ascent. Small car shuffle may be required. 250kms, \$75 per car.

26 - 29 November four day packwalk

Kosciuszko NP
Leader: Mick Kelly
2A/B/C/D
Maps: Eucumbene, Khancoban 1:50 000
Phone: 4472 3959 or email
kellymob@sci.net.au

Day 1 drive to Gungarlin/Snowy Plain area, park vehicles and walk up old stock route to Cesjacks Hut, camp near hut or on Doubtful Creek (two nights). Day 2 walk to Mt Jagungal via Jagungal saddle. Day 3 through to Kidmans Hut via old stock

route and Bulls Peaks area. Day 4 back to cars and home via Teddys Creek. Please note walk is in high country, and will encompass creek crossings, wet areas, and scrub bashing from time to time, notwithstanding we should have a wonderful time. The walk will be a joint one with the Batemans Bay Bushies. Numbers limited, please contact leader by 22 October. 400kms, \$120 per car.

**28 November daywalk
Mulligans Flat**

1A
Leader: Jacqui Cole
Map: Canberra Street Directory
Phone: 6262 2152

Meet at the Mulligans Flat entrance on the Gundaroo Road (first carpark on the right after leaving Gungahlin) at 9.30am. This will be a fairly easy stroll. We will hope for lots of birdlife and kangaroos to watch, and we'll take in the ambience of the lovely woodland environment in this wonderful part of Canberra Nature Park.

**2 December Sunday daywalk
Fishing Gap and Cotter River**

Leader: Barbara Edgar
2A/B
Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000
Phone: 6230 5685(h), 6264 2991(w)

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am. Drive to Tidbinbilla, walk on fire trail to Fishing Gap. From there a walking track drops 300m down to the wild and remote Cotter River as it runs from Corin Dam down to Bendora Dam. In this magnificent setting we will have a leisurely lunch before returning. 60kms, 418 per car.

**8 December Saturday work party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contact: Eleanor Stodart, Syd Comfort
Phone: 6281 5004 (Eleanor), 6286 2578 (Syd)**

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre Tharwa at 9.15am, or Yankee Hat carpark at 10.00am. Weeding, wilding removal or other work for rehabilitation of the Boboyan pines area. Tools will be provided. Christmas get-together afterwards.

**9 December (Sunday)
NPA Christmas Party
Contact: Max Lawrence
Phone: 6288 1370**

Our Christmas party this year will again 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 the carpark at the Tidbinbilla 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!

**16 December Sunday daywalk
Snowy Mountains wildflowers
Leader: Brian Slee
2A/C**

Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000
Phone: 6281 0719

Depart Kambah Village 6.30am. Park at Charlotte Pass. Proceed initially via Blue Lake track and then

south, across Club Lake Creek to Kunama Hutte site. After inspecting ruins of lodge and ski tow, stop for morning tea at nearby waterfall. Continuing west, cross Northcote Pass and descend to Lake Albina for lunch, inspecting eyebrights, buttercups and anemones on the way. Return via Mt Lee. Great views. Several steep climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Book with leader as numbers limited and weather check essential. 430kms, \$129 per car plus \$15 for cars without permit.

**Late December packwalk
Rivers and Rainforests
Leaders: Pat and Eric Pickering
1C/D/E/F**

Phone 6286 2128 for details and bookings
The intention is to spend 4 - 5 days between Christmas and New Year in an area such as Ettrema or the Shoalhaven - probably the former this year - walking, scrambling and swimming. Traditionally we return to Canberra on New Years Day (after an early celebration on New Years Eve). Precise dates and location of the walk are negotiable.

13 January 2002 Sunday daywalk

**Tate West Ridge
Leader: Brian Slee
3A/C
Map: Mt Kosciuszko 1:50 000
Phone: 6281 0719**

Depart Kambah Village 6.30am. Park at Guthega and walk north up Guthega Ridge toward the Rolling Ground. Cross Windy Creek north of Consett Stephen Pass and continue up to Tate West Ridge. Visit a number of rocky outcrops along the broad ridge, stopping for lunch at a daisy meadow along the way. Views north to Jagungal and Dicky Cooper Bogong and west to Geehi Reservoir. Amazing panorama from Mt Tate to Watsons Crags to the south. A couple of steepish climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Contact leader in advance in case weather affects plans. 430kms, \$129 per car plus \$15 for vehicles without permit.



Thirty Years of Black Mountain Nature Rambles

On Saturday morning 13 October George Chippendale will come to Black Mountain and introduce a new generation of members of the National Parks Association to the wonders of Australian native flora in the springtime, as he has been doing for the last twenty nine years. In more recent times he also has included the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and the University of the Third Age (U3A) in his annual Black Mountain rambles. As well as interested newcomers, it can be expected that, as in the past, there will be a fair proportion of satisfied repeat customers turning up to drink at the fountain of George's wisdom.

NPA and the people of the ACT have been very fortunate that George has so generously shared with us the great knowledge of and enthusiasm for native Australian flora he accumulated over many years of distinguished professional work in this field. He started as an assistant at the NSW National Herbarium in 1936, and returned to the Herbarium after war service and the completion of his Science degree. During the period 1954-1966 he was the first resident taxonomic botanist in the Northern Territory, stationed in Alice Springs, and during this time emerged as one of the leading authorities on arid zone plants. He moved to Canberra as botanist/senior research scientist with the Forest Research Institute, Forestry and Timber Bureau, Yarralumla (later CSIRO Division of Forest Research, and now Forestry and Forest Products, CSIRO), where he stayed until his retirement in 1983. In 1972-73 George was Australian Botanical Liaison Officer at the Kew Herbarium, London. George Chippendale's love of the Australian bush and its conservation have never been restricted to his professional life, and this has been especially evident since his retirement. As well as running his annual Black Mountain nature rambles, George has been energetically involved in community affairs in this area. He was a committee member of NPA, was its President in 1971, and for some years has been running botany courses with U3A, where he has a large and avid following. Those who come along on 13 October on his Thirtieth Anniversary outing will be enriched by the experience, as were all those who went before (and kept coming back for more!).

When a fire is not a burn

On returning from southern Namadgi along the Old Boboyan Road on the shortest day of the year we saw a pall of smoke rising from the vicinity of the Yankee Hat car park area so pulled into the lookout which overlooks the area. Below us the smoke was rising from a fire in a section of the old Boboyan pine forest which had been felled last spring. The fire was a welcome sight as it was needed to allow the area to be replanted with acacias and eucalypts as part of the regeneration plan. However all was not as it appeared.

The area to be burned was 23ha located just beyond the locked gate at the Yankee Hat carpark and had originally been scheduled for burning on the day after Anzac Day. This was found to be inappropriate so the burn was deferred. Continuing dry weather meant that the burn could not be undertaken because the risks to surrounding areas were too high. Rain in June allowed the burn to be planned for Thursday 21 June and the Parks Service decided to combine the fire with a training exercise involving Emergency Services, Ambulance, Bush Fire and catering units as well as Park Service staff. This was aimed to exercise procedures for coping with an extensive fire of a scale similar to that experienced in Namadgi in 1983.

Following some cold days, rain fell on the night of the 20th. The fires were lit as planned on the 21st but the pines failed to catch. The



Fire in a section of felled pines in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Area.

Photo Tim Walsh

combination of cold, wet conditions and gusty winds prevented the development of the convective effect needed for a hot burn and the result was that only the edge of the area was singed and there was no effective burning of the main body of the felled pines. The training exercise went ahead and proved to be very successful. However as far as clearing the cut pines to enable replanting to proceed the fire had failed except perhaps in a small area along the lower edge. The volumes of smoke had been deceiving!

Another opportunity to burn the area may occur in the spring after the fuel has dried out but this will be dependent on favourable weather conditions permitting a fire to be lit without risk to surrounding bush.

Meeting prescriptions for fire at that time may be indeed be difficult. The implications for the regeneration program are that replanting of this area, with the possible exception of the small section mentioned above, will have to be deferred as attempting to reseed or plant without burning is unlikely to be successful. This is disappointing, but in a program as extensive as the Gudgenby regeneration some setbacks are inevitable and in the meantime efforts can be focused in other directions. It is important that felling of other stands of pines be undertaken in the coming spring in preparation for further burning next autumn and subsequent reseeding.

Syd Comfort

Some Gudgenby bush regeneration trivia

On 28 June I went over the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Project with the Natural Heritage Trust Bushcare assessment team (NHT grants paid to the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group form part of the Bushcare allocation).

We have spread about 500kg of seed over something like 300-400km of seeding lines (a seeding line is 4m wide) with a strike rate of 1800 stems per km after 12 months and 2000 stems per km after 24 months

(based on counts in six 50m transects). About 24 000 seedlings have been planted. Greencorps teams, GBRG members and one NPA work party took part in the plantings.

We have no overall figures for weeds removed. In quantity terms much of the work has been done by a contractor spraying St Johns wort, blackberries and briar roses, but the July work party saw 13 people remove 85 pine wildings, over

350briars, and over 250 blackberries from the Hospital Creek section and the bush just to the south.

Apart from our core regulars, we are getting a steady trickle of NPA members taking part since the work parties have been included in the outings program. If just half the members of NPA attended one work party once in three years we would have five extra NPA members at each work party.

Eleanor Stodart

Quarry rehabilitation a gigantic task

Attempts to rehabilitate the quarry slopes are evident from the walking track, but it is not until you visit the mine that the magnitude of the task becomes clearer. The quarry, owned by Blue Circle Southern Cement Limited, is at Marulan South near Goulburn and is reckoned the biggest limestone quarry in Australia. The walking trail, which gives a clear view of the mine, is opposite the quarry across a steep-sided gully and is known as the Long Point track.

The local council built the 3km long track in 1938 to give walkers access to the Shoalhaven River. It also built a lookout at the start of the walk giving a grand view of the Shoalhaven as, far below, it forms a U shape beneath Rainbow Ridge.

The mine was in operation long before 1938, limestone having first been extracted in the Marulan district about 1875. Several companies worked the current site from the 1920s until Blue Circle became the sole owner in 1974. Thirteen years later Blue Circle became part of Boral Limited.

According to a quarry booklet, the mine's economic significance to New South Wales and Australia is considerable. Cement production, steel making, soil stabilisation, agriculture, stock feed, glass production, pulp and paper manufacture – limestone figures in all of them.

Years ago there was little, if any, acknowledgment of environmental damage from mining. Unwanted mullock from the quarry was simply tipped over the side of gullies, creating enormous damage and polluting Barbers Creek below the walking track, and then the Shoalhaven into which the creek runs.

The mine owners are committed to rehabilitation of the site and a few years ago appointed their latest environmental officer, Grant

Thomson, who first began working at the quarry as a fettler and then as a gardener before getting the environmental job.

Quarry restoration has been under way since at least the late 1960s. In those days a helicopter was used to ferry rock baskets for the erection of gabion walls above Barbers Creek to stop mine waste reaching creek and river. In another measure a rock filtration barrier was placed above the walls. About 10 gabion walls are now in place around the quarry site.

Today the first of the devastated slopes seen from the Long Point walking track resembles a bright green waterfall. Bulldozers were used to bench the slopes, grasses were sown, trees planted. While some trees survive, they are struggling. This is because the species planted were not native to this area. In addition, the mullock has few nutrients and with the spoil being porous, essential water escapes quickly.

It is readily admitted that planting trees not native to the area was a mistake. Grant Thomson now propagates his own tube stock from local seed, but he is experimenting also to find out whether direct sowing of seed works better. Last spring, Grant planted species from the area – casuarinas, acacias and certain eucalypts – on the slopes. Some are doing well, but others were gobbled up by goats, rabbits and kangaroos.

Fencing to keep animals out has been successful in some parts of the quarry and trees and shrubs have flourished. But the huge size of the areas that would have to be fenced off, let alone the expense, is daunting. Some slopes are so steep that fencing looks impossible. And the water problem may only be solved by installing tanks and employing drip irrigation, an expensive and time-consuming process. It has been tried in a few

areas and does work.

Grant Thomson has a planting target of 2000 trees per annum at the mine. Just how many of these plantings will survive is the unknown factor. He has had more success with plantings outside the immediate area of the mine, but conditions there are more favourable to their survival. These saplings were planted on 40 house sites at Marulan South village where the ground is flat and the soil much better because village folk were keen gardeners.

The dwellings, most of them owned by Boral, were demolished or cut up and taken elsewhere after it was found that upgrading the village sewerage system to meet Environmental Protection Authority regulations would cost \$1 million. Other improvements – for example, to the water supply – would have cost as much again.

Mullock is now filling two gullies not visible to the casual observer from outside the mine. One of these overburden areas is enormous, but the depth and extent of the two pits on the site easily explain how this extraordinary pile of waste has come about.

Before the mullock is dumped, topsoil in its path is removed and trees chipped to provide mulch. The intention is to spread the topsoil across overburden to be revegetated so that seed or plants will have a better chance of surviving. The topsoil also contains seed banks for natural germination and will help retain water.

Exactly when the mullock heaps will be revegetated is not known at present although they will be grassed. This is because developments in use of mine waste mean that productive uses may be found for some of the spoil. Walls

continued on page 13

Update on Namadgi management agreement

The June *Bulletin* reported on the agreement reached to involve ACT Aboriginal groups in the management of Namadgi National Park through the establishment of an Interim Namadgi Advisory Board comprising five Aboriginal representatives and five non-Aboriginal members appointed by the Minister. This board will provide advice to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna on a new draft management plan, other relevant legislation and on consent decisions relating to a number of activities in the park.

At the time of writing (August 17) the position is that the five Aboriginal members have been nominated and provisional appointments made for the five other positions. Four of these members have each been selected to

provide specialist contributions from the areas of science, heritage, nature-based tourism and non government organisations. The fifth member will come from the office of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. An informal gathering of these people was expected to be held in late August. Formal appointment will not be made until necessary procedures have been completed so that an announcement of this can be expected in September with the first meeting of the board likely towards the end of that month.

Any move from the interim arrangements outlined above to the long-term management provisions would depend on progress in the resolution or withdrawal of the outstanding native title claim now before the Federal Court.

Syd Comfort



President Clive Hurlstone with the former Executive Director of Environment ACT, Colin Adrian, at the signing of the Namadgi National Park management agreement at the Namadgi Visitor Centre on 27 May 2001.
Photo Reg Alder

Quarry rehabilitation – continued from page 12

have been built on the dumps to help control dust and these are revegetating naturally, if slowly.

While revegetation is the most visible of the rehabilitation efforts at the quarry, the real environmental enemies are pampas grass, serrated tussock, blackberry, cotoneaster and weeds in general. Grant Thomson is waging a war on pampas grass and serrated tussock whose seed can be borne many kilometres in the wind. The threat to the neighbouring Morton National Park and Bungonia State Recreation Area is obvious.

The struggle to control these invaders and weeds is unending. While many pampas grass plants have been eliminated, survivors can be seen clinging to the sheer walls of the two great pits at the quarry. Getting to these, spraying the plants and removing the seed heads

requires agility and skill. Blackberry clumps and cotoneaster shrubs are other menaces although their presence does not approach that of pampas grass and serrated tussock.

More people view the mine from lookouts above Bungonia Canyon in the Bungonia SRA than from the Long Point walking track. What they peer at from the famous Lookdown is the southern pit because a high earth wall was built to shield the northern quarry from view. Local native species have been planted above the southern pit and more have survived than have died or been eaten by animals. But given the size of the southern part of the quarry, any success in shielding it from the Bungonia SRA must take many years to achieve.

Illustrations in the quarry booklet show that the southern pit will be even deeper than at present,

although after about 2005 the mining will be internal with the rim not being lowered any further. Blue Circle intends to complete mining the southern pit in the next 20 years or so. After that it will be rehabilitated – the massive amounts of mullock required will come from the northern pit and by 2030 filling should have advanced far enough for tree planting to begin. Filling the whole gigantic hole will take years, but if possible it will be screened from view.

Restoration on this scale will be welcomed by the thousands of visitors who over the years have been affronted by the quarry when gazing at mountains and gorges from Bungonia SRA lookouts. The views are superb, but inevitably one's gaze is drawn back to the quarry and the deep wounds it has caused to the landscape.

Graeme Barrow

PARKWATCH

Wild horse management – research under way

Wildlife ecologist Michelle Walter has just completed the second year of her 3½ year research program into the population ecology of the wild horses of the Australian Alps. Michelle is enrolled at the University of Canberra and her research is funded by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.

The information about Kosciuszko's wild horses will be very important to park managers as previously there was little information about the numbers and distribution of horses in the park. Michelle's work involves mapping the distribution of horses from the ACT through to the Bogong High Plains in Victoria and she has been talking to local residents to get an indication of historic distribution.

Another important component of her work is a helicopter aerial survey of the horses. This was undertaken from late February to early March. This is the first time an attempt has been made to estimate the total numbers of wild horses in Kosciuszko and this information will be a good baseline for monitoring the populations into the future.

Studying population dynamics is another key part of Michelle's research. Information recorded includes the foaling rate and the survival of different sex and age groups from season to season. This information is being collected at three sites in Kosciuszko – the Currango plain in the far north of the park, the Big Boggy area near Thredbo and Cowombat Flat on the NSW/Victorian border. Michelle's work also involves identifying individual animals and following them over time. She now has records for more than 150 horses across the three study sites.

If people see any horses in the study areas Michelle would be particularly interested to see photos which allow individual horses to be identified, or any information on births of foals or animals dying or leaving the population. Information

can be forwarded to Michelle at P0Box 642, Jindabyne, NSW 2627. *NSW NPWS Snowy Mountains Region Newsletter, May 2001.*

A \$1.5m rescue to beat the peat
It took tens of thousands of years for Wingecarribee swamp to form and a single night of flooding to almost destroy it.

For more than 30 years the swamp was mined for its peat. Sydney Water has relied on the water that flows out of the marsh, and agriculture has surrounded the unique area.

Yesterday the Environment Minister, Mr Debus, announced that the State Government will try to rehabilitate the heritage-listed swamp, and prevent further damage to the highly degraded ecosystem.

Wingecarribee is home to at least three endangered species and numerous Aboriginal archaeological sites. Much of the \$1.5 million allocated by the Government will be spent ensuring these values are protected.

'After intense rainfall on the night of 8-9 August 1998, a dredge from the mining lease within the Wingecarribee Swamp was found floating towards the middle of the Wingecarribee Reservoir,' says a new management plan for the swamp. 'Behind the dredge was a floating island of peat, estimated to contain between 1.7 and 2.3 million cubic metres of peat.'

The loss of so much peat was a disaster for the swamp and the water quality of the reservoir.

According to the report, it has fragmented and destabilised the swamp, lowered much of its surface by up to five metres, lowered the water table, altered drainage patterns and created a channel which now dissects the length of the swamp.

Blackberry and willow invading newly dried parts of the swamp are to be eradicated as a priority, water levels are to be stabilised and the site is to become a total fire exclusion zone.

It is not yet possible to restore the swamp to its pre-1998 condition, Mr Debus said, but the plan will see the National Parks and Wildlife Service working 'to stabilise and preserve the remaining swamp habitat'

The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 May 2001.

The economic benefits of parks
The Colong Foundation has campaigned on purely environmental and recreational grounds for the dedication of parklands. The preservation of wildlife and catchment protection have been two of our main themes. But as the NPWS points out in the findings of 'The Technical Report on The Contribution of Warrumbungle National Park to Regional Economic Development', 'national parks can make a significant contribution of the regions in which they are located.'

Rural and logging interests have opposed the creation of national parks because grazing and logging within the parks are ruled out. The implications of the report are that this opposition is based on self interest – not regional economic interest. The 23,198 ha. of the Warrumbungle National Park occupies a tiny fraction of the vast rural lands of the north western statistical division. It was previously privately owned grazing land. It provided grazing land for a few thousand sheep. The annual revenue from paid accommodation associated with visits to the park is estimated at \$683,000 and the Gross Regional Output effects generated are estimated at \$3.7 million, including \$1.38 million in household income to the equivalent of 66 people.

The report is one of 10 NPWS economic publications on the benefits of protected areas for local economies. They provide a complete answer to the opponents of parks on economic grounds; as parks these lands become valuable regional assets.

The Colong Bulletin, March 2001

continued on page 15

PARKWATCH – *continued from page 14*

4WD MOU

The NPWS signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Recreational Four Wheel Drive Clubs Association (NSW and ACT) in October. The MOU aims to achieve a 'cooperative working relationship'; and it allows access to areas that would 'otherwise be closed to the public'. It commits the NPWS to responding to correspondence from the 4WD Association within three weeks: NPA does not get such a speedy response as this!

NPA is opposed to special access arrangements for recreational groups and is concerned that this MOU sets a precedent – it may lead to exclusive access arrangements that alienate parts of the national park estate for particular sectional interests.

National Parks Journal, April 2001.

Ten points to save the Murray

The excitement around the Olympics and the Centenary of Federation has shown that Australians love to get behind a big idea. And no idea is bigger – and no project more timely – than saving the artery of the east, the Murray River. ACF's Ten Point Plan sets out the steps needed to revive this wasting waterway.

1. *More water* – reduce the amount diverted for irrigation to deliver flows.
2. *Healthier estuary* – the five barrages that stop seawater and marine life entering the estuary are a luxury we can no longer afford.
3. *From lakes to rivers* – the impact of weirs must be reduced. This may include leaving weirs open for longer, removing them altogether, or building fish ladders on the walls.
4. *Greening the riverbanks* – too many river banks are over-grazed and trampled by stock.
5. *Thawing the waters* – over half of the 30 dams in the Basin release water which is so cold that it can stop native fish from breeding. To bring back the habitats we will need to warm

to a basin-wide investment program.

6. *Halt land clearing* – stopping broad scale land clearing in the north is crucial to safeguarding the long term future of the rivers.
7. *Green the land* – further south we need to undertake enormous revegetation schemes to restore balance to water cycles to tackle salinity.
8. *Retraining our shame drains* – a program of reducing pollutant inputs, vegetating drains and using artificial wetland treatments is necessary.
9. *Good advice, not parochial advice* – the current Murray-Darling Basin Commission framework has been found wanting and needs a breath of fresh air.
10. *Informed catchments* – community ownership is the key to achieving better rivers and catchments.

habitat, June, 2001

Rare birds get own land

More than 1000 ha of north Queensland coastal habitat has been set aside as a sanctuary for the southern cassowary. The Queensland and Federal Governments have bought the coastal land near Innisfail in a bid to ensure the flightless bird's survival.

About 1400 cassowaries remain in north Queensland rainforests and Senator Hill (Federal Minister for Environment) said the population near Ingham was significant. 'It is also the one most threatened by continual clearing of the rainforest,' Senator Hill said.

Cassowaries have a unique role in rainforest ecology, that of spreading seeds. Senator Hill said that the cassowary population had declined rapidly in the past 25 years with up to 40% of its habitat cleared. In the same area, more than 60 cassowaries had been killed by cars between 1986 and 1999.

Parkwatch, June 2001.

Fraser Island dingo challenge

The NPAQ was appalled at the killing of a young boy by two dingoes on Fraser Island on 30 April 2001.

Its collective heart goes out to his family and friends at their tragic loss.

NPAQ supported the initial government declaration of an immediate assessment of the dingo situation with a view to implementing a measured response. It did not object to the elimination of the two dogs responsible for the attack, but was surprised and shocked at the Premier's announcement two days later that he was ordering an immediate cull of dingoes around camps and townships with an expected 20 to 30 animals to be shot.

The basis on which these shootings was ordered remains unclear as it appears to be against the advice of experts, conservationists and traditional owners. Public reaction was also against the shootings from the first day. Attempts to placate the public through media statements, letters to concerned citizens and the 'dingo hotline' have not given plausible explanations for the course of action taken.

The killings, which amounted to one in six of the estimated dingo population, stopped on Saturday 5Ma y. Twenty-eight dingoes were dead by then and it is possible that another three have been shot at the time of writing.

Reports reaching our office indicate that the spaces left vacant by the shot dingoes were occupied by others in hours, not days as many predicted, and people were still enticing the dogs into close proximity. As predicted by most with some knowledge of the situation, the shooting did little to influence the behaviour of dingoes or people.

Belatedly, the government called a meeting of experts, government officers and some other interested people to study the situation, but this came too late for many innocent dingoes whose only mistake was to act as they had become accustomed to doing for the past decade.

QUOTE:

Long-time Fraser Island campaigner, John Sinclair, wrote in

continued on page 16

My favourite place:

Mallacoota – Victoria's best kept secret

In this article Barbara describes her "favourite place". The Bulletin would welcome articles from other members describing their "favourite places".

We've been going to Mallacoota since 1977 and each time we go, we come back refreshed and "detoxified". We seem to shed the "skins" civilisation puts on us, even coming from a place as nice as Canberra.

The best way to go is via Nimmitabel (don't miss a stop at the bakery!) then turn right to Bombala. You travel through Bombala and turn on to the Cann River Road which is about 1km out of town on the left. This road is followed until you come to the turn off to Eden. There is about 500m of dirt road (which no shire is apparently responsible for!) and then you travel via the Imlay Road until you hit the Princes Highway. After this lovely forest drive (avoid driving at dusk because of all the wildlife on the road), you emerge just south of Eden. You turn right and follow the highway until you reach the turn off to Mallacoota and the lovely expanse of the Genoa River.

By now, after about four hours of travelling, you have shed Canberra and you are ready to welcome

Mallacoota. It's about 25km in off the highway (which keeps the Victorian tourists away), and its simplicity is apparent as you avoid dogs sleeping in the middle of the road, and the lovely expanse of the lakes which aren't surrounded by houses.

The area is well renowned for its prolific bird life – ibis, herons, spoonbills, kingfishers, godwits, pelicans, oystercatchers, wonga pigeons, gannets, terns, Pacific gulls, albatross, little terns, whistling kites, sea eagles, ground parrots, yellow robins etc – just to mention a few! There are also many nice walks within close proximity of the town – Casuarina Walk 1.8km, Heathland Walk 0.8km, Beach walk 2.1km, Pittosporum Walk and Shady Gully 0.5 km. These all bring you into close contact with a variety of plant life, including mountain grey gums, black she-oak, *Casuarina littoralis*, and on the heathland walk there are many species of orchids which are well worth investigating. The very rare Mallacoota gum (there are possibly only 38 left) is also evident next to the mudbrick pavilion in the heart of town.

A walk along the foreshores is not to be missed with lovely rock pools

home to numbers of crabs, molluscs, urchins and other intertidal life.

For those with a more adventurous spirit, you can do the coast walk to Shipwreck Creek, and on to Wingan Inlet and Point Hicks (in a southerly direction). You could also go north to Cape Howe; however, you would have to arrange boat transport across the inlet. A flight to Gabo Island is also worth a look. You can stay in the lighthouse keeper's cottage for \$100 (for six people) and watch the fairy penguins come ashore at night.

A boat trip on the lake to watch the sea eagles being fed is another worthwhile experience, whilst an early morning canoe trip up the Betka River to watch the kingfishers and sea eagles is also something special. If you are fortunate enough to find the sand dune (half way along Tip Beach) then to perch at the top of this and watch the dolphins frolic in the surf below is another rich reward of nature.

I hope the above explains why we go there. Our sons say "But Mum, the coast is only two hours away not four and a half! Why did you choose Mallacoota?" Need I say more?

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

PARKWATCH – *continued from page 15*

a recent edition of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation Newsletter: *Fraser Island without dingoes would be like Yellowstone National Park without bears or Kruger National Park without lions or Kakadu without crocodiles. We don't destroy cars because some have been responsible for killing some humans. We don't demand that all domestic dogs be destroyed because some kill humans. Why then should anyone demand that all Fraser Island dingoes be killed?*

NPA News, June, 2001

Environmental events calendar

- 3 September: *ACT Arbor Day*
- 7 September: *National Threatened Species Day*
- 16 September: *International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer*
- 25 September: *National Parks Day*
- October: *Bushcare Month*
- 1 October: *World Habitat Day*
- 3 October: *World Animal Day*
- 8 – 14 October: *National Weedbusters Week*

14 – 20 October: *National Water Week*

22 – 29 October: *National Bird Week*

12 – 18 November: *National Recycling Week*

25 November – 7 December: *Peoplescape—a Federation Celebration, Canberra*

1 – 7 December: *Coastcare Week*

For more information on these events call toll free 1800 803 772 *National Heritage Trust, 2001 Calendar.*

Allan Fox, OAM



Allan Fox, OAM

It is with great pleasure we congratulate Allan Fox for receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to conservation and the

environment through education and management.

As a student teacher, Allan was strongly influenced by Allen Strom, the conservationist who became the Chief Guardian of Fauna in NSW before the days of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

After eight years as a teacher in the National Fitness Camps in NSW, Allan worked for the Fauna Panel, later for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and then for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. He wrote management plans for many national parks, including Uluru, Kakadu and Mootwingee. He prepared the information displays in the Warrumbungle National Park Information Centre and has written the text for many interpretative

signs along nature trails in various parks and reserves.

Allan is the author of 36 books about history, geography and the environment, illustrating them with careful maps, diagrams and beautiful photographs. He is frequently asked to speak at gatherings of environmentalists both in Australia and overseas.

His enthusiasm for the environment and the need for careful management is infectious and draws people into that field.

It is very satisfying to see people who have worked for the protection of the natural environment recognised by the community. Our whole nation benefits from the work of enthusiasts like Allan.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Over the plains and far away

In the spring of 2000 Gary and DiThompson ventured off in Di's "trophy car" (her words not mine) to see Lake Eyre, well endowed with water, and a part of the central Australian desert in the company of several camels. Di shared these adventures with those who attended the July General Meeting. Her presentation was illustrated with some slides of the amazingly harsh country that they traversed, and an album of excellent photographs.

Di gave us a quick glimpse of Burra (which she highly recommends as a place to visit), the Flinders Ranges and some of the intriguing Aboriginal petroglyphs in the Gammon Ranges. Gary and Di then drove along the Oodnadatta Track as far as William Creek, where their adventures really began.

Di flew over Lake Eyre in a light plane. The lake had been filled by floodwaters coming down the Diamantina/Warburton, Thompson/Barcoo and Cooper Creek river systems, together with water from several smaller river systems. When Di made her journey most of the birds had gone, but her

slides showed a mystical, watery wilderness with relatively clear water masking only slightly the interesting contours of the lake bed. Di aptly likened the abstract quality of her images to Aboriginal paintings.

Then at Warrina Siding (a relic of the old Ghan route), about half way between Oodnadatta and William Creek Gary and Di met up with six camels, their guide and a journalist from Coober Pedy to begin a four-day camel trek on Peak Station, which is part of Anna Creek, the largest cattle station in the world and owned by the Kidman family.

The country they travelled was a harsh, spectacular wilderness, with little vegetation, much more rock than soil, and little wildlife apart from a few lizards but, strangely enough, a rich and varied bird population. It was fortunate, I thought, that their companions were camels – the couple of waterholes they visited looked most uninviting! Their guide was a self taught expert in the regional desert ecology and cultural history. Di gained the impression that he was doing all he could to protect the area in which he worked and that he was passing on a sound conservation education to his

safari members. Travelling closely to the route of the old Ghan which ceased running in 1980, they also saw some interesting relics of the days of steam. Di showed a slide of the Kennecot water treatment plant which seemed to be right in the middle of nowhere, but which was used to soften the very saline water from artesian bores for the steam locos. At Kennecot the cast iron water tank used to hold 120 000 litres of softened water.

They seemed to do a lot more walking than riding, and many of us, I think, were grateful that we were able to experience Di and Gary's adventures from the comfort of our chairs at Forestry House.

Len Haskew

Subscriptions for 2001/2002

Subscriptions to the association are now due and should be forwarded using the yellow form included in the June *Bulletin*. Asterisks on the address label indicate that association records show that the subscription has not been paid and that no further issues of the *Bulletin* will be despatched until the subscription is received.

2001 – International year of the volunteer

How many members are aware that 2001 is the International Year of Volunteers and of the amount of volunteer work carried out by our committee in administering our association, and of the ongoing work of members over the years on projects within our national parks?

The United Nations Volunteers program was created in 1970 to serve as a partner in development cooperation: each year close to 5000 professions from 150 nations work in a range of technical, economic and social fields.

The motives of volunteers in undertaking unpaid work vary. Some may volunteer because of their belief in a set of values that express their own personal values. There could be a quest for knowledge, or as a means to an end through meeting others, especially kindred spirits with a commitment identifying themselves with a specific problem. Volunteering is not carried out for monetary gain, or with coercion but with an objective of benefit to the community, but it may also benefit individual members in intangible ways.

Most members of our NPA Committee have a firm commitment to attend association meetings at least three times per month and, in addition, other meetings with parks representatives or of kindred associations. This requires a high degree of dedication to the work of the association. Additional sub-committee meetings are involved with the outings program and in production of the *Bulletin*. Government publications require perusal and a good deal of research in order to formulate policies and to draft replies. Leaders of our outings, besides volunteering to commit themselves to an event which may be over three months ahead, also have a responsibility to bring back walkers safely through sometimes difficult country under adverse conditions. Then there is the every day watch-dog commitment of being alert to some activity or action which may be deleterious to the well-being of our parks.

Originally all our administrative work was all carried out by members, but as our commitments grew we were able for some years to obtain grant money which enabled

the association to employ a part-time office assistant. Later as the work of responding to management programs increased a research assistant was employed to draft association comment. This funding has ceased over the past couple of years, imposing a further work load on members to staff the office and carry out research.

Governments are showing an increasing tendency to divert work to volunteers without compensation; the promise to apportion revenue obtained from gambling proceeds to volunteer organisations has long been forgotten. Many volunteers are quite prepared to accept the obligations which the work entails but there is a limit. The final work often falls back on the dedicated few, who, if too much is asked, will drop out if they find the work too onerous or time consuming, or interfering too much with their domestic life.

Governments must expect to provide some administrative support to volunteer organisations if they are to continue to address public needs.

Reg Alder

Save the bilby

"Help save this endangered animal (or plant) is a constant cry to the public and, thankfully, some people take up the cause with great zeal for the animal or plant of their choice.

Such an enthusiast is Frank Manthey, Chief District Ranger in the Queensland National Park and Wildlife Service. Frank's friend, Peter McRae has been studying bilbies for many years and has managed to breed them in captivity. As a way to introduce the bred animals back into the wild, Frank proposed that an area in a suitable national park, such as Currawinya, be fenced and the feral animals that prey on the bilby be destroyed and others kept out. This sensible idea met opposition because of the expense. Frank then suggested that the money be raised from the public but this was frowned upon until a new Director of the Service saw this as an enlightened idea.

Frank's "Buy a Fence Panel" (\$20) was launched on the ABC's Macca on Sundays program and the scheme was away. A \$50 000 grant came from the Natural Heritage Trust's Endangered Species Program to add to the donations and the fence was completed by Easter 2001. Now money is needed for the electrification of the fence. Only then will the bilbies bred at Charleville be released into the 25 sq km fenced area.

Bilbies once lived on 80 per cent of the Australian land surface, but agriculture, grazing and the hunting habits of feral cats, dogs, foxes and pigs have destroyed their habitat. There are now only small scattered colonies left in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland.

They are nocturnal marsupials, living and breeding in burrows, and feeding upon grubs and insects. They are delightful little creatures with their



sharp faces, large erect ears and long slim furry tails. The adults are the size of very small dogs and hop quickly on large back legs. The bilbies in the breeding program may be viewed at the Parks Service Charleville at the conclusion of Frank's evening lectures on the animals.

If you would like to buy a fence panel send your donation to the Queensland NPWS, PO Box 148, Charleville, Q. 4470.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

BOOK REVIEW

Murray of Yarralumla, by Gwendoline Wilson, Tabletop Press, 2001, RRP \$29.95 inc GST.

Gwendoline Wilson's history, *Murray of Yarralumla*, ranges much further than its title suggests. It is a family saga, reaching back to 8th century Ireland and forward to illustrious sons, and gives vivid pictures of white settlement far from Yarralumla – at Moreton Bay, and especially on the Goulburn Plain and south to the Monaro and Snowy Mountains and east to the coast.

There are stories of hazardous treks, the opening up of new grazing country, the management of stock, the building of huts and mansions, social and family life in Sydney and the bush, how travellers fared on the road, overturnings and drownings at river crossings, urgent dashes to get cattle down from the high country because of early snow, and murder, suicide and frequent financial ruin.

Contemporary records are quoted to give insight into relations between free settlers and convicts, relations with the Aboriginal people on treks and in settled areas, encounters with bushrangers.

Names on today's maps often contain echoes of the past in the family names and Aboriginal words used in the early letters, diaries and documents – Arralumna, Yarrowlumley, Yarrowlumla, Kemberry, Canberry, Maneroo, Jedbinbilla, Collegdar (an Aboriginal word), Nimothy Bell, and an echo two places removed – Waa-wee-waa, now Werriwa, the Aboriginal name of Lake George.

It seems that Murray led the first party of Europeans to the top of Mount Coree – then called Pabral Peak – during which, as he records, he "listened with surprise and pleasure" to the singing of lyrebirds, and took potshots at two.

The book is rich in insights into the lives and aspirations of the first settlers – but mainly those whose wealth and background enabled them to aspire not only to even more wealth from their landholdings but to a genteel lifestyle as well. Mansions appeared in the bush

almost as soon as settlement was started. But for most people life was hard and hazardous.

The first substantial building at Yarralumla was a gentlemen's stone hunting lodge – with kennels nearby for an attendant pack of hounds. When Terence Aubrey Murray acquired an interest in Yarralumla in 1837, he took over the pack.

All the hounds died in a drought summer a year later on a six-man expedition Murray led into the Brindabellas looking for pasture. All the saddle and pack horses were lost, too. One died of exhaustion: the rest escaped into the bush, possibly to start breeding brumbies.

In later life Murray said these mountains were "the scenes of my greatest exertions and greatest difficulties". A sentiment that might be shared by some NPA members.

Murray was only 27 when he took over Yarralumla. In 1841 – when he was 31 – Murray had properties at Lake George and Yarralumla and stations at Brindabella, Cooleman, Mannus, Jingelic and one that does not appear on any maps then or now – the mysterious Boongongo, which, the author speculates, may be the present-day Bungonga.

Many other heroes and heroines appear in the pages. Murray's sister, Anna Maria, was the author of the first novel published in hardback in Australia. Another of the book's heroes is Stewart Mowle who, as a 16-year-old, was invited by Murray to help manage Yarralumla. He became a major landholder, Usher of the Black Rod in the NSW Parliament, and a venerable figure who was instrumental in having Canberra chosen as the site for the national capital.

Murray was very much at home in the saddle. The author says that when leading an expedition Murray "gave the impression of a courageous leader, with his strong physique, air of command and calm manner". It seems that he really did embody most of the attributes of the manly pioneering ideal.

He was not alone in that. What would be regarded today as feats of

horse riding were then commonplace. To ride from the Limestone Plains to Sydney and back raised no more comment than today's car trip. Murray rode from Yarralumla to Melbourne and back in 18 days, including about a day and a half for business in Melbourne.

On horseback, dray, carriage or foot, or in a ship, people were surprisingly mobile. But not very fast. Wagons carrying wool to Sydney sometimes took three months to complete the journey. Stewart Mowle and his young bride, Mary, took two weeks to travel from the Limestone Plains to their first home near Tumberumba.

Mary had been brought up as a gentlewoman and was known as the daughter of "the laird of Braidwood". The home she went to had a clay floor and a leaking bark roof. Nevertheless, she had a maid and cook in attendance.

A diary she kept when she and her husband and their children lived in a stone cottage on the Limestone Plains shows she adapted to the role of farmer's wife – for example: "7 January. The same old story – get up – dress the children ... Feed the poultry – breakfast – go to work – put Kate to sleep – hear Florence her lessons – dine – read – feed chickens – work till sunset ..." The site of the cottage is now under Lake Burley Griffin.

Murray of Yarralumla was first published by Oxford University Press in 1968. Tabletop Press is to be commended for bringing this valuable record back into the public domain.

The author has lived in Canberra since 1935. She was Professor Manning Clark's first student in Canberra to take a degree in history with honours.

The book is available at most Canberra bookshops or from Tabletop Press, 2 Lambell Close, Palmerston, ACT, 2913, ph62420995.

Graeme Wicks

Calendar

Activity	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee meeting	Thu 6	Thu 4	Thu 1	Thu 6
Environment Sub-committee ¹	Thu 13	Thu 11	Thu 8	Thu 13
General meeting	Thu 20	Thu 18	Th 15	
<i>Bulletin</i> Working Group ²	Tue 25			
Christmas Party ³				Sun 9
Gudgenby Regeneration ⁴	Sat 8	Sat 13	Sat 10	Sat 8

Further details

1. See page 2 for contacts
2. Syd Comfort 6286 2578
3. See outings program
4. Yankee Hat car park 10:00 am; Eleanor Stodart 6281 5004

New members

The association welcomes the following new members who have joined since early April:

Lyndall and Hal Hatch, Jamison
Roger Farrow and Christine Kendrick, Duffy
Celia Clonin, Curtin
Robin Garnett, Torrens
Helena Mills, Kingston
Bill Coote, Campbell
Ed Visbord, Griffith
Mary Bennett, Yarralumla
Wayne Hunt, Canberra
Celia Cronin, Curtin
Russell and Louise Wenholz, Holt
Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin O'Connor
Penny and Colin Palmer, Bungendore
Debbie Wainer, Downer
Pamela Mathie, Hackett
Jennifer Chorley, Mawson
Michael and Marion Hess, Lyneham
Heather McDonald, Dickson
Grant and Natalie Woodbridge, Jerrabomberra
Ralph Snowdon and Barbara Jesiolowks, Calwell
Les and Alison Davies, Chapman

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

General meetings

Our general meetings are held at Forestry House, CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products, Wilf Crane Crescent, off Banks Street, Yarralumla, commencing at 8:00pm.

Thursday 20 September 2001

Greenhouse - your house

Chris Mackenzie Davey, the Cool Communities Facilitator for the ACT, will talk about global warming and local consequences, what it means, and what we can do.

Thursday 18 October 2001

Charles Weston

Dr John Gray will talk on early days of conservation and afforestation in the federal capital 1911-1926

Thursday 15 November 2001

Wetlands for our suburbs

Jennie Gilles, Coordinator, Sullivans Creek Catchment Group. Sullivans Creek Catchment Group (SCCG) is an incorporated volunteer-based community group that is actively working in partnership with government, business and the broader community to improve the long-term ecological and social health of Sullivans Creek catchment.

A particular focus of the group is the restoration of Sullivans Creek, which has been lined with concrete in the urban part of the catchment. SCCG's major objective is to restore the urban sections of Sullivans Creek to a more natural and effective system of wetlands and vegetated channels.

