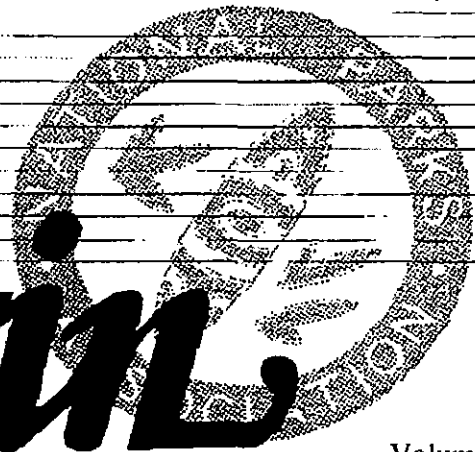


NPA Bulletin



Volume 42 number 3
September 2005

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



President's report

Lessons from Hadrian's Wall

Progress on Colverwell graveyard

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National Parks Association of the 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

<i>President</i>	Christine Goonrey	6231 8395 (h)
<i>Vice-President</i>	David Large	6291 4830
<i>Secretary</i>	Sonja Lenz	6251 1291 (h)
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Clive Hurlstone	6288 7592 (h), 040 778 3422 (mob)
Judy Kelly	6253 1859 (h, after 7.30pm)

Immediate Past President

Kevin McCue	6251 1291 (h)
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The NPA ACT office is 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. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

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NPA Bulletin

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

Deadline for December 2005 issue: 1 November 2005

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

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Cover Photo: "There has been a bit of snow at Gudgenby";
Frank Clements, Doug Brown, Clive Hurlstone and Syd Comfort on the Old Boboyan Road in July (see page 9).
Photo Adrienne Nicholson

President's report

The management committee of Chris Emery, Steven Forst, Christine Goonrey, Rod Griffiths, Clive Hurlstone, Judy Kelly, and Kevin McCue has had a busy and fruitful year and with new member Sonja Lenz and the return of David Large, productivity has gone up. I want to thank each and every one of them.

Much of the output of NPA ACT has been generated in the sub-committees and workgroups:

- Policies
- Outings (walks and work groups)
- Publications (Bulletin, email newsletter and tree book)
- Submissions
- Web site
- Office.

At several general meetings, NPA ACT members finalised our main policies, recognising that this was a prerequisite for making submissions to various enquiries and reports.

Submissions on the following topics were prepared:

- The Mt Clear Development Application
- The ACT Strategic Bushfire Plan
- Heritage Places Register
- Kosciuszko Plan of Management
- ACT Water Options
- Cattle grazing in the Victorian Alps National Parks
- Budawangs National Park issues for bushwalkers

Many members participated in the organised walks including the inaugural Great Australian Bushwalk on 9 October 2004, which attracted a huge crowd. Unfortunately, the work parties were not as well attended, but extensive repairs were made to the Yerrabi Track, and with the Boboyan Pine Plantation now completely gone, the area is already partially restored to a more natural state with a lot of help from our members in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group. A memorial to Eleanor Stodart in the form of a grove of *Eucalyptus stellulata* was dedicated in the regeneration area and an obituary

published in the *Canberra Times* to commemorate her contributions to the environment. Other members monitored water quality in Namadgi National Park.

Thanks go to our intrepid walks leaders who maintained a program of regular and diversified walks throughout the year. Insurance issues were addressed through the Confederation of Australian Bushwalkers, and first aid courses were organised for members. Legal opinion sought on whether the NSW Child Protection Act needed to be complied with on our outings was to the negative as only accompanied children participate.

NPA ACT accepted an offer from Kosciusko Huts Association to take responsibility for Demanding Hut in addition to the nearby Horse Gully Hut. We also provided seed funding for an extraordinary book, *Monga intacta*, about the dedication of Monga National Park.

The *NPA Bulletin* continues to meet the high standard our members expect and is now supported by a regular email newsletter. Your contributions are still essential. A small working group has nearly completed the second update of the tree field guide which has been such a successful publication that another reprint became essential.

The behind-the-scenes effort by a few members at the office in support of the management committee has been commendable, logging calls, filing mail and faxes, sorting out membership applications, tidying up the office, upgrading the computer and applying for grants. The provision of supper at our general meetings is greatly appreciated and adds to their convivial atmosphere.

Membership of all these work groups has been extensive. I congratulate and thank all those involved, too many to mention here individually.

NPA ACT and NPA Vic Alpine Campaigner Phil Ingamells presented a unique book on the Australian Alps National Park to Dr Maxine Cooper standing in for the ACT Minister for the Environment. With NPA NSW's Andrew Cox also present, another copy was later presented to Geoff Hunt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Heritage. At this meeting we had our first inkling of the pending funding cuts to the conservation councils for their perceived opposition to the Commonwealth Government in the previous election campaign. The committee has since made a small donation to the operating costs of the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra.

The NPA ACT website has been rebuilt with much consultation between the developer and working group members. It is constantly changing and will only improve as you provide feedback, information and ideas. I hope you have all been delving into the website (www.npaact.org.au) with many of the results of our working groups.

There are many issues for the incoming committee and I would urge all members to see how they could participate, whether it be in the working groups, management committee or sub-committees. It is already shaping up to be a busy year with imminent publication of the draft plan of management for Namadgi National Park requiring a thoughtful response from us. NPA ACT is hosting the first meeting in Canberra of the National Parks Australia Council on 17/18 September. We are also organising the Great Australian Bushwalk on October 16 and a scientific forum early next year, the first since our jubilee year in 1985.

Good luck NPA ACT.

Kevin McCue
August 2005

Annual General Meeting 2005

There was a very good attendance at the AGM of the association held at O'Connor on Thursday August 18. The minutes of the 2004 AGM were accepted and the retiring President Kevin McCue made his annual report. Kevin paid tribute to committee members and other association members who had contributed to a successful year. His report is printed in

full on page 3. Treasurer Rod Griffith presented the financial report which showed that an operating profit of \$2291 had been achieved. Rod reported that, overall, the association's finances were in a healthy state, well able to meet foreseeable demands. The business then moved to the election of committee members for the ensuing year. All office-bearer positions were

filled and five members of committee elected. There remain vacancies for committee members.

The composition of the new committee is shown on page 2, opposite. Christine Goonrey, the new President, paid tribute to the energy and leadership that Kevin had shown during his three years as President. Some

(Continued on page 5)

A Walk along Hadrian's Wall and some lessons for Australia

Wallsend, Newcastle to Bowness-on-Solway 86 miles (136km)

Background

Hadrian's Wall Path was declared a National Trail in 2003. The wall had been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1987. My interest in long distance walking and my sometime professional involvement in World Heritage matters in Australia drew me to undertake a walk along the wall. A visit to England in June/July 2004 provided me with the opportunity.

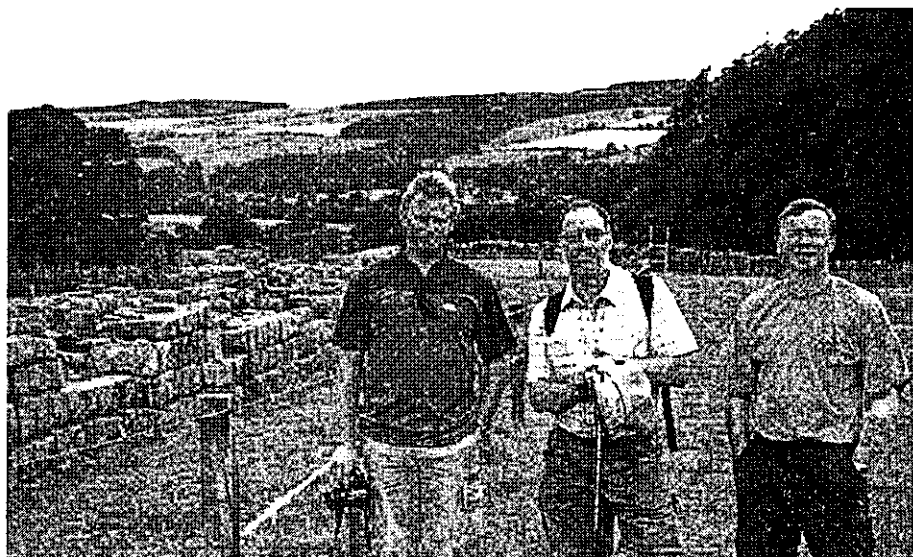
Hadrian's Wall — a brief history

Hadrian's Wall was built over a six year period during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (122–138 AD). Its purpose was more complicated than just a desire to keep out the northern barbarians. It was to provide the Romans with frontier control rather than an impenetrable barrier. The numerous gates along the wall allowed for trade between the north and south as well as a means whereby the Romans could put down local uprisings. It began as a series of observation points and defensive positions. It was Hadrian's decision to link up the various defensive positions already in existence. For 300 years the wall was the north-western-most barrier of the Roman Empire.

The "wall" is a combination of a carefully constructed masonry wall and a series of trenches, the main one being to the south of the wall and known as the Vallum. Following the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain, which began at the start of the fifth century, the wall began to be plundered. The neat, well-cut stone was taken for building farm houses, churches and field walls. During the Jacobean rebellion of the 1750s a military road was built on top of the wall. The wall was used as a convenient quarry well into the late nineteenth century. Today the wall is in the possession of English Heritage, the National Trust, local authorities and archaeological trusts. Serious archaeological work, started in the nineteenth century, continues. A plan of management for the wall is in place and tourism initiatives are extensive.

The walk

I chose to do the walk with a commercial group (Serac Outdoor Sports) to take maximum advantage of



Tim (above, centre) with two of his fellow walkers beside a section of Hadrian's Wall. Photos by Timothy Walsh

the limited time I had available and to make the logistics easier for myself. As well, I wanted some company. However it would not be difficult to arrange to walk the wall by oneself. A Hadrian's Wall bus travels along the route several times a day in the tourist season, stopping at forts and museums. There are five Youth Hostels on or near the route and numerous hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses, bunkhouses and some camping facilities. Our first night was spent at a B&B near Newcastle and the remaining five nights were spent at the comparatively new YHA hostel at Bardon Mill. This has the advantage of an excellent pub, The Twice Brewed, next door! Our support vehicle collected us each morning and deposited us at the preceding day's finishing point.

Day 1. I walked from east to west, rather disconcertingly starting at the Segedunum fort and archaeological museum at Wallsend. The advantage of doing it this way is that you start in the industrial area of Newcastle, in fact beneath the massive Swan Hunter shipyard, and finish at the desolate and wild Solway. Walking through Newcastle was surprisingly interesting with many fine buildings to admire. As well, Newcastle is undergoing something of a renaissance so it is interesting to observe the urban renewal taking place. This ranges from the docks becoming marinas and townhouses to a flour mill becoming a concert hall and exhibition area. The walk follows the River Tyne for much of the way and this means that one

passes under a bewildering collection of historic and modern bridges — almost a study in bridge making on its own. The day's walk ends at a pub. The Three Tuns, after some pleasant riverside walking and a visit to a length of reconstructed wall.

Day 2. The highlights of the second day were a visit to Chesters Fort Museum and archaeological site and the beginning of the open countryside walking.

Day 3. The best day yet. Plenty of open country with lots of ups and downs which I suspect I enjoyed more than my companions who by this stage were showing signs of blisters and a lack of "match fitness." As one of these people was a British infantry officer some years younger than myself, I felt a certain inner smug pride in my own capacity! Unfortunately my companions did not want to visit the Housestead Roman fort, but I made up for this by visiting the Vindolanda Roman settlement on my own at the end of the day. This was particularly interesting as summer students were busily excavating during my visit. The onsite museum contains a wonderful collection of excavated artefacts. A grand day of crags and wild Northumberland moorland.

Day 4. Another good solid day's walking with a long stop at the Roman army museum at Carvoran. Here we managed to catch a live lecture on Roman weaponry and its use. We walked past a number of working farms with cows and sheep aplenty. Today our Hadrian's Wall Passport was

stamped at Birdoswald, another Roman museum.

Day 5. This saw us entering Carlisle in the afternoon after a less interesting walk than previous days with little sign of the wall. We walked along country lanes and entered the township via a golf course. However walking along the Eden River was a pleasant way to end the day.

Day 6. The final push! The highlight of the final day of the walk is undoubtedly the rather bleak walk along the path through the marshland bordering the Solway Firth — an area well known for its seabirds and waders. Today also brought views to the south of the Lake District's fells and to the north into Scotland. The walk ended at The King's Arms, where we were awarded with our End to End certificates and a glass of champagne.

Summary of the walk

This is an interesting and sometimes strenuous walk passing through a variety of landscapes and with the exciting attraction of Roman ruins to admire and an almost daily diet of museums and archaeological sites. It is a worthy alternative to Wainwright's Coast-to-Coast walk slightly further south for those with limited time.

Conservation and management of the wall

Modern conservation of the wall dates from the nineteenth century when John Clayton bought up tracts of land and employed workmen to uncover and stabilise, and in some cases reconstruct, the wall. Now that it is a World Heritage site the United Kingdom government has an international obligation to conserve and manage the site for all time. This they appear to be doing admirably.

World Heritage listing requires that a Plan of Management for the site be prepared. The initial 1996 plan has been revised for 2002–2007. It is well worth looking at and can be accessed through the English Heritage web site. It is a prescriptive document recommending what each authority with an interest in the site should be doing to carry out its

responsibilities. It also gives the current economic and social framework in which the wall exists and suggests how conservation of the wall can be incorporated into the economic and environmental sustainability of the region. This covers such matters as the developing concept of countryside stewardship, improved transport links, programs to promote tourism and sustain rural communities.

The Hadrian's Wall National Trail is an excellent example of what can be achieved when archaeologists, farmers, local governments, walking associations and tourist authorities work together to conserve as well as to provide access. Considerable funding from central government helped too. It is interesting to compare the millions of pounds which have been allocated towards conservation and promotion of Hadrian's Wall from the UK's National

has been slow to appreciate that long distance walking tracks can offer a host of benefits to the community at large and the communities which they pass through. I am constantly amazed and annoyed by the hostility many Australian landholders show to walkers. I have a large collection of photos showing "Keep Out", "Trespassers will be Prosecuted," "Intruders will be Shot" and worse signs. Local governments are often apathetic. State governments half-hearted. The Commonwealth is practically invisible in the scheme of things despite spending staggering amounts on other "regional and rural schemes", many of which turn out when audited to be of dubious value to the communities they were intended to help.

The Hume and Hovell Track from Yass to Albury and the Great North Walk from Newcastle to Sydney are examples of noble enterprises that have yet to be recognised for the economic benefit they could bring to the rural areas they pass through. Although the Northern Territory government has done a fine job with the Larapinta Trail and the Queensland Government is slowing implementing its Great Walks of Queensland program there is still much to be done. Long distant tracks have enormous potential to help regenerate depressed rural areas in Australia. The combination of World Heritage listing for Hadrian's Wall and the accompanying Long Distance Path have brought considerable economic benefits to the depressed rural area of northern England. Australian policy makers should take note. Surely our natural landscapes can be as a great an attraction as Roman ruins.

Reference material: Contact the author for a reference list of further reading, guide books and web pages. (thompson.walsh@netspeed.com.au tel: 6285 1112)

Timothy Walsh



Lottery Fund and the paucity of support from the Australian Government's National Heritage Fund for such projects in Australia.

Lessons for Australia

With the noticeable exception of the Bibbulmun Track in Western Australia (which does receive significant funding through the WA's lottery), Australia

Annual General Meeting 2005 *(continued from page 3)*

matters of general business were then dealt with and the meeting closed.

The gathering was then treated to a fascinating presentation by member Esther Gallant on the Boundary Waters

Canoe Area Wilderness in north eastern Minnesota. Esther has canoed over these waters on a number of occasions and has developed an understanding and sympathy for the area which she

conveyed very convincingly to the audience. We then enjoyed the traditional AGM supper orchestrated by Adrienne Nicholson.

Syd Comfort

Cattle grazing in the Australian Alps or World Heritage listing

The following press release was issued by the NPA ACT in response to the decision of the Victorian Government to end cattle grazing in the state's alpine national parks.

On August 14 lease action was taken to implement this decision. The Commonwealth Government has initiated action to seek heritage listing of the area.

The National Parks Association of the ACT adds its congratulations to the Victorian Government for its sensible and measured decision to end cattle grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Parks. The decision followed overwhelming scientific advice that

cattle grazing causes severe damage to Australia's precious alpine areas.

Conservation is the means of maintaining the natural values of national parks, and park management should reflect this. These parks have been set aside for future generations to appreciate the unique alpine biodiversity of pre-European Australia, which will be lost if feral animals continue to graze there. Preserving the quality of water supplies at their source in the alpine areas is also dependent on the conservation and restoration of the formerly extensive peat bogs that have been damaged by introduced hard-hooved animals. Further grazing would exacerbate the damage already done and further diminish the natural values of the park.

The cessation of grazing is a necessary condition for uniting all the Australian alpine national parks into one Australian Alps National Park (www.onebigpark.com), a proposal that is supported by the Commonwealth, NSW, Victorian and ACT governments. This decision clears the way for world heritage listing, a stated goal of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments which gives the parks an additional layer of protection.

The Victorian Government's decision to handsomely compensate farmers whose leases will be terminated is applauded.

Continuing issues

It is expected that by the time this issue of the *Bulletin* is printed the draft Namadgi Plan of Management will have been released. The study of this plan and development of responses to it are going to dominate the association's thinking for some time.

Related to the plan of management is the matter of the arrangements for the management of Namadgi National Park. At present the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board operates to provide advice to Government and the terms of the members have been extended to continue this arrangement for a further year. It is to be expected that at some

time consideration will be given to future arrangements.

The issue of securing sustainable water supply systems remains a vital matter for the future of the ACT and particularly for the ACT natural environment. Although some steps have been taken to ease the problems, further decisions will need to be made and thus attention is required to protect the related environmental aspects.

In December 2004 the association made a detailed submission on a draft Strategic Bushfire Management Plan developed by the ACT Emergency Services Authority. In January 2005 a

Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (Version 1) was released with the intention of replacing it by a Version 2 in mid 2005. It has since been decided to leave the Version 1 in place until mid 2006 so the development of a plan for the longer term continues and with it a number of issues of concern from an environmental perspective.

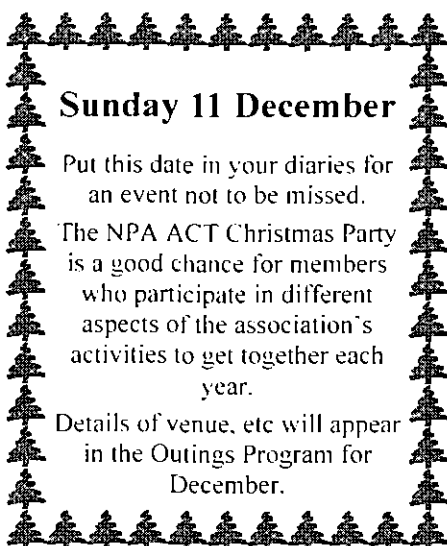
The ACT authorities are developing a framework for the development of the Molonglo Valley. As set out in a separate article this process has environmental implications which need to be addressed.

Syd Comfort

New members

The association extends a warm welcome to new members and invites them to participate in the wide range of NPA activities.

Barbara Akhurst
Karen Dace
Paul and Liz Edwards
Phil Irons
John Kay
Kerryn Milligan
Cathryn Ollif
Roger Timewell
Janet Tweedie
John Waldren



Sunday 11 December

Put this date in your diaries for an event not to be missed.

The NPA ACT Christmas Party is a good chance for members who participate in different aspects of the association's activities to get together each year.

Details of venue, etc will appear in the Outings Program for December.

From the Editor

My apologies to Matthew Higgins for an error in the note on his address in the June *Bulletin*. The note should have read:

In recent weeks in the Ainslie area Matthew has spotted a tree near the old glider den with a glider, possum and owllet-nightjar all sharing the same tree. So night life on Mount Ainslie continues apace!

Matthew tells me that he has another film project well advanced so I'm sure that members would welcome the opportunity if he were able to show this to a general meeting.

Our new-look website

We hope that everyone has visited our recently improved website at <http://www.npaact.org.au/>. Our thanks go to Rohan and Colin at Encode for doing such a great job for us on the programming. The website features an EVENTS calendar and a NEWS panel on the front page — to quickly keep you up-to-date. There is lots of other

information on our policies, history, how we work, how to join etc. Our photo gallery is growing. Martin Chalk provided some excellent photos that have been used to augment the text pages. His photos change automatically each time you select a different page. The number of different people (sites) that visit our website each month is

growing steadily. In June and July there were over 200 and August is trending to over 300. If you have material for the website or any comments, please send them to our webmaster Chris Emery at chris.emery@optusnet.com.au. Photos are welcome to add to the Gallery.

Chris Emery

Presentation of the Big Book

On May 9 representatives of the NPAs of NSW, Victoria and the ACT met with Mr Greg Hunt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and presented a copy of the Big Book to him. Copies of the book have now been presented to the

environment ministers of NSW, Victoria, the ACT and the Commonwealth.

The book is a large format folio of exquisite photographs extolling the alpine national parks, only four copies having been produced. The *NPA*

Bulletin of March 2005 has further details.

The ACT copy of the book is now held in the Namadgi Visitor Centre and is available for inspection on request.

Great Australian Bushwalk

Members who participated in last year's Great Australian Bushwalk through Goorooraroo and Mulligans Flat nature reserves are unlikely to forget the experience, if only because of the soaking rain in an otherwise drought year.

This year the event will take place on Sunday October 16, again with the support of the ACT Government. The walk will be along the Murrumbidgee

River Corridor on the recently upgraded walking track. There will be three starting points offering walks of different lengths but all finishing at Pine Island. The Outings Committee will be heavily involved with the organisation of the walk and will be looking to NPA members to again make themselves available to assist on the day or in preparation. The Great Australian Bushwalk is a National

Parks Association initiative originating with New South Wales NPA and now taken up by other NPAs, so although the event is supported by the Government in the ACT, this association has a vital role to play.

The NPA ACT has received a grant of \$15 000 for the Great Australian Bushwalk in the recent round of ACT government grants for environmental projects.

Exhibitions at Namadgi Visitor Centre by NPA members

Association member Sarah Porgorny has on exhibition in the Namadgi Visitor Centre a number of her oil paintings and pastel drawings of Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks. The works are based on photos

taken by Sarah during extensive walking in the two national parks.

Di Thompson's *Ring of Fire* photographs, which she successfully exhibited in the NSW Parliament House, have now been put on

exhibition in the Namadgi Visitor Centre.

NPA members and the public are most welcome to view these exhibitions.

Black Mountain spring wildflowers

The Burbidge/Chippendale tradition of a social ramble continues in its 34th year with a spring wildflower celebration to introduce the beauty and diversity of Black Mountain's vegetation. This mountain has the oldest soils in the ACT and a vegetation mix different from that in the nearby hills. The theme will be either *diversity despite drought* or *what a difference a little rain makes*. It will be led by Peter

Ormay, Laurie Adams and Jean Geue for Friends of Botanic Gardens, U3A, Australian Native Plants Society and National Parks Association.

This will be a social walk with easy grades and a break for tea and conversation. Everyone welcome, beginners and those who know and love Black Mountain.

Contact: Jean Geue 6251 1601

Sunday 16 October 2005

9.30 am to 12.30 pm.

Meet from 9.15 am at the **Black Mountain Reserve** sign, off Belconnen Way from Civic just before Caswell Drive (or the earlier cherry sellers pull-off, watch for the balloons).
BYO friends, enthusiasm, morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

Awesome Mount Logan

Steve Colman, adventurous founder of Global Learning, filled in at short notice for the ailing Geoff Hall at the June 16 General Meeting of NPA.

Steve and two companions climbed Mt Logan in the Yukon Territory in May and June of 2004, the results of which were presented to the meeting in the form of Steve's magnificent photographs of the area.

Mt Logan, a remote 20 000 foot mountain, is Canada's highest peak and is the largest ice cap outside the two poles. The mountain is located in the southwest corner of the Yukon Territory west of Whitehorse. The three climbers with their bush pilot flew 120km in to the area of the mountain to establish a base camp. A quantity of food and 20 litres of fuel had been

purchased in Whitehorse for the expedition and transported on skis and a sled.

Conditions for Steve's hike were gruelling. The snow in the area is up to 1000m deep with temperatures down to minus 35 degrees experienced. Frost gathered inside the tent at night and there were dangers of crevasses, avalanches and altitude sickness to contend with. The 25 day trip progressed over relatively flat glaciated areas with five camps set up leading up the mountain. Unfortunately bad weather and diminished supplies of fuel prevented the group from reaching the summit, only 5km away before the decision was made to turn back.

Understandably only a small number of expeditions per year attempt

this climb so Steve Colman and his companions are to be congratulated for their effort. Steve is superbly prepared for such expeditions with a long experience as a back-country skier and white water kayaker among his accomplishments. He is also a seminar leader, leadership consultant, coach and last, but far from least, an outstanding photographer.

David Pfanner

The Great Ocean Walk

Association member Ross Walker has forwarded the following notes on an exciting new development about to hit the Australian walking scene.

On hearing that work was in progress to officially open, in late 2005, a "new" Great Ocean Walk (GOW) from Apollo Bay along the coast around Cape Otway and towards the Twelve Apostles, I thought that I would make an advance attempt to see how far I could get on it.

Firstly let me lead off and say I forecast that the new GOW is likely to become the iconic Australian coastal walk. It will incorporate the equivalent experience of coastal parts of the Bibbulmun Track, the Great South West Walk, the Cape-to-Cape in WA and the Sydney Coast Walk, all in a five to eight day time-frame. I say five to eight days for the reason that the GOW will only be some 91km long, will have seven campsites and incorporate legs with distances apart of 10.5 to 15km and with the end of walk being near Twelve Apostles Visitors Centre, 15km out of Port Campbell.

I was able without any real fuss to do the first four legs in two days and I imagine that more serious walkers may want to do some similar double

hopping as they do the track. However there is plenty of scope and enough to see to simply potter along if one is so inclined. I ended up getting some 60km along the track before available maps ran out. I did the last six kilometres or so as a day walk from the last campsite at Johanna Beach and then retraced my steps back to Apollo Bay, being out for a total of seven days (six nights).

The track, as far as I got, is in very good order and I imagine that the final track will be similar. Five new walker-dedicated campsites are being constructed and will have toilets, water and platforms but no cover. The lack of cover will be a problem in terms of when to do the walk as southerly blasts could be a candidate at any time of the year, I imagine. Always take your woollies in case? I did get hit with one such cold change and appreciated use of the toilet block at Johanna Beach to at least keep out of the wind and some of the showers — all helped by the fact that the existing huge campground was vacant.

I should add that winter is not likely to be a good time to go in future, as I found it very difficult to get a campsite that was not waterlogged and the only fairly complete new walkers' campsite I went through was a slopheap of mud. Water was also a slight problem for me

on this occasion and I did spend one day having to survive on brackish water from one of the inlets. I noted, however, a new tank being delivered for the nearby new walkers' campsite. Another tuning matter is worth noting — six or so kilometres of the first stage of the walk from Apollo Bay is along exposed rock platforms and beach and should only be attempted at mid to low tide. It should also be noted that the new GOW is being designed to be travelled from east to west. All of this points to doing the new track in autumn or spring next year to get the best of the weather and to get in before the GOW gets overcrowded as it becomes better known (*Lonely Planet*ed to death?). By that time the new YHA at Apollo Bay should also be completed and a full set of maps for the track available.

I hope that you find these comments of interest.

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group news

At the annual general meeting of the group, the President, Clive Hurlstone, spoke with some satisfaction that next month will see the achievement of another important milestone with the completion of broad-scale seeding of the former pine plantation with eucalyptus species.

The finalising of commercial pine harvesting last winter and the very effective burning of the residue has enabled the park service and the

regeneration group to begin the process of seeding the remaining one third of the former pine plantation. Although there are some clear tasks for the future it was agreed that it is time to look further ahead and identify future directions.

The group was pleased to welcome to the meeting Brett McNamara, manager of Namadgi National Park, and Bernard Morris, the ranger directly responsible for the regeneration area.

Their presence helped to ensure that our future planning and the park service's directions are complementary.

The following members were elected to the committee: President, Clive Hurlstone; Secretary, Hazel Rath; Treasurer, Syd Comfort; Public Officer, Frank Clements; Committee Members, Martin Chalk, Sonja Lenz, Fiona MacDonald Brand and Kevin McCue.

Syd Comfort

When is a work party not a work party?

On Saturday July 9, five hardy souls set off for the scheduled Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group work party. Word at Namadgi Visitor Centre was that "there has been a bit of snow at Gudgenby", and the GBRG trailer had been taken out to Hospital Creek the previous afternoon replete with wire tree guards to be erected around the newly planted trees of Eleanor's Grove. We had with us a crate of prepared sand/seed mixture to be distributed over the ridge behind Frank and Jack's Hut.

From the crest of Fitz's Hill onwards the surroundings had a significant snow cover. Driving along the Boboyan Road we were delighted with the magic of the surroundings, particularly as we had not set out specifically for "snow country". By the time we reached the Old Boboyan Road turnoff, we had begun to wonder how far we would get with our work during the day. Within a couple of hundred metres we were stopped by fallen trees and branches on the road. After an attempt to clear these, we realised we would need the saws from the trailer to



get through this lot and we could see many more obstructions ahead. It was clear we could not drive further, nor reasonably get to the planned work.

Nevertheless, we decided we could enjoy a wander along the road towards

the Yankee Hat carpark and do our bit clearing some manageable branches off the road along the way. It was a cold day, but so still that the snow remained on the trees and bushes, only dislodging as soggy "plops" from time to time. There were spectacular cloud effects on the hills and swirling up from the valley with breaks revealing patches of bright blue sky and admitting shafts of sunlight through to the snow. Kangaroos bemusedly watched as we ambled by, on our way to a fire and lunch at the Forestry Hut and then a return to Canberra a bit earlier than usual.

What a grand work party it was!

Adrienne Nicholson

Above. The workers, Clive Hurlstone, Doug Brown, Syd Comfort and Frank Clements considering any options for getting to the proposed work areas.

Left. The clouds and light varied throughout the day with spectacular effects.

Photos Adrienne Nicholson



An exercise in detection

Professor Henry Nix, then Director of the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, addressed the March 1988 general meeting of the National Parks Association and spoke on the Greenhouse effect. His outline of this phenomenon was for many members an introduction to the science of what is now an accepted part of the contemporary scene. Professor Nix's presentation was a memorable one. Now, at the May 2005 meeting of the association, he has given another outstanding address on a very different theme, this time related to his current chairmanship of Birds Australia.

His task was to make a comparison between the environment of Australia today with that at the time of first European settlement through a study of the distribution of native birds. But what was the state of the environment at the time of this settlement? For answers Professor Nix has turned to the reports of the first European explorers. However, many of these early reports are of little help as they tended to report the interesting and unusual, ignoring the commonplace, and lacking detail of location and density of species. But Leichhardt's 1844-5 expedition from the Darling Downs to Port Essington provided reliable data and this is the starting point for this study.

Ludwig Leichhardt was a scientist skilled in a number of disciplines, a capable leader and good bushman. (Professor Nix considers that his achievements have been undervalued, something he is working to redress).

Leichhardt's party included John Gilbert, former bird collector for John Gould, and he collected bird specimens and kept accurate diaries during the expedition until his death, after which the leader maintained a detailed record of bird observations.

The expedition kept good documentation of its route and this has recently been tracked throughout its length using GPS. This has allowed comparison of Leichhardt's bird observations with the current bird distribution set out in the Birds Australia atlas. The speaker outlined the changes in distribution of many individual species, projecting illustrations of the birds and atlas maps of current distributions. Some birds, such as the scaly-breasted lorikeet, seen in large numbers by the expedition are now rare. Others, such as the forest kingfisher which is now common, were not recorded by Leichhardt. The galah and cockatiel which were only reported by Leichhardt on isolated occasions are now widespread. On the other hand, the crested bellbird, seen during the expedition most of the way, has now retreated to the arid inland.

Looking for an explanation for these changes, Professor Nix said that in some instances this is to be found in specific circumstances. For example, the star finch, once common, is now effectively gone due to trapping for the caged bird trade. But clearly the major cause is to be found in the changes in habitat. Settlement quickly followed the expedition so that by 1860 most of the

best pastoral land had been occupied. Sheep were the first animals grazed and they did such damage that by about 1903 the seed-eating birds all but perished. Similarly cattle, introduced later, destroyed the habitat of birds. Current practices have exacerbated the situation. Whereas the earlier British breeds of cattle did not tolerate droughts and this allowed the natural flora to make some recovery, breeds introduced more recently survive bad seasons much better. Again, modern management practices, such as trucking cattle south in poor seasons, have resulted in the loss of the Mitchell grass habitats for birds. Birds from other areas have moved into land in which many of the indigenous species cannot survive, with the result that there are still plenty of birds but the number of species is greatly reduced.

Professor Nix does not believe that national parks will save the situation. One solution may be to compensate some land owners for removing stock from their properties so as to reduce competition from grazing, permitting recovery of the habitat.

Syd Comfort

Grassland conservation strategy released

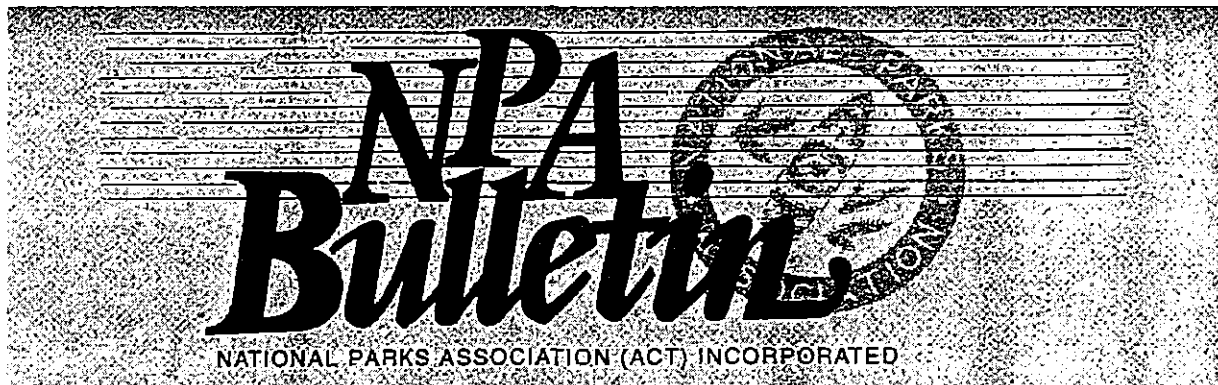
Natural temperate grassland is one of Australia's most threatened ecosystems. These grasslands and associated grassy woodlands were the natural resource base for the development of the Australian pastoral industry from the early 1800s. In the ACT the development of Canberra in valleys and on the plains during the 20th century destroyed most of the grassland that remained.

The *ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy* now published

by Arts, Heritage and Environment within the Chief Minister's Department builds on more than 10 years of survey and research in relation to lowland native grassland in the ACT and region. The publication sets out a process for the protection of the remaining ACT lowland native grasslands. It supersedes 13 separate action plans previously published for the grassland ecological community and related threatened animal and plant species. Overall, it provides an integrated conservation

strategy and a comprehensive reference for the native grassland areas.

Syd Comfort



NPA OUTINGS PROGRAM

September 2005 — January 2006

Outings Guide

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 — up to 10 km
- 2 — 10 km to 15 km
- 3 — 15 km to 20 km
- 4 — above 20 km

Terrain grading

- A — Road, firetrail track
- B — Open forest
- C — Light scrub
- D — Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E — Rock scrambling
- F — Exploratory

Day walks Carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.

Pack walks Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Car camps Facilities often limited. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Other activities include nature rambles and environmental and field guide studies.

Passenger transport. The committee suggests a donation, to the nearest dollar, of THIRTY cents per kilometre. This is based on four occupants in the car including the driver. When odd numbers arise, the total contribution is divided by the number of cars. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader.

Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are approximate distances for the return journeys.

Points to note

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

In voluntarily participating in these activities conducted by the NPA, participants should be aware that they could be exposed to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death, or to loss of, or damage to, their property. These risks could include but are not limited to slippery and or uneven surfaces, rocks being dislodged, falling at edges of cliffs or drops or elsewhere, risks associated with crossing creeks, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and the risks associated with any of the Special Hazards listed on the *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* provided by the leader at the start of the activity.

To minimize these risks participants should endeavor to ensure that the activity is within their capabilities and that they are carrying food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity. Participants should advise the leader if they are taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect their participation in the activity. Participants should make every effort to remain with the rest of the party during the activity and accept the instructions of the leader. By signing the *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* participants agree that they understand these requirements and considered the risks before choosing to sign the form and waiver any claim for damages arising from the activity that they might have against the club, the leader or any other participants in tort or contract.

**10 September Saturday Work Party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578, scomfort@netspeed.com.au ,or Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422, clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or at Yankee Hat car-park at 10:00 am. Work in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration area replanting, weeding etc following removal of pines. Tools provided.

**17-18 September, Pack Walk
Mt Burbidge**

Leader: Philip Gatenby

Grading: 2 C/D/E

Map: Yaouk 1:25 000 and Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Contact: 6254 3094 or philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

The top of Mt Burbidge is about 700 metres higher than the Yankee Hat Car Park where the walk starts. The first day's walk will involve a climb with packs to Bogong Gap and from there a climb to the summit of Mt Burbidge without packs. The return on the second day will be via Rotten Swamp and Middle creek. Contact leader by Wednesday before the walk. Drive 140 km, \$42 per car.

**18 September, Sunday Walk
Mt Anton on snowshoes**

Leader: Brian Slee

Grading: 2 B (in snow)

Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000

Contact: 6281 0719 (h) or brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Participants need to be fit. Depart early from Kambah Village in order to secure parking at Guthega. Descend to Farm Creek and cross on flying fox. Follow Snowy River, then cross it at Illawong bridge. Climb steep ridge above Twynam Creek to Pounds Creek and then Mt Anton. After lunch, return same way, or if conditions permit, via Tate East Ridge, beautiful area. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Book with leader for departure time and weather check. Participants hiring snowshoes (try Jurciweicz at Fyshwick) should be in possession of them before departure. 420km drive, \$120 per car, plus \$16 park entry for vehicles without permit.

**25 September, Sunday Walk
Demanding and Horse Gully Huts**

Leader: Steven Forst

Grading: 3 A/B

Map: ACT 1:100 000

Contact: 6219 5236(w) or

6251 6817(h) or steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Meet at the Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am. A walk from the Mt Clear Camping ground along the Naas river to Horse Gully Hut via Demanding Hut to survey the conditions of these huts. 150 km drive, \$35 per car.

28 September, Wednesday Walk

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 6251 6817, steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Details to be advised by email or contact leader.

**1-3 October, Pack Walk
Mt Kelly**

Leader: Steven Forst

Contact: 6251 6817, steven.forst@acma.gov.au

A walk to Mt Kelly for views over southern Namadgie and the Bimberi wilderness area. The walk starts from the Yankee Hat car park and proceeds over the Gudgenby saddle and on to a campsite on Sam's Creek. Visit Mt Kelly the next day as a day walk. Walk out the third day. Drive: 140 km, \$40 per car

**8 October Saturday Work Party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578, scomfort@netspeed.com.au or Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422, clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or at Yankee Hat car-park at 10:00 am. Work in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration area replanting, weeding etc following removal of pines. Tools provided.

**9 October, Sunday Walk
Mt Morgan**

Leader: Steve Hill

Grading: 3 A/E

Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000

Contact: 6231 9186 or landshil@webone.com.au

A chance to see fabulous views from one of the most spectacular mountain tops in the region, including over much of the KNP and Namadgi National Park. We climb up the Lone Pine trail before turning left, towards the summit at some high alpine frosty hollows. We tour the summit for a view of the things that matter to us. The bushfire damage around this region is still obvious, but the

regeneration is heartening. The climb of nearly 700 metres is steep in parts, but is mainly on track and no serious bush bashing is involved. Meet at Kambah Village Shops car-park at 7.30am for a fabulous day. Drive 210km, \$70 per car.

**16 October, Sunday Walk
Black Mountain Spring Wildflower Celebration**

Leader: Gwyn Clarke

Contact: Jean Geue 6251 1601, jean.geue@alianet.alia.org.au

Meet at 9.15am Belconnen Way stile before Caswell Drive corner (use earlier car-park for overflow). Gwyn Clarke will continue the 33 year Burbidge/Chippendale tradition of a social ramble to enjoy the spring flowering and show us more about the incredible diversity of our Black Mountain plants. George Chippendale hopes to be there for the handover and others with plant ID skills will help. It's an opportunity for a big gathering to show we value our Bush Capital heritage and are devastated at the bulldozing of the lower and more fertile slopes. Bring your friends, your enthusiasm, morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

**16 October, Sunday.
Great Australian Bushwalk
Murrumbidgee River Corridor**

Contact: Steven Forst or Environment ACT

The Great Australian Bushwalk was an initiative of the NSW NPA in 2003 and has grown to become a national activity. This year ACT walks will be held along the Murrumbidgee Corridor. This will be a major exercise and is being conducted jointly by Environment ACT and the NPA ACT. Further details will be published in *The Canberra Times* and through *Burning Issues*.

**22 October, Saturday Walk
Glenburn Historic Precinct**

Leader: Col McAlister

Grading: 1 A/B

Contact: 6288 4171

A pleasant, easy walk around several historic sites in the Kowen Forest. Two highlights will be viewing the inside of the Glenburn shearing shed (which is believed to be the oldest shearing shed in the ACT still in use) and viewing the (hopefully) completed conservation work on the Colverwell graveyard and graves. Meet at Kingston Railway Station at 8.30am. Drive 50km, \$15 per car.

**22 October, Saturday Work Party
Alpine Walking Track/Cotter Hut
Road area**

Leader: Martin Chalk
Contact: 6292 3502 (h) or
6268 48645 (w)

There is a section of the Alpine Walking Track that is badly eroded and is in need of steps. This work party will put these steps in place.

The work site is located about 10 minutes walk from the intersection of the Walking Track and the Cotter Hut Road. We will need volunteers to take members to the intersection in their vehicles. The Parks Service will provide all tools and materials and instruction on the construction of steps. The section of track has a northerly aspect, so it could be a warm day if the sun is out. Meet at the Namadgi Visitors' Centre at 9:00am. Drive 80km, \$24 per car.

26 October, Wednesday walk

Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or email
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Details to be advised by email or contact leader.

30 October, Sunday walk

Cotter Gap / Spit Rock
Leader: Barbara Edgar
Grading: 4 A/B
Map: ACT 1:100 000
Contact: 6219 5236(w) or
barbara.edgar@immi.gov.au

Meet at the Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. A walk from the Orroral Valley mainly on fire-trail to Cotter Gap. Optional climb to split rock, a spectacular granite feature and views over the Cotter Gap area. Possibly a long day. 100 km drive \$30 per car.

**6 November, Sunday Walk
Mt Wee Jasper**

Leader: Margaret Power
Grading: 2 B
Map: Couragago
Contact: 6253 0131 (h);
margaret.power@act.gov.au (w).

We will start walking not far from the Fitzpatrick Trackhead and follow the Hume and Howell Track to the top of Mt Wee Jasper. The track is mainly a 'foot track' (with only a couple of short sections on fire-trail). It will take us through varied and interesting forest surroundings. We will have lunch at the top while we enjoy fabulous views. Return by same route. The walk is about 12 km, with an ascent of 700m.

Drive 170 km, \$36 per car. Meet at Kambah at 8.00am.

**12 November Saturday Work Party
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group**

Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,
scomfort@netspeed.com.au ,or
Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422,
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or at Yankee Hat car-park at 10:00 am. Work in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration area replanting, weeding etc following removal of pines. Tools provided.

13 November, Sunday walk

Tantangara Huts
Leader: Brian Slee
Grading: 2 A/B/C
Map: Tantangara 1:50 000
Contact: 6281 0719 (h)
brianslee@iprimus.com

Depart Kambah Village 7.15 am. Drive via Adaminaby to Tantangara and park east of dam wall. In morning, walk north to Townsend Hut near Murrumbidgee River. After a break, head south to restored Circuits Hut for lunch. Continue south to Schofields Hut in afternoon. Return same route (all on fire-trail). However, if sufficient starters, a shuffle will be arranged with vehicles at Tantangara Dam and the disused quarry at Nungar Creek. The southern return to the quarry is off-track. Afternoon tea at Adaminaby. Drive 250km, \$75 per vehicle

**19–20 November, Pack Walk
Sentry Box Mountain and Naas
Creek**

Leader: Philip Gatenby
Grading: 2 C/D/E
Map: Yaouk 1:25 000
Contact: 6254 3094
philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

A walk from the Yaouk Valley, climbing the Boboyan Divide and then continuing on to Sentry Box Mountain. The views from the top are spectacular. We will also visit the headwaters of Naas and Grassy Creeks. A climb with packs of about 600 metres is involved on the first day and there will also be some rock scrambling. Contact leader for details by Wednesday 16 November. Drive 170kms.

**20 November, Sunday Walk
Hills and Dales, Canberra Nature
Park**

Leader: David Large
Grading: 2/3 A
Map: ACT 1:25 000
Contact: 6291 4830 or
egrald@bigpond.com.au

An easy daywalk taking in Mt Taylor, Farrer Ridge and Isaacs Ridge. Some ups and downs but we'll take our time and enjoy the day out looking at birds and some bushfire recovery areas. Meet at the end of Kathner Street Chapman at 9:00am.

23 November, Wednesday walk

Leader: David Large
Grading: 2 B/C/E
Map: a 1:25 000
Contact: : 6291 4830 or
egrald@bigpond.com.au
Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30am.

**26 November, Saturday Work Party
Gudgenby Area — Middle Creek**

Leader: Philip Gatenby
Contact: 6254 3094 or
philip.gatenby@dewr.gov.au

Last February, a work party was conducted on Middle Creek, upstream of the Gudgenby homestead, to remove a re-infestation of Crack Willow. This work party will be a follow-up to remove the handful of plants that were left and to check for any regrowth. Tools and other equipment will be provided. The work site is a five minute walk from the Old Boboyan Road North. Meet at the Namadgi Visitors' Centre at 9:00am. Drive 80km, \$24 per car.

**27 November, Sunday Walk
Tolong Mine**

Leader: Mike Smith
Grading: 2 A/C/E
Map: Caoura 1:25 000
Contact: 6286 2984 or email
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Meet at Southwell Park netball centre carpark on Northbourne Ave at 8:00am. Drive to Bungonia SRA. Descend to the Shoalhaven River by the old flying fox trail. Wade across the river and explore the old mine workings. Return by a different route to the entrance of Bungonia SRA or, if good swimming weather, upstream to the block-up and return by the same route. 500m descent/ ascent. Small car shuffle may be required. 250 km drive, \$75 per car.

30 November, Wednesday Walk

Leader: Mike Smith
Contact: 6286 2984 or email
msmith@netspeed.com.au

Mid week walk in conjunction with CBC and FBI. Details to be advised by email or contact leader.

3 December, Saturday walk Beginners Navigation Exercise — Boboyan Hill and Grassy Creek

Leader: Martin Chalk
Grading: 2 B/C
Maps: Yaouk, Shannon's Flat
1:25 000
Contact: 6268 4864 (w)
6292 3502 (h)

This is the scheduled walk that was cancelled in July due to weather. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 9.00am. This walk is in rolling country that is a mixture of forests, clearings, river valleys and low ridges and is ideal for those who would like to brush-up their bush navigation in a variety of terrain and vegetation. It will commence at Brayshaw's Hut and proceed west via the ridge to the north east of Grassy Creek before crossing the Creek and climbing the Boboyan Divide. It will return to Brayshaw's via Westerman's Hut. Each leg has particular features to aim for and the task of finding these will be shared around the participants. If you wish to participate in the navigation exercise, please bring your own maps and compass — GPS receivers will be relieved of their batteries! If this is not you, come along for the walk anyway. Drive 160km, \$48 per car.

4 December, Sunday Walk Mt Coree

Leader: Margaret Power
Grading: 2 A
Map: Cotter Dam 1:25 000
Contact: 6253 0131 (after hours) or
margaret.power@act.gov.au

Meet at Deeks Forest car-park (the corner of Cotter and Uriarra Roads) at 8.30 am. We'll start our walk from Blundells Flat Road, adjacent to the site that was the arboretum (now gone). The walk will follow the Pabral Road fire trail and then the Coree Summit fire trail to the top of Mt Coree. We'll have lunch at the top while we enjoy the views. After lunch we'll return to the cars via the same trails (with just one short deviation from the route used to go up). The walk covers 14.5km, with an ascent of 650m (including a couple of fairly steep bits). Drive 80km, \$25 per car.

5–18 December, Pack Walk Australian Alps Walking Track:

Dead Horse Gap to Canberra
Leader: Neville Esau
Maps: see summary sheet
Contact: nemax@bigpond.com

This is a fourteen day trip to follow the AAWT through Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks from Dead Horse Gap to Tharwa.

A re-supply at Kiandra will be arranged. We will catch a bus to Thredbo for the start, and arrange a pick-up for the finish at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. The walking covers a wide range of terrain and conditions. The book by John Siseman, "Australian Alps Walking Track, Walhalla to Canberra", provides a detailed description. The group will be limited to eight participants. Please contact the leader at least two weeks prior to the walk to register interest. A summary sheet of the walk is available. Apart from the bus fare (tba) there are no other transport costs.

10 December Saturday Work Party and Christmas Party

Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group
Contact: Syd Comfort 6286 2578,
scomfort@netspeed.com.au or
Clive Hurlstone 0407 783 422,
clive.hurlstone@csiro.au
Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or at Yankee Hat car-park at 10:00 am. Work in the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration area replanting, weeding etc following removal of pines. Tools for the morning's work will be provided, as will a Christmas lunch in the shade of the regenerated trees.

11 December

Honeysuckle Creek

NPA Christmas party

This year we plan to hold our Christmas Party at the Honeysuckle Campground. All the usual features. We will hold a short walk to see the regeneration between Honeysuckle and Booroomba Rocks. Details will be in the next *Bulletin* and *Burning Issues*.

Contacts: NPA committee

18 December, Sunday Walk

Cascade Hut
Leader: Brian Slee
Grading: 3 A
Map: Chimneys Ridge 1:25 000
Contact: 6281 0719 (h)
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 6.45 am Wanniasa Shops, Langdon Ave (cnr Rylah Cr, opp. Red Rooster). Drive 5km south of Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap. Follow Australian Alps Walking Track (Cascade Trail) via Crackenback River and Bobs Ridge to Cascade Creek. Lunch among snowgums at the much-loved hut. Feral horse area. A couple of steep climbs in the 17 km walk but great views of Chimneys Ridge and Rams Head Range and chance to check recovery after 2003 fires. Afternoon tea in Jindabyne. Drive 420km, \$120 per car, plus \$16 for vehicles without park entry permit

15 January 2006, Sunday Walk

Muellers Peak
Leader: Brian Slee
Grading: 2 A/C
Map: Perisher Valley 1:25 000
Contact: 6281 0719 (h)
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart Wanniasa Shops, Langdon Ave (cnr Rylah Cr, opp. Red Rooster) 6.30am. Park at Charlotte Pass. Descend to and cross Snowy River, climb Mt Clarke, contour south of Mt Northcote and climb Muellers Peak (latter optional). After break, descend to Lake Albina for lunch. Return via Northcote Pass and Club Lake Creek. Great views, wildflowers. Several steep climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Book with leader as weather check essential. Numbers limited. Return distance 420km, cost per car \$120 plus \$16 for vehicles without entry permit.

The future of the Molonglo Valley

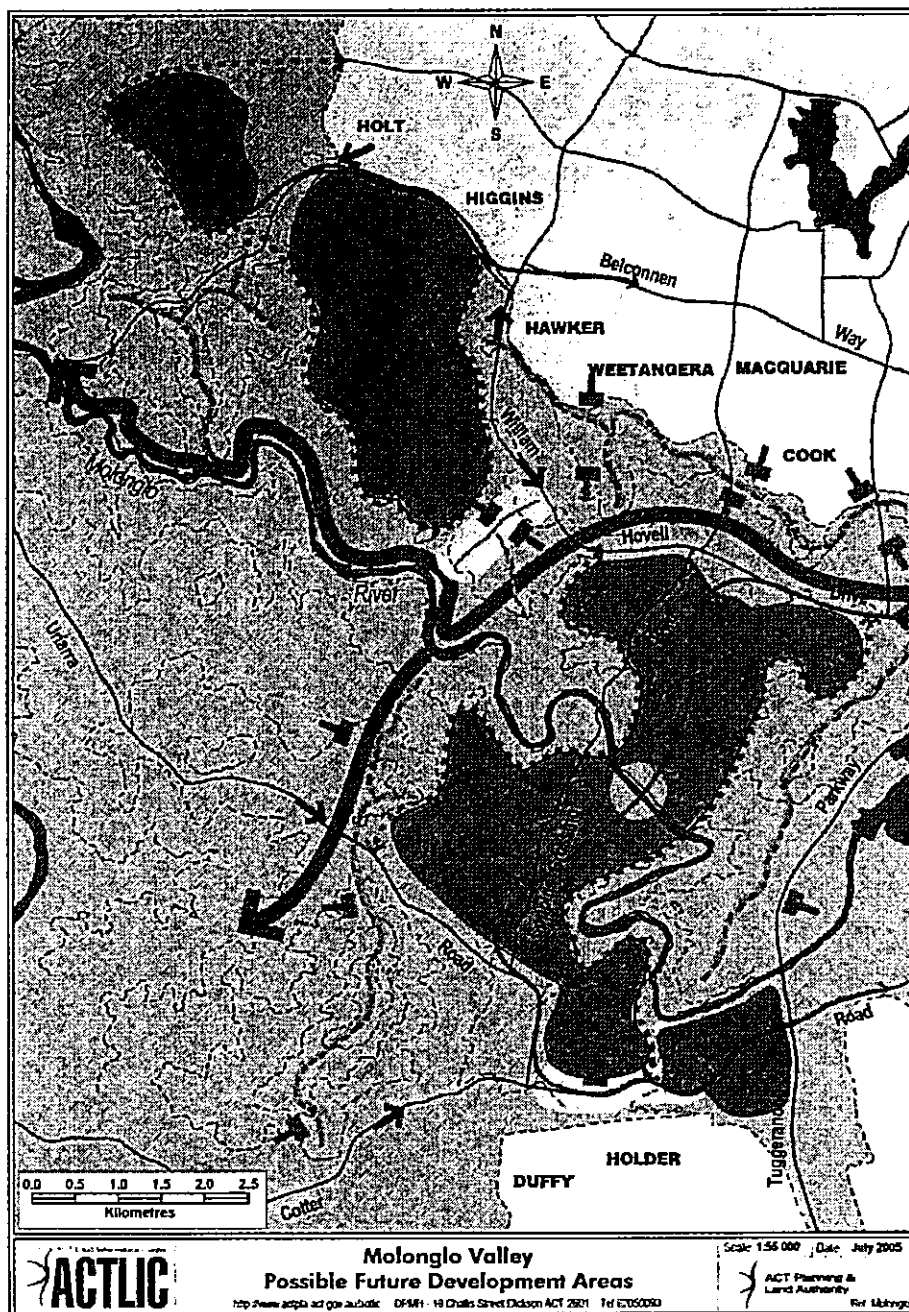
The Canberra Spatial Plan published in 2004 identified the Molonglo Valley as an area for future development. A study is now underway to prepare a broad structure plan including a flexible framework of objectives, principles and land use policies. This framework will guide any potential development in the valley within the context of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The area under consideration, which is shown in heavy shading on the map below, is adjacent to a substantial length of the Molonglo Valley in the vicinity of Coppins Crossing so could seriously degrade the natural values of this area. Some preliminary concepts indicate a high level bridge over the valley within a kilometre of Coppins Crossing and substantial residential or other development in the vicinity.

Preliminary framework proposals for the study area are expected to be released for public consideration in the next few weeks.

It will be important to ensure that full value is given to the environmental implications of this study throughout the consultation period.

Syd Comfort

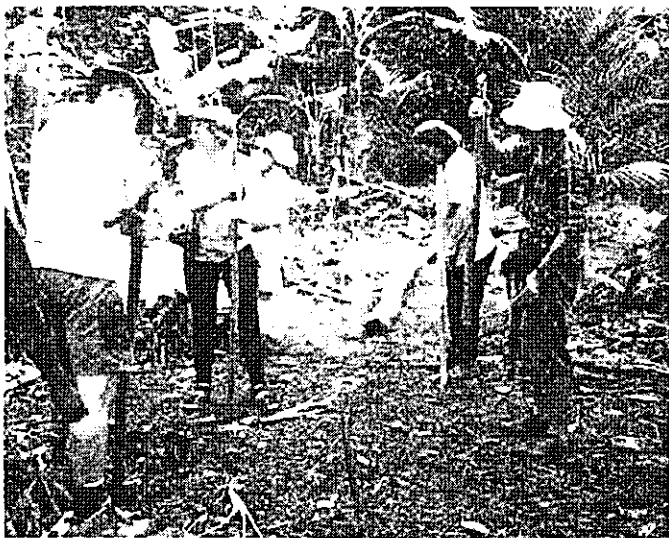


Sustainable tourism in Vanuatu

Association members Elizabeth and David Teather have provided this fascinating account of a conservation enterprise in Vanuatu. They would be happy to answer any questions members may have. Their phone number is 624 0598.

If you think that conservation of pristine forest is difficult in Australia, imagine trying it in a low-income, tropical nation where quick bucks can be made by selling off your village's forest to enable your children to go to school. Wiser counsel has prevailed in the case of this good news story from Vanuatu. But the *quid pro quo* is that ecologically sensitive tourists are vitally needed to provide the income forgone by rejecting a forest "fire sale".

In July 2005 we returned from two weeks in Vanuatu. The highlight of our visit was a six-night stay in the Vathe Conservation Area, a 4500ha tropical forest — one of only two conserved areas in the entire country, and probably the largest remaining unlogged lowland forest in the South Pacific. Adjoining the forest is the village of Matantas, beautifully sited behind a sandy beach at Big Bay on the north shore of the island of Espiritu Santo. Village and forest are overlooked by a raised reef which forms a steep forested escarpment. Outrigger canoes and the occasional village motorboat are the only traffic on this huge, mountain-rimmed bay.



Top right, Elizabeth grating manioc under Tatania's supervision, Matantas village.

Above, Gardening island style: planting taro and cabbage with digging sticks, Matantas.

*Facing page, Outrigger canoe construction from the trunk of *Bluwota* (*Pterocarpus indicus*), Port Resolution.*

Photos Elizabeth and David Teather

The Vathe Conservation Area was established when the 35 families in Matantas decided to clear no more forest. Although still used in many traditional ways by the villagers, the forest is no longer subjected to the inroads of shifting cultivation. A small amount of land is already used as gardens, which

supply the bulk of the villagers' food — yams, manioc, taro, island cabbage and bananas. Existing coconut plantations, which provide a little cash (through copra) as well as other essential materials, will not be expanded into the forest. The villagers of Matantas are proud of their forest. Its dense, shadowy, luxuriant tracts are as well known to Bill, Phelda and Tatania, our young guides, as suburban streets are to city youngsters.

Visitors to Matantas sleep in simple thatched burés, two or three to each. Only a dozen visitors can be accommodated at any one time. Such large groups are rare, but more would be welcome. A large dining room is gently lit at night by power from solar charged batteries, but the burés have no electricity, and tiny kerosene lamps are brought round at dusk. There are three flush toilets, and cold showers. Meals are prepared, mostly from local produce, by a capable cook from the village. At night, the peace and darkness are profound, broken only by the chirrups of a gecko, the delicate cry of the fruit bat or the indignant crowing of a cockerel. It is a short stroll to the beach, where a night swim stirs up phosphorescence.

Visitors are invited to participate in several activities. We spent a day in the forest learning about the rich variety of plants and their traditional uses. On



another day, we walked with Thelma to her garden. We planted taro and island cabbage, which we hope some future visitors will enjoy, and enjoyed a meal cooked in bamboo tubes accompanied by the traditional dish of taro pounded and blended with coconut milk. This took three men — one to pound and two to hold the heavy wooden tray steady! Lurking amongst the luxuriant garden vegetation we discovered pepper vines, tiny red chillies, onions, ginger and galangal. On another day we had a weaving lesson, using pandanus leaves. Our group was the first to be invited to spend a morning in village homes, getting to know our hosts and helping prepare food for a truly sumptuous beach feast the same night. We were also invited to travel by boat to Talatas, an isolated, tiny village along the coast to watch "Kustom" dancing, where a young man reduced us to hysterics with his brilliant, comic mime routine. Mime, especially when involving fish or birds, crosses cultures with ease!

Our group leader was Sue Maturin, from New Zealand's Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society (RFBPS) which has sponsored this experiment in sustainable tourism (www.forestandbird.org.nz). Sue has been involved in the project since 1993, in the early years as a consultant scientist. She speaks fluent Bislama, the pidgin used throughout the islands of Vanuatu, where there are over a hundred languages. Sue knows every villager in Matantas and their place in the close network of family ties. She also knows, only too well, the very difficult local politics that nearly defeated the project at its inception. Land disputes have become endemic throughout Vanuatu. Setting up this sustainable tourism initiative involved sorting out such a

(Continued on page 13)

Hidden Heritage: European coastal explorers on Australia's south east corner

Hidden Heritage was the title of Trevor Lipscombe's fascinating presentation to NPA members at the general meeting of July 21. The south east corner of Australia is a strangely neglected area yet it contains abundant interest in the form of history, cultural heritage sites and national parks. Trevor's historical research and personal exploration of this part of Victoria and New South Wales uncovered a story he shared with the membership. The story is contained in more detail in Trevor's recently published book, *On Austral Shores — a modern traveller's guide to the European coastal exploration of the coasts of Victoria and New South Wales*.

The coastal exploration of south east Australia by three 18th century explorers formed the basis of the evening's presentation: James Cook, Hugh Thomson and George Bass. Most of the places these explorers described and named are today in national parks and make interesting bush walking destinations.

Following his departure from Tahiti in the *Endeavour*, Cook's route took him, via New Zealand, to the coast of

Victoria where, in April 1770, he named the first landfall by Europeans on Australia's eastern coasts as Point Hicks. While a feature with this name appears on today's maps it is not what Cook saw. In 1969 an exact reconstruction of his route using Cook's own journals and logs demonstrated that what Cook must have seen was a cloud bank about 40km WSW of today's Point Hicks.

Escaping from the wreck of the *Sydney Cove* on an island off Tasmania, Hugh Thomson and 17 sailors were again shipwrecked in their longboat near Lakes Entrance early in 1797. The group set out to walk along the Victorian and New South Wales coast in order to return to Port Jackson, becoming the first Europeans to land in Victoria and to see 150km of its coast. Clark, a member of the party, kept a detailed log of the trip, portions of which were read by Trevor. In the first ever European encounter in Victoria with a group of Aborigines, Clark recorded the intense curiosity of the natives with European clothes, while it was noted that the Aborigines were covered with grease and were, to the

Europeans, offensive, hideous and disgusting. After passing Point Hicks, Twofold Bay and Batemans Bay, three of the shipwrecked sailors finally reached Port Jackson.

Later in 1797 George Bass, who came out to Australia with Flinders, also explored the south east corner, sailing down the coast in an open whaleboat from Port Jackson as far as Western Port, east of today's Melbourne. His journal describes for the first time the Shoalhaven area, Jervis Bay, Tuross, and Pambula River in what is now Ben Boyd National Park. Bass and Flinders returned to the area during their voyage to prove the existence of Bass Strait and made a detailed chart of Twofold Bay, which is described in their 1798 journal.

The story of the first Europeans to see the south east corner of Australia, briefly sketched here based on Trevor's presentation, is well documented with text, maps and information on bush walks to these exploration sites in Trevor Lipscombe's handsome book.

David Pfanner

Sustainable tourism in Vanuatu (continued from previous page)

dispute between Matantas and Sara villages.

If you would like to join the RFBPS's annual trip in late June-early July 2006, contact Sue on s.maturin@forestandbird.org.nz. Sue maps out a two-week tour. It involves five or six nights at Matantas, a couple of nights in the far south on Tanna Island for a visit to Mount Yasur, an active volcano, and several nights at a beach resort near the capital, Port Vila on Efate Island. On our trip, every opportunity was taken for snorkelling. Sue provided a weighty handbook on wild life and geomorphology, and an informed commentary as we travelled. Her contacts with local people, and with other expats, meant that we had opportunities to learn first hand about daily life in Vanuatu well beyond the normal tourist enclaves. For example, we spent time with staff and children at a village school; with the proud owner of a partly-completed dugout canoe; and with an American Peace Corps worker who had helped villagers set up a co-operative market for vegetables and handicrafts.

Getting off the beaten track in Vanuatu has its challenges and adapting to "island time" is one of them. But everyone we met was very helpful and we found that "things usually work out". We visited during the drier, and slightly cooler, season of the year, and were little bothered by mosquitoes. We felt we'd learned a lot about life in one of our Pacific neighbours. Twenty-

five years on from the end of the colonial era — and the inefficient joint Anglo-French rule — there's still much to be done. But, against the odds, at Matantas an encouraging start has been made in the conservation of a magnificent environment.

If you'd like to visit the Vatthe Conservation Area independently, you can make a booking, and arrange transport from Luganville, by contacting bungalows@positiveearth.org. It's about two and a half



hours from Luganville to Matantas. Do not expect a good road!

If you'd like the challenge of leading your own group to Matantas, Sue is willing to share her expertise with you. If you can't get there, spread the word! Visitors are urgently needed to keep this unique conservation operation viable.

Environmental news

Environment and forests merged

The activities of Environment ACT and ACT Forests were combined on 1 July 2005 in a move the Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, says will allow a greater focus on water catchment issues, the provision of visitor services, fire management, and the development of major projects at places such as Tidbinbilla and Stromlo.

"The change brings all of the ACT's water supply catchment areas under a single management group," he said. "The community will now be able to talk directly to the one management agency in relation to non-urban issues. This should eliminate potential confusion arising from the need for rural leaseholders surrounded by government land to speak to two different agencies. Recreational users and event organisers will similarly now have a single point of government contact."

The March 2005 NPA *Bulletin* reported that Environment ACT, which had formerly been an agency with the Department of Urban Services, had joined the Chief Minister's Department within the agency of Arts, Heritage and Environment, headed by Dr Maxine Cooper, formerly Executive Director of Environment ACT.

Research and repairs for natural places

Two projects to conduct research into the ecological management of woodlands and conserve and repair rural and bushland areas in the ACT have been launched recently, with funding from the Commonwealth and the ACT governments totalling \$8.5 million.

The Living Environment project has been allocated \$3.2 million by the Commonwealth Government and \$4 million in-kind support from the ACT Government. Its aim is to protect and repair the natural resource values that underpin the sustainability of the ACT's landscapes, water catchments and rural enterprises.

With separate funding, the National Capital Woodlands Initiative has been launched to promote research into the recovery of birds, other animals, and native plants, especially in yellow box and red gum grassy woodlands.

The project is being carried out collaboratively over five years by the ANU's Centre for Resource and Environment Studies and Environment ACT with grants from the Australian Research Council and the ACT

Government totalling \$1 057 000.

Among aspects to be studied will be the effects of replacing fallen timber that has been removed, the use of fire to manage fuel hazards, the management of grazing by stock and kangaroos for the benefit of the woodland ecosystem, and the control of foxes and feral cats, and public education.

The Living Environment project involves programs under seven headings — ACT Land Keepers, Seeds for Survival, Natural Challenges, Bushcare in the Bush Capital, Getting Equipped, Working with Our Neighbours, and Keeping Track — and will be delivered by government and community agencies.

The chief executive of Environment ACT, Dr Maxine Cooper, said the project would help stabilise various creek systems and riparian systems, and address vegetation issues and the habitat needs of fauna.

Trees for Stromlo

Planting of the first of 170 000 trees planned for the new Stromlo Forest Park began in August and was expected to take about two months. The trees will cover almost all of the eastern-facing slope of Mount Stromlo, which was burnt in the 2003 bushfires.

The species being planted were chosen in consultation with CSIRO bushfire experts, and will be predominantly endemic species — *Eucalyptus manifera* (brittle gum) and *Eucalyptus rossii* (scribbly gum). A small number of *Eucalyptus maculata* (spotted gums) will also be planted along a gully.

The planting is in addition to the boundary planting of 30 000 native and exotic trees along the Cotter Road, which began in July.

Captive breeding

Another 300 northern corroboree frog eggs have been collected this year from sphagnum moss bogs in Namadgi National Park for use in the captive husbandry program based at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Following egg collections in the past two years there are now about 700 frogs living in captivity. The first breeding-age frogs will be ready for release into the wild in another two years.

An additional climate-controlled facility was placed alongside the smaller facility in July. Together they will provide capacity for the release of about 700 frogs a year and will make possible an attempt to breed the species in captivity, something that has not

been successfully done before.

The program aims at helping wild populations recover faster than would occur naturally. Corroboree frogs have a low breeding rate. They take four years to reach breeding age, and the females only breed once a year and produce about 25 eggs.

Up to 80 per cent of the habitat of the northern corroboree frog was burnt during the 2003 bushfires, and subsequent monitoring showed there were probably fewer than 100 breeding pairs left in the ACT. The southern corroboree frog in the Kosciuszko National Park is in a similar situation.

The bushfire was not the only factor in the poor result. Numbers have been in decline for some time, and this is thought to be due to the prolonged drought and the skin-damaging chytrid fungus disease which has caused frog populations to decline worldwide.

End nearer for mynas

Measures to control Indian myna numbers have taken a step forward with plans to undertake pilot cullings in Canberra and Cairns. The project is being funded respectively by a grant of \$75 000 from the Hermon Slade Foundation and a \$130 000 grant from the Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust.

The cullings will be supervised by Dr Chris Tideman, of the ANU, who has invented a method of attracting the birds, by decoys and recorded myna calls, to imitation trees that can be trailed to appropriate sites and then humanely gassing them.

Indian mynas have had a devastating effect on native birds in eastern Australia, destroying eggs and chicks and competing aggressively for food, nesting sites and territory.

The Hermon Slade Foundation was set up in 1995 under a benefaction from Hermon Slade to encourage the pursuit of excellence in scientific research, particularly on topics designed to improve the ways in which individuals and communities interact with their natural environments. By June 2005, 25 projects with grants totalling \$1 934 236 had been completed, and there are currently 36 projects underway with grants totalling \$2 096 430.

Bikers out

Environment ACT has witnessed an increase in the number of mountain bike riders in Canberra Nature Park since the 2003 bushfires, particularly on

(Continued on page 15)

Interim Namadgi Advisory Board

Di Thompson has passed on the following report on the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board

Members' tenure on the board formally ceased on June 30 but has since been renewed 12 months. Towards the end of the year the memorandum of understanding relating to the board will expire and consideration will move to the appointment of a permanent board. In the meantime here is a summary of issues discussed.

1. Draft Namadgi Plan of Management. This should be out in 3-4 weeks, with a three month public consultation period. The Chief Minister's Office has put forward a number of changes to the draft. The Board has noted them and will comment further during the public consultation phase. I am hopeful that NPA will be able to put forward an issues brief that will draw out key issues for conservation comment.

2. We are getting closer to beginning work on the refurbishment of the Namadgi Visitor Centre display area. The money, earmarked from the Transgrid compensation monies, has been available for some time. A select tender has been drawn up, and it will of

course have a greater consideration and involvement of Aboriginal people's links to that land and the area.

3. We had a presentation on Onyong's grave site, and other displays and links to Queen Nellie, Nanny, and Black Harry. This will form an interpretative trail in various locations with links to the area and NNP. Onyong's grave site is north of the Tharwa Bridge. It is a further effort to pull together, through a common thread, places of interest in the ACT, and in this instance to demonstrate the links with the Aboriginal people.

4. The Mt Franklin shelter. one set of plans has been drafted, and others are being sought. There has been considerable consultation with the Ski Club. There is hope that it may be completed by the summer of 2006-07.

5. Emergency Services Authority trunk radio network. This is ongoing, with discussions including co-location at Bulls Head and Ginini, plus Mt Tennant and Mt Clear. This would mean a digital radio network for all emergency services. In the case of access to Mt Clear, there is a possibility of an easement from NSW. The problem is that the southern part of the park and

bordering NSW has very poor coverage, and Mt Clear will also allow coverage for the ambulances coming from the snowfields. Frankly our position is to minimise the impacts, with diesel and solar power. We are not keen to go with wind turbines (more unsightly structures on hilltops).

6. Fire trails. Environment ACT has a project officer specifically working on fire trails issues. He reported that there had been considerable sediment control work carried out after the fires, 66km of fire trails cleared and dangerous trees removed. I didn't get the opportunity to visit the Mt Franklin Road when it was opened prior to the recent snow and rain, but am keen to see what work has been done there.

7. Next year Environment ACT will be hosting the First Nation's Park Workers gathering (for Victorian, NSW and ACT alpine parks). This year's inaugural meeting was held at Dinner Plain, Victoria. The work is carried out through the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and apparently it was a very successful venture.

I'm happy to discuss these issues or raise others at the Board level if anyone wishes to contact me.

Warning on "unfettered powers"

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW has warned that an amendment to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act has given the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning "largely unfettered discretionary powers" in assessing whether or not major projects can go ahead.

The amendment, which added Part 3A to the Act, became effective from August 1.

According to a departmental statement, Part 3A applies to State government infrastructure projects, developments previously classed as

State significant, and other projects, plans or programs declared by the Minister. The statement says it "consolidates the assessment and approval regime of all major projects that need the approval of the Minister".

The Nature Conservation Council says the legislation removes "many of the hard-won environmental and planning laws that have existed since 1979", when the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was first introduced, by giving the Minister largely unfettered discretionary powers with regard to:

- the environmental assessment of large-scale projects;
- the criteria for approval;
- the need to consider the views of the public and procedures governing such projects;
- the need for separate approvals, including approvals on pollution, native vegetation, cultural heritage, coastal protection, bushfire safety, rivers and fisheries; and
- the approval of critical infrastructure development even where local plans prohibit such development.

Graeme Wicks

Environmental news

(continued from previous page)

Mount Majura, Mount Ainslie and Percival Hill Nature Reserves.

The Chief Minister and Minister for the Environment, Mr Jon Stanhope, has stated that mountain bike riders who use Canberra's nature parks must stay on formed roads and not ride on walking tracks unless they are designated and signposted multi-use tracks.

"Not only is incorrect use of tracks a safety issue for all park users, it is a significant cause of environmental

damage," Mr Stanhope said. "During one recent incident, a mountain bike travelling at speed along a steep, narrow walking track came suddenly upon a local Park Care group, almost causing a nasty accident and damaging the track, which now needs urgent rehabilitation to reduce soil erosion and sediment run-off."

Mountain bike riders were welcome to use formed roads and designated tracks, Mr Stanhope said, but walking tracks were not built to take the impact

of mountain bike activity and were vulnerable to soil compaction, increased run-off and weed invasion if used incorrectly.

There were clearly signposted multi-use tracks in the Bruce and O'Connor Ridge Reserves and on the Googong Foreshores, and a number of dedicated mountain bike trails also exist in the Kowen and Majura pine forests, he added.

Compiled by Graeme Wicks

Colverwell graveyard: conservation work underway

In the June 2005 *NPA Bulletin*, Syd Comfort set out efforts that were being taken to persuade the ACT Government to undertake conservation measures at the historic Colverwell graveyard.

In a letter of 25 May 2005, Mr Jon Stanhope, as Minister for Arts, Heritage & Indigenous Affairs said:

...the ACT Government is committed to protecting heritage sites such as the Colverwell graves. The Heritage Unit and ACT Forests wish to have the site protected according to best practice and to this end assessments have been undertaken to determine the scope of works required to conserve the graveyard and headstones. ACT Forests has agreed to fund some conservation works, which will commence in the coming months.

On 17 July 2005 an NPA outing visited several sites in the Glenburn Historic Precinct, including the Colverwell graveyard. The 20 people who made the journey were delighted to see that considerable conservation work had already been carried out at the Colverwell graveyard.

The post and rail fence surrounding the graveyard had been repaired and restored. In addition, the outer fence that protects the graveyard from stock has been replaced with a new, solid security fence. Several people commented favourably on the sensitive way that this work had been done. Well done, The Heritage Unit and ACT Forests!

On 26 July 2005 the four gravestones were re-erected.

The two headstones were mounted upright on aluminium frames. This will help reduce stone erosion from wind, rain etc and thereby slow down the deterioration of the carved inscriptions which are already difficult or impossible to read in some places.

The two footstones have also been erected in upright positions. This has been done by burying about one third of the stones in the ground.

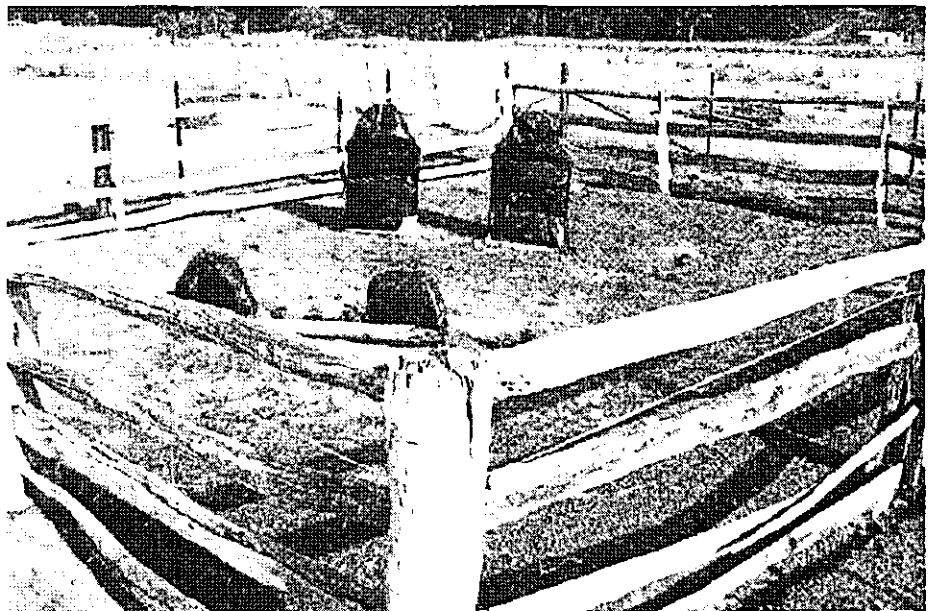
On 2 August 2005 the gravestones were covered in black plastic. This will stop sunlight falling on them with the aim of eradicating lichens that are attached to all four gravestones, particularly Margaret's headstone. The

plastic will be removed when the lichens disappear.

Further conservation work will commence shortly. Two important components of this work will be painting the post and rail fence with a timber preservative and erecting an interpretive sign. The Heritage Unit and ACT Forests hope that all work will be completed before the end of the year.

I would like to thank Jon Stanhope and staff of The Heritage Unit and ACT Forests for putting up with my persistent lobbying on this matter and for the positive and sensitive way that they have responded so far and their commitment to undertake further conservation work at this important heritage site.

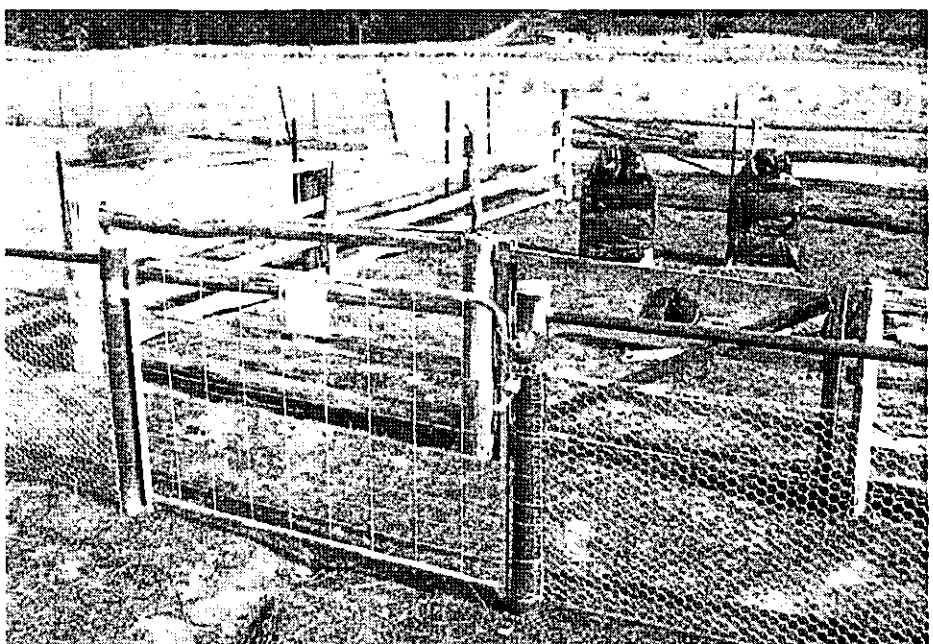
Col McAlister



Above. The post and rail fence surrounding the graveyard has been repaired and restored. Note the plastic covered headstones and footstones.

Below. The new security fence erected to protect the graveyard.

Photos Col McAlister



PARKWATCH

(more PARKWATCH on page 18)

NPWS — Budawangs walking and camping strategy

After consultation with key interest groups the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has completed a draft bushwalking and camping strategy for the northern Budawang range in Morton National Park. Highlights from the draft include the following proposals.

- It continues the existing ban on camping and wood fires in Monolith Valley, Hidden Valley, the Castle Saddle, the Vines and along the Two Rivers track within wilderness.
- It prohibits camping in rock overhangs except for a number of listed sites.
- It bans wood fires in all caves and overhangs.
- Maximum tent numbers and a fuel stove only requirement are imposed in five popular camp sites that are suffering significant damage.
- Toilets of minimal construction are proposed to address pollution.
- Walkers will be required to keep to designated tracks and camping areas in the former artillery impact area.
- Walkers will be encouraged to keep group sizes small, to a recommended maximum of 8 and an absolute maximum of 12.
- A permit system is proposed for popular routes at peak times.
- Minor track works such as relocation, water diversion or hardening will continue to be undertaken where necessary to prevent erosion and track braiding.

Appropriate information will be provided to walkers about values, track conditions, restrictions and minimal impact practices and private publications will be encouraged to provide similar information.

A full Strategy document is available from NPWS website at www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au.

The Bushwalker, Autumn 2005

KI koalas to get more funds

The SA State Government has announced a significant funding increase for the koala management program on Kangaroo Island.

The Premier, Hon. Mike Rann and Environment & Conservation Minister, Hon. John Hill announced the \$4 million program as a part of the 2005 State Budget handed down in May. The Premier said there were warnings that if koala numbers continued to climb, Kangaroo Island's natural heritage could be irreversibly

damaged within five years. The Premier went on to say that "... the current population of 27,000 koalas is too great. They are doubling in population every five years and we need to bring that under control as a matter of urgency." It is expected that the \$4 million program will sterilise 8000 koalas over four years.

While it remains somewhat unclear exactly how the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) will spend the money for controlling the Island's koala population, what is clear is that the Government continues to rule out the option of a humane cull. In his media release the Premier said: "Killing koalas is not the way to go — it is repugnant and unacceptable way out of this problem."

Curiously, the Premier also said that koalas are now an accepted part of the environment. "Accepted by who?" is the obvious response to this — certainly not the manna gums that are being slowly destroyed by these hungry animals.

Xanthopus, Winter 2005

Last chance to protect Murray red gum forests

The VNPA, with environment groups from three states, is leading the call for State and Federal governments to end logging in the iconic River Red Gum forests and wetlands of the River Murray.

This call comes as a new tri-state report released by the Murray Darling Basin Commission shows the proportion of dead and dying River Murray red gums has increased from 51% in 2002 to 75% in 2004.

The Commonwealth, Victorian, NSW and SA governments declared a series of "icon sites" in 2003 as part of the Living Murray Initiative, promising to return 500 billion litres of water to the Murray to save these forests and wetlands from further degradation. These sites..., include the Barmah-Millewa and Gunbower-Pericoota wetlands in Victoria and NSW, the largest River Red Gum wetlands in the world.

But these national icons are being used as woodlots for firewood, and managed as plantations, despite being internationally significant wetlands. The dying Murray has brought these areas to their knees. If logging continues it will finish off these magnificent trees for good. The \$500 million being spent to protect the Murray's wetland forests will be money

down the drain unless logging is stopped.

In the Gunbower-Pericoota site, the NSW Government clearfells red gum 15 metres from the Murray and sells the timber for firewood in Sydney and Melbourne.

The clock is ticking for our iconic River Red Gum forests and wetlands.

Parkwatch, June 2005

HSI campaigns to save shrublands in arid Australia

The old man saltbush shrubland is one of the latest additions to HSI's campaign to save threatened ecological communities. Occurring in arid and semi arid Australia, the old man saltbush plant lives for 50 to 100 years and is known for its ability to withstand severe drought as well as waterlogging. Despite its enduring nature, the old man saltbush community is in danger of becoming extinct.

In December last year, HSI submitted a nomination to have the community listed as endangered under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. Next on our agenda is a nomination for the community under the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, which we are currently preparing.

Grazing and trampling by stock and feral animals has wiped out massive areas of the community. In NSW, only 12% of the original community remains and less than 1% of this occurs in protected areas.

The old man saltbush plant is well known among farmers as a food source for livestock in times of drought and for its potential to combat salinity. Saltbush plantations are now widely used in grazing systems to revegetate saline discharge areas and rest grasses from grazing.

It is the naturally occurring old man saltbush ecological community that is in danger. This community is a complex assemblage of shrubs, trees, forbs and grasses. A diverse array of fauna call it home, including the thick-tailed gecko, lion earless dragon, narrow-nosed planigale (a very small carnivorous marsupial) and the threatened Forrest's mouse. The natural community is in fact very different from the saltbush plantations used in agricultural systems and unless it is protected from further degradation it will be wiped out completely.

*Humane Society International
July 2005*

PARKWATCH

(more PARKWATCH on page 17)

Devils to make "threatened" list

The Tasmanian devil will be listed for protection under threatened species laws, as new research predicts at least a further 20 per cent decline in devils over the next decade.

Tasmanian Environment Minister Judy Jackson announced the Government would nominate the devil for listing under the state *Threatened Species Protection Act*.

The nomination, expected to be accepted by the state's Scientific Advisory Committee, will boost protection of the beleaguered species being decimated by a facial cancer.

The Australian, 12 May 2005

NSW parks: overburdened and out of control

The flora and fauna of the state's national parks are being degraded by the fire management practices of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

A survey of park rangers, field staff and managers has found that in nearly 300 of the state's 600 parks the ecological and cultural values are being diminished by a failure to meet fire management objectives.

Many parks, such as the Royal, are being overburned.

Across hundreds of the national parks under its control, the department is also failing to control weeds and feral animals or protect historic sites.

The findings are included in the first *State of the Parks* report, which is designed to gauge how effectively NSW's enormous park estate is being managed.

In the 10 years since Bob Carr became Premier, the national park estate has increased from 4 million to 6 million hectares.

While many of the problems identified in the report are beyond the control of the park service, the survey has confirmed that serious threats and management issues need to be confronted.

The report says the most significant pressures are isolation, which affects 25 per cent of the parks, and "incompatible adjacent land use" in 20 per cent. Reserves such as that on North Head are affected by both these threats — cut off from bushland elsewhere and encroached upon by suburbia. Others, such as Lane Cove, are polluted by stormwater run-off.

The Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, said that with so much land

under its control everyone had expected some bad news. However, it was part of the service's determination to be open so improvements could be made.

The report told the "truth warts and all", he said. On the issue of fire there was a balancing act between biodiversity and protecting property and life.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 9-10 July 2005.

Airline's mountain resort flies into flak

Private swimming pools for each hotel room, large verandas with views and \$320 airport transfer charges just to get to the front door: welcome to resort life. Emirates Airline style, and it is heading this way.

The airline's next project, to be announced today will be a slick, expensive operation bordering the Blue Mountains National Park, but the Greens have serious concerns about its possible impact.

The airline says that the development will be an environmentally sensitive resort north of Lithgow, alongside the World Heritage-listed area and modelled on its Al Maha Desert Resort and Spa, near Dubai.

The airline's chairman, Sheik Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, and the NSW Tourism Minister, Sandra Nori, will launch the "tourism and conservation investment" at the Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney today. The Wolgan Valley site will be cleared of feral animals, and most of the area bought left undeveloped.

Emirates tried to keep details of the project under wraps but *The Australian Financial Review* yesterday reported that it had bought thousands of hectares from the local Webb family for an undisclosed amount.

Access is by dirt road, prompting Greens MLC Ian Cohen to raise concerns about roadworks or the building of an airstrip or heliport.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 June 2005.

Threatened cod back in the swim

Exactly two years after it was declared a threatened species, the Murray cod has defied the odds and is returning in abundance to the river that gave it its name.

Recreational fishermen along the South Australian reaches of the Murray River say that, despite lower flows

caused by drought the freshwater fish has increased in numbers in recent months as the river's water quality improves and the European carp loses its dominance.

"Its very true," said Brian Schulz, a longtime fisherman and resident of Murray Bridge who had watched cod numbers decline since the 1980s. "It's amazing. They are coming back. Not just the big ones. They are coming from everywhere."

The federal Environment Department declared the cod a "threatened species" in July 2003 after a 30 per cent fall in stocks in the past 50 years. Experts attributed the decline to the construction of locks across the Murray-Darling basin and the impact of commercial netting, now banned by the Rann Government.

Anecdotal evidence that the cod is returning to the Murray is backed up by intelligence passed on to the South Australian Research and Development Institute by river users. "They are telling me about how the fish are coming back," said fisheries scientist Qifeng Ye, one of the nation's foremost authorities on the Murray cod. Dr Ye said the increase in cod numbers was due to multiple environmental influences.

The Australian, 11 July 2005

The role of predators in Australian ecosystems

The dingo is the top predator in Australian ecosystems (excluding humans) but its role is a contentious one. Certainly the dingo can pose great problems for livestock grazing — a fact that has led to its widespread control — but the dingo may also have benefits for biodiversity. Comparison between areas of high and low dingo abundance suggests that dingoes can limit populations of herbivores, which can become over-abundant in the absence of their natural predator. Perhaps even more importantly, a growing body of evidence suggests that dingoes can suppress cats and foxes thereby providing indirect protection for a host of smaller animals which are threatened by these introduced predators. Endangered animals such as the Bilby and Malleefowl are thought to benefit in this way from the presence of dingoes.

Wilderness Winter 2005

Compiled by Len Haskew

Book review

On Austral Shores

by Trevor Lipscombe

Published by Evironbook 2005

RRP \$49.95.

Available from the author \$30 or mailed anywhere in Australia \$39.95 via TrevorLipscombe@bigpond.com or PO Box 43 Campbell ACT 2612.

Towards the end of July Barbara and I sought sun and warmth on the mid north coast, so, armed with a copy of *On Austral Shores*, this trip provided an opportunity to put the book through its paces. The author, a member of the National Parks Association, has set out to provide a traveller's guide as well as interesting reading in its own right. Trevor has aimed to give an accurate historical account of European exploration of the Victorian and New South Wales coasts, something he considers is frequently undervalued by both individuals and authorities with management responsibilities for these areas.

This large format book is attractively designed with an arresting dust cover. Clearly printed and well set out it is overall a quality production. Illustrations are confined to black and white sketch maps and reproductions of relevant charts, but rather than being a limitation, this is a strength as there are over 60 maps, many of them full page.

The book has four main components the first being an overview of the exploration of the Australian coast. There follows for Victoria and then New South Wales, a detailed coverage of the exploration of the coastlines. Then there are separate chapters that provide guides for travellers to locate and visit coastal explorations sites in both states. The final section of the book comprises three useful appendices, a bibliography and index.

Early in the book we are told that "Discovery for the purposes of this book is defined as 'first to see'". Being unsure what Aborigines saw before Europeans arrived, the author assumes Aboriginal priority for the discovery of the whole of the continent and refers to the European experience as "exploration". Again, the author accepts that the Portuguese and possibly the Chinese explored the Australian coast before the 17th century and he includes an interesting summary of the evidence for this. However, given the contentious nature of this evidence the account of exploration of

the Australian coast in this book starts with the firmly documented exploration of the Dutch in 1606. The subsequent exploration is comprehensively followed, the account being well illustrated in a series of very clear maps showing the sequence of events until the jigsaw is complete.

The book then focuses on Victoria and New South Wales, tracing the sightings and mapping of the coastline moving broadly from western Victoria to the Queensland border. Although not claiming to write new history the author is careful to base his account on established evidence with frequent reference to original documents and reproduction of carefully selected charts made by the explorers. The large format is used to advantage in reproducing many of these, my only criticism being that some charts lack the contrast to enable details to be read and so lose some of the benefits of the large size. The author has been keen to identify "firsts", some of these having been achieved by individuals little recognised by the Australian public. The book sets out clearly the often tangled matter of which point on the east coast was actually the first sighted by Cook's crew.

Trevor and his wife, Joan, toured and walked extensively on the coasts to garner the background for the chapters on travellers' guides to exploration sites. Locations of historic interest are identified, good directions given and accurate information of their significance provided. The author is critical that many important heritage sites on these coasts are not fully valued by visitors nor adequately identified in national parks.

Now to my use of the book while staying in Forster. I will mention just two examples. Crowdy Head is a prominent landmark and lighthouse site to the north of Forster. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife brochure gives the credit for the naming of the headland to Cook: "Seeing a crowd of aboriginal people on the headland he called it 'Crowded Head', from which followed the name, Crowdy Head." This account is also taken up by what is probably the most widely read Australian touring guide. What has *On Austral Shores* to say on this matter? Well, nothing, but quite a lot. The book does not offer any explanation of the naming of this landmark but Cook's charts reproduced in the book and those of Flinders (1802 and 1814), also reproduced, do not carry the name. Nor

does Oxley's 1818 chart name Crowdy Head although his account includes a description of the adjacent area which he passed through. Sufficient, perhaps, to say that the book draws attention to the need for further evidence before accepting the proffered explanation.

Visiting the Forster area today with its extensive clearings it is perhaps hard to picture the landscape before settlement. The exploration of this district between Port Macquarie and Port Stephens was undertaken by John Oxley as the concluding leg of his 1818 expedition that had taken him from Sydney to the west of the Dividing Range and then to the coast at Port Macquarie.

On Austral Shores contains very good descriptions of the coastal section of Oxley's progress and a good reproduction of his chart, the first, of this part of the coast. In this way it adds a great deal to a visitor's understanding of the heritage of the region, something that might otherwise be overlooked as there appears to be little local recognition of the very considerable contribution made in this area by Oxley and his expedition.

On Austral Shores is recommended as a companion to anyone interested in our coastal areas both as a traveller's guide and as stimulating reading that will bring new insights into the region's heritage and history.

Syd Comfort

Postscript. *I have just had an email from Rebecca Linton, author of Crowdy Head, Lighthouse of the Manning, its shipwrecks, Fishing Industry, National Park and Residents, who says that the origin of the name "Crowdy Head" is uncertain but discounts any attribution to Captain Cook. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service plans to amend its brochure in this regard at next printing. I think that Trevor won this round. SFC*

National Parks Association Calendar

General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month
*(No General Meetings in
 December or January)*

8:00pm

**Uniting Church hall
 56 Scrivener Street
 O'Connor**

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Public holidays</i>		<i>Mon 3</i>		<i>Mon 26 Tues 27</i>
General meetings	Thur 15	Thur 20	Thur 17	—
Committee meetings	Tues 6	TBA	TBA	TBA
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 10	Sat 8	Sat 12	Sat 10
NPA Christmas Party				Sun 11
Great Australian Bushwalk		Sun 16		
Bulletin Working Group ²	Tues 20			

Further details ¹ Yankee Hat carpark 10:00am, Clive Hurlstone 6288 7592 (h)
 040 778 3422 (mob)
² Syd Comfort 6286 2578

Thursday 15 September 2005

Getting the cattle out of the Park

Phil Ingamells

Alps Campaigner, Victorian NPA.

Phil will give a short illustrated talk on the recent (thankfully successful) campaign to remove licensed cattle grazing from Victoria's Alpine National Park. The talk will put the campaign in the context of earlier campaigns for protection of the Alps, and also look towards future management possibilities for the Australian Alps. Questions and discussion are most welcome.

Thursday 20 October 2005

Members' forum on Namadgi National Park Plan of Management

The draft of the new *Namadgi National Park Plan of Management* was released on 6th September for public comment. The NPA ACT Committee believes that it is important to have input from members on what NPA's response should be. To facilitate this, members of NPA's Draft Plan working group will give short presentations on aspects of the plan which NPA could support or oppose.

Lively discussion essential.

Thursday 17 November 2005

Conserving our Heritage in Kosciuszko

Mark Cleghorn

President, Kosciusko Huts Association

In the January 2003 bushfires in Kosciusko National Park, 19 hut places were either severely damaged or destroyed. With the loss of so much cultural heritage at one time the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service commissioned the preparation of a draft strategy on the future management of the huts still standing as well as what to do about those destroyed in the bushfire.

Mark will speak on the recommendations of the draft and KHA's future role in heritage management in the national park.

NPA ACT *Bulletin*

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now overdue.**

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