



NPA *Bulletin*

Volume 46 Number 4 December 2009

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



**NPA celebrates
25 years of Namadgi**



**The puzzle of
Yankee Hat**



**Wedgetails breeding
in Molonglo**

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

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From the President

A very disturbing trend is emerging in the debate on climate change. As governments around the world become enmeshed in the global carbon debate, the fight-back from entrenched industries has intensified. While the mining or timber industries make solemn assurances that they want to work with the rest of us on solving climate change, they spend millions of dollars on campaigns to undermine the environmental debate. We all saw the huge newspaper advertisements pleading for special consideration under the carbon trading scheme. Who among the environmental groups has the sort of money needed to respond to that?

It seems that our political system at all levels has become finely tuned to this sort of lobbying. The climate change debate has been captured by any interest group which can predict huge job losses and write up dodgy economic forecasts in glossy brochures. However what worries me more than this slick spin-doctoring is that we have become so focussed on the money we have lost sight of the real issues. Somehow the whole point of climate change has been reduced to calculating the value of our carbon footprint according to the movement of vast sums of money around existing financial systems.

What began as an environmental debate has been transformed into an economic argument about profit and loss. What has gone missing from the debate is a focus on biodiversity. We are no longer debating the impact of climate change on the complex world of millions of known and unknown species which create, stabilise and recover our climate, our oceans and our planet. We are debating the impact of climate change on just one species—us. So we are losing sight of the actual damage we are doing to the natural world.

Reducing carbon in the atmosphere is not going to save species or ecosystems now on the brink of extinction. It is not going to re-create species and ecosystems already lost. Planting huge mono-cultures of trees is not going to bring back the corroboree frog or the brown tree-creeper. Even paying farmers not to clear their land is not going to deliver targeted conservation of eco-systems at risk. It's just going to deliver a lot of farms with the existing number of trees on them.

Let me put it even more starkly: no carbon trading scheme currently under consideration places any value on national parks! Not only are national parks being excluded from access to the billions of dollars being tossed around the carbon trading market, they are being pushed even harder to fund their own conservation with private tourism and recreation developments. Has the world gone mad?

One of the underlying reasons for this madness is a simple problem: we have an expensive and complex reporting system of national financial accounts; we do not have any form of assessing or reporting on national environmental accounts, even in financial terms.

The Wentworth Group has released a paper calling for a one per cent levy on the carbon market to fund the monitoring and reporting costs for a system of regionally-based National Environmental Accounts. It's a start. But what we really need



(continued next page)

Large scale events in Namadgi National Park

In Easter 2010 an event is scheduled by Orienteering ACT for about 1 000 participants, based beside Gudgenby Homestead. NPA ACT is concerned that the number of participants competing in this off-track event will disturb and possibly endanger wildlife, including birds preparing to migrate; small mammals preparing for winter; and lizards and other reptiles which inhabit the rocky outcrops and rock surfaces of the valley and surrounding hills. Participants will trample and destroy grass, small forbs, lichen and mosses on soils and rocks already stressed by years of drought. Runners will damage considerable areas of vegetation as they traverse the eighteen different courses set up into the granite hills above the homestead. A number of significant Aboriginal sites in the area are at risk of damage, even if only from competitors who get lost. The European heritage of Gudgenby Homestead, Gudgenby Cottage, associated buildings and landscape values is also being ignored.



View across the Gudgenby Valley, over the Gudgenby Cottage and Homestead to Yankee Hat. (See article on page 13 for discussion on which peak is the rightful Yankee Hat).

Photo Max Lawrence

Fragile soils

Compaction and erosion at the start and finish areas will only be part of the problem at the site. Support services for the event will be spread around the area beside and below Gudgenby Homestead. The event will require truck access, the erection of large marquees and toilets plus spectator areas and parking for over 250 cars beside Gudgenby River. This will all take place on fragile soils and surfaces already degraded by drought. With winter approaching, there will be little prospect of re-vegetation for many months so that all rain events will contribute significantly to erosion and damage to the Gudgenby River. Access for participants, spectators and service vehicles will be through a normally locked gate and along an unsealed access track which follows the banks of the river for approximately a kilometre. Gudgenby River has undergone

significant restoration work in recent years but remains very vulnerable until native vegetation is re-established.

The numbers of participants will also increase the probability of weed invasion and dispersal, particularly of a newly invading species, hawkweed, which has recently been identified as a severe risk to native vegetation in the Australian Alps National Parks system. This all adds up to an unacceptable level of risk for the area and for the national park itself.

Gold coin donation

The only environmental mitigation proposal currently on the Orienteering website is a request that participants make a gold coin donation to help buy grass seed to scatter on the damaged areas.

This is not a one-off event. The 2007 draft of the Namadgi Management

Plan—yet to be approved by the Legislative Assembly—makes it clear that large scale events are to be permitted in Namadgi not just for orienteering but also for rogaining and mountain biking. Other sports are sure to follow. So, despite the depth of our concerns about the 2010 event, NPA ACT has written to the Chief Minister proposing a very reasonable compromise. We have proposed that this event be allowed to proceed with strict environmental controls but that it be the last, and that limits on the size of events be re-instated in the Namadgi Management Plan (as recommended by the Standing Committee on Planning and the Environment) when it is put before the Assembly for approval. We have also asked members of the Greens party in the Assembly for their support on this issue.

Christine Goonrey

From the President

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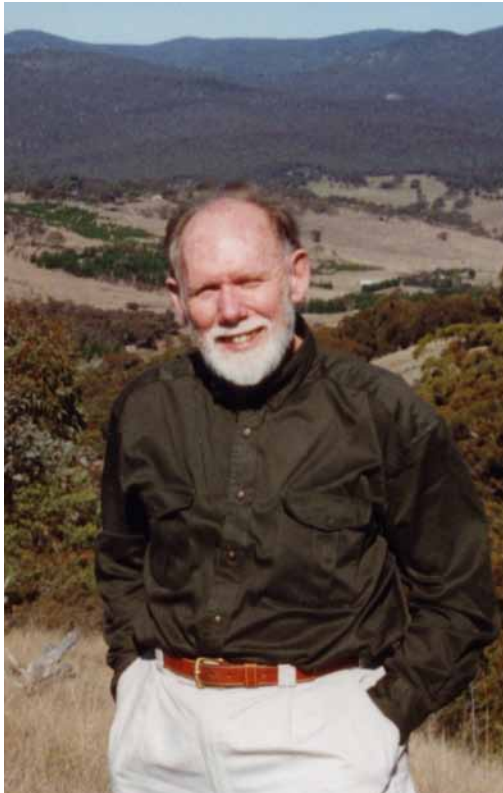
is some political muscle, some anger and energy from all of us directed at protecting our biodiversity from the carbon traders as much as from the impact of climate change. We have been almost put to sleep with the boring endless arguments about international markets for carbon trading while the real issue of biodiversity protection is slipped to the side yet again.

I think it's time for another public revolution against the exploitation of natural resources like we had late last century against damming wild rivers and clear felling native forests. We don't have to sit in trees or blockade forests this time; we have to let our politicians know that we're on to them, that we won't fall for the thimble and pea trick again. Meaningful, real-time action to

protect and restore our biodiversity must be a full partner to any climate change strategies and must be fully funded and effectively targeted. Anything less invites environmental catastrophe.

Christine Goonrey

Vale Graeme Wicks 8 July 1932–13 September 2009



and was the author of several books, both fiction and non-fiction. His abiding passion was fishing, especially fly fishing, and he had been out indulging this passion in his beloved high country only weeks before his death.

As *Bulletin* sub editor, Graeme had a magic ability to make our stuff so much more authoritative and readable, with an absolute minimum of fuss. I know that when he'd been over my bits I could scarcely tell what he'd done, but I knew that it was much better—seemingly little things like breaking up turgid paragraphs, inserting nifty subheadings, checking facts and consistency and so on. Said like that it doesn't seem much, but I never ceased to be amazed at the difference he made. And he did it so nicely!

Graeme was given a good sendoff by his loving family, his former professional colleagues, his friends in the literary world, his fishing mates, and NPA. He is survived by his artist wife Pat, his son Jon, daughter Annabel, and four grandchildren.

At Graeme's memorial service Syd Comfort, formerly long time editor of the *Bulletin*, contributed the following on our behalf.

Editor

My friendship with Graeme does not extend back over as many years as I would have liked. It was initiated following a request made some years ago by the National Parks Association for members to work on the association's quarterly *NPA Bulletin*, an important link in the association's activities. We were indeed fortunate that Graeme did not subscribe to the old 'never volunteer' maxim. He soon brought his considerable energy, and writing and editing skills to the small publication team and for over ten years there was scarcely a page that had not benefited

from his careful composition or editing. However it was not only this contribution but the manner in which he went about making it, that marked him out. In dealing with what was an essentially amateur group he tempered his professional experience with tact and consideration and a capacity to meld into the team. These characteristics he extended more generally through the association. His sincerity, good fellowship and balanced positions on issues were recognised and appreciated by members and brought him respect and friendship within the association. He will be deeply missed.

On an individual note, I greatly valued his friendship and feel a sense of personal loss.

Within Graeme's span of interests was an enthusiasm for the natural environment, and with this an ability to capture it in words which resonated with those of like feeling. Let me conclude with an extract from one of the stories in his collection *Trout Stream and Fly Rod*:

There was all that is part of being out of doors in a remote place; in walking on rough ground with the sky all around you and nothing in between but hills and trees; feeling the warmth of your blood and the well-being of your body; taking your measure from the wide horizon and the vastness of space and at the same time being cosily aware of your insignificance in the landscape and the universe; seeing the shape of rocks, the texture of earth, lichen on granite, the shimmer of a dragonfly hunting, the drift of eagles, a moth glued to the current, an army of ants emptying a lizard skin, trees that showed the essence, as perfectly as a piece of sculpture, of the climate and country that made them.

Syd Comfort

(Photo of Graeme supplied by the Wicks family)

Flowers

Throughout his life, Charles Darwin surrounded himself with flowers. When he was 10, he wrote down each time a peony bloomed in his father's garden. When he bought a house to raise his own family, he turned the grounds into a botanical field station where he

experimented on flowers until his death. But despite his intimate familiarity with flowers, Darwin once wrote that their evolution was "an abominable mystery."

If you would like to know more about this "abominable mystery", Kevin McCue suggests it might be worth

reading the article by Carl Zimmer in the *New York Times* of 9 September 2009. Go to

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/08/science/08flower.html?_r=1&ref=science

Developing regional fire plans for the ACT

At the association's general meeting on October 15, attendees were provided with a detailed and comprehensive presentation of the ACT regional bushfire management plans. Dr Margaret Kitchin (Senior Forest Ecologist, PCL) and Dylan Kendall (Senior Fire Management Officer, PCL) outlined the hierarchy of the various plans.

The *Strategic Bushfire Management Plan*, currently in its second iteration, sits at the top with the new *Regional Fire Plans* immediately below. At the third level of the hierarchy are the annual *Bushfire Operational Plans* that are used at the fire site. The middle level has been missing until recently and the presentation covered the nature of this new level of fire plan.

Form of large maps

The *Regional Fire Plans* are in the form of large maps (about A1 to A0 size) rather than a book. In this way, they are more readily accessible by groups of people when discussing fire operations. The ACT is covered by nine such sheets forming a set of nine discrete, geographically based plans that include Googong. Each plan covers a 10-year period but is revised every five years.

Each sheet contains a range of tabular information and a large scale topographical map. The tabular information covers such things as fire history, vegetation fire response, and prescribed burn intervals and areas. The topographical map includes physical features plus fire trails, cultural and other

assets, location of water resources, helipads and the like. The map also includes a colour coding system to indicate the year and extent of planned fuel reduction burns—this is the art of the plan.

The process behind the development of these plans sought to identify the most appropriate burn frequency and interval for any known vegetation community covered by the respective sheets. Some fire communities are extremely sensitive to fire and have a long inter-fire period, others are less so. Some grassland communities were identified for periodic fire for ecological purposes. The plans recognise the need to avoid landscape-scale 'burn-offs', so the areas identified for hazard reduction burns are a mosaic. Each mosaic area has a window of two years in which the burn should be conducted, thus allowing for seasonal variability. Adding to this complexity is the perceived need, in areas close to the urban fringe, primarily asset protection zones, to exercise regular and obvious fuel reduction. Through scientific analysis and wide community consultation, which has included the NPA, the plans have achieved a balance, while accepting that modifications will necessarily occur during periodic reviews.

New concepts

The presenters explained that the older understanding of fuel load, as a measure of the need to reduce fuel levels, has now been replaced by the more sophisticated

idea of overall fuel hazard which considers not only the amount of fuel but also its arrangement (surface fuel, elevated fuel, bark on standing trees, etc). Overall fuel hazard accumulation models have been developed for the vegetation communities occurring in the ACT based on more than 700 overall fuel hazard assessments in the ACT and surrounding NSW. These models predict that grasslands return to their maximum fuel hazard level after two years from burning while dry sclerophyll forest can take up to 13 years.

Margaret and Dylan pointed out that fire is not the only hazard reduction technique identified by the plans. Where appropriate, herbicides, grazing, physical removal and mowing/slashing are also employed.

Margaret and Dylan conveyed succinctly the complexity and extent of the planning process. It became clear that the ecological values of the landscape were given as much importance during this process as the more traditional 'life and property' arguments.

The point was also made that when considering the intensity of bush fires, the capacity to control them is limited to the small proportion of intensities at the lower end of the scale. Although fires at the higher end occur infrequently (to date) their consequences can be catastrophic when human lives are impacted.

Martin Chalk

The son, the soldier and the lily



On a recent visit to the Australian National Botanic Gardens Fiona MacDonald Brand noticed a particularly poignant interpretive display beside the path leading from the information rooms to the café. She thought our readers may be interested. It reads as shown at right.

How does a single plant connect family, early bushwalking in the Snowy Mountains and a soldier who gave his life for his country?

As a member of the Melbourne Amateur Walking and Touring Club, William Frederick Murphy walked up the western side of Mount Kosciuszko in 1933. On the way down he collected this Tasman Wax Lily for his mother. It sat in a bucket of water for 12 months before being planted in her backyard in Melbourne. In 1941 William enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force to fight in World War II, but was interred by the Japanese as a prisoner of war in 1942. Forced to work on the Thai-Burma railway, William died at '55 Kilo Camp' (also known as Khonhkan) in 1943.

His memory lived on in the lily growing in his mother's garden. To remember a beloved son and brother the Murphy family replanted the lily no less than five times as they moved house—a truly hardy Australian native. In 2004 the plant was donated to the Australian National Botanic Gardens, and in 2009 a cutting was planted near Mount Kosciuszko—a journey of over 75 years for a plant of remembrance.

In memory of Bill

We acknowledge the support of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in bringing this plant and its story to the Gardens

Linking Landscapes summit

I attended the Linking Landscapes summit at Kingscliff, NSW in October as a representative of both National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) and National Parks Association of the ACT. The summit was arranged by the Australian members of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). It sought to get national agreement on how to address the issues around landscape scale connectivity in response to the challenges of climate change.

While the invited audience came from quite a wide range of conservation, management and indigenous groups, as well as state and federal government agencies, the topics addressed did not cover the role of national parks. The dominant group of speakers came from organisations currently involved in private conservancies including Greening Australia, the Nature Conservancy and Bush Heritage. No-one spoke on the role of national parks and protected areas in landscape connectivity and I was told this was because they were such an integral part of the issue that there was no need to focus on them.

One group of speakers did pay close attention to national parks, though not in a good way. This group included a speaker from Forests NSW who took the opportunity to promote mixed use recreation, including shooting and 4WD. The Queensland Outdoor Education Federation speaker pushed for construction of mountain bike tracks in national parks and wilderness areas which seemed to have little to do with landscape connectivity. Even a farm-

based conservation program's claims that they were better at conservation than national parks went unchallenged.

The National Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) speaker claimed that building new infrastructure and exclusive experiences for the current target group in tourism, the 'experience seeker', would be good for conservation by increasing support for the environment but offered no evidence for this assumption. A more robust format where such points of view were openly debated would have been useful.

A third group were from commercial environmental services companies, including Water Services Association of Australia and CO2 Aust. They disagreed strongly on whether there was any money to be made for conservation activities out of carbon trading but they all seemed to suggest that there was plenty of money to be made for investors.

The conference offered an insight into some approaches we have not seen before about how to tackle loss of biodiversity. Dr Robert Lambeck from Greening Australia's national office stated bluntly that volunteers turning up on a Saturday afternoon "made no difference to conservation outcomes", a strange admission from an organisation so deeply involved in mustering volunteers for Saturday afternoon tree plantings. He went on to say that "conservation is beyond volunteerism, it is about commercial models, building a legitimate industry". Some other speakers supported this viewpoint,

claiming that what was wanted was a move away from volunteerism to tree planting on an industrial scale. Western Australian mining operations were quoted as a good example of what could be achieved. Fortunately the conference didn't get any stranger than that.

The most sustained conversation across speakers was the need to find funds for private conservation. The keynote speaker, Harvey Lock (Vice President of the Wild Foundation, USA) kept telling attendees that the private funds would appear if their vision was grand enough.

But funding isn't going to come from the Federal Government apparently, at least not for volunteers and national parks. The speaker from the federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts gave an outline of what the Caring for Country funding had been about and admitted that they may have got some of the business processes wrong. Nevertheless she was firm that the end result was what they were aiming for. Future tweaking may be in order but conservationists had to get used to the fact that the days of funding non-targeted, small or inefficient projects was over. They no longer 'fund projects', they 'make investment decisions'. It was a fitting end to the official speakers program.

For the full conference program, the speakers' presentations and the final communiqué go to

<http://www.linkinglandscapes.net.au/>

Christine Goonrey

Vale Robert Forster 30 March 1929 – 8 September 2009

It is with great regret we announce the passing of Robert Forster. Rob was a keen and well liked member of NPA and a very active participant in the association's walks program over many years, both as a leader of walks and as a regular participant in walks at all levels, including many tougher packwalks. He enjoyed being out amongst the region's national parks, particularly Namadgi. Rob was always a friendly and energetic club member who had a passion for the Australian bush.

Rob grew up in Melbourne and from a young age had a keen interest in the Australian bush and particularly bushwalking. He was a member of the Melbourne Walking Club for over 50 years and walked extensively

throughout Victoria and Tasmania. In his younger days he had dabbled in some mountaineering, summiting some of New Zealand's more challenging peaks. At the ripe old age of 65, Rob trekked to Everest Base Camp on one of his Nepal trips. In recent times he spoke fondly of his walks on the Hume and Hovell Track, the Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island, and the Larapinta Trail.

Rob attended the University of Melbourne to obtain a Bachelor of Arts/Science (Honours), before working for the Bureau of Meteorology and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. In the early 1970s he moved to Canberra with his family to take up a position with the Department of Transport. He will be greatly missed by his wife Margaret, and

sons,
Warwick
and Andy.

Rob had always been actively involved in the community through volunteering and participating in a variety of local organisations.

Andy Forster

Photo of Rob on a Mt Morgan walk in 1998, by Max Lawrence

Book review

Rugged Beyond Imagination: Stories from an Australian Mountain Region

Matthew Higgins,
National Museum of Australia Press,
2009
243 pages, \$39.95



Matthew Higgins is very well known to members of NPA as a long time member of the association, as a bushwalking companion, and as a man who has made a lifetime occupation of researching the history and cultural heritage of Namadgi and beyond. Members will also remember the fascinating presentations—not always on matters historical—that he has given in recent years as a guest speaker at our monthly general meetings. But Matthew is perhaps best known for the books he has written on subjects ranging from skiing in the Brindabellas to the surveying of the ACT border.

So it was with pleasant anticipation that I picked up this latest very attractive book by Matthew. This is a history book about the areas now covered by Namadgi and Tidbinbilla, and the contiguous areas

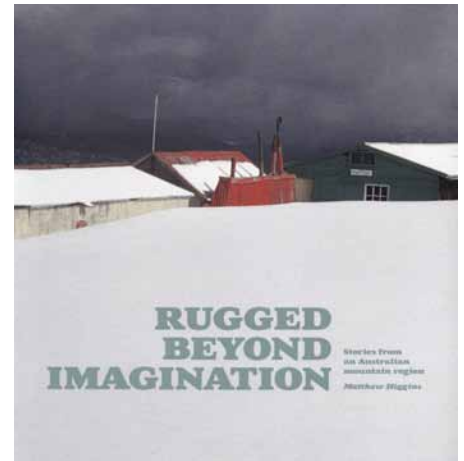
across the border in Kosciuszko National Park. It acknowledges the 20 000 years of Aboriginal occupation prior to European settlement, but it is essentially the latter which is the focus of his research.

What life was like

While the book does draw partly on Matthew's earlier published material, it in fact goes far far beyond being a mere compilation. Its big strengths are the extent to which it draws on the personal contacts Matthew has developed over many years with the families who once lived, worked and played in our hills, and the photographic records he has been able to unearth from these and official sources. The result is a very detailed and personal account of what life was like for the pioneers, and how circumstances have evolved and changed over the generations.

The book is presented in three main parts. The first deals with, chronologically, by far the longest part—focussing on sheep and cattle grazing from the arrival of the very first European settlers in the 1820s to the establishment of the national parks around a century and half later.

The second part of the book partly overlaps that first period, covering developments in the mountains following the selection of the ACT as the site for the national capital: the border survey, forestry operations, managing the water catchment, building the dams and the pipeline, coping with fire, skiing on the Brindabellas, and so on.



Role of NPA

The third part is entitled *A Place of Change*, and covers the establishment of Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks, with quite a detailed description of the role played by NPA in getting Namadgi established in the first place. It also refers to the impact of the 2003 fires, especially on the items of cultural heritage lost forever. This part of the book is the shortest of the three, both chronologically and in terms of pages. This provides a nice perspective of our own fleeting place in the big scheme of things, but it also seems entirely appropriate that the foundations for the future should have a separate section of their own, even in a history book.

This is an attractive and highly readable book that fills a void not covered satisfactorily by other volumes on Canberra or Kosciuszko. It will be equally at home on the coffee table or the reference shelf, but be sure to read it first.

Max Lawrence

Work party in the snow



The NPA's September work party, willow control in the Gudgenby Valley, provided unusual challenges! The test after lunch became one of just finding the targets. Dedicated leader Phil Gatenby as the snow starts (above) and setting off to find another target (right).

Photos Adrienne Nicholson



Report: NPAC conference and AGM

Sydney 18–20 September 2009

The NPA ACT delegates for the 2009 Annual General Meeting of the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) in Sydney were Kevin McCue and Christine Goonrey, with Sonja Lenz and Michael Goonrey providing note-taking for the three day meeting. Friday afternoon's session was led by Matt Ruchel, the Victorian NPA executive director, and addressed capacity building and fund raising. All day Saturday and Sunday morning were to be hard work on a national strategy for co-operation, and Sunday afternoon was to be a visit to the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Robust discussion

Minister Peter Garrett attended on Saturday morning and discussed key issues informally with us. In his view national parks are not being used enough, they need to become 'peoples' parks' and be less constrained by conservation. He thinks most national parks are well managed within their funding restraints but it is important that they raise more funds for their own management, rather than relying entirely on the public purse. He is equally insistent that the push to increase accommodation and infrastructure for high-end tourism is needed in national parks to help them pay their way. He wants to incorporate more indigenous interests in park management and is seeking to do this in his own portfolio which manages national parks such as Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Kakadu.

NPAC was subsequently invited to the November meeting of Minister Garrett's Environment Roundtable to discuss the National Biodiversity Strategy.

In the afternoon Sally Barnes, Director General of NSW NPWS also came and talked tourism. She said the problem with primitive camping sites in national parks, ie sites with only basic water and toilet facilities, is that people who like more creature comforts can't use them, and she can't see why they should be excluded from staying overnight in national parks. She would be happy to see high-end tourist accommodation built at iconic locations such as Green Cape Lighthouse in Ben Boyd National Park, if it doesn't threaten any heritage or conservation values. She felt NPAs don't understand about tourism and how it can benefit parks. She thought NPAs have a reputation of generally not wanting people to visit national parks, emphasising that we can't lock up the parks. Delegates did try to set the record straight but our continuing opposition to activities which threaten conservation values seems to have got us a 'bad' reputation. It was a robust discussion, but held in good humour and with respect, and both sides benefited from hearing the other point of view.

In between our august visitors, NPAC delegates worked hard to develop a strong coherent strategy for the coming year. We agreed we needed to talk together more, to share problems, strategies, lobbying tactics. If we could meet more often it would be even better but at least we can use email and telephone linkups to co-ordinate our efforts. We came away with a solid and challenging workplan for the coming year and a real sense of commitment.

NPAC to the fore

One opportunity which was eagerly taken up by NPA ACT members, was to make our 2010 symposium *National*

Parks, can they take the heat? a national event, and we will hold an NPAC meeting in conjunction with it. Kevin has since spoken to the WA Conservation Council and they are happy to talk about joining forces in some fashion. We will be talking to the Northern Territory Conservation Council to see if they will join us also.

At the AGM, the executive committee was re-elected: Christine Goonrey (President), Fred Gerardson (Secretary), Kevin McCue (Treasurer and Public Officer) and Anne Reeves (Immediate Past President).

The trip to Sydney Harbour National Park was an eye opener. We went to Nielsen Park, beside the mansions of Vaucluse, which was crowded with picnickers and people enjoying the small beach. Anne Reeves, our guide, explained that the park actually contained some endangered shrubs and had even been a haven for small marsupials until park staff cleared the blackberry bushes and inadvertently destroyed their protection from the neighbourhood cats. Sydney Harbour National Park is spread over many hectares of native bush and beaches on both sides of the harbour and while the views are outstanding, it certainly provides different and unusual problems in terms of managing a national park.

Our Sydney hosts were very hospitable and the weekend was judged a great success. The next annual conference will be in Adelaide, in November 2010.

The NPA ACT team:

**Christine Goonrey and Kevin McCue,
Michael Goonrey and Sonja Lenz**

Walking in Slovenia

In May 2009, Pat and I joined 18 other members of the Family Bushwalkers (FBI) in a two-week walking trip in Slovenia's Julian Alps (Triglav National Park) near the Italian and Austrian borders. We had flown from Sydney for four days in Venice before bussing to Ljubljana and the Alps.

We spent a week in each of two villages, Ribčev Laz on the shores of Lake Bohinj, and Kranjska Gora, a skiing village. There were four walk leaders in our group who arranged a variety of walks each day. Walks are well

sign-posted and there is no need for a guide or special transport. There are mountain, waterfall and lake walks and others through lush alpine flower meadows. We did a total of 13 day-walks, some of which are mentioned here.

Walks from Ribčev Laz

Our first walk in Slovenia was around the beautiful Lake Bohinj. It is located at the head of a valley and is surrounded on three sides by steep snow-capped mountains and fed by Slap Savica, a

substantial waterfall. The walk around its shores is delightful, through attractive woodland with glimpses to the lake where a ferry plies a couple of times a day and a few folk in row-boats pretend to fish. Our group continued beyond the lake to the 100m high Slap Savica which thunders and sprays into the rocks below and cascades down to the lake, eventually finding its way to the Danube. The ferry is an option for the return journey but at the end of the day ice cream tastes better if you walk!

(continued next page)

Walking in Slovenia

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Vogel (1540m) is on the southern side of the lake. We took a short bus ride and the exciting almost vertical cable car ride to the top. The snow-capped Julian Alps, with their centrepiece the mighty 2864m Triglav, were an incredibly beautiful sight. After coffee on the sun-warmed terrace we hiked cross-country to our hotel. The first part of our descent was quite hazardous through some deep snowdrifts.

A challenging walk was to Pršivec (1761m) on the northern side of Lake Bohinj. It involves a 1200m climb and some 18km walking all on track except for the last kilometre, which is rough and steep with some snow. We were rewarded with glorious views of the lake, its valley with steep mountainous sides, and Vogel.

Lake Bled is a short bus ride along the valley. More developed than Bohinj, Bled is justifiably known as the jewel in the Slovenian Crown. Not only does it have an island with a steeped baroque church but also a mediaeval castle (now a museum) perched on a cliff rising vertically from the shore. The castle is a popular place for weddings—we saw one where the participants were attractively dressed in period costume. We walked around the lake and on the deserted paths of the forested hills surrounding it for spectacular glimpses of the lake, its island and church. We could hear the ethereal sound of distant church bells. The gondola ride to the island is a must!

Walks from Kranjska Gora

We bussed to Martuljek village farther down the valley. We strode into the steep



mountains beside a cascading torrent, across a few rickety bridges to the spectacular Martuljek Slap. We pressed on towards another waterfall but when we saw it involved a steep descent to a place where there was no path, just iron pegs hammered into the rocks leading to a slippery log crossing (the bridge had been washed away), we decided it was time to lunch and return.

A short bus ride took us to the historic village of Rateče, where we commenced the climb to Tromeja (meaning three borders), at first on a farm road, then on a zigzag walking track through conifer forest to the peak. A wooden mushroom-shaped trig point marks the spot where the borders of Slovenia, Austria, Italy, and symbolically Europe's major cultural groups—Germanic, Romance and Slavic—meet.

Nearby are plaques urging peace and goodwill. Looking across to the Austrian and Italian mountains, serene, peaceful and soundless it is hard to believe that they were the scenes of many hard-fought military battles.

Another walk with a World War I history was the Russian Road walk. We took a taxi from our hotel up the winding road to Vršic Pass (1739m). Pat was amused by the advertisement for La Cocette Stripclub on the taxi's doors. We climbed to the spectacular Vratca pass (1790m) in snow with magnificent views of distant mountains as far as the eye could see. We felt "up close and personal" with Vratca Peak which we could almost touch. The zigzag journey down the grassed and unused Russian Road through beautiful mountains has reminders of warfare—some military shelters with bullet holes. We walked to the Russian chapel on the main road and arrived there at exactly the same time as our pre-arranged taxi. The chapel was built in honour of a hundred Russian prisoners of war and their Austrian guards who were killed in an avalanche during its construction.

We returned to Ljubljana and made our way south to the Istria peninsula (Croatia) for a few days in Opatija and Pula before returning to Venice and Verona and eight days in the Italian Dolomites. But that is another story.

Eric Pickering



Top of page. Lake Bled, jewel in the Slovenian crown.

Left. Eric and Pat Pickering atop Pršivec.

Photos supplied by Eric and Pat Pickering.

A walk in the woods

Jan Muir was born in Canberra and has lived here nearly all of her life. A little over a year ago, however, all that changed when she went to New York City to work for the United Nations. This is her account of her introductory walk on the Appalachian Trail.

9 September 2009

I was going hiking in the woods of New England and naturally I wanted to be prepared. I had the gore-tex boots, the merino socks specifically tailored for each foot, the high-tech, odour-suppressing merino shirt, the low-tech dry-overnight pants and the backpack with umpteen niches, flaps and pockets. I had super blister stopper, hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes, SPF 70 sunscreen, Deep Woods insect repellent effective against mosquitoes, ticks, biting flies, gnats and chiggers (chiggers?), several types of nuts and mints and several forms of identification. I had invested many dollars.

I had also invested many hours. I had guidebooks to the area and, crucially, Bill Bryson's account of his own walk in the woods over ten years ago¹ along the 2100-odd mile long Appalachian Trail that stretches from Georgia to Maine. Bryson is a celebrated writer and a former resident of New England. His book was an indispensable reference and an exhilarating read, devoured over three days when I put it down only to eat and sleep.

And so I was feeling confident when I got off the plane in Manchester, New Hampshire and met the waiting guide and several fellow hikers. It wasn't long before the chat in the shuttle van turned to the hike that awaited us. 'I enjoyed reading Bryson', I said, expecting enthusiastic agreement from the guide.

'Hmm', he said.

Other hikers had also read it. 'Great book', they said. 'Great story-telling'.

'Hmm', he said.

We thought he was probably preoccupied.

That night, at dinner, I tried the other guide. This time I ventured a question rather than a statement. 'I guess you've read Bryson?' I said.

'Yeah', he said. And that was it. The rest of us looked at each other. The ambivalence was surprising, and just a

little worrying. What did it take to impress these guys?

Their territory

The following morning, when we set out in bright sunshine into the woods above the Quechee Gorge, just outside Woodstock, Vermont², there was no lack of enthusiasm from the guides. This was their territory, and they loved introducing it to others. We loved it too.

The land was undulating and occasionally mountainous or cut through by rivers. The Quechee Gorge is a deep V-shaped indentation through which the Ottauquechee River rushes over boulders and around a round green island. The hills behind Woodstock rise steeply to high meadows and peaks, including Mount Tom, just a half hour walk from the main street and pristinely beautiful with its outlook over the picture postcard town. Beyond them lie higher peaks—Mount Ascutney, where we watched hang gliders launch from a ramp and sail high above the valley below, and further still, the Green Mountains and the highest peak in the immediate area, Mount Killington.

The trees were tall and green and graceful and stretched as far as the eye could see. There were hemlocks and birches and beeches and maples; there were oaks and ashes; there were pines and firs and spruces. The sun shone through the leaves, some of which were just beginning to change colour, illuminating them from behind and creating rays that slanted through the trees across the trail. The ground was covered with a squishy carpet of last year's leaves, fallen logs and a profusion of healthy bushes. Occasionally, a sugar house (where maple sap was formerly boiled into maple syrup), a stone bridge or a log cabin hiking shelter stood in a clearing or by a mirror-perfect lake.

Around the trees and in cleared meadows were long grasses and flowers, chest-high goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace, prolific asters and daisies and perfect bell-flowers, verbena and lilies. There were bushes with big flat leaves and bushes with smaller needle-like fronds; there were wild cucumbers and asparagus and tiny blackberries; there was poison ivy (looking nothing like ivy). There were granite boulders, little outcrops of creamy marble and sparkly mica-flecked rocks. It was breathtakingly

beautiful, soothingly tranquil and utterly captivating. You could sit on a log and feel the cool breeze through the trees and wish you could stay forever.

It must take guts

Our group split up, with some hiking along scenic, cushiony pine-needle trails and others clambering over rocks and roots to higher peaks. We had the luxury of carrying only daypacks and the freedom to enjoy the easy companionship of walking with others, but it was not hard to see how difficult this might be for the Brysons of the world, burdened with 40 lbs or more of equipment and facing weeks or even months of negotiating often brutal terrain with a sometimes unpredictable companion in often brutal weather.

I tried a different tack. 'It must take guts for someone like Bryson to attempt the Appalachian Trail', I said.

'I wouldn't hike with him', declared one of the guides, flatly.

Ah-ha. Now we had it. Could it be sour grapes? Could it be the fact that Bryson—despite serious hiking experience in England—was primarily a recreational hiker bent on taking on something that would test even a veteran? Could it be the fact that he ventured out with a mate who was probably under-prepared, physically and mentally? Could it be, perish the thought, the fact that Bryson mined the humour and impossibilities in the situation to create a book that would forever after be quoted at guides by starry-eyed novices attempting their own little walk in the woods?

Well, none of the above. When we finally got it out of the guides, it was actually simple. What irked them about the book was that Bryson didn't finish. He had walked, by his own calculation, some 870 miles, a distance few of us could even begin to imagine covering on foot. But he hadn't done the whole 2100-odd miles. *He hadn't done the Appalachian Trail.*

Our own guided, cosseted three days involved little in the way of ambitious goal-setting, so there was little need for goal modification. We ventured onto the Appalachian Trail for a short distance, but mostly explored a variety of trails in a variety of locations. We were out for a simple walk in the woods and we got it.

(continued next page)

Molonglo Valley—the eagles at home



Two wedge-tailed eagle chicks at home high in a dead casuarina tree. Photo Esther Gallant

Sunday 1 November

The walk started at the end of Stockdill Drive (at the gates to the Water Treatment Plant). We stayed up high to enjoy the expansive views over the valley with glimpses of the Molonglo's gorge to our right. A possible wallaroo made a brief appearance on the opposite bank, and we flushed a couple of mobs of eastern grey kangaroos. Wedgies circled high above the river. The day was warm—rapidly moving to hot.

Morning tea was at a cluster of rocks with a view across to Spring Valley Farm. We studied maps showing the planned East Molonglo suburb which will stretch from the west of Spring Valley to Uriarra and Cotter Roads in the south, William Hovell Drive in the north

and nearly to the Tuggeranong Parkway in the east. According to the present plan the only large sections within this area not to be developed for housing are the Molonglo River Corridor and the Kama Woodland. (See article by Syd Comfort in the January 2009 *Bulletin* for further details of the development proposals).

The Lower Molonglo River Corridor Nature Reserve now appears in much better shape than it was a little over a year ago. Since the removal of stock from the precinct, the vegetation has recovered surprisingly quickly. The native wild flowers were in bloom, and thanks to recent spring rains the whole valley was gloriously green.

We sought out the wedgie nest seen

last year. It now has two large chicks just beginning to grow their adult feathers. After admiring and photographing the chicks from a respectful distance, we found a shady cluster of rocks on the bank for a leisurely lunch. The afternoon walk up through Kama Woodland was hard work because of the 30°C heat. However, there were rewards in the form of displays of wildflowers, bird sightings and clusters of fungi. This area too is recovering rapidly from years of grazing.

The afternoon was capped off by a stop for coffee, cake and conversation at 'Strathnairn' on Stockdill Drive.

Esther Gallant

A walk in the woods *(continued)*

But if our goals were modest, the outcome was not. For three days we were surrounded, delighted, entertained and educated by those woods. We had the company of generous guides and open-hearted companions. That long weekend in Woodstock, Vermont is one of the best I have ever spent.

Bill Bryson? Congratulations on

every one of those 870 miles. Oh, and ... love your work!

Jan Muir

1. Bill Bryson, *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail*, Broadway Books, New York, 1998
2. No, not **that** Woodstock. The Wood-

stock of music festival fame is in New York State, not Vermont. There are other Woodstocks too—in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Georgia and Virginia. And did you know there is a Woodstock in Queensland, not far from Townsville?

Black Saturday essay wins literary award



An essay written by NPA ACT member Tom Griffiths, and published in the June 2009 edition of the NPA *Bulletin*, has been awarded a Victorian Premier's Literary Award. Valued at \$15 000, the Alfred Deakin Prize for an Essay Advancing Public Debate went to Professor Griffiths' paper *We have still not lived long enough*.

Professor Griffiths, an environmental historian at the Australian National University, wrote the essay to reflect on the Black Saturday bushfires and the deep ecological and historical patterns that gave rise to the event.

He said he will donate his prize money to a collaborative community fire history project that will help those affected by the Victorian bushfires to tell

their stories through books and film.

The essay was earlier published in the online current affairs magazine *Inside Story*, which is edited by the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University of Technology in association with the Australian National University. *Inside Story* is an online magazine that draws on a network of writers, researchers and correspondents, to investigate the forces shaping contemporary politics, society and culture.

Professor Griffiths' award-winning essay can be read at

<http://inside.org.au/we-have-still-not-lived-long-enough/>

Serious hikers support conservation

[USA] *ScienceDaily*
(October 9, 2009)

Serious hikers and backpackers tend to become supporters of environmental and conservation groups while casual woodland tourists do not, a new study says—and a recent fall-off in strenuous outdoor endeavors portends a coming decline in the ranks of conservation backers.

Oliver Pergams, visiting research assistant professor of biological sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Patricia Zaradic, director of the Red Rock Institute in Pennsylvania, made [USA] headlines in early 2008 with a study showing that a steady decline in nature recreation since the late 1980s correlated strongly with a rise in playing video games, surfing the Internet and watching movies—an unhealthy trend they called “videophilia.”

Now Pergams and Zaradic, along with Peter Kareiva, chief scientist at the [USA] Nature Conservancy, have found that only people who engage in vigorous outdoor sports, like hiking and backpacking, tend later to become supporters of mainline conservation groups, while those who only go sightseeing or fishing do not. Their findings are reported Oct. 7 in *PLoS ONE*, an online publication of the Public Library of Science.

The researchers found that the amount of time one spent hiking or backpacking in nature correlated with a willingness, 11 to 12 years later, to financially support any of four

representative [in USA] conservation organizations: the Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, the Sierra Club or Environmental Defense. The typical backpacker gave \$200 to \$300 per year, after the dozen-year lag.

“For the first time, we’ve shown a direct correlation between outdoor recreation and investment in conservation, and we know what types of outdoor activity are most likely to lead to conservation investment,” Zaradic said.

Surprisingly, the more time one spent fishing or sightseeing in natural areas, the less likely that person was to support these particular conservation causes.

“Apparently not all outdoor recreation is equal in terms of who is going to be an investor in conservation,” Zaradic said.

The researchers conclude that there are effectively “two Americas” when it comes to nature exposure and support for conservation. Environmental groups depend on a very narrow base of support from elite, active outdoor enthusiasts—a group that is predominantly white, college-educated, higher income, and over 35.

“There’s a much broader market—more diverse and urban—that can be tapped by conservation organizations,” Zaradic said. “Those groups haven’t been spoken to in a way that attracts them.”

Pergams agrees the finding is a wake-up call to environmental groups that their base is shrinking, as giving can be predicted to fall during the next decade with the decline in hiking and

backpacking since their popularity peaked from 1998 to 2000.

Also boding ill for the conservation groups is an economic study Pergams published in 2004 that showed that support for conservation depends on the broader economy and can be predicted by GDP and personal income. Pergams is concerned that the current economic crisis will add to the conservationists’ woes caused by declines in hiking over the past dozen years.

“It’s a ‘perfect storm’ of lower personal and corporate income resulting in less conservation support, compounded by effects from the past decline in hiking and backpacking,” he said. “It’s tough times ahead.”

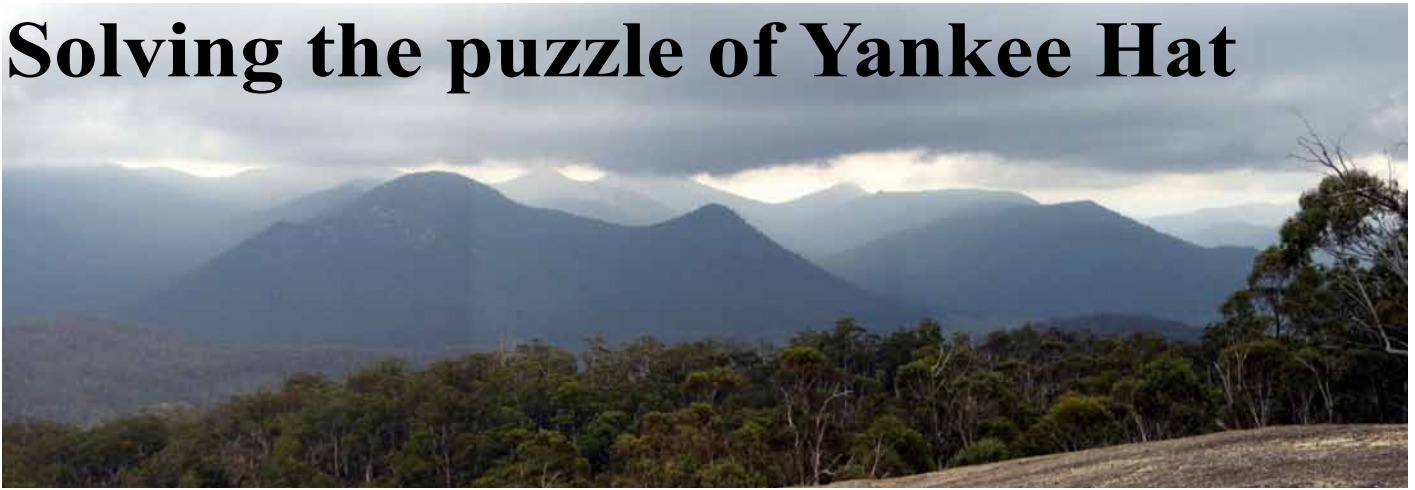
Pergams says the key to conservation awareness and support is to reach children early with broad-based educational programs that introduce them to vigorous outdoor recreation.

“If you never get out into nature, you’re not going to care about it when you get older,” Pergams said. “The kids are where it’s at, and we’re losing our kids to other influences—they don’t go outside.”

Adapted from materials provided by University of Illinois at Chicago, via EurekAlert!, a service of AAAS.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/10/091006201352.htm>

Solving the puzzle of Yankee Hat



On frequent visits to Namadgi National Park I have often wondered about the naming of a particular mountain as Yankee Hat, when it seems that this name should rightly belong to an adjoining peak in the Gudgenby Valley. Years ago the former Central Mapping Authority of New South Wales seemed to be having an each-way bet when on its *Yaouk* 8626-11N map of 1981 and the adjoining *Rendezvous Creek* 8626-1S map of 1982 it named both mountains Yankee Hat!

The more recent *Yaouk* 8626-2N map produced by Land and Property Information NSW in 2003 bestows the name Yankee Hat on a long, sloping mountain (1558 m) south-south-east of the peak with which it once shared that moniker. However, it bears no resemblance to a hat, Yankee or otherwise. On the new *Rendezvous Creek* 8626-1S map of 2002, the other mountain does not bear a name at all.

When you drive along the Old Boboyan Road towards the Yankee Hat car park, it is obvious that the peak north-north-east of the currently designated Yankee Hat more closely resembles headgear worn by American cavalrymen in countless Westerns of my youth. [See photograph page 3 of this *Bulletin*. Ed] This headgear and the mountain's resemblance to it, are said to be the origin of the name, and I have found some written evidence of this although it may not be regarded as conclusive.

The evidence is contained in a manuscript written by Edward Lee (born c. 1904) who grew up on Gudgenby Station and is unequivocal on the subject: "*Yankiehat* [sic] *is a very steep hill. it [sic] lies in the west. how [sic] it got its name it is shaped like a hat.*" The manuscript, MS 8390, is among the papers of Mary Ina Cumpston, held in the National Library of Australia. Oddly, the ACT Place Names Committee has no record of Yankee Hat as a name and nor

does the NSW Geographical Names Board register.

What I think is the correct Yankee Hat is, like its neighbour, a mountain of precipitous flanks and massive boulders. It is not as high, rising just 1447m, or more than 100m lower than its neighbour. Not that far away, among massive tors, is an Aboriginal rock art site, also known as Yankee Hat, and a favourite destination for walkers in that part of Namadgi.

Nineteenth century maps

In an attempt to resolve the issue of the name I consulted the survey office of the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA), which kindly produced a copy of a nineteenth century map of the area, '*Plan of converted pre-lease No. 1273, Parish of Gudgenby, County of Cowley*' (CPL407 Ca), for which a survey was completed on 19 December 1885 by a licensed surveyor named Herman Leslie Barrington. He took his time in that he waited six months before sending the plan to the NSW Surveyor General on 15 June 1886. The copy I have seen has various notations: F. H. Wilson checked and charted it on 2 July 1886, District Surveyor A. C. Betts approved the plan depicting the boundaries of a 597-acre converted pre-lease block on 4 August 1886, and a later District Surveyor G. H. Sheaffe approved the withdrawal of 150 acres on 4 March 1892, leaving a residual block of 447 acres.

What was exciting about this find was that a mountain on this plan was named Yankee Hat, but it appeared to apply to the smaller of the two peaks.

ACTPLA also produced a copy of a more comprehensive map of the same area called the *Parish of Gudgenby, County of Cowley*, dated 23 June 1931, the fourth edition of this particular map which incorporates part of Barrington's plan. When ACTPLA digitally overlaid this map on the combined *Yaouk* and

Rendezvous Creek maps it showed quite clearly that 'Yankee Hat' as a name had been bestowed on the smaller peak, especially when the position of this mountain and Bogong swamp to the south-east are taken into account.

If this evidence is accepted and the name is reassigned, then it leaves the higher peak without a name, like many mountains and hills and other features in Namadgi. Maybe the usurped Yankee Hat should be called Mt Barrington. Did this surveyor, in talking to early settlers, discover that they called the smaller peak Yankee Hat? Or was it already named as such on earlier maps of the area? This is unlikely because ACTPLA says that while Barrington's is not the earliest survey plan of this part of Namadgi National Park, it is the only early survey plan showing Yankee Hat. The plan crosses the peak's south-eastern spur and is the closest to the mountain that I think should be called Yankee Hat.

The National Library has a fine collection of maps, but on these the earliest reference I can find to Yankee Hat is from 1914 (Fed. Territory 40 Cs to 1 inch. Sheet 7. G8981.G46 1914 2 S31). This map serves to muddy the issue because it bestows the name on the higher peak. Searches of earlier maps held by the Library failed to turn up any reference to Yankee Hat, or the maps did not cover the area in question.

The name 'Yankee' appears elsewhere in the general Canberra region or further afield in NSW. There's a Yankee Creek in the Yass land district, Yankee Flat (Cooma), Yankee Jacks Hill (Gunning), Yankee Point (Blayney) and Yankee Toms Hill (Orange). Maybe there was an influx of Americans when these places were named. (Source: *An Alphabetical List of Names of ... in New South Wales*. Compiled by E. C. Gleeson. Sydney, October 1954.) Unfortunately the Geographical Names Board of NSW cannot provide the

(continued next page)

Solving the puzzle of Yankee Hat (continued)

origins of Yankee Jacks Hill, Yankee Point and Yankee Toms Hill. The other two locations do not appear on the Board's register.

Putting their own marks

The aforementioned Edward Lee, whose handwritten manuscript is in the National Library, was the son of Marmaduke Watson Lee, commonly known as 'Duke', who was born in England in 1857 and arrived in Australia in 1876. He worked as a jackeroo, then became a more exalted grazier, arriving at Gudgenby in 1907. He was to die there in 1924. 'Duke' married Myrrha Annie Gertrude Rustin in 1902, and their son Edward was born in 1904. Other children followed in 1908, 1912, 1916 and 1922. (Details from *Biographical Register of Canberra and Queanbeyan* ... compiled and edited by Peter Procter, Canberra, 2001.)

In 1995 there was a flurry of excitement about the origin of some of the paintings at the Yankee Hat Aboriginal art site when a letter writer to the *Canberra Times* of 12 June 1995, I. M. Cumpston (presumably the same person whose papers are held in the National Library although there she is called Mary Ina Cumpston), claimed she had been told in 1941 by Roberta Lee, one of 'Duke's' children, that they had 'touched them up and added some of our own'. Edward described the site in his manuscript, but said nothing about the children putting their own mark on the paintings:

There are some big granite Rocks down below it [Yankee Hat], where the blacks used to camp & hold their Coroberies [sic]. The big rock is an overhang it made a good dry camping place for them. They lit their fire. Drawn on the Overhang wer [sic] figures of Animals one like a Kangaroo one of a murrumbidgee [sic] turtle another of an Eguanna [sic] all done in white & red clay ... Up in the Rondezvous [sic]

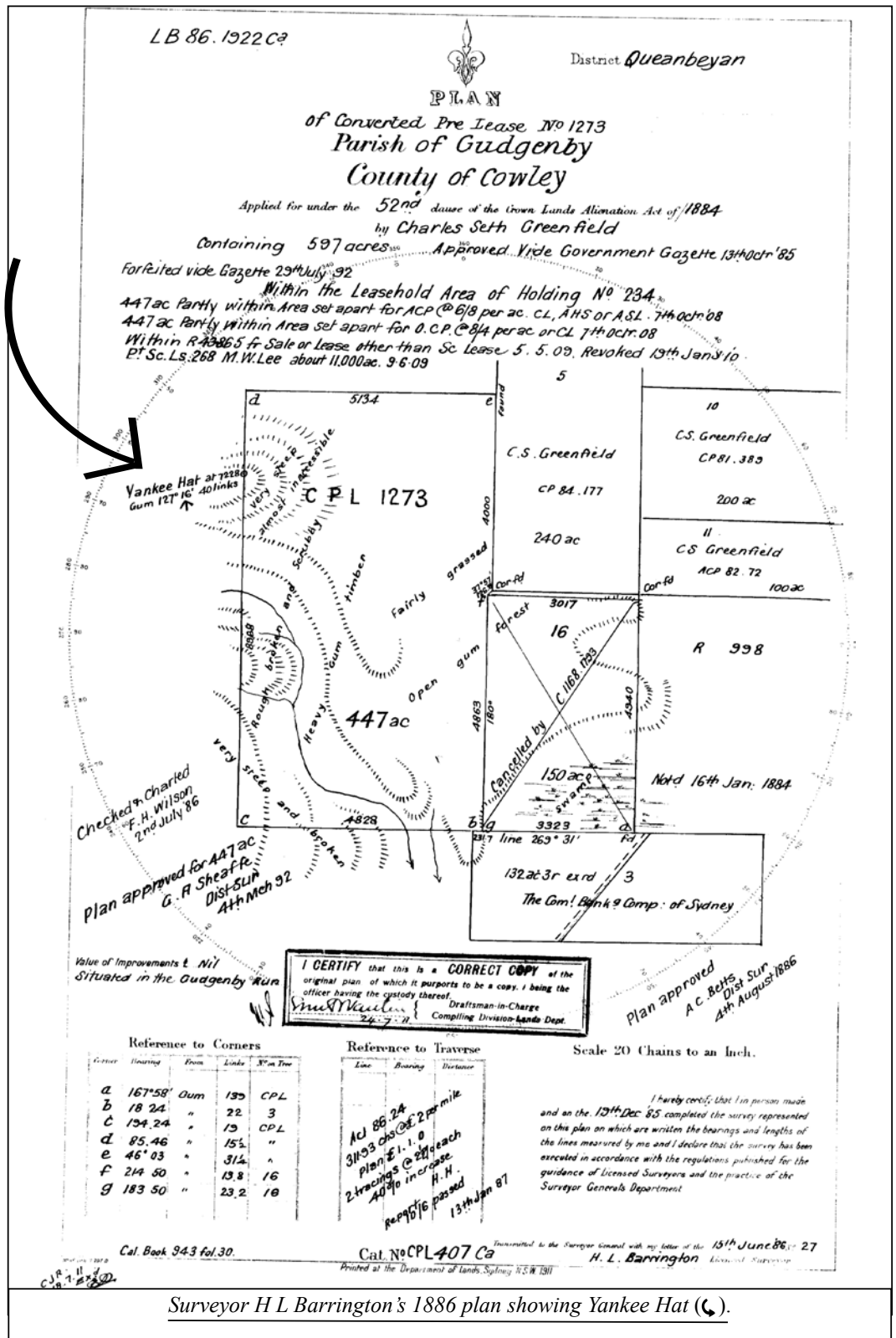
valley ... was a second camping place under a large Rock. it [sic] had black fellows [sic] drawings in it. It was very blackened by smoke and the drawings had faded a bit ... I dont [sic] think ... there were not any Drawings in the Orroral valley. It was a bit of the main track the blacks used to follow.

The letter writer's claim brought this

rejoinder from Kelvin Officer in the *Canberra Times* of 21 June 1995:

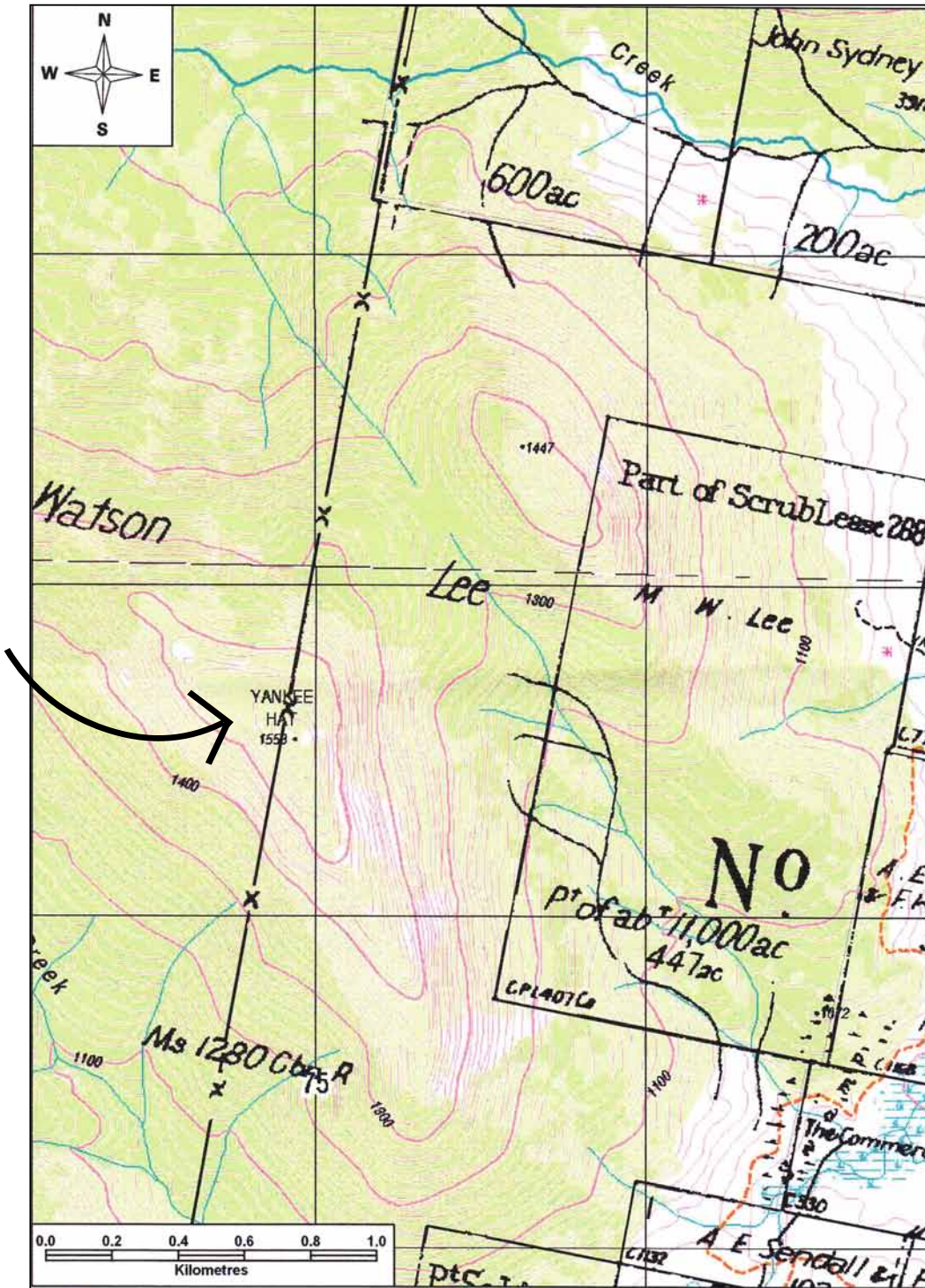
Detailed recordings of the art made in 1988 revealed 160 marks in the Yankee Hat shelter and 111 at the Rendezvous Creek shelter—138 and 70 of these respectively are interpreted to be Aboriginal in origin.

In contrast to many of the Aboriginal
(continued next page)



Surveyor H L Barrington's 1886 plan showing Yankee Hat (C).

Solving the puzzle of Yankee Hat *(continued)*



people which attempt to copy the Aboriginal style, but were clearly made later and with less talent. There are also Aboriginal pictures which have been inexpertly added to with inferior pigments. This is probably the art of the Gudgenby homestead children.

At Yankee Hat there are no such pictures and it is probable that the children's art together with the Aboriginal art on the lower panel was rubbed away by stock animals.

The earliest art in Namadgi may be in the order of 3000 years old, and the latest Aboriginal art may record the coming of European pack horses in the early 1800s.

There used to be a walk in to the Rendezvous Creek rock art shelter mentioned by Edward Lee and Kelvin Officer, but the site, which is in the next valley to the north, remains closed after being damaged in the 2003 bushfires. When I visited the site in 2000, a sign stated that the paintings represented four kangaroos or wallabies, a goanna, and an echidna or long-necked tortoise. Small figures at the lower left could be men on horseback. A favourite stopping place, Rowleys Hut (c. 1950), which stood on the walking track, was destroyed by fire in July 2003, apparently after having caught alight from a fire-place blaze that got out of control. Destruction by fire was the same fate that overtook Rowleys Orroral Valley hut, also in Namadgi, in 1994.

For such a small part of Namadgi National Park, the Yankee Hat/Rendezvous Creek area obviously contains plenty of interest. Regrettably some of it has been lost or damaged through fire, while one mountain is wrongly named. Putting the name Yankee Hat where it rightfully belongs should be considered by those who decide such issues.

Graeme Barrow

The author is indebted to Gavin Evans (ACTPLA) for his help in preparing this article and also to the National Library of Australia.

Part Yaouk & Rendezvous Creek Map Sheets With Parish of Gudgenby Overlay
 Scale: 1:15 000 Date: Aug. ACT Planning & Land Authority
 http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/act/act/DP191-10/Challis Street Dickson ACT 2001

The Parish of Gudgenby map was surveyed and drawn on the magnetic meridian, while the underlying 1:25 000 Yaouk and Rendezvous Creek topographical maps are based on Map Grid of Australia 1994 (MGA94). The map overlay process has rotated and scaled the Parish Map in order to fit in its approximately correct spatial location. The accuracy of the overlay process is generally in the order of ± 50 metres. A Yankee Hat is shown on this map also (G).

pictures, all of the European additions are now very faded and hard to see. Consequently it is the Aboriginal art which greets visitors. The European additions have faded

because they were made with poor quality pigments or by shallow scratching. In Rendezvous Creek, there are several faint pictures of animals and

Ramshead in the snow: a bushwalking record



Brian Slee on the Ramshead Range. Photo Mike Bremers

Walk: Ramshead, 9 August 2009

Participants: (3) Brian Slee (Leader), Mike Bremers, Margaret Power

Weather: High cloud, sub-zero temperatures, keen breeze.

Leader's Comments: A short, steep walk above 2000 metres in an icy wonderland.

We departed Wanniasa at 6:30am, collected Mike in Richardson and headed for Thredbo, arriving before 9:00am. The free bus took us from the carpark to Kosciuszko chairlift for a \$29 ride to the top. There Eagle's Nest cafe was found to have good facilities.

It was an "almost-balaclava" day so we donned everything else, and our snowshoes, and headed for North Ramshead. Mike immediately spied a hare which disappeared among rocks. There was a layer of dry, wind-blown snow on an icy underlay, so the going

was good except on exposed slopes. In places the ice was grippy sandpaper.

We were surrounded by wind-whipped snow and bizarre encrustations. The balancing rock visited in February, just north-east of North Ramshead, looked glued down by ice; the adjacent monolith, profiling a craggy elongated male head, was now less distinctive but the swirling ice patterns on its surfaces hinted at the fierce weather it is exposed to. We had morning tea and photos.

Moving west around North Ramshead, the sun briefly lit up its massive icy terraces, reminiscent of cave limestone flows. Of course, this is the home of the wind so after quickly viewing the bulk of Kosciuszko, we turned south, heads down, stopping only briefly before tramping a path up the north side of Ramshead. The ground on

quickly as the wind would not leave us alone: just 30 metres below us in the valley we were to find it was utterly still.

Margaret led off through the lines of rocks to the chairlift and we followed her trail. During a stop while the chair was descending, in a conversation struck up with an ascending skier; Mike commented on his helmet camera which we were told worked.

Our usual supper at Sundance, Jindabyne, followed by an eventless drive back to Canberra (we were not stopped by the breathalyser squad at Bredbo) meant we arrived at 6:00pm. A day that went like clockwork. First time any of us had been on Ramshead in winter and not the last, I trust. Memorable experience.

Brian Slee



NPA Christmas Party



SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER

GUDGENBY COTTAGE

FROM 11:30AM

Nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.

Bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer.

Bring along your spare "stuff" to donate for our fund-raising auction.



Follow the Old Boboyan Road *towards* the Yankee Hat carpark; about 1km from the turn-off, the NPA ACT sign will indicate the track to the cottage (right, go through gate).

Contact NPA committee members if you need a lift. Check *Burning Issues* for any last minute details

The hidden costs of more people

In the Sydney Morning Herald of 28 September 2009, economics writer Ross Gittins presented an interesting perspective on population growth, living standards and sustainability. The following is an extract from his excellent article.

So you think Australia has escaped a “technical” recession? Actually, if you look at what’s happened to real gross domestic product per person, it has fallen in three of the past five quarters. Over the past 15 months it has contracted by 1.5 per cent.

In other words, remarkably rapid growth in Australia’s population has been a little-acknowledged factor helping to hold up the economy. We learnt last week that, during the year to March, our population grew by 2.1 per cent, its fastest in almost 40 years.

Although our low birth rate is up a bit, almost two-thirds of that growth came from net immigration. This net inflow of almost 280 000 people is 20 per cent higher than the previous record year. And when Treasury plugged a much higher level of immigration into its projections for 2050, it foresaw a population of 35 million, 6.5 million more than it was expecting just three years ago.

So, is a rapidly growing population just what we need to give us a healthy economy? That’s what almost all business people, politicians and economists would tell you, but I wouldn’t be so sure of it. If you believe immigration adds more to the demand for labour than it adds to the supply of labour, then the present rapid growth in immigration is helping to limit the rise in

unemployment. That’s nice, but we should be wary of the almost universal tendency to focus on the overall growth in GDP rather than the growth in GDP per person.

Why? Because it’s only when GDP’s growing faster than the population that our material standard of living is rising. You have to ask yourself what’s so good about rapid population growth. From a narrow materialistic point of view, immigration-fed growth in the economy is good only if it raises the real average incomes of the pre-existing population. And it’s debatable whether it does. If it doesn’t, we’re running a high immigration policy mainly for the benefit of the immigrants, who are able to earn more in our country than they were in their own. Which is jolly decent of us.

Of course, if you were a business person you wouldn’t care whether high immigration led to a rise in income per person. All you’re after is a bigger market because you believe it will allow you to make bigger profits. So business and its politicians and economist handmaidens believe in growth for growth’s sake.

Environmental damage

But the other point that tends to be overlooked is that when you use immigration to force the pace of economic growth, it comes with a lot more costs attached than usual. These costs tend to be underplayed and hidden from view, partly because they’re not acknowledged in our standard measure of growth, GDP. Indeed, some costs actually show up as additions to GDP. More growth—you beauty!

GDP ignores the cost of the environmental damage done by immigration. Apart from being morally dubious, poaching skilled workers from developing countries roughly doubles their greenhouse gas emissions, in the process making it all the harder for us to achieve the necessary reduction in our emissions.

But the extra carbon emissions are just one of the environmental costs. A total projected population increase of 13 million over the next 40 years does raise the question of whether we’ll exceed our ecosystem’s carrying capacity. Is the additional land use sustainable? Here’s a country that badly stuffed up its river and underground water systems, and as we speak is demonstrating a serious lack of political will to fix the problem, telling itself an extra 13 million people will be no problem.

And what about the cost of all the roads, hospitals, schools, police stations and other infrastructure we’ll need to build to accommodate a 65 per cent increase in the population? All that spending will add to growth as measured by GDP, but that doesn’t mean it won’t come at considerable cost to taxpayers.

The decision to ramp up immigration levels is made by the “Feds”, but the responsibility for providing the extra infrastructure will be left to the less-than-competent state governments. Any failure on their part to cough up the money and rise to the challenge will generate real but unacknowledged costs to you and me.

Source: Ross Gittins in the Sydney Morning Herald, 28 September 2009

Car camp in the mountains

Dianne Thompson had a good turn-out for the car camp at Three Mile Dam in November. One of the activities she arranged was a long walk **down**, with a wet creek crossing, to Vickerys Hut for lunch. Of course, that meant a long walk back **up** after lunch!

The crowd at Vickerys, from left to right, were (standing row) Mike Smith, Bob Haskew, Adrienne Nicholson, David Large, Di Thompson (leader), Lucinda Lang, Len Haskew and Gary Thompson; (front row) Debbie Cameron, Esther Gallant and Annette Smith.

Photo Max Lawrence.





NPA ACT's bush picnic celebrating 25 years of Namadgi National Park





Celebrations on the Yerrabi Track.

Association members and friends gathered on Sunday, October 11, 2009 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi National Park. All enjoyed the fresh air(!), chatting and memories, the nibbles and drinks provided, their various picnic lunches, rounded off with a magnificent, and appropriately decorated, birthday cake. Some proceeded after lunch with the *optional* walk up to the Boboyan Trig.

Photos, facing page.

1. A comfortable base for lunch and goodies was set up in the grassy hollow down from the Yerrabi Track car park.
2. Kevin McCue providing a birthday anthem?
3. Sabine Friedrich, who made the wonderful birthday cake, enjoyed the outing and made the most of the photographic opportunities.
4. Judy Kelly, Shirley Lewis and Fiona MacDonald Brand, no doubt reminiscing about NPA times past.
5. Margaret Pyke, with Fiona MacDonald Brand and Chris Emery who cut the mighty birthday cake.

Photos this page.

6. Judy Kelly ready for the toasts, with Christine Goonrey very ready for the toasts!
7. John Webster and Sonja Lenz in pensive mood.
8. Muriel Story Edwards and Rod Griffiths already toasting.
9. Film-strip of some participants (top to bottom): Steven Forst, Shirley Lewis, Joan Goodrum, Gail Burns, Philip Gatenby, Judith Webster, Michael Goonrey.
10. The energetic took a post-prandial walk up the Yerrabi Track.

Photos by Sabine Friedrich and Max Lawrence.



PARKWATCH

Pouch young = Extinction buffer

Research and conservation is part of what we do at Tidbinbilla' says David Dobroszczyk, Senior Wildlife Officer at Tidbinbilla. 'Some of this involves monitoring and managing the free ranging animals within the reserve's 6 500ha, but we also support captive breeding programs for endangered species.'

Tidbinbilla is one of several sites where the critically endangered southern Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby is being captive bred. It is a collaborative effort by members of the Victorian Dept of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria, Adelaide Zoo and Tidbinbilla.

There was a time when the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby was found at Tidbinbilla, but it is unfortunately now considered extinct in the ACT. Happily the work to date is showing promising results. Sharing expertise and information has been part of the process. Successful breeding, slowly at first, has produced eight new pouch young over the past year. Knowing that the current estimate of animals in the wild is only 20 puts the efforts of the captive breeding program into stark perspective.

The other good news is that areas of appropriate habitat exist where captive-bred animals can be released to live and breed in the wild. In November 2008, the recovery team released 10 animals into the Grampian National Park. Four of these 10 animals were raised and 'hardened off' at Tidbinbilla making a real difference to Australian conservation efforts. In addition in May 2009, a further 3 Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies from Tidbinbilla were sent to the Grampians for release later this year.

News from the Alps No 38, 2009

The Good Fight

Botanist Keith McDougall (NSW Dept of Environment and Climate Change) understands that the moment to take on hawkweeds is now. 'If we leave them, we will never have another chance,' he says. He pulls no punches as he spells out the threat they pose. 'Based on hawkweeds' performance elsewhere, they have the capacity to be an environmental disaster'. And in terms of the Alps in particular, 'there is no precedent for a plant of this nature, which will take off at a very rapid rate and effectively out-compete the native flora'.

However, spotting is often a matter of pure chance, as Keith discovered while

he was out studying the impact of the 2003 fires. 'We had been out in the Jagungal wilderness area of Kosciuszko National Park doing flora surveys, and were on a management track taking a look post-fire. There was a log across the road and it was a toss-up whether I'd drive over the top. In the end I decided to reverse, and when I opened the car door to get out to move it, there was the hawkweed'.

Taking chance out of the equation will be part of the path to success. At Falls Creek, where Orange Hawkweed escaped from a resort garden, Elaine Thomas, Ranger at Mt Beauty, has designed a cross tenure control program, guided by a Melbourne University wind dispersal model, which has provided a team of people with a template area for searching, destroying and ongoing weekly monitoring.

Charlie Pascoe (Parks Victoria) and Keith also arranged a series of presentations and field visits in Melbourne, Falls Ck and Round Mt in Kosciuszko National Park, culminating in a Hawkweed Eradication Workshop at Charlotte's Pass. 'All of this activity was great because it helped the DPI in Victoria to recognise the serious threat posed by hawkweeds. They have now taken up the challenge and appointed a full-time Hawkweed incursion officer and significantly increased funding for Hawkweed control in 2009/2010.'

News from the Alps No 38, 2009

NSW budget—tighter for NPWS

The latest NSW budget handed down in June spared the environment from serious cuts but left funding for core national park management on a downward decline. NPWS is forced to fund 'efficient cuts' of about 2% each year while it faces ageing infrastructure and rising wage and other costs. It means that park managers are struggling to afford enough rangers and field officers and to properly maintain basic visitor facilities.

Interestingly, visitor numbers to national parks have been recalculated to be closer to 38 million each year, rather than 22 million. It makes almost meaningless Government plans to increase visitation to parks and reserves by 20% by 2016. NPA NSW supports increased funding for NPWS to support more visitors to NSW parks. It opposes plans to build new private accommodation in parks on a false premise of generating new funds.

National Parks Journal NSW vol 53 no 4 August-September 2009

Macquarie Marshes Adaptive Environmental Management Plan

The plan is based on compelling evidence that the resilience of the Macquarie Marshes is declining and that some parts have already been lost. The trend needs to be reversed to prevent the loss of this important large, diverse and complex wetland system.

The State Government has purchased approx 40,000ML environmental water under the Riverbank and Wetland Recovery Plan while the Federal Government has purchased approx 42,000ML in the Water for the Future Program. The Marshes also have a 160,000ML allocation in the Water Sharing Plan depending on water levels in Burrendong Dam.

In order to efficiently deliver this water to the Macquarie Marshes for the best possible environmental outcomes an adaptive environmental management plan has been developed with broad consultation across all government agencies and community sectors. For the first time an attempt has been made to collate the actions of all stakeholders necessary to maintain the ecological functions and processes in the Marshes.

A draft of the plan was put out for public comment during September. It is a way forward for strategic planning and management of an iconic Australian wetland area.

National Parks Journal NSW vol 53 no 5 October-December 2009

National Park tourism folly

If society is ever to reach ecological sustainability, then the protection of our national parks for nature must come before society's desire for private coastal eco-resorts, glamour camping, motor sport rallies and blood sport with dogs, bows and arrows and bullets.

Ms Sally Barnes, head of National Parks and Wildlife, believes that it is time 'for a paradigm shift' toward the construction of commercial facilities inside national parks. The NPWS believes that national park development is essential to grow its revenue base for future park acquisition and conservation. This pipe-dream of green-wash spin would see park development benefit resort owners most, and reduce the benefit of tourism to local communities. For example, \$4.8 million will be spent on infrastructure in Kosciuszko National Park this year in an attempt to prop up tourism there.

Our national parks today confront the

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

biggest attack on their nature conservation principles since the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* was gazetted in 1968. Park staff and resources have been diverted to tourism. A consultant, one who was responsible in 2008 for Kakadu's tourism development plans which covered part of that park's former wilderness zone, will soon release a tourism development strategy for NSW national parks. So far, five accommodation developments proposals for coastal parks have emerged, including one for Arakoon. More are being planned to pick the eyes out of best loved parks, including Ben Boyd and Mimosa Rocks National Parks on the far south coast of NSW.

Our parks must remain protected for nature, forever. The entire concept of development of Parks for revenue raising opportunities has not been thought through, just like concept planning and the Part 3A changes to our planning laws were not thought through. Current visitor data shows that more and more people are visiting national parks each year. These people are voting with their feet. They want basic, well-kept park facilities and pristine parks, not glamour camping and commercial use.

*National Parks Journal NSW vol 53 no 5
October-December 2009*

Yanga National Park

The new Yanga National Park, 5km east of Balranald, was officially opened late May by Minister for the Environment, Carmel Tarbutt. The 65,000ha park has 150km of frontage to the lower Murrumbidgee River and vast Red Gum wetlands that form part of the Lowbidgee Floodplain which supports some of the largest breeding colonies of waterbirds in Australia.

Visitor facilities at Yanga are now built, so it would make a great trip to SW NSW in combination with a tour of the Murray River Red Gums and nearby Mungo National Park. At Yanga there are two campsites, a massive 130m long woolshed and historic Yanga Homestead. This exciting new park was made possible by the purchase of a large pastoral station under the new DECC national park establishment plan and a well-funded land acquisition program.

*National Parks Journal NSW vol 53 no 4
August-September 2009*

The Bushfires Royal Commission part 2

Fuel reduction burning, and vegetation clearing, will soon be in the Royal

Commission's spotlight. Having delivered its interim report, largely on the effectiveness of Black Saturday's emergency response process, the Royal Commission into Victoria's bushfires has already begun deliberations for the final report. This will deal with many new issues around fire, including building design, electricity supply and climate change predictions.

However, the most frequently cited concern in the first round of submissions to the inquiry was fuel reduction or prescribed burning. The VNPA has never opposed effective fuel reduction programs. But we do strongly believe that, except in critical safety zones, they should be ecologically based, and should be backed up by the best available science.

Because it is an evidence-based investigation, the Royal Commission offers a rare opportunity to get this right. The VNPA will be preparing a submission to the Commission on fuel reduction and vegetation clearing. In the meantime we have commissioned a series of studies outlining current levels of knowledge of fire ecology, and looking at the current capacity of our land management agencies to administer an ecologically enlightened fuel reduction program.

Parkwatch VNPA, September 2009

Carnarvon Great Walk

July 28th 2009 marked the opening of the latest of Queensland's Great Walks. Carnarvon Walk combines wild, natural beauty with some unique flora features as well as significant indigenous history.

The cost of establishing this walk was approx \$1 million. The opening was conducted by Hon Kate Jones, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Resources Management. The Minister was treated to a helicopter ride over the gorge to ensure she had some comprehension of the scale and beauty of this park.

The walk is 86 kms long and links the Carnarvon Gorge and Mt Moffat sections. To do the walk comfortably requires about six or seven days. There are five overnight campsites with water available at all sites.

*NPA News Qld vol 79 no 8
September 2009*

Mount Lofty ranges Woodland Birds Survey

The Mt Lofty Ranges Woodland Bird Monitoring Program is a long-term project initiated by Professor Hugh Possingham from the University of

Queensland that has been running since 1999. The Program aims to assess the evidence for declines in woodland birds through repeated surveys of sites through the Mt Lofty Ranges.

Survey data is gathered from September to December annually. The Nature Conservation Society of SA manages and coordinates the survey as well as securing funding for the project. During the spring and summer of 2008, 163 sites were surveyed by nine different surveyors. A total of 5543 bird records were documented. Within these data, a total of 89 species were identified (83 native, 6 introduced); and of the native species 8 were of conservation concern in SA.

With nine years of data collated, we are just getting to a point where significant changes, if they are occurring, should be discernable in common and moderately common species like the Crescent Honeyeater or Scarlet Robin.

Xanthopus vol 27 part 3, 2009

When the Lights Stay On – A Novel Approach to Assessing Human Impact on the Environment

A consequence of the explosive expansion of human civilization has been the global loss of biodiversity and changes to the life-sustaining geophysical processes of Earth. The footprint of human occupation is uniquely visible from space in the form of artificial night lighting—ranging from the burning of rainforest to massive offshore fisheries to omnipresent lights of cities, towns, and villages. A novel approach to assessing global human impact using satellite observed night-time lights will provide managers and governments with a screening tool for conservation projects. Sites requiring restoration and precautionary actions can be identified and assessed further in more focused investigations.

Night-time lights, in addition to serving as a proxy measure for other human activities, pose a serious threat to biologically diverse ecosystems and even to human health. The ability to easily visualize regions particularly subjected to artificial light at night can be valuable to identify degraded sites requiring immediate restoration actions and pristine areas with high priority for protection. But in theory, harmful light could be eliminated immediately by “flipping a switch at the source”.

Submitted by Kevin McCue

Selected by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	Dec '09	Jan '10	Feb '10	Mar '10
Public holidays	Fri 25 Mon 28	Fri 1 Tues 26	—	Mon 8
General meetings ¹	—	—	Thur 18	Mon 1 ⁵
Committee meetings	Tues 1	—	Tues 2	Tues 2
50 th anniversary picnic ⁵				Sun 21
NPA ACT Christmas Party ²	Sun 13			
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ³	Sat 5 ⁴	—	Sat 13	Sat 13

Further details: **1** There is no general meeting in December or January
2 See notice page 16 for details of the NPA ACT Christmas party.
3 Meet Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15am or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am
4 NB. This work party, with GBRG Christmas Party, is a week earlier than usual.
5 Invitations to two special events are enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

New members of the association

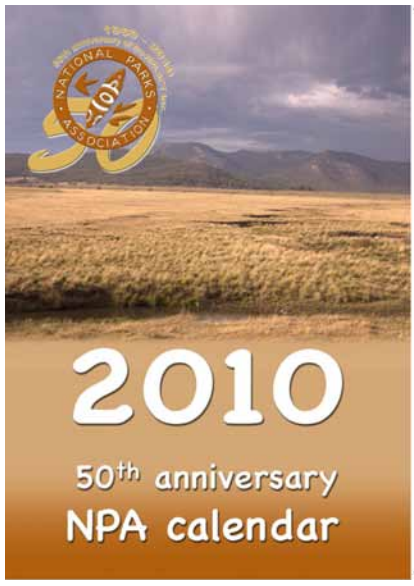


The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:
 Janet Tweedie and Roger Timewell, Hanna and Subhash Jaireth (all rejoining), John Kelly, Tim Palmer and Penelope Grist.

We look forward to seeing members at NPA activities.


It is with sadness that we note the passing of our members Graeme Wicks and Rob Forster.

Special anniversary calendar




For members who forgot to order their 2010 NPA ACT special anniversary calendar, we still have some spare copies.

Contact Sonja on 62511291, or purchase one at the NPA Christmas Party.




NPA Christmas Party



Details in notice on page 16

GBRG Christmas party Saturday 5 December

(NB. One week earlier than usual)



Work party in the morning, then GBRG Christmas party at lunchtime and strolling party around the regeneration area in the afternoon.

This *Bulletin* was put together by
 Editor: Max Lawrence
 Presentation: Adrienne Nicholson

Front cover photographs

Main photo. Mike Bremers at Pryors Hut in the snow. NPA walk in July 2009. *Photo Brian Slee*

Insets (left to right). The great birthday cake for Namadgi's 25th birthday, picnic in the park (Photos page 18). *Photo Sabine Friedrich*

Yankee Hat(s) viewed from Yerrabi track rock platform (Michael and Christine Goonrey, Sonja Lenz, Dianne Thompson and Kevin McCue (Article page 13). *Photo Max Lawrence*

Wedge-tail eagle chick on the lookout for the parents' return (Walk report page 11). *Photo Esther Gallant*



General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month,
(not December or January)

8:00pm,

Uniting Church hall,
56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor

Thursday 18 February

Japan: nature and culture.

David Large, NPA member.

In October, 2009, David and Robyn Large, with Janet Thomson and Tim Walsh, spent two weeks in Tokyo and other cities with sojourns to the Japanese Alps. They stayed in country inns and onsens*, with visits to shrines, temples and gardens. Come and be regaled with their experiences.

* In Japanese, *onsen* is a term for hot springs, though the term is often used to describe the bathing facilities and inns around the hot springs.

2010 is NPA ACT's 50th anniversary year



Key events and dates

1 March	Monday	Celebrating the anniversary of the first meeting, National Film and Sound Archive, Acton.
21 March	Sunday	A picnic and barbeque at the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre.
7-8 May	Friday/ Saturday	Symposium, <i>National Parks: can they take the heat?</i> at CSIRO Discovery Centre.
19 June	Saturday	Winter solstice lunch at Gudgenby Cottage.
30 October	Saturday	Pot Luck dinner at Wesley Centre.

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

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<i>Vice-President</i>	Chris Emery	6249 7604 (h)	chris.emery@optusnet.com.au
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The NPA ACT office is in the Conservation Council building, Childers Street, City. It is staffed by volunteers but 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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Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	<i>Bulletin</i> only	\$33
Full-time student/Pensioner	\$22		

All the above subscription categories reduce to \$11 if a donation of \$100 or more is made.

Advertising

The *Bulletin* accepts advertisements and inserts. Contact the Editor for information and rates.

The NPA ACT website is hosted by
our generous sponsor, Encode.



NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, letters, drawings and photographs are always welcome. Items accepted for publication may also be published on the NPA website. Send all items to The *Bulletin* Team, admin@npaact.org.au, or the postal address above.

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Gallery of lizards

On their property, *Garuwanga*, Geoff Robertson and Margaret Ning have identified thirty species of frogs and reptiles.

Here is a small selection of lizards from the photos shown by Geoff Robertson illustrating his talk to the association, *Reptiles of the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales*, in September 2009.



Photographs clockwise from top left:

1. Striped legless lizard, *Delma impar*, grows to 28cm. Different colour forms exist. (GR)
2. Eastern bearded dragon, *Pogona barbata*, grows to 55cm. (GR)
3. Shingleback, *Trachydosaurus rugosus*. Local populations are black. (GR)
4. Grassland earless dragon, *Tympanocryptus pinguicollis*, grows to 16cm. (GR)
5. Grassland tussock skink, *Pseudemoia pagenstecheri*, has a distinctive red lateral stripe. Grows to 17cm. (GR)
6. Lace monitor, *Varanus varius*, grows to 210cm. A tree-hugger, it often hides on the "other" side of a tree. (MN)
7. Cunningham's skink, *Egernia cunninghami*, grows to 39cm. (GR)
8. Blotched blue-tongue, *Tiliqua nigrolutea*, can reach 50cm. (GR)
9. White's skink, *Egernia whitii*, grows to 32cm. (MN/GR)
10. Jacky Lizard, *Amphibolurus muricatus*. Grows to 37cm. (MN)
11. Three-toed skink, *Hemiergis decresiensis*, grows to 11cm. Belly is yellow. (GR).

Photos by Margaret Ning (MN) and Geoff Robertson (GR)

If you want to identify local reptiles, seek out the NPA ACT's publication *Reptiles and Frogs of the Australian Capital Territory*, by Ross Bennett. Note: a new edition of this publication is in preparation.