



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



New approach to old ways



Celebrating Nancy Burbidge



Feral daisies rampant in Kosciuszko



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

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From the President

Dear colleagues,

The NPA ACT continues to be busy, with many challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

Probably the biggest challenge is the proposed changes to the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). This is the key piece of the Commonwealth's environmental protection mechanisms under which many threatened species have obtained protection, the koalas in Queensland and New South Wales being the most recent example. However, this important piece of legislation is threatened itself, as proposals are put forward to water down its powers. A great article by Christine Goonrey on this topic is included in this edition of the *Bulletin* and I urge you to read it and make your concerns heard.

Safeguarding Gungahlin's grassy woodlands

On the local front, development continues to threaten vital pieces of grassy woodland on Gungahlin's northern rim. The NPA ACT is pleased to be working with the Conservation Council and others to safeguard these important areas of high conservation value by lobbying for their reservation. Where reservation is not currently possible, such areas should be managed in a manner that facilitates their continued usefulness for conservation connectivity. Ultimately, these areas should be key parts of the NPA ACT's proposed northern national park.

Look out for pig hunters in Namadgi

For those of you who missed Brett McNamara's talk at the last general meeting, a strong message was the impact of pig hunters on the pig control measures in Namadgi National Park. Hunting has led to illegal access to the park and the disruption of the pig-baiting program which, thankfully, continues to be successful despite these actions. Brett, as the land manager responsible for Namadgi, would be keen to be advised of any incidences of illegal access to the national park and has offered the following email address: Brett.McNamara@act.gov.au. Please use it for reporting illegal access issues only, as other matters of management should be communicated through the Visitor Centre or via Canberra Connect.



Sub-committees active

It is great to see the NPA ACT sub-committees involved in a range of matters. The environment sub-committee has recently

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Federal Government abandons Environmental Protection Act

The Federal Government intends to hand over nearly all of its environmental protection approval powers to the States and Territories. By December 2012 it will have negotiated agreements with those governments and once the bilateral agreements are signed, in the words of a senior bureaucrat, 'The EPBC Act will have been turned off'.

Since 2008 members of the National Parks Australia Council including NPA ACT have worked hard to influence the debate on reforms to the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). In December 2009 we thought a sensible compromise had been reached between business and conservation interests when the independent Hawke Review was released. It accepted a need to reduce 'red tape' but recommended offsetting this by taking a more strategic approach across the landscape; by establishing better data and reporting systems; and through greater public openness about decisions.

The Federal Government didn't agree. In June 2011 it responded to the Hawke Report by announcing it proposed stripping out all the 'red tape' but was refusing to accept any of the public transparency, data and monitoring measures. This view of the Act took concrete shape at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting on 13 April 2012. After consulting with the Business Advisory Forum, COAG announced that the first

of its six priority areas for 'major reform to lower costs for business' was 'addressing duplicative and cumbersome environment regulation'. This is to be achieved by handing over Federal powers to the States and Territories. (See the full statement at http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2012-04-13/index.cfm).

The Federal Government claims that it is still protecting the environment because States and Territories will have to accept national standards before bilateral agreements will be signed. However, there is no mention of setting up auditing or monitoring mechanisms. Once the approval powers are handed over to State and Territory governments there will be no way to ensure decisions actually meet the agreed standards and no mechanisms to withdraw the delegation if the Federal Government's standards are ignored.

The Labor Government has not approached the Greens to get the Bills passed in the Senate. It is working with the Coalition which has indicated it will support the changes.

So how real is the threat that States and Territories will use this delegation of Federal powers to pursue their own agendas? Here in the ACT the government will be making decisions on its own land developments in nationally listed woodlands and grasslands with no involvement at all from the Federal Government. The clear conflict of interest is obvious to some of us but apparently not to the Federal

Government.

Do any of us really believe that State Governments will put their own development and business interests aside to meet national standards that have no teeth? Do we really think the Victorian Government will refuse to allow cattle back into the Australian Alps National Parks simply because they have signed a standards agreement that will never be monitored? Can the Queensland Government refuse the temptation to increase mining and construction on the edges of the Great Barrier Reef because the Federal Government might get a bit upset its standards are being ignored?

We have had over a decade of a national approach to environmental protection. The Act has had its critics, but there have been significant achievements. The Federal Government is now returning us to the era of local interests prevailing over protection of our environment. Remember the Franklin River campaign? Save the Daintree? And the blockade of Parliament which preceded the National Forestry Agreement? More of that is now ahead of us.

It seems we will have to return to the local barricades and work on our State and Territory governments on a case-by-case basis because an unpopular Federal Government wants to wash its hands of the whole messy business of protecting our environment.

Christine Goonrey

From the President *(continued)*

made a submission to the ACT Assembly standing committee inquiry into ecotourism as well as continuing to campaign for the new national park. The publications sub-committee is busy with a new insect book and the revision of the NPA ACT's bird book, and the Scholarship working group has put forward a proposal that would see the NPA ACT funding a scholarship for honours study over a three-year period. All NPA ACT members are eligible to join the sub-committees and their convenors would welcome additional help. See the inside back cover for details of the convenors.

This will be my last president's report before the AGM and I would really encourage members to consider helping the NPA ACT though nominating for committee membership. The current committee members are a great bunch of people who are able to achieve so much but it is always good for an organisation to avail itself of the wide range of skills embodied in its members. I would be more than happy to respond to any queries you might have.

All the best.

Rod Griffiths

STOP PRESS

The NSW Government has announced that private licensed shooters will be allowed to hunt feral animals in NSW national parks. For NPA's response, see the enclosed Media Release.

Nancy Burbidge, Centenary of her birth

Our secretary, Sonja Lenz, was invited by the Woden Community Service Inc. to give a talk to a gathering on 8 March, International Women's Day. She chose to pay homage to Nancy Burbidge, the founder of the National Parks Association of the ACT, the 100th anniversary of whose birth is being celebrated this year. The following is an edited version of Sonja's talk.

Nancy Tyson Burbidge was born on the 5 August 1912 in Cleckheaton, Yorkshire, England. She came to Australia with her parents in 1913 when her father, a clergyman, was appointed to the Anglican Parish of Katanning in Western Australia (WA). Nancy went to school in WA and later to the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth, where she gained her Bachelor of Science degree in 1937 and Master's in 1945. Later, in 1961, she became the first woman to be awarded by UWA the peak degree of Doctor of Science.

Nancy was awarded a prize of a free passage to England, and she spent

18 months in 1939–40 working on Australian plants at the Kew Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens in London. On her return she worked in Perth on WA plants and in Adelaide on regenerating native pasture in arid and semi-arid regions of South Australia. Then, in October 1946, Nancy was appointed systematic botanist in the CSIRO Division of Plant Industry in Canberra.

Research science

She was employed to provide an identification service, but she soon began organising and expanding the division's plant collection, and became the curator of the *Herbarium Australiense*. In 1953 she was seconded to the Kew Herbarium as Australian botanical liaison officer. Here she photographed and indexed type specimens of Australian plants. She returned to her Canberra job in 1954.

Nancy published the results of her work in various scientific journals and in monographs such as *The Plants of the Australian Capital Territory* (1963, with Max Gray), *A Dictionary of Australian Plant Genera* (1963); *Australian Grasses* in three volumes (1966, 1968, 1970); *Flora of the Australian Capital Territory* (1970, again with Max Gray); and she prepared the compilation of *Plant Taxonomic Literature in Australia*, which was edited by A. McCusker and published in 1978 (after her death).

Public science

But Nancy also wanted the general public to know about Australian native plants and she published two volumes on *The Wattles of the Australian Capital Territory* (1961) and *The Gum Trees of the Australian Capital Territory* (1963). Her wonderful drawings have led to many lay-people being able to 'see', recognise and love our local native plants.

She was an outstanding botanist and was

promoted to the level of senior principal research scientist at CSIRO; and due to her outstanding administration skills she became director of the *Flora of Australia* project sponsored by the Australian Academy of Science from 1973 to 1977.

So, Nancy had a very distinguished scientific career.

Starting the National Parks Association

But she was also an activist and a visionary. She belonged to a group of fellow-scientists and members of the concerned public who realised that the National Capital needed to preserve natural spaces for the Canberra community to enjoy and treasure. Their agitation led to the foundation of the National Parks Association (NPA) of the ACT in 1960. Nancy was the founding secretary of this organization, which she also led as president for two terms. She later became the first Honorary Life Member of NPA (in 1972), and in 1976 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to science and the community.

From the beginning, NPA was committed to the establishment of a 'National Park for the National Capital', but also worked on getting Tidbinbilla, Molonglo Gorge and Gibraltar Falls declared as nature reserves. Under Nancy's guidance members put together all the supporting documentation for NPA's submission to the government on a proposal for a national park — including scientific surveys of fauna and flora in the area recommended for the park. Sadly, Nancy never saw the fruits of her and her fellow members' work before she died in 1977. Gudgenby Nature Reserve, approximately the area that NPA had put forward as a national park, was declared in 1979 and — with additional sections of land — became Namadgi National Park in 1984.

A keen educator

Nancy had a very human side to her: she was a keen educator and she loved to lead people of all ages into the Australian bush on 'nature rambles' where she would describe and explain the distinguishing features of local plants to everybody in words that were understood even by the very young. She realised that people had to know where and how to look before they could learn to love the Australian bush. She called it having

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National park push grows

The following article by reporter **Michael Inman** appeared in the *Canberra Times*, *Sunday 11 March 2012*. It was accompanied by *Katharine Griffiths' photo of Michael and Christine Goonrey taking in the view from Red Hill.*

The push for a new national park in Canberra has gained momentum after a local environment group petitioned the ACT government to fund an investigation into the proposal.

The ACT National Parks Association used a budget submission to the ACT

government to urge the development of the park which would rebrand many ACT nature reserves as protected areas.

The proposed park, stretching from Mulligans Flat in the north to Wanniasa in the south, aims to protect endangered lowland grassy woodlands, particularly yellow-box red-gum ecosystems.

The reserves are a stronghold for many endangered species, including the golden sun moth, button wrinklewort, superb parrot and grassland earless dragon.

The idea was first pitched early last year and a report by the then ACT

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Maxine Cooper, published in July, lent support to an investigation.

The association president Rod Griffiths said rebranding urban reserves as national park would afford the imperilled ecosystems greater protection.

He said the proposed area was subject to planning pressures.

"Along the northern border of the ACT there is the potential to maintain a magnificent crescent of land that would link up existing reserves and support threatened grassy woodlands," he said.

"One of the key recommendations to come out of the investigation was about improving the condition and resilience of our nature reserves by improving connectivity between them.

"Without the maintenance of biodiversity corridors that join them, our reserves become vulnerable islands," Mr Griffiths said.

"The creation of a new national park ... would be a major achievement for the ACT and would be recognised both nationally and internationally."

If approved, the bushland would be the ACT's second national park.

Namadgi National Park covers 46 per cent of the ACT and is the most northern park in a 1.6 million hectare chain of protected areas that form the Australian Alps national parks across NSW, the ACT and Victoria.



Nancy Burbidge, 100th anniversary 2012 *(continued)*

'eyes or no eyes'; even somebody who started out as a 'no-eyes' person in the bush could become an 'eyes' person, and she would help them to get there.

One of NPA's endearing mementos of Nancy is the series of drawings and nature notes that she published in the association's newsletter between 1963 and 1971 under the title 'Eyes or No Eyes'. The drawings and nature notes were re-published in a separate booklet as a tribute to Nancy in 2010, the 50th anniversary year of NPA*.

Commemorating Nancy

There are two memorials to Nancy Burbidge in the ACT: one is the Nancy T. Burbidge amphitheatre in the grounds of the Australian National Botanic Gardens which was proposed by several organisations, including the NPA; the

other was the naming of a 1,720 metre peak in Namadgi National Park in 1992 as 'Mount Burbidge', proposed by the NPA to commemorate a 'person prominent in the area's development' (a criterion in the naming of geographic features).

The NPA of today is still committed to protecting Australian flora and fauna, natural features and cultural heritage; and to educating the public about conservation of the Australian bush. We have continued Nancy's tradition by publishing ACT field guides to native trees, birds, orchids, and reptiles & frogs. And we are especially proud of our publication *Namadgi — A National Park for the National Capital*.

* Some copies of *Eyes or No Eyes*, a limited edition publication, are still available for purchase.

Sonja Lenz

Sources:

- NPA *Bulletin 40th Anniversary Supplement*, March 2000
- Website: Australian National Botanic Gardens
- Website: ANU Australian Dictionary of Biography

Ox-eye Daisy: yet another dreaded weed



The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is targeting Ox-eye Daisy infestations in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). This weed first came to my attention on Martin Chalk's January 2011 NPA walk in the Tantangara area, and it featured on the cover of the March 2011 edition of the *Bulletin*. At the time I innocently thought it to be a pretty native wildflower. Wrong!



At a recent field day, NPWS Ranger Elouise Peach said Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare**) has already infested parts of New Zealand, Canada and the Kashmir Valley in India, well beyond its native Europe. A single healthy Ox-eye Daisy can produce up to 26 000 seeds, which remain viable for years, and this perennial herb also spreads using shallow, creeping roots or rhizomes.

The flowers of Ox-Eye Daisy are about 5 cm in diameter, with white petals and a yellow centre. The plants are single-stemmed, grow to about 1 m in height, and have spoon-shaped leaves, the upper ones being narrower.

The northern section of KNP has had an explosion of Ox-eye Daisy in the past four years, notably in the Tantangara area, despite an extensive program to try to

control the spread of this weed. Ox-eye Daisy populations have also been found on private lands in the region.

This pernicious plant invades grasslands and open woodlands aggressively, and native plants cannot compete. Dense populations of Ox-eye Daisy also produce more bare soil, which makes erosion more likely. Control methods include mowing to reduce seed production, pulling shallow root systems by hand, tilling to destroy roots and the use of herbicide.

Ms Peach noted that many people find Ox-eye Daisy attractive when it is in flower, but it has negative impacts on the environment that must be taken seriously.

For us, as users of the Tantangara area and places that are as yet unaffected by the weed, the message is clear — awareness of the problem, and boot and equipment hygiene, are the first line of defence against its continuing spread.

A more detailed article by Dr John Benson on the extent of the infestation, the growth and ecology of the weed, methods available for controlling and/or containing it, and directions for research, is in the Autumn 2012 edition of NPA of NSW's *Nature New South Wales*.

* Also sometimes known as

Chrysanthemum leucanthemum.

Max Lawrence

Photos by author

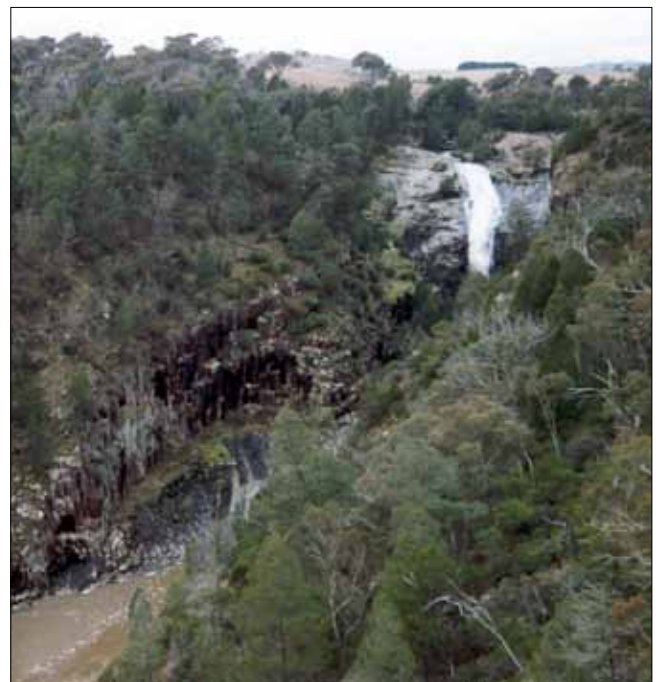
Young members sought

The community group pushing for a new national park in NSW to the north-west of the ACT— the Murrumbidgee–Ginninderra Gorges National Park— has formed itself into an association, the Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA), and is actively seeking new members. Present membership stands at 41 and the association would dearly like more, especially young people, to join it. Contact Chris Watson, ph 02 6278 3079.

By the time this *Bulletin* goes to press, the GFA will have given evidence to an ACT Legislative Assembly committee inquiring into current and potential ecotourism of the ACT and region. It will also have met with the ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, to press its case and urge active involvement of the ACT Government in the park proposal.

In a further step, the GFA is planning another public meeting in early June, to inform the general community on progress towards achieving what promises to be an outstanding addition to the number of national parks in NSW.

Graeme Barrow
Ginninderra Falls Association



Run rabbit run

In this article distributed to ParkCare groups last summer Peter Mills, Ranger-in-Charge, Mulligans Flat, describes the use of specially trained Springer Spaniels for eliminating rabbits (and hares) from the sanctuary area at Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve [The heading and subheadings are ours. Ed.]

I am sure most of you were in withdrawal last week (December 2011) as we had closed the reserve to go about the intensive work of removing as many rabbits and hares as we could find. We employed Steve Austin and his four-legged Springer Spaniels Bolt, Dina and Jenny. Steve was heavily involved in training handlers and dogs for the rabbit removal work on Macquarie Island World Heritage Area.

Early starts, longs days in the hunt for leporids

Our days usually began around 4:30 am and ended at 8:30 pm and I apologise now if we made too much noise. We very quickly developed a system with Steve and whichever dog was working. Two rangers and Steve carried shotguns for euthanasing rabbits/hares that did not immediately run down a burrow. One other ranger followed in a quad bike with burrow poisoning gear. When a rabbit was detected the dog immediately stopped and stared; if we could shoot the animal the closest inline shooter would carry out the task. I must admit the practice at the Sporting Shooter Range paid off here as Steve was impressed at our accuracy.

Dog detectives find hidden burrows

The main purpose of using dogs for detection is to find isolated hidden burrows that the pesky little creatures escape to. Over the 5 days we found 60 hidden burrows that were poisoned using 'Phostoxin', and 13 rabbits and 2 hares were shot. Feral research tells us that there is what one could call an average number of rabbits living in each burrow; we have settled upon about 3 rabbits per burrow. All up, we can approximate that probably about 150–180 rabbits were euthanased.

Handler controls; dogs learn

During the week we estimate that we walked about 12–15 km per day and the dogs ran about 40 km per day. It was quite amazing to see the dedication of the dogs and their enthusiasm for the work. Steve

has trained the dogs to trot along up to 25 metres in front of him running backwards and forwards continually watching Steve for commands. Steve not only controls the dogs with silent and audible whistle commands but is able to indicate using his hands pointing to a particular clump of grass, logs or rocks. He also uses spoken commands to encourage the dog. After a day, the dog gets to know the areas that Steve wants checked out and automatically learns to do so with no commands.

In some places the grass was so long we did not see the dog running about under our feet and this is where we see the name 'Springer spaniel' come to the fore. The dog springs up out of the grass with flying floppy ears, sees Steve and checks that he is still there. Steve also knows where the dog is as it 'springs' up, then it can be 2 whistles to go left or 3 whistles to right or 4 to come back. All the rangers got to know Steve and how he works the dogs to detect rabbits and hares. We also befriended the dogs and they are smart, learning to come and sit on your feet for some well-earned attention.

Follow-up campaign needed

Looking back on this process of using dogs to detect rabbits and hares, we know that we covered most of the sanctuary and likely left a few hidden burrows, rabbits and hares that were missed on the run. We have walked much of the sanctuary in fine detail and are reasonably well aware where a few may have escaped detection. Steve has been invited back for 3 days sometime in late

February and we do expect that it will take a few more short visits to get the last rabbits and hares. While on the job, Steve trained the dogs to ignore our local lizards and echidnas. Rangers will continue to employ all the usual trapping, spotlight shooting and baiting methods.

About rabbits on Macquarie Island

We did learn from Steve that the rabbit program on Macquarie Island has been very successful at finding rabbits occupying penguin burrows. The dogs live on Macquarie Island for at least 5 years until the island has been cleared of rabbits and none sighted for 2 years. Every summer several dog handlers travel back to the island and up the intensity of rabbit detection. They have terrain difficulties with high grassy cliff-like slopes leading down to the sea in many places.

... and feral cats further afield

We are confident that using dogs is another very useful method we can use in our rabbit and hare program. When Bettongs are reintroduced into the sanctuary we are confident that the dogs can be quickly trained to ignore their smells in the same way the dogs ignore sea birds, penguins or seals. Steve is off to the Mornington Sanctuary in the Kimberley this week to hand over a trained dog that the Australian Wildlife Conservancy has purchased to detect feral cats killing small mammals.

David and the Minister

On a recent walking trip to New Zealand NPA member David Large had the good fortune to meet Kate Wilkinson, the NZ Minister for Conservation. The two are pictured here at the opening of the Anne Hut in the Lewis Pass region of the South Island. David will be addressing the AGM in August on the subject of his walks in New Zealand

Photo by Tim Walsh



Aboriginal Land Management Workshop

This two day workshop was held on 19 and 20 April 2012 at Geoff Robertson and Margaret Ning's property 'Garuwanga', 15 km east of Nimmitabel. It was sponsored by Kosciuszko2Coast (K2C) and the Friends of Grasslands (FOG), and was the fifth in a series of workshops. Christine Goonrey had attended one of the earlier sessions along with local property owners and land managers, and she saw the value of having a session for NPA ACT members.

The organisers kindly agreed to run an additional workshop mainly for NPA, and this was duly advertised in our Outings Program. Thirteen of our members eventually turned up for the event:

Christine and Michael Goonrey, Sonja Lenz and Kevin McCue, Adrienne Nicholson, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Max Lawrence, Annette Smith, Barbara Edgar, Martin Chalk, Andrew Morrison, Chris Emery and Sabine Friedrich.

A further four people attended, including local property owners, making a total of around twenty including those running the show.

Indigenous man Mr Rodney Mason is the key to the project. Geoff and Margaret were generous hosts to our group, and they are also very active with K2C and FOG, as well as being keen advocates of Rod's methods in managing their own precious 'Garuwanga' (Ngarigo for Dreaming)

Rod Mason is a special man with unique qualifications in both traditional Aboriginal ways and 'modern' science. He is a Ngarigo elder based in Cooma, but with family history and connections extending even to central and northern Australia. His K2C bionote shows that he is one of a small group of people who have undertaken the Diploma of Natural and Cultural Resource Management (bachelor degree). He is a former Ranger with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, where he trained staff and visitors on traditional land management practices, landscape function and biodiversity.

Christine took detailed notes at Rod's workshop, and shares the main points with us as follows.

Introduction

This workshop was designed to reconnect people to the natural and cultural resources in our region and to create a better understanding of our (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) shared culture/heritage/biodiversity values. Rod's vision is to have Indigenous natural resource management techniques adopted in farm and reserve management.

There are no straight lines Aboriginal learning, no hierarchal connections that can be followed sequentially. Learning is a large interconnecting web of experience and responsibility. Authority to teach comes from connection to the land and from taking care of the land, not from structures. History is personal, spiritual and global, all at the same time. It is past, present and future. Caring for country is embedded in familial relationships and stories that are both true and myth at the same time.

Understanding the land

Rod starts with the names of the significant features of the area because *knowing* the land is inherent in *managing* the land. One word can mean a lot of things depending on context but the main features of this country are:

Nallaga: ridgeline
Wallaga: coast
Narrawallee: grassland



Rod Mason (centre) with Christine and Michael Goonrey at the Garuwanga workshop. Photo Adrienne Nicholson

Wadbilliga: escarpment
Tidbilliga: Snowy Mountains
Burrungubugee: foothills.

Wadbilliga is the escarpment, which also contains the burial grounds. Tidbilliga is the spiritual place, the church. Narrawallee is the living area where food and game is. All the areas are linked and major features impact across a wide area. For example, the big rainmakers for this area are hundreds of kilometres apart.

Family and responsibilities

Rod's family, ancestry and responsibilities go from the coast out into

the central desert. Ancient camps his family are connected to go way up the coast and out west. The oldest local camp is Birrigai; other important meeting places going north include Menai, Kurringai and Nattai. Rod's families keep stories right across these areas; e.g. part of his education was gaining knowledge of the big underground caverns below Canberra.

Stories come from family and tell you who you are, where you're from. Rod's grandmother taught him all the places to camp, all the birds, all the plants and trees. 'This bush school is still open', Rod tells us. But some people have lost respect for the old country. They were taken away and forgot where they came from.

Families are more than the immediate relationships. Knowledge is built up from uncles and grandfathers, not just fathers and mothers. More often, knowledge and authority comes from members of the wider family group. In return, people have a wider responsibility than just to their own children and parents.

The families had specialised roles spread throughout the groups. Some were toolmakers, other made spears. There were judges, juries and policemen who enforced the law. The groups traded with each other, sometimes across big distances, and marriages were

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with Rod Mason at 'Garuwanga'

arranged with neighbours.

Culture comes from the land itself; the trees, the rocks, the bushes. Everything has a name, a dance, a story. Bull ants aren't just bull ants; they don't just sting. If you observe them closely you will see them dance. It is important to look closely; see things you've never noticed before; find your own values; understand more about it by working *with* the land.

Rod's people came from the desert out west and from the country way up north. They haven't been in this south country long, only about 4 000 or 6 000 or 8 000 years. They didn't live here before that because of the dangers in this area. One story is that big winds blew for many hundreds of years, no-one could live here. Then there were the Dulugar; big hairy men who lived in this country and killed and ate Aboriginal people if they caught them. For a long time the families didn't come further south than the Clyde River. Then pressure of families growing bigger pushed them south. But they kept the connections with the old country and Rod's authority is recognised out in the central desert as well as here on the coast and escarpment. He still goes back to the central desert regularly to look after country. All the places connect; joining the dots is where knowledge is.

Aboriginal people didn't just passively travel though the land picking up what was there. They actively managed the country setting up food and material for use when they returned. Over the centuries they brought plants and animals into new country as they travelled south and east. For example, the Dharrawal people brought the cabbage tree palm (a rainforest tree) with them as they travelled south. They cultivated local plants and established gardens at regular camping sites, so that the site would be producing the things they needed when next they visited. Everyone, even small children, have an area for which they are responsible for the rest of their lives. They have to keep it healthy, keep its plants and animals healthy.

As families got bigger, tracks became more frequent. Tracks up from the coast to the mountains were spread across the land, going to different areas like grass country; stone country; and to food supplies like swamps and creeks. Campsites were dispersed, a sister's group here, a brother's there.

Ridgelines and creeks were always



Field excursion at Garuwanga.

Photo Max Lawrence

good pathways to ceremonial places or hunting grounds or to food camps. Different sites are important because they have different purposes. They may be campgrounds, gardens or resources; there may be a particular ceremony or dance associated with the site; they may have burial grounds or meeting grounds; or they may have a spiritual meaning in the big story of the land.

Corroboree was an important part of passing on the knowledge. Participation went across family groups. For example young men and older uncles would come to the same place every year for ceremony often over hundreds of years.

When people died they were buried in the country in which they were born. The dead were wrapped in bark and left in trees. Some time later the family members gathered up the bones, wrapped them in bark and put them in special places. For Rod's extended family this was the caves and ledges along the escarpment, Wadbilliga. (*Rod expressed a wish to be able to visit these places where they are on private land. This is a classic example of the long-term clash between the European notion of land ownership and Aboriginal view of their role as custodians of the land, not its owners.*)

The laws of the natural world

There are three main laws or elements: wind; fire; water. Laws on management

and use of resources, plants and animals are grouped under these three laws.

- So there are wind birds (eagles etc.); fire birds (e.g. Diamond Firetail Finch); and water birds (e.g. ducks etc.).
- Grasses are wind plants; eucalypt is a fire plant; casuarina is a water plant.
- Three main colours denote the role or grouping of things: red/orange; blue; and white. Colour is a guide to plant use.
- Three main kinds of trees are used: acacia; eucalypt; melaleuca.
- Things belong together, e.g. three kinds of possums belong with the three groups of trees: sugar gliders belong with acacia; brush-tail belongs with eucalypts; ring-tail belongs with melaleuca.

Seasons are identified by what things appear in conjunction with each other, e.g. 'butterfly time' means butterflies bring birds; birds spread seeds and help the gardens grow. Ferneries come good in mid summer when birds need refuge from the heat. Managing the land means enhancing these relationships.

Learning the right ways

Aboriginal learning is done through show and tell; trial and error; touch and taste. Rod's teacher was his grandfather. He spoke six languages but never wrote

(continued on page 10)

Aboriginal Land Management Workshop ... *(continued from page 9)*

anything down. He used painting and mark-making to record what needed to be recorded. Rod showed us his father's and grandfather's ceremonial shields, which marked their authority in different parts of the country. The markings on the shields described specific areas and would be recognised by initiated men.

'The country teaches you'.

Managing the land

Aboriginal people managed the natural world for what they needed. It's the same as European farming but done with a different mindset. The bush has patterns. Use the patterns to manage for what you want to achieve. For example, we looked closely at a small rocky knoll with dead wood, weeds etc. hampering good plants and the small animals and birds that need to be encouraged. Fire can be used to carefully manage this area but first you have to look carefully at what is there and decide how to manage it.

Rather than tell us what to do, Rod posed two questions: which is the most flammable plant here, and do you burn the most flammable first or last? The issue is not what are the right answers to these questions but how you observe and learn the answers for yourself. He suggested the way to do this would be to set a small fire and observe what happens. Then, over several weeks, go on to set other small fires that put into



Demonstration of the land management use of fire. Photo Max Lawrence

practice what you have observed. The idea is to get rid of rubbish and allow the good plants to grow. These small fires cover only a few square metres at a time and it may take several weeks to burn the area in a pattern that makes sure the valuable plants and animals of the rocky knoll are not damaged. Burn and watch it; come back; watch what is there; learn about it. Then don't burn for a few years; just observe and learn. Bring the pattern back.

Fire as a tool

Fire is used to clean up country, look after the plants and trees. Use small fires, spread across the area. Use fire at different times for different purposes; for example, using cool autumn burns for grassy areas. There are strict laws about who can burn, and when. You can't burn someone else's area; it's their responsibility and you will get into a lot of trouble if your fire goes across into their country. Rod's people never lit a fire and left it, there was always a responsibility to make sure it worked the way it should.

For a cool autumn burn select the area carefully, wait till there's low cloud, maybe mist on the hilltops. You want the green underlayer to

remain. Mark out the area you want burnt, prepare strategies to limit it in case a wind springs up. Start the fire with the wind at your back. Spread it across the area with small ignitions, working it across the area you want covered. If the wind changes, you change where you are working, keeping the wind at your back all the time.

Areas that Aborigines didn't go into were not burnt. Fire was a tool for managing the places they used. There were types of vegetation they didn't burn, e.g. forests where the bark goes right up into the canopy. Aboriginal people had no right to interfere with lightning strikes. If a big fire came through, you left it, let it go. Don't try to stop it, just get everyone out of its way. Don't put out natural fires; country did that or another entity. Never interfere with wind, lightning, rain.

Looking at the landscape

Rod encouraged us to look at the wider landscape around us. Look for particular species that can indicate the health of an area, e.g. banksia on a rocky knoll. Look at the connections between ti-tree and rocky outcrops, between wet and dry areas. We have to know when the birds and butterflies arrive in this part of the world; when the trees blossom; what's happening under the ground.

It's not just about the shrubs and trees and things Aborigines use and eat. We

(continued next page)



Rod Mason with ceremonial shield and boomerang. Photo Max Lawrence

Aboriginal Land Management Workshop ... *(continued from page 10)*

need to look after the whole of country. Look for what's missing as well as what is here. This country needs to get more of the small animals back; but to keep them on country it needs the big emus to make them feel safe, drive away foxes and wild dogs. Smaller animals don't feel safe without the big emus looking out for them. We won't get koalas back if there aren't any emus because the koalas won't feel safe. Need a big feller and some females to come and settle, lay eggs; stay on country.

Listen to what's coming out of country. Observe for yourself; carry out the task you've been given; come back to the family and tell the old people what you've learnt.

Managing change

To manage the land for which we have taken responsibility, we have to know the place inside out and know how the place changes in the story line. For example, storytellers on weather have a long history of weather. They have been tracking climate changes for a very long time. Change happens, we have to adapt. During the recent ice ages, the land extended out beyond the present coast. Rod's grandfather told him stories of stone axes now in underwater caves in Sydney Harbour but no-one listened till a scientist found one, then they believed it.

Tjuppurra

'When we go home and go to sleep, who's looking after us: country. So we have to look after country. Find all these values, family values, personal values.' Find out what is our Tjuppurra, our own story, our own special place and use it.

Everyone has their own special

responsibility. Rod's daughter, for example, is boss of orchids; his son is boss of ring-tail possum. Rod's daughters collect seed pods and make necklaces out of them, not to sell but to act out Tjuppurra. Being in the bush, making things, even toys, using the bush, that is part of Tjuppurra. It doesn't have to be serious stuff all the time. Rod showed us how to make little birds and spiders out of feathers, leaves and seed pods, then how to play games with them.

Politics

The problem for a lot of Aboriginal people is the big displacements over the past 200 years. A lot of Aboriginal politics like Land Councils are run on the Mission system: nepotism as opposed to the larger family network and responsibilities; short-term interests as opposed to caring for country; hierarchy instead of responsibility for country. So a Land Council member from the rainforest country could be making decisions about escarpment country. That's why that system doesn't work for Aboriginals. These are what Rod calls 'new Aboriginals'; people who have come into another country, without learning the ways of that place, and stayed on.

These people don't know where they came from and they don't know the right stories; they don't know how to behave. They haven't got their Tjuppurra; they're not educated; never done ceremony; they have no culture. Ceremony is secret; you have to swear to protect country. It's family business, control and responsibility. The family networks have to deal with it if it is disrespected. But family members are scattered, they're stuck on reserves, off country.

Aborigines from Wilcannia were sent to Coonamble; long way to get back home.

Possible future actions

Rod would like to farm native grasses like lomandra; to use his country to produce commercial supplies of the herbs and seeds people want to buy. He wants some commercial tourism in the area where the Aboriginal knowledge is respected and imparted to visitors. Visits could include Tuross Falls, Lambie Gorge and the mountains.

Final words:

Be curious; make things in country; find your values, your story.

Christine Goonrey

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Thursday 16 August 2012

Business: Minutes of the AGM 2011

President's Report

Financial Report

Appointment of Auditor

Election of Office-bearers and Committee

Any other business

Note: all office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

Nominations for the ensuing year are welcome.

Detailed notice on page 22.

Below Left. Rod making simple toys from nature. Photo SabineFriedrich

Below. Showing off a bird made from seed pods, nuts, leaves and feathers. Photo Max Lawrence



Australian Aboriginal land management before and during the nineteenth century

As a member of the NPA group who went to the two-day workshop led by Rod Mason to learn about the land use practices of the Aborigines of the south coast and southern inland area of New South Wales, I learned much and recalled information I'd read in Mary Gilmore's book *Old Days: Old Ways*, first published in 1934.

Mary (Cameron) Gilmore was born in 1865 near Goulburn NSW, and died in Sydney in 1962. Her youth was spent near Wagga Wagga and the Riverina, where her father Donald Cameron, a building contractor, had a great sympathy and admiration for the Aboriginal people who he considered were being 'wiped out' by the European settlers. He learnt the language of the Waradgery tribe, held long discussions with elders and was made a member of the tribe.

Donald and Mary Cameron noted and discussed the ways in which the Waradgery managed their land. The following are a few examples of the land-use practices recorded in *Old Days: Old Ways*.

Chapter 29 'Fire and the planted seed'. When using fire to capture animals 'the system was by firing and back firing so that conflagration could be stayed at any time and only sufficient fire let run to circle and drive the animals to a common centre. If the fire was in danger of getting away, the Aborigines would get small branches and beat out the fire with rapid arm movement.

'It was here (after fires) I saw more or less extensive planting of seeds by the lubras. This was done at the direction of the chief who when the earth was cool enough to walk upon, went first to one shrub and then another testing and examining the burnt capsules and where these had been destroyed, directing the attention of the women to them. The women gathered fresh ones from untouched shrubs, and planted them where the destroyed ones stood. The

use of ammonia was apparently known, for when the seeds were in the scratched but still warm earth the little boys were requisitioned to damp them.

'Grass seed was gathered, a heavy kind, and I helped in this. When a lot still in 'the ear' had been collected it was rubbed by hand and then by a turn the bark container into which it had been put was shaken, tipped right and left, and the grain lay clear at one end, with the husks in a little pile at the other.'

Mary also noted that individual seeds from fruit that had been eaten were planted after first heating the earth by a small fire of twigs.

'Then there was their usage in the matter of the quandong tree. They looked to see which of the stones or nuts were male or female and planted accordingly. But there was more than this. When a grove was in flower they brought branches from another grove to fertilise the blossom. I saw this done at Yarrengerry ... Earlier I had seen it done near what is now Bethungra. Often I saw the twigs left on the ground under trees to show that the work had been done and need not be repeated.'

Mary gives the following clear description of fire control:

'Having the confidence of habit they allowed a fire freedom where it seemed least dangerous. In one such fire they concentrated on the sides, letting the centre flame run forward. But far in advance of this ran lubras hunkering down over their half yard wide flares. Behind the first row a second line was at work and behind this a third, each fire opposite the gaps between the forward ones. The advancing tongues of flame having been kept narrow by attention to the sides draught was narrow, so a very wide front of fire was not necessary.



Dame Mary Gilmore 1865–1962. Photo from illustrated edition of *Old Days: Old Ways*, Angus and Robertson, 1986

'When the advance met the little islands of burnt grass it died there: in the lanes between it was beaten out. The chief told my father that unless fire was kept narrow and beaten out before it created a high wind it was no use fighting it. Once it created its own wind it was invincible ...

'At this place the chief spoke bitterly of the white man's carelessness in lighting bushfires, saying that he lit and let them run like a child that loved destruction: that such destruction was wanton; the forest fires spoiled the fine timbers from which weapons were made and bark taken for canoes; that it took years for the forest to come back to itself after being burned, and the fire destroyed birds, bees, seeds and animals. He was to learn later that fire, miles wide, would be lit to burn him and his.'

Fiona MacDonald Brand

NPA ACT Art at Gudgenby Cottage.

We plan to have another Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage close to the spring equinox, end of September. This is a chance for members of NPA ACT to indulge their more creative selves through painting, drawing, writing, photography, or other artistic endeavours; explore Namadgi from a base in the Gudgenby Valley; share warm, comfortable and convivial evenings. You can join in for a day, overnight, or several days.

(Note that overnight numbers will be limited — six people per night).

For information and to express your interest in participating, contact:

Adrienne Nicholson on 6281 6381 or
Christine Goonrey at cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au
or on 6231 8395.

Check *Burning Issues* for details when available.

More dollars for koala research

At NPA's February general meeting, guest speaker Chris Allen spoke about research on koala conservation in south-eastern NSW. His talk was subsequently reported in the March edition of the *Bulletin*.

Since then it has been announced that a grant for \$100 000 from the NSW Environmental Trust will enable Cooma–Monaro Shire Council (CMSC) to proceed with plans to help balance land management issues with koala conservation.

Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Koala Recovery Project Coordinator Chris Allen reports that OEH, together with the Rural Fire Service, local volunteers and Sydney University researchers, has made great strides understanding koala distribution and behaviour near Cooma.

'The 50 000 hectare region where OEH and the RFS have been surveying koalas over the last 18 months lies within Cooma–Monaro Shire Council, and this grant will provide a great boost to this work', Mr Allen said. He added:



'Across the Southern Tablelands study area, koala evidence has been discovered at more than half of the survey sites we have assessed east of Michelago and Cooma. During surveys, we record data including koala droppings, chewed bark and animal sightings and we collect samples where possible.'

'Koala inbreeding is a problem in some parts of Australia, but researchers at Sydney University have so far identified two distinct gene pools and a relatively high level of variability within each in the Southern Tablelands koala population. These genetic findings and evidence of the extent of this population are an encouraging sign and also highlight the conservation significance of Southern Tablelands koalas.'

Max Lawrence

After the drought

six days
without the sun
my heart sings
this blessed La Nina —
two hundred millimetres

all weekend
walking in gentle rain
turning inwards
to rainwashed thoughts
'neath a goretex hood

after the drought
I tread Earth's soft carpet
through yellow box
and *blakleyi* ...
maggies and butcher birds

spring rainfall
above average —
our dams are full —
I flush the toilet
freely ... emphatically

Gerry Jacobson

David Campbell, Poet 1915–1979



In the March 2012 edition of the *NPA Bulletin* Klaus Hueneke contributed an article of reminiscences prompted by a book he borrowed from Tim Walsh. The article was entitled *Where the Ice-Trees Burn*, and the book included letters written by the late David Campbell, a Canberra poet and landowner who had lived at Wells Station, and whose property included parts of Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo. Klaus noted there was a park in the suburb of Harrison where examples of his poetry were displayed.

It has now come to our attention that Mr Campbell and his work are also represented in Garema Place, Canberra City, in the form of a bust mounted on a plinth which incorporates his poem *The Heart of the Matter*. He is flanked in this space by fellow poets Judith Wright and A.D.Hope, and a nearby sign proclaims *Private Poetry: Trespassers Welcome*. As well as being a local landowner and much published poet, David Campbell was a Cambridge scholar, a war hero pilot in the RAAF during World War II, a keen fisherman, and an accomplished athlete. A colourful Canberra character indeed.

Max Lawrence

The Heart of the Matter

*Plodding physicists agree
That matter equals energy;
Energy is sweet delight,
Says Blake, and puts the matter right.*

*Stars and singing birds rejoice
In their courses with one voice
And from the dreaming atom grows
The chain-reaction of the rose.*

*Matter would take fire without
The channelling restraints of thought
That lock wild ardours up in stone
To lend his concepts flesh and bone.*

*Stars and singing rejoice
In their courses with one voice
And from the dangerous atom grows
The thorny passion of the rose.*

David Campbell

Thomas Shanahan and his JallaGillingong Run

Shanahans Mountain Track is described in a recent guide map as being a pleasant walk through snow gums to the summit of the mountain with rewarding views over Clear Range to the Tinderry Range. Some people, on the other hand, find the walk a little uninteresting. Perhaps knowing about the people after whom the mountain, the track, and also a creek, are named will make the walk of more interest.

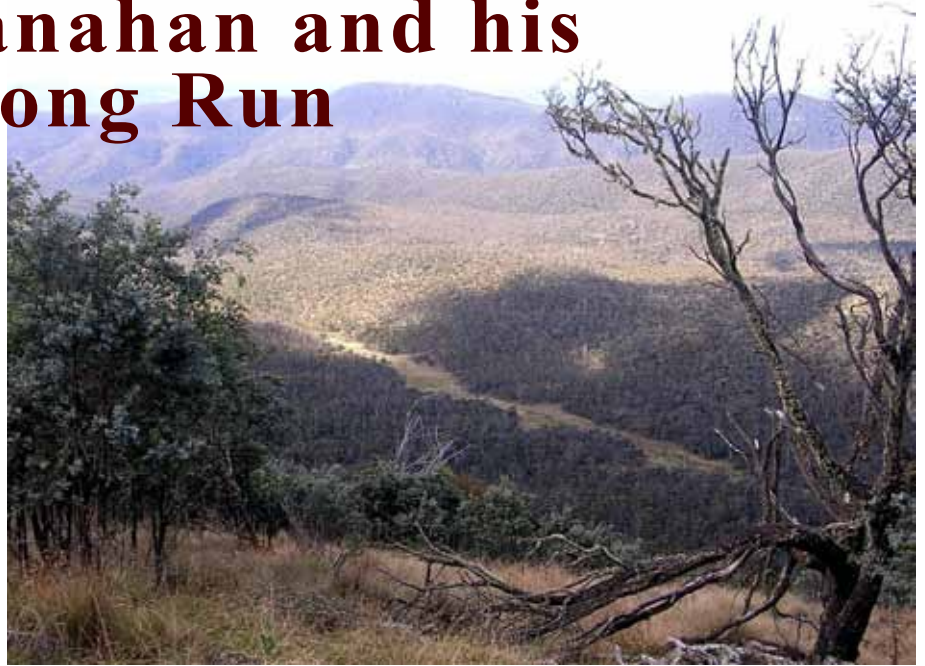
Shanahan and Cotter; Irish exiles

Thomas Shanahan arrived in the Colony of New South Wales in November of 1822 on board the convict ship *Mangles*, along with another 189 Irish convicts. He was a labourer from Tipperary, Ireland, aged 28, who was given 14 years for having forged banknotes in his possession when arrested. One of his fellow passengers was Garrett Cotter, then aged 18, a ploughman from Cork, who had been charged with insurrection and firing on the King's troops. He was at first sentenced to death but, because of his young age, the sentence was later commuted to transportation for life.

The social turmoil of Ireland at that time was extreme, with unemployment, poverty, heavy taxes, famine and starvation the lot of many. The suffering, especially among the labouring classes, was so bad that many had no choice but to break the law to survive. By being sent to the colony Shanahan and Cotter escaped Ireland's most troubled years. Theirs is a typical story that out of the cruel repression of Ireland of the early nineteenth century came success and respect in the convict colony.

Both men were initially assigned to work for people in the Airs (now Campbelltown) district, after which their paths diverged for some years.

Cotter's history is well known (see Bruce Moore's *Cotter Country* for his full story). Briefly, while on his first ticket-of-leave passport with Francis Kenny at Lake George he was accused of stealing a mare, so he absconded. Later he gave himself up, was brought before the court and as punishment was banished to the unknown territory beyond the Murrumbidgee River. He survived this harsh exile only because of the help he received from the Aboriginal elder, Honyong. During that period of exile, Cotter became familiar with the



View from Shanahans Mountain. Photo Babette Scougall

then unsurveyed mountainous region that now forms the southern part of Namadgi National Park.

Shanahan ... 'an honest, sober and industrious person'

Shanahan's history was different. His first 'master' was Daniel Driscoll who, within two years, was so impressed with his convict servant, describing him as 'an honest sober and industrious person', that he was willing to back him when Shanahan petitioned Governor Brisbane to have his destitute wife and children in Ireland brought out to the Colony so that he could provide for them. This request was approved and the family arrived the following year.

The Convict Muster of 1828 finds Shanahan still in Airs, but with a new master, Chris Coleman. By the mid 1830s, however, Shanahan was not only a free man, he held land in the Monquedelan Plain (the now Michelago area) and had applied for and was granted a licence to run a wayside inn, the *Union Arms*. The inn was next to the main dirt track leading down to the newly opened Maneroo district and quickly became a convenient watering hole for all early travellers south. However, being on the outer edge of civilisation and the most southerly wayside inn at the time, it was more likely to have been a sly grog shop where convict stock keepers, shepherds and runaways congregated. A police station wasn't established in Michelago until 1859.

Squatting at JallaGillingong

As early as 1837 Shanahan had also squatted on a large block of unsurveyed land in the unnamed mountains to the west of his Michelago farm. He chose the Aboriginal name JallaGillingong for it. This is the name entered on his first 1837 depasturing licence. Later, for unexplained reasons, the spelling of the name was changed to Tallingillmang, the name used on later entries. The run abutted the southern boundary of James Booth's Demanding Run and together they straddled the upper Naas valley. Its southern boundary abutted that of William Bradley's large Bullanamang Run.

It was in 1839 that Henry Bingham, Land Commissioner for the Murrumbidgee District, arrived at the remote JallaGillingong Run as part of his land survey. He found a small party of three men in residence, looking after 560 cattle and 17 horses on an estimated 3 840 acres. They appeared to have been there for some time. The superintendent of this primitive establishment was recorded as being Shanahan's 23-year-old son, also Thomas, with two unnamed servants. It would appear that one of them was Garrett Cotter, then on his second ticket-of-leave and therefore entitled to find his own employment within the district, even though he was still a convict. Shanahan in 1840 unsuccessfully petitioned for a pardon for Cotter while he was in his employ. (Cotter's conditional pardon didn't come through until 1847.) It was probably Cotter who ran this early establishment

(continued next page)

for the Shanahans. It may even have been Cotter who guided Shanahan up to this mountain hideaway composed of ridge after ridge of thickly wooded hills and deep unexplored gullies. Cotter probably discovered the place and saw its potential during his period of exile. Landlocked gullies were essential in those fenceless days of early grazing.

Apparently no-one permanently lived on this squatting run. It was not a particularly thriving run and appears to have been used as relief country only.

Purchase of 'The Briars'

By 1843 Thomas had accumulated enough money to purchase the large early grant belonging to William Balcombe called 'The Briars' in the Molonglo Plains (near present-day Rossi). After this, Thomas Shanahan left his interest in the Michelago district to his brother David who came out to the colony in 1840 with his family. 'The Briars' became Thomas Shanahan's head station and his family's permanent residence, along with their outstation 'Hazel Dell' at Long Swamp near Boro. The Shanahan family grew and prospered there. By the time of Thomas senior's death in 1874, he was a prominent citizen and highly respected member of the Bungendore–Queanbeyan district, as was also his son. The graves of a number of these Shanahan families are on the property.

At one stage back in the 1840s, Thomas Shanahan snr won local fame when he captured the bushranger Holloway near Bungonia. Shanahan was on his way to Sydney with a horse team from his station on the Molonglo River when Holloway bailed up the party. Shanahan was ordered to strip off his clothes and empty his pockets, which he refused to do. Holloway fired at Shanahan but, fortunately for Shanahan, the shotgun was in bad condition and misfired, giving him the opportunity to drag the bushranger off his horse and, with the help of his men, tie him to the cart and deliver him to the Police Post at Bungonia.

JallaGillingong dispersed

With only fragments of information available about very early squatting runs it's hard to piece together a complete history of JallaGillingong/Tallingillmang. It would appear that it may have been left comparatively untouched for some years. When the Bumbalong Station was taken up by Archibald Peden, he added parts of Shanahan's squatting run to his holdings. Also, the Cotter family later acquired the neighbouring Demanderung Run, as well as blocks of land in the Shanahans Falls Creek valley. In more recent years there was a paddock on Colin and Daphne Curtis's Clear Station that they called Shanaghan's. Daphne always spelt and pronounced Shanahan with a 'g'. As it is now, you can sit on the rocks at the highest point on the Shanahans Mountain Track and see right across Shanahan's run, and down below the creek that bears his name and which was at the heart of the JallaGillingong/Tallingillmang squatting run. It looks hardly touched now. Only the pale thread of a fire trail breaks up the heavily timbered slopes of the ridges in the distance.

A walk in the footsteps of pioneers

So the next time you do the Shanahan Mountain Track you may well be walking in the footsteps of the first two white men who dared to venture into this wild unknown territory — Thomas Shanahan and Garrett Cotter. There is a great possibility, more likely a probability, that they were up

'Is it Tallingillmang Run or should it be JallaGillingong Run?'

What emerged while researching this story is the surprisingly large number of Aboriginal names that are present in the records of this early 1820s and 30s contact period. The early pioneers seemed to like to use the Aboriginal words for their runs, even if they didn't know how to spell them. JallaGillingong [or Tallingillmang as it came to be called] is just one example. The tragedy is that neither version of that name now exists in the Park, while at the same time the Shanahan name is commemorated three times— for the mountain, the creek and the walking track. As one of the first landholders Thomas Shanahan played a role in the Park's history. He used the run from only about 1836–37 to the early 1840s; that is, for less than a decade. Aboriginals on the other hand were there for thousands of years, so we should not allow their words and place names to be forgotten.

Adrian Brown has explained that there is no 't' in the language of the Namadgi people, so the earlier Jalla (also spelt Jaller) Gillingong spelling is the more correct one.

on this mountain together at least during the 1839 to 1842 period, looking down on Shanahan's stock below (or was it theirs?). Did they ever sit there and discuss how they'd been treated since their forced removal from Ireland, the land they loved? Did Cotter tell Shanahan how he managed to survive his extraordinary exiling to the west of the Bidgee?

There's more to this walk than just gum trees.

Babette Scougall

Other place names relating to this story include:

Michelago and its many early spellings — Micilogo, Mikilago, Mickilago, Micalago, Macalego Plain, Micalyn Plains are but a few. 'Micki' is said to mean lightning.

The mountains to the west of Michelago were generally referred to as the Mickelago Ranges (a variety of spellings), but never Clear or Booths.

Shanahan called his first farms 'Micilogo' (etc.) and 'Nimyibelle' (Nimmitbelle, Nimmitabel). They were said to be in the Monquetelan Plains (Monkedelan Plains), which became known as Keefe's Plain after the Keefe family settled there.

Book review

The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia

Bill Gammage

Allen and Unwin, 2011

434 pages, \$49.99 rrp

The central thesis of this weighty but very readable tome by Canberra academic and historian Professor Bill Gammage is that prior to European settlement Aboriginal people used fire to very carefully manage the entire Australian landscape. The result was a far more open panorama than we know today, more akin to the parkland estates held by European gentry in their northern hemisphere homelands. Gammage maintains that once Aboriginal people were no longer able to tend their country, it became overgrown and vulnerable to the hugely damaging bushfires we now experience. Importantly for readers of this journal especially, he maintains that *'what we think of as virgin bush in a national park is nothing of the kind'*.

The research effort put into this book is enormous. There are something like 1500 references in the bibliography at the back of the book, and just about every paragraph in the text is footnoted. The bibliography includes both historical and scientific references, with the emphasis necessarily being on the former. However, Gammage has relatively little to draw on in the way of direct records from truly original sources — the Aboriginal people themselves. Despite having been in this country for 40 000 years or more their history was mainly passed on orally, and with the rapid depletion of their numbers following

European settlement much has been lost.

This has not deterred Bill Gammage. In the first part of his book he quotes extensively from the records and diaries of early white explorers and settlers, and their descriptions of the landscape as they found it. This includes Cook's and Banks' 1770 observations on the extent of fires evident along the eastern coast, the diaries of Charles Sturt, Ludwig Leichhardt, Edward Eyre and other explorers, and the writings of numerous pioneers. Even Abel Tasman is quoted on his view of southern Tasmania as *'pretty generally covered with trees unhindered by dense shrubbery or underwood.'* This historical analysis is then backed up by a very interesting pictorial comparison of early paintings and current photographs taken from similar locations. These cover a wide variety of sites including some from this area (Lake George is one), and others ranging over the whole continent.

The second part of the book examines the fundamentals of nature as they apply to Australia, and the extent to which European land use has disrupted these fundamentals, through such things as soil compaction, increased water runoff, salinity and uncontrolled bushfire. Before 'settlement' Aboriginal people were able to manage the land, its water, plants and animals through judicious use of fire and a highly mobile way of life. This existence was underpinned by a religious code embodied in the Dreaming and the Law, which had sustained a remarkably stable culture and lifestyle for millennia. Clearly, it would seem, Aboriginal people over a very long period had worked out a very sustainable system of living in harmony with their

environment and, broadly speaking, with each other. Just as clearly, it would seem the newcomers had much to learn from the original people, but they haven't been listening.

In the third part of the book Gammage details at some length the various methods and techniques Aboriginal people used to ensure that their country supplied them with the essentials of life, and even a few luxuries. This invariably involved the use of fire to bring on particular plants, attract (and trap) animals and control unwanted growth. It also depended on a high level of mobility, with people travelling over quite extensive tracts of country for which they were responsible, and on which they depended. Even the resources of the deserts were open to them. The strength of the obligation to maintain their country is demonstrated by the example of the Aboriginal people in Tasmania, who continued to use fire, even though it would reveal their presence, and ultimately seal their fate.

The detail of such management practices is examined for each of the capital cities of Australia, including Canberra, by reference to historical records. The early explorers were invariably interested in the potential of the land they saw for sheep and cattle grazing and, accordingly, they usually described what they found in some detail.

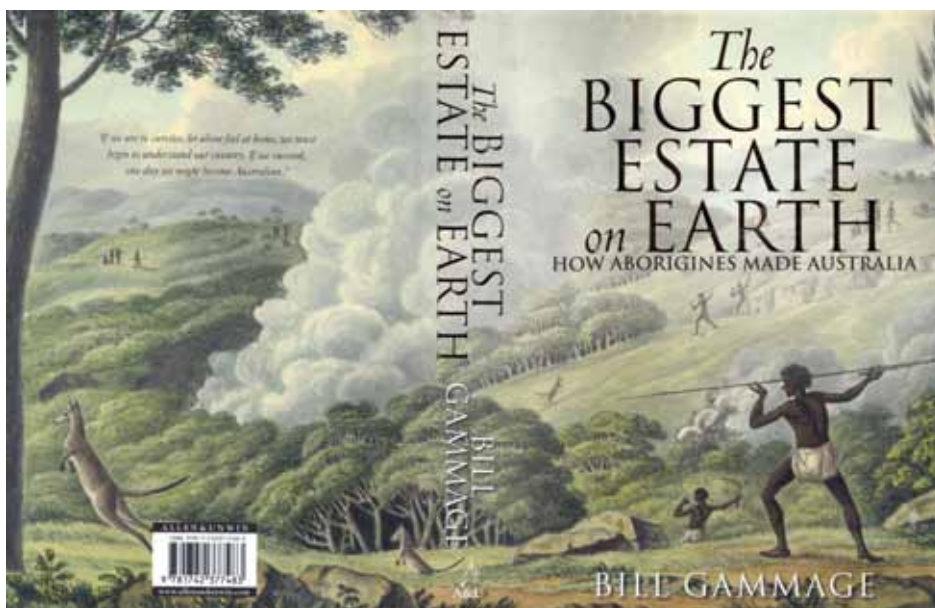
For Canberra, Charles Throsby Smith in December 1820 described 'a beautiful Clear plain ... as far as the Eye could reach all round ... a finest Country as ever was seen'. Gammage goes on to define a particular small plain in the vicinity of today's Australian National University, and notes that *'people burnt carefully to make this plain'*.

In undertaking this huge project Bill Gammage has of necessity been restricted to a somewhat subjective approach, something he freely admits. This is the nature of History. It could be asserted that much of the analysis is based on selected quotes set up to support his underlying hypothesis, and no doubt this is so. Gammage clearly feels somewhat vulnerable on this count, and has included an Appendix rebutting

(continued next page)

Cover image:

Joseph Lycett, c1775-1828, Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroos, c1820, watercolour 17.7 x 27.8 cm (Pic R5689, National Library of Australia)



Report on a bushwalk

Walk: Mt Morgan, 13 May 2012.

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Bernard Morvel, Margaret Power, Max Smith, Mike Smith.

Weather: Cold; breezy with low cloud at first; snow and strong westerly at altitude; briefly sunny late in afternoon.

Leader's comments: Mt Morgan is visited for the views. We saw none. The peak was being blasted from the west by stinging snow. Forecasts had suggested this wintry scenario. The condition of the access road limits opportunities to experience the mountain this way so we took a chance and had a memorable day out.

We piled into Mike's Pajero at Kambah Village, departing 7:30 am and arriving, via Yaouk and Kennedys Roads, at the entrance to *Snowgum* ('For Sale') soon after 9:00 am. Kennedys Road had benefited from weeks of dry weather so the only obstacles were four gates.

Lone Pine Trail is seriously steep; when you have 700 metres to climb it is good that the toughest bit comes early. Margaret spotted the first snow patch at the burnt-out alpine ashes and by the time we turned off to Bung Harris Creek for a break, small grains were falling. Time to don extra layers.

The light dimmed. The footpad was smeared with fused snow and there was sufficient to enlase delicate leaves and fallen trunks. As we rose so did the wind. A robin 'redbreast' (how do they survive?) flitted by as we rounded iced rocks and trees. We were in cloud on the summit at noon, and in the wind we could barely reach the presumed container of the visitors book (it was frozen shut). The exposed rock face was crusted with knobby ice.

We hunkered down for lunch in a surprisingly sheltered, but otherwise unremarkable, spot. Some had wet socks and were feeling cold; we were off before 1:00 pm. The track was not obvious as horse riders visit less often and, with the accumulating snow, the track could not be found. So Mike and Max used GPS and reunited us with it at

the creek. Here it really began to snow and persisted for half an hour.

Morgan (1 874 m) is the second highest in the area after Bimberi and perhaps creates its own weather. As we descended, clouds were breaking into blue, Yaouk Plain was in sun, black cockatoos conversed, and all again seemed fine with the world. We were at the car 3:15 pm. But as we drove out the mountain was dramatically enveloped by a snowstorm. It pursued us briefly as rain; the light was beautiful.

No afternoon tea at Adaminaby (false advertising, sorry). Return was via Boboyan Road where it had also snowed. A pair of eagles were disturbed at a road kill. Arrived Kambah 4:45 pm, total distance 200 km (not 150 — another error!). Mt Morgan was an annual Steve Hill event until 2010 — grand return 2013?

Brian Slee

Membership fees and information survey

In the last week or so you will have received a letter in the mail asking for membership renewals and donations. Part of the letter is a printout of the details we store confidentially on our membership database and we are asking members to check that the information we have (name/s, address, phone number/s, membership type, joining date, your interests in supporting the NPA ACT, email address and an indication whether you want to receive our e-newsletter *Burning Issues*) is still correct.

There is also a survey question we would like you to answer: would you prefer to receive future *Bulletins* in printed form (as usual), as a digital document through your email address, or as both printed and digital copy? Depending on the

survey results, the committee will consider making changes to the way we distribute the *Bulletin*.

Please take the time to check and correct (if necessary) your details, answer the survey question and send the whole form, with your membership dues, back to the office.

Thank you to members who have already returned their renewal form.

Sonja Lenz, Secretary



Book review *(continued)*

criticisms by some scientists. This reads a bit like 'they say, I say', so clearly both sides are capable of quoting selectively. My own feeling is that there is already an impressive amount of science included in the analysis and, together with the presentation of the available historical evidence, this persuades me of the value of the book's conclusions.

The last two paragraphs of the book bear repeating:

This book interrupts Law and country at the moment when terra nullius came, and an ancient

philosophy was destroyed by the completely unexpected, an invasion of new people and ideas. A majestic achievement ended. Only fragments remain. For the people of 1788 the loss was stupefying. For the newcomers it did not seem great. Until recently few noticed that they had lost anything at all. Knowledge of how to sustain Australia, of how to be Australian, vanished with barely a

whisper of regret.

We have a continent to learn. If we are to survive, let alone feel at home, we must begin to understand our country. If we succeed, one day we might become Australian.

Max Lawrence

Report on a bushwalk

Mt Painter and surrounds: birds, flowers, Indigenous artefacts and a B&B!

Esther Gallant kindly put on a gentle walk in our backyard on Sunday 22 April; how could we miss it? Mt Painter and the Pinnacle were to be scaled, prominent ancient volcanic peaks in south Belconnen, but what eventuated exceeded our expectations of a neighbourhood stroll.

Len Haskew, Deidre Shaw, Sonja Lenz and Kevin McCue set off with Esther from a car park on Bindubi Street, through Canberra Nature Park to Mt Painter. The first thrill was a hovering Black-shouldered Kite and, in the same hunting space soon after, a fly-by of an Australian Kestrel. Not to be outdone, a flash of red, black and white signalled a cruising male Scarlet Robin down in the gully. Those were the highlights for the bird watchers with many other common species disturbed by our passing.

Signs of abundant friendship

Clustered pink triangular plant guards attested to a busy and successful planting program near the summit by the Friends of Mt Painter; many contained flowering or recently flowered chocolate lilies, *Hardenbergia* and native grasses. The volcanics here produce a conspicuously richer soil than that in nearby Aranda.

We continued on, skirting the adjacent rural lease areas to the south. The weather forecasters promised showers but they held off until lunchtime on the Pinnacle, and with a cool breeze on our backs we decided not to stay too long. We chatted amiably with a grandmother, father and young son, local residents out for a short pre-lunch ramble to admire a large mob of kangaroos lolling in the long *Themeda* grass just metres away, quite oblivious to us.

The effort put in by the local park care group, Friends of the Pinnacle, was



impressive, an elaborate enclosure, a metal walkway, erosion control and lots of weeding and poisoning of briars, with more ahead of them.

Views from Mount Painter and The Pinnacle

Mount Painter (743 m asl; incorrectly marked as 473 m on the current Canberra Nature Park map) has extensive views in every direction, weather permitting, which it didn't, but the vista from The Pinnacle (709 m asl) is obscured by some magnificent gum trees, which is probably why there are several survey markers there, perhaps not so necessary today with the development of GPS. The old trig site on the summit had been recently renovated.

On the walk, eagle-eyed Sonja spotted several stone flakes left by the Aboriginal inhabitants before European occupation. We examined them with awe before returning them to where they had been discarded who knows how long ago. We noted some trees, shrubs and forbs had become confused by the warm weather and were flowering again.

Rosebud Cottage

On the circuit back Esther led us around the side of Mt Painter through a narrow weed-infested laneway in Cook. We spied a farm complex which I, a Canberra native, had never seen before, slab huts and outhouses in a well-kept 'English' garden. We were taking photographs when we were hailed by a

woman walking purposely towards us. She introduced herself to our surprise as Maureen Tully, one of

the family that has owned the complex since 1937 and then she asked if we would like to see through Rosebud Cottage which is let as a B&B! Surprise hardly describes my reaction but in a few minutes we entered a beautifully maintained cottage, the slabs, as Deidre pointed out, had been expertly finished with an adze. It had all the mod cons carefully set into the heritage cottage interior, the four-poster bed more redolent of a castle in the old country than in a slab hut in the old Ginninderra Village.

Len explained how the builders rebated the slabs into a slot in a horizontal timber foundation slab, preferably a termite resistant timber.

Grateful for the hospitality and tour of this bit of the past, we left on the last leg of our 13 km walk. Arriving at the cars, feeling a little tired, we were revitalised with a hot fresh cuppa and home-made muesli slice whipped up by Deidre in her immaculate motor home, and then it was off home.

Thank you very much Esther!

Kevin McCue



Top. Mt Painter across to the Arboretum
Left. Inside the Rosebud Slab Hut
Right. The Rosebud Creamery
Photos Kevin McCue



Report on a bushwalk

Walk: Bulgar Hill, 15 April 2012.

Participants: (5) Brian Slee (Leader), Rupert Barnett, Phil Anderson, Max Smith, John Kelly.

Weather: Cool at first, warm by afternoon, partly cloudy, mostly still air.

Leader's comments: A new 15 km walk from Bugtown to Gavels Hut via Bulgar Hill, mainly in forest.

We left Kambah Village at 7:00 am in two Subaru, travelling via Boboyan Road (in good condition), Adaminaby and Bugtown Road (4WD, but not a problem) to get to Bugtown. As in 2011, the cows were offended by our presence and impudently 'barked' at us like dogs when we stopped to open one of the six gates.

After a group photo beneath a eucalypt of mighty girth, we set off at 9:20 am on Circuits Trail, climbing gently and then descending to the ruins of New Hut, on the edge of

Nungar Plain, for morning tea. From there we ascended west via the creek through park-like forest to featureless Bulgar Hill (1 515 m), Rupert checking the coordinates to confirm we were there. Maybe it got named by graziers needing a reference point when moving stock between valleys.

We continued west (wallabies crashing about), and a bit north of west, so that we encountered Gavels Hut Trail where it crosses 'Gavels' Creek, adding 1 km to our route. A curious new enclosure has been erected in squishy ground, spanning the creek. Heading south, three distant brumbies lined up to face us but soon fled.

Lunch was at 12:15 pm in a grove of shade trees on the north side of the hut (which is in great condition). Lovely place to contemplate the world. A wagtail caught our eyes and treecreepers our ears. A slowly circling wedgetail made a late appearance before we departed at 1:00 pm.

It was downhill on Gavels Hut Trail to Goorundee Rivulet (full and gurgling, as usual) and then east on Boundary

Trail, which was new to us all. It started with the steepest climb of the day, followed by another ridge. A protest was lodged but the committee failed to convene. More magnificent eucalypts, of unknown variety, came into view. What great ruins they make when they fall, breaking mid-trunk. We were soon at Circuits Trail and back at the cars at 3:10 pm.

At Adaminaby the Big Trout is under cover during refurbishment: be ready for sparkling pink scales and pouting lips. The bakery now closes at 2:00 pm Sunday so we had hot drinks nearby at Snowy Cafe. From there we were on the road, with plenty of dust, reaching Kambah at 5:50 pm. Good day. No great excitements but lovely country.

Brian Slee

Ferals at Thredbo



Feral deer in Kosciuszko National Park, just across the Thredbo River from the campground at Thredbo Diggings, January 2012. Photo Sabine Friedrich

PARKWATCH

National parks are national in name only

It is a peculiar twist of logic that we elevate a handful of Australian actors to be called national treasures, yet our national parks struggle to make even B-grade celebrity status. In truth, our national parks are 'national' in name only. Largely the creation of state governments, these treasures enjoy very little national oversight or protection.

Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke's recent decision to stop cattle grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Park illustrates the critical need to place our national parks under federal oversight. When the Baillieu Government made the decision to introduce cattle into a national park, it walked away from its responsibilities to manage the state's natural environment. At a state level, the decision was widely viewed to be politically motivated. At a national level, it highlighted the fundamental flaws in our national legislation to protect these critical areas. In the past 12 months, the Baillieu Government has also exposed a number of threatened species to logging by changing the *Code of Practice for Timber Production*. In effect, changes to the code allow areas identified for logging to be exempted from threatened species laws.

In the 1990s the states and the Commonwealth agreed that the states would have responsibility for threatened species management in areas targeted for logging under regional forest agreements. Hence, national environmental laws do not apply in logging areas, placing our threatened species at the mercy of state-owned logging interests. Since 1993, Australia has been a party to the global *Convention on Biological Diversity*. Under the Australian Constitution, the Federal Government is responsible for delivering on international obligations for nature protection, with states largely responsible for land management.

Recently, Minister Burke proposed a regulation that damaging activities such as cattle grazing, mining and land clearing in national parks would be referred to the Federal Government for review and approval. This would be an important step in making national parks national, and in restoring greater integrity to our magnificent network of national parks. Taking it a step further, the VNPA and other environment groups are discussing the desirability of national

parks becoming truly national by making their management a 'trigger' under the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. Some state governments, including Victoria's, have responded negatively to this perceived attack on their rights. But can it really be claimed as a 'right' if a government abrogates its responsibility to care for a key area under its jurisdiction?

The Federal Environment Minister stepped into Victoria's cattle debate because of the potential impact of grazing on the threatened Alpine Tree-frog. Alpine sphagnum bogs and fens are also listed under national environment law. But the fact that the grazing 'trial' was in a national park was not in itself a trigger for Federal Government. National parks are the most efficient and effective way of conserving nature, particularly threatened species. Now is the time to recognise the importance of national parks to the nation as a whole by protecting them at a national level.

Park Watch (VNPA),
No. 248 (March 2012)

Plant pests threaten our natives

Australia's national floral emblem, the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*), could fall victim to newly evolving plant pests from overseas, after the Australian Government failed to deal with the recent invasion of Myrtle Rust.

'South African foresters are warning that new diseases attacking Australian wattles grown in plantation in Africa and Asia will reach our shores', said Invasive Species Council CEO John DeJose. 'But the Australian Government is yet to develop contingency plans for these and other looming threats to our natural environment. These new pathogens have evolved the ability to infect several wattle species, just as Myrtle Rust 'learned' how to exploit the weaknesses of our eucalypt species.'

Australia's biosecurity system has no contingency plans to deal with these new pests and diseases, despite the ecological importance of wattles. Myrtle Rust arrived in Victoria in January 2012, having taken less than 2 years to colonise most of Australia's east coast. It may prove to be one of the most calamitous environmental pests of the century. Australia's wattles are nitrogen fixers, a primary source of scarce nitrogen in our ancient soils. No one knows how severely exotic pathogens might disrupt this essential ecosystem service.

'If we don't manage our biosecurity better, our children and grandchildren might inherit an environment so poor it can only support a poor society', Mr DeJose said.

Park Watch (VNPA),
No. 248 (March 2012)

Needed – a conservation vision for Victoria

After the conservation policy debacle over cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park, you'd think it would be a case of 'once bitten, twice shy' for Ted Baillieu. But the political masterminds who dreamt up the plan to give free grazing in a national park to a handful of cattlemen are working behind the scenes to repair the embarrassment in the River Red Gum national parks in northern Victoria.

The Barmah Cattlemen's Association, a small group of privileged landholders who used to receive very cheap agistment for their cattle, is lobbying local National Party MPs for a grazing trial at Barmah. Local National Party MP Paul Weller supports cattle grazing in Barmah National Park. Following the 2010 state election, Mr Weller unilaterally announced in local media that the Baillieu Government would reintroduce cattle into the park. Thankfully, this was categorically ruled out. However, Mr Weller has continued to broadcast in local media outlets his 'aspiration' for a return of cattle to Barmah NP.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria and the local Catchment Management Authority have all recognised the ecological impacts of stock grazing in Red Gum wetlands, so much so that the state government offers incentives to landholders to exclude stock completely from similar, but dwindling, vegetation communities and wetlands on private property. The Federal Government's Murray-Darling Basin Plan aims to spend over \$10 billion of taxpayers' money on putting environmental water into the Barmah Forest and other wetlands to improve their condition.

So why all the fuss by the cattlemen again? The National Party has never supported new national parks; it has a policy to scrap VEAC, and supports logging, grazing, hunting and other activities in Victoria's preserved areas. The Liberal Party on the other hand, has a proud and strong conservation history. It established the Land Conservation

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

Council, created the National Parks Act, introduced a permit system for firewood collection and established numerous national parks that protect Victoria's habitat and biodiversity. The problem really stems from a lack of any cohesive environmental policies from the Baillieu Government either before or since the 2010 election, and a government department (DSE) that is increasingly going along with feral community elements due to a government policy vacuum.

So what's the solution? The VNPA does not believe that Ted Baillieu would want to repeat the Alpine grazing trial debacle. And we certainly do not think that the growing 'anti-conservation' agenda emanating from elements of government is in Victoria's interest. National parks, and the state government itself, should be for all Victorians, not just the vested interests of a few commercial stakeholders. Likewise, environmental policies must be governed by science, not by commercial considerations. What the Baillieu Government lacks is a clear vision that details how it will restore Victoria's fragmented landscape, increase protection for its rare and threatened plants and animals, and give Victorians confidence that their parks are in safe hands. Only then will this government do justice to our world-class system of protected areas, and to the legacy of its predecessors.

Park Watch (VNPA),
No. 248 (March 2012)

Crocodile safari hunts back on the agenda

The Northern Territory (NT) Government is once again seeking approval to introduce a crocodile-hunting safari program. The government is seeking permission to kill 50 saltwater crocodiles, not as a means of controlling

nuisance crocodiles, but a means of collecting money from tourists wishing to obtain trophies from their hunting expeditions.

HSI believes that allowing crocodiles or any Australian native wildlife to be hunted for trophies is outdated and unacceptable, and will damage Australia's eco-friendly reputation. HSI believes that a return to trophy hunting would be a return to the outdated attitude to wildlife from the last century. Crocodiles deserve to be protected and safari hunting poses considerable animal welfare concerns.

The NT Government has tried multiple times to get this proposal through, and each time it has been rejected, reflecting the public opinion of Australians who are opposed to trophy hunting of our animals. HSI is once again opposing the introduction and is urging the Federal Environment Minister to reject the proposal and the NT Government to instead focus on promoting eco-tourism areas.

Humane Society International Newsletter
Vol. 18, No. 1 (March 2012)

Recent national park additions in Queensland

More than 100,000 hectares of precious and biodiverse land across the state has been added to the national park (NP) estate in Queensland. In the far north, more than 42,000 ha of land has been added to the Daintree NP. Nearby Cedar Bay NP has been renamed the Ngalba Bulal NP and now includes an additional 36,810 ha of land.

Kuranda NP has now been granted full national park status. This park forms an important wildlife corridor for a range of animals, including the iconic cassowary, and features both rainforest and open eucalypt forest. Eighteen hectares of unallocated state land has been added to the Djiru NP near Mission Beach. The variety of potential food

plants makes this national park a great place to see a range of butterflies and it is also an important habitat for the endangered southern cassowary.

Near Childers, 431 ha has been added to Wongi NP, which features a string of beautiful waterholes fringed by paperbarks and rushes, and surrounded by eucalypt forest. The National Bicentennial Trail passes through the area, which contains hoop pine rainforest, open eucalypt forest and open woodland with a heath understorey. National parks in the Proserpine region have been boosted by a total of 5,654 ha, [including] an addition of 5,221 ha to the existing Conway NP. The new area of Conway NP means almost the entire length of the 30 km Whitsunday Great Walk is now within national park boundaries.

Remote Dawes NP near Bundaberg has been expanded by more than 3,013 ha to ensure the protection of an endangered remnant of open forest. Tewantin NP near the Sunshine Coast has been expanded with more than 1,000 ha added from forest reserves.

Finally, Pumicestone NP has been increased by 312 ha, helping to secure the integrity of the western shore of the Pumicestone Passage and the long-term protection of threatened habitats that adjoin the Moreton Bay Marine Park.

NPA News (NPA Queensland)
Vol. 82, No. 2 (March 2012)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

Nominations for NPA office bearers and committee 2012/13

Nominations are sought for office bearers and committee members to be elected at the AGM on 16 August 2012.

We nominate

for the position of in NPA ACT in 2012/13

Proposed by (signature) Seconded by (signature)

I accept the nomination (signature) Date

[This form can be photocopied and used for nominations.]



NPA notices



New members of the association

The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Pam Morrison
Liz Coates
Robert Moore
Tony Lawson
Chris and Alison Ware.

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.

This *Bulletin* was prepared by
Editor: Max Lawrence
Sub-editor: Ed Highley
Presentation: Adrienne Nicholson

National Parks Association Calendar

	June	July	August	September
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Mon 11</i>	—	—	—
General meetings	Thur 21	Thur 19	(AGM) ² Thur 16	Thur 20
Committee meetings	Tues 5	Tues 3	Tues 7	Tues 4
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 9	Sat 7	Sat 11	Sat 8

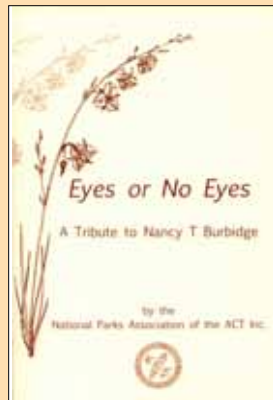
Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet Namadgi Visitor Centre, 9:15am or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am
2. Annual General Meeting. See notice below, check *Burning Issues*



Some copies of NPA ACT's limited edition book

Eyes or No Eyes

our 50th anniversary tribute to our founding member, Dr Nancy Burbidge, are still available at members' price of \$28.



Reminders.

Membership fees are due. Notice page 17

August AGM. Nomination of office bearers, form page 21

Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage, notice page 12

NPA publications. Contact the office, information page 23.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

All members of the association are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Uniting Church Hall at O'Connor at 8:00pm on **16 August 2012**

Business: Minutes of the AGM 2011 President's Report Financial Report Appointment of Auditor
Election of Office-bearers and Committee Any other business

Note: all office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

Nominations for the ensuing year are welcome. Please use copies of the nomination form (*page 21*) to nominate members for office-bearer and committee positions for the coming year.

Following the formal business and **Guest Speaker**, David Large, members are invited to the traditional AGM supper.



Pack for sale

Alison Peters, an NPA member who has departed for an extended stay overseas, very generously donated three near-new backpacks to NPA for the auction at last year's Christmas party. Two of these — a small daypack and a large travel pack — were duly sold, raising \$140 for our coffers. The third is still available. It is a large blue Sea-to-Summit Echo model in brand new condition, suitable for overnight packwalks. It is for sale at the bargain price of \$100 to a lucky NPA member.

Contact Max Lawrence at 6288 1370, or email mlawrence@netspeed.com.au

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Rod Mason, Ngarigo elder, demonstrating Aboriginal traditional land management at 'Garuwanga' (*page 8*).

Photo Sabine Friedrich

Insets. Upper. New approach to old ways for managing the land (*page 8*).

Photo Max Lawrence

Centre. Dr Nancy Burbidge (*page 4*).

Lower. Feral Ox-eye Daisies rampant in Kosciuszko National Park (*page 6*).

Photo Max Lawrence

Back cover

High flow in the Numeralla River at 'Garuwanga' (page 8).

Photo Max Lawrence

General Meeting

Third Thursday of the month, (not December or January)
8:00pm, Uniting Church hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor



Thursday 21 June

Climate change in the local region.

Clem Davis

Visiting Fellow, ANU Climate Change Institute, and formerly Officer in Charge of the Canberra Meteorological Office

What can we learn from a study of long-term observational records regarding climate change and the influences of the El Niño Southern Oscillation climate pattern in Canberra and the Snowy Mountains.

Thursday 19 July

Sub-alpine New Guinea — as big as Tasmania and its own amalgam of Australian and Himalayan high country.

Professor Geoffrey Hope

Visiting Fellow, Dept of Archaeology and Natural History, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Done it all? Tassie and New Zealand walked to death; visited the high mountains in the 'Stans and China? Why not wander around our very own Australian Plate collision mountains and discover the result of making tropical mountains far from similar habitats in the eastern Himalaya and Tasmania/New Zealand. A lost alpine fauna and miles of mud and soggy grass plains, plus all kinds of mountains.

Thursday 16 August Annual General Meeting

Tramping in New Zealand — David, Tim and Ross in Hobbit Land.

David Large
NPA ACT member

Over the past five years, David, with Tim Walsh and Ross Walker, has visited New Zealand several times to tramp some of the lesser known tracks. Despite earthquakes and tornadoes, they have been able to enjoy the spectacular scenery including the Mountain of Doom!

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	Rod Griffiths	6288 6988 (h)
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<i>Vice-President</i>	Vacant	
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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 BluePackets.

NPA Bulletin

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

Deadline for the September 2012 issue: 31 July 2012.

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For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our website
<http://www.npaact.org.au>