



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc



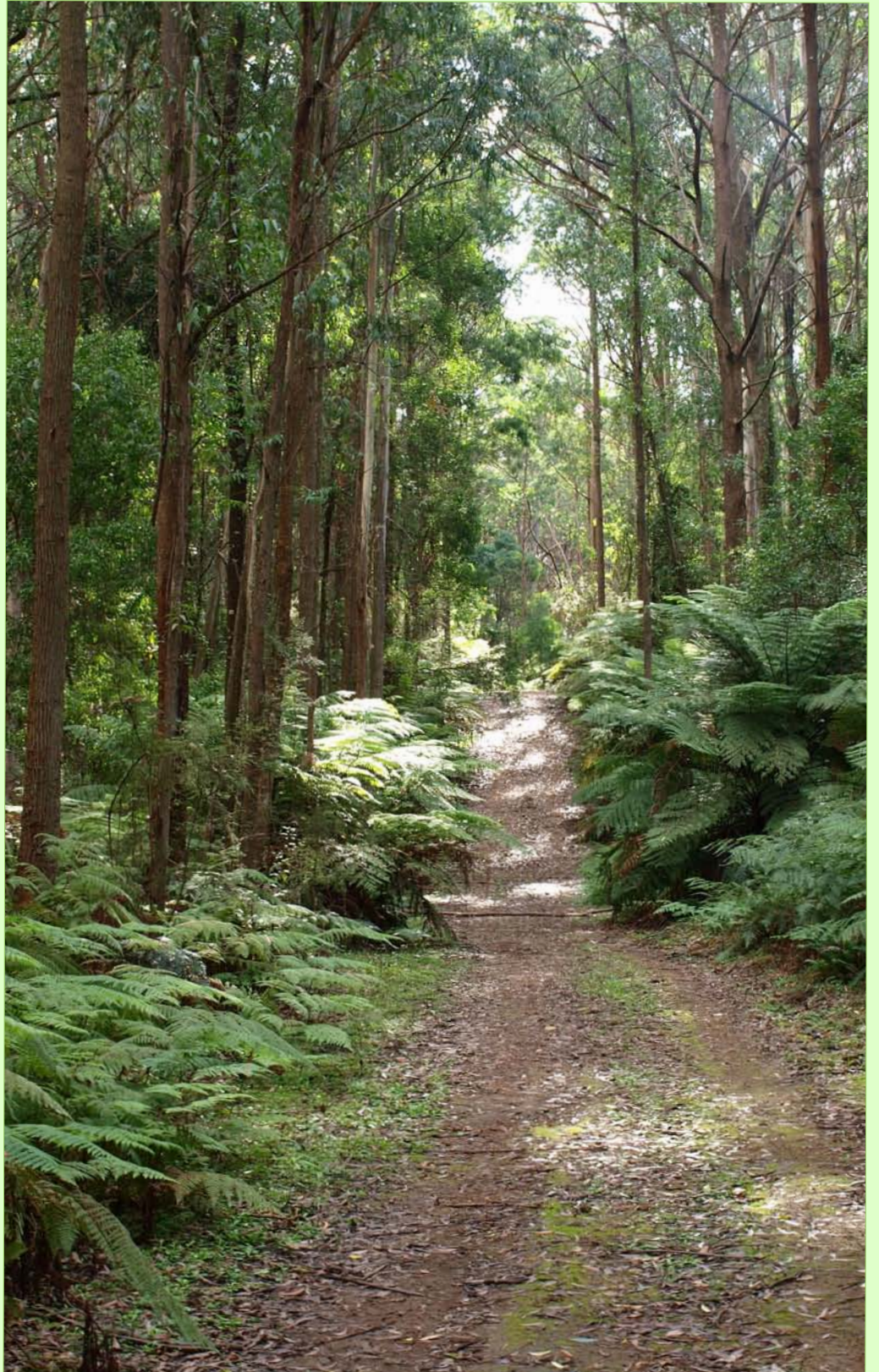
**TrailRider
gets a workout**



**Work parties
full steam ahead**



**More Boboyan
history revealed**



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

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From the President

At a recent NPA general meeting I was asked about my opinion of the federal government's green army proposal. This is one of the major planks of the government's environment policy and you know I want to sound positive. Here is \$500 million of paid resources to help remediate degraded ecosystems across Australia and it will achieve some positive outcomes. However, at the same time the government is taking nearly \$500m out of Landcare, so we are replacing dedicated and committed volunteers and professionals with potentially not so dedicated 'volunteers'. Each of the many green army groups (battalions? regiments?) also needs to be professionally managed, which reduces the bucket of money available for on-ground works. I feel that it is, in many ways, another avenue to limit the funding receivable by environment groups.

Overall, I thought the environment came out of the 2014 Budget very poorly. The Budget saw the cessation of the GVESHO program, which was one of the few sources of funding not tied to projects. Here in the ACT, the Conservation Council will lose a fifth of its revenue because of this decision. Two key components of the National Reserve System no longer have funds specifically allocated to them. And this in the year that Australia hosts the once-in-a-decade World Parks Congress. Funding for renewable energy has been wound back through the proposed abolition of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

We will need to be strong during this period of opposition to the environment. One of the ways you can assist is to help the NPA ACT in its various roles. The NPA ACT, through the

work of its members, is recognised as a strong advocate for the environment. I ask you all to think about the ways you may be able to assist the NPA ACT in its tasks. This year the NPA ACT is looking to update its skills and interests register of its members. The 2014–15 membership form will have a segment on skills and interests, and I urge to you to complete this. It would be great to share the workloads more equally.

I note with pleasure that 2014 is the 30th anniversary of the announcement and gazettal of Namadgi National Park. To mark this milestone, NPA ACT will be holding a picnic at Honeysuckle Creek on the 19 October — please come and celebrate with us. More details will be available closer to the event.

I was very pleased to see the success of the Heritage Week event at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. The NPA ACT organised for the TrailRider all-terrain wheelchair to be available there and provided 'Sherpas' and interpretative guides to accompany the small group of participants on the day. Well done to all the NPA ACT volunteers.

All the best.

Rod Griffiths



NPA ACT News



Namadgi turns thirty

Established in 1960, NPA ACT's main purpose for nearly half of its fifty-plus years was to secure the establishment of a national park for the national capital. This goal was realised on 3 October 1984 with the gazettal of Namadgi National Park.

To celebrate this very important birthday, NPA will be having a picnic at the Honeysuckle Creek picnic area on Sunday 19 October. Full details will be in the September *NPA Bulletin*.

Also, for this anniversary year, NPA's beautiful book *Namadgi. A National Park for the National Capital* will be available to members at the special price of \$15 per copy. They make wonderful presents (hint).

NPA ACT Honours Scholarship

The recipient of NPA's first honours year scholarship at the ANU's Fenner School is Amy Macris. Amy's topic is 'Plenty more frogs in the gene pool? Genetic impacts of chytridiomycosis in alpine tree frogs'. She will be our guest speaker at our next general meeting on Thursday evening, 19 June. For details, see page 23.

The winner of our second scholarship has recently been announced: Bhiame Eckford-Williamson. His Honours thesis will investigate the role of young people in Aboriginal environmental stewardship organisations. The project has been designed in partnership with Northern Territory Indigenous groups and the Ngunnawal Aboriginal Rangers based in Canberra, ACT. The thesis title will be 'What will be the role of young people in Aboriginal stewardship groups in the years to come?'

Art Week

Bookings are open for the 2014 Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage. Dates are Saturday 6 September to Saturday 13 September 2014. Remember, this is not a week for 'professional artists' but a week to look around and photograph, write, draw, think, sew, knit, paint, walk, weave, sketch and talk. Or just come and wander around and be inspired by the bush and good company. For those staying overnight there is a \$30 per night fee.

For details, contact Christine Goonrey at cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au or phone 6231 8395.

Yerrabi signs

The Yerrabi walking track was an early

project of NPA following the establishment of Namadgi.

NPA has contributed to the recent updating and renewal of the interpretive signage along the track, and this is now in place. It is to be officially opened by the Minister, Shane Rattenbury, on Sunday 15th June.

World Parks Congress comes to Sydney

The IUCN World Parks Congress is a one-in-ten year event that brings together 3000 people from 160 countries. This is not just 'another conference': it's an international event for those concerned with the world's cornerstone of biodiversity conservation — the global system of protected areas.

This decade it's Australia's turn. The Congress will be held at Sydney Olympic Park from 12–19 November 2014. NPA has offered to sponsor an ACT ranger to attend the congress, and the Parks Service has since decided that it will sponsor a contingent of ACT rangers.

The congress is open to all. For details see <http://www.worldparkscongress.org>

'Places you love'

The 'Places you love' alliance, representing more than 40 Australian environment groups (including NPA ACT), said in its submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment's inquiry into Streamlining Environmental Legislation that it opposes the federal Coalition's proposal to hand all environmental approval, assessment and enforcement powers to state governments.

The Alliance says that the 'One stop shop' model of environmental assessment and approvals will mean greater uncertainty for business, more legal battles and higher costs. It says 'cash strapped states can't be trusted to look after our environment, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* has cost business less than 0.1 per cent of investment in its first nine years'.

For more information, go to www.placesyoulove.org

Trouble in Tassie

Green group the Tarkine National Coalition (TNC) took legal action against former federal environment

minister Mark Butler's approval last year of an iron-ore mine in the Tarkine. The TNC argued the cumulative impact of three mines planned in the area by Venture Minerals on threatened species such as the Tasmanian devil was not taken into account. But the federal court found against the TNC. Much of the Tarkine was recommended for national heritage listing but only a small section has actually been listed.

On the wider front, as reported in the *Canberra Times* on 18 May, the federal government will push on with a bid to wind back protection of Tasmanian forests, despite a draft decision against it by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature — the same body running the World Parks Congress in Sydney in November — advised the Committee to reject the government's submission to cut 74000 hectares from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Greens leader Christine Milne said the draft decision's outright rejection of the proposed cut is the best possible result for Tasmania's forests, Australia's international reputation, and the integrity of World Heritage sites everywhere.

Max Lawrence

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Thursday 21 August 2014

Business: Minutes of the AGM 2013

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 office-bearer and committee positions for the coming year are welcome. Please copy the nomination form on page 5.

NPA TrailRider at Heritage Festival



As part of Heritage Week, NPA organised a demonstration on 19 April of the TrailRider, the all-terrain wheelchair that was the association's centenary gift to Canberra last year. The venue was Namadgi Visitor Centre and the route was around the Woodlands Trail. NPA helpers were Deidre Shaw, Adrienne Nicholson, Graham Scully, Steven Forst and Syd Comfort.

We also were given wise advice and ideas for the future by two proud wheelchair users and active members of the community of people with disabilities. Their backgrounds included multi-day bushwalking and mountain biking.

Sue said: 'I am really glad that NPA has made this contribution to opening up the ACT's beautiful bushland for people with disabilities to enjoy, and I hope it will lead to more and more facilities and track becoming available in the future. Thanks very much, once again, for all the work you have put into the excursions we held on Easter Saturday,

and to the promotion of the TrailRider and to figuring out how its use can be maximised in the ACT and environs.'

Elizabeth said, 'For the first time in 16 years I felt I was **in** the bush, **not on the outside** looking in', while Jim, Annie, Lily and Callum, warmly thanked Graham and the NPA 'for giving our

daughter Lily the chance to enjoy the gorgeous bushland of the Namadgi National Park. The TrailRider is a liberating piece of equipment for people in wheelchairs and also surprisingly well-balanced and easy to steer for the two assistants. We will certainly use it again and will spread the word amongst our networks.'

Our committee has shown great foresight and compassion in purchasing the TrailRider and donating it for use through the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. I am confident that there is huge potential to expand the use of it and will be following this up over the next few months.

Graham Scully

Above left. The whole family enjoying the bush together.

Below. Elizabeth, well rugged up, sets off for the Woodland Trail with two 'sherpas' and an explainer.

Photos Graham Scully



Clickety-clack, clickety-clack at Wagonga Inlet, Narooma

Mesas of mudflats rise out of receding tide to reveal armies of soldier crabs with curled-up legs and a single, scythe-like weapon attached to one claw. They emerge from wet, sloppy underground bunkers in surprisingly clean blue uniforms. The sand closes behind them as they ascend to do battle. They are busy making balls of sand. Why? To shoot at enemies? For fun? I, the enemy wearing body crushing boots, advance, camera in hand. Their creaking, crackling bodies go clickety-clack, clickety-clack like a dozen pairs of scissors at a busy barber shop. They raise that

lethal looking claw as if to attack but then, in the face of a giant from *Gulliver's Travels*, decide to plead 'not me, not me, not me' and retreat back into the mud — blue body rotating sideways and legs pushing up sand. I walk over the top, oblivious of the homes I am crushing, to chase another lot for that elusive photo that never quite succeeds. A while later I look back and they have re-emerged, clickety-clack, clickety-clack, clickety-clack. The army marches on. It cannot be crushed.

Klaus Hueneke

Our youngest members?

Two of our young grandchildren, aged 8 and 6, wanted to go for a bushwalk and we decided that a visit to Pryors Hut would be just long enough for them to walk — and far enough for Grandpa with a recovering broken ankle and their Mum carrying tents, food and gear for three. It was raining and the forecast was not promising. Luckily the rain stopped as we arrived at the gate and didn't start again until we were happily sitting in front of a nice fire in the hut.

Children see so much more than we gung ho adults — anxious to keep up our speed and get there! We would have missed the red toadstool, the death cap mushrooms, the rainbow leaf, the multi-coloured alpine grasshopper (can you eat it grandpa?) and many other things had we not had our eager-eyed companions. Mum and the kids slept in the hut; Helen and I chose the tent — and a better night's sleep than their mother had.

Next morning we set off for the summit of Mt Gingera finding more wonderful things on the way and bogong moth remains in the small shelters at the top. The clouds settled at the top just as we arrived so the children missed out on



Freya and Tulley Lewis on the way to Pryors Hut. Photo Graham Scully

the view but were delighted to be on top of those magnificent granite tors.

We have joined them up to NPA and our hope is that their love of nature will

continue to grow with them and that, as adults, they will be strong defenders of all things natural.

Graham and Helen Scully

To the editor, *NPA Bulletin*

Why join NPA ACT?

While speaking to Graham Scully during his much appreciated welcome to NPA, he suggested that other members may be interested in my reasons for joining at this stage of my life. I am 76 years old and, had my oncologists been correct 18 months ago, I would not still be alive. I joined because I have very good friends amongst your membership. I well know and appreciate the good work NPA has done and is doing and, in its advocacy role, membership numbers give strength.

I also belong to another NPA, Noosa Parks Association, which is responsible through the dedication of its members for the national parks in the Noosa Shire in Queensland.

With Kindest Regards,

Mike Ogden

NPA ACT Annual General Meeting

Nominations for NPA office bearers and committee 2014/15

Nominations are sought for office bearers and committee members to be elected at the AGM on 21 August 2014.

We nominate

for the position of in NPA ACT in 2014/15

Proposed by (signature) Seconded by (signature)

I accept the nomination (signature) Date

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

Dananbilla update



in a regular grid pattern over 2ha. This work is experimental, with the aim being to out-compete the spiny burrgrass in the medium term and then have the short-lived acacias acting as pioneer species in the longer term.

All the trees and seeds that were planted during the three days were sourced locally and mixed to ensure genetic variability.

The September 2013 issue of the *Bulletin* contained three articles that described various aspects of Dananbilla Nature Reserve and the NPA's volunteer work party activities to assist with its conservation. Since that article an additional 2-day work party was conducted over 5–6 June 2013 and three 3-day work parties have been conducted over 29–31 October 2013, 12–14 March 2014 and 14–16 April 2014, with a fourth planned for 27–29 May 2014. A total of some 10.5km of stock fencing has been removed and approximately 500m remains (plus the removal of barbed wire from other sections).

However, the April 2014 work party was a watershed event for a number of reasons.

Eucalypt plantings

In addition to the removal of the last significant section of stock fencing, 280 *Eucalyptus blakelyi* and 680 *E. albens* seedlings were planted as tube stock across nine areas of the reserve. NPWS ranger Andrew Moore and his assistant located the planting sites with star pickets and pre-delivered the tube stock to each location. Given the high moisture level in the soil, no watering-in was undertaken. The only consistently applied technique to aid in the trees'

establishment was the placement of a biodegradable plastic weed mat at the base of each (*photo at lower right*). However, in the two southernmost sites the trees were also planted in existing tree enclosures to help prevent damage and grazing by kangaroos.

The density of planting was low (*photo at top*) in an attempt to produce a grassy woodland. However, the NPA members present would be pleasantly surprised if the density of mature trees reflects that as planted.

Tackling spiny burrgrass

On the last afternoon, the team relocated to an area on the south-western side of the reserve that was added some 8 years ago. This small, flat addition has a number of high conservation values, including various lily species and a fine example of the succession of eucalypt/callitris forest from the steep slopes of the Dananbilla Range to the gently sloping valley floor. However, there are a number of weed species present, one of which in particular is targeted for long-term eradication. Spiny burrgrass (*Cenchrus* species) does not like shadowing conditions under tree canopies. Therefore, the work party assisted with the direct seeding of 5kg of *Acacia dealbata* and *A. deatii* seeds

sourced locally and mixed to ensure genetic variability.

I would like to thank those who have participated in this series of mid-week work parties. Although additional demands have been placed on those concerned, I think the results are obvious and NSW NPWS is grateful for our assistance in progressing this project to this stage.

Martin Chalk, Volunteer Coordinator, April 2014



More of the volunteer workers

Brian Slee, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Adrienne Nicholson, Martin Chalk and Kathy Saw taking a short rest on the way out from the April NPA work party at Stockyard Arboretum.

Photo Max Lawrence

Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct: good things continue



Friends of Glenburn Work Party, April 2014. Photo Max Lawrence

Since my last report in the December 2013 *NPA Bulletin*, several major developments have taken place or are in train.

Perhaps the most important are the following:

Glenburn Homestead. A Parks Service carpenter has completed repairs to the corner posts of the slab home. Other minor 'maintenance' is scheduled for the homestead including the insertion of perspex in the windows of the slab home and realigning the downpipe to the tank attached to the pisé home.

The Friends have also mowed the grass inside the post-and-rail fence on a couple of occasions. There is now a good cover of grass over much of the area following the reseeding last year and the subsequent good rains.

Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard. The Friends have continued with the capping of the walls at Colliers ruins under the expert guidance and supervision of Head Ranger, Dean Darcy. In addition, rocks have been removed from inside and around the ruins to make mowing safe, and re-emerging blackberries have been dug out.

Also, the outdoor setting donated by Brian Slee has been put in place between the quince copses and in front of the very large pear tree. It will provide a great facility for visitors to rest and have a bite to eat in comfort. Thanks Brian.

Later in the year, the capping of the ruins wall will be completed.

The completion of the capping, together with the erection of the rabbit-proof fence (see below) and the

progressive elimination of blackberries that has taken place over the past couple of years, will mean that several very significant milestones will have been achieved by the Parks Service and The Friends of Glenburn in the protection and conservation of the site.

The Parks Service has employed contractors to erect a **400 metre rabbit-proof fence** around Colliers Homestead ruins and orchard. Over the coming months, the Parks Service will seek to eradicate the large number of rabbits that are now trapped within the fence.

The erection of the fence is a major protection action. Not only will it lead to the elimination of rabbits from the site and the damage they cause, but also it will protect the ruins and orchard from damage by stock and feral pigs.

The Friends, with the assistance of NPA and private donors, made a \$3300 donation to the cost of the fence. Many thanks to NPA and the private donors.

This financial contribution together with other previous expenditure by The Friends and the work by The Friends work parties have earned the NPA and The Friends a pile of 'brownie points' from the Parks Service. We fight well above our weight in the protection and conservation of the early European structures in the Glenburn/Burbong historic precinct.

Discovery of some new information.

- Colliers homestead was built for George Campbell towards the end of the 1870s – probably in 1879 on land he did not then, or subsequently, own. In December 1879, the Inspector of Conditional Purchases described it as 'Completed except internal fittings'.
- William Collier was born in Ireland in 1842 (or 1843). It was previously thought that he had been born in Queanbeyan although no records of his birth had been found.

There is continued involvement of the teachers and students of the **Canberra**

Institute of Technology's Department of Horticulture and Floristry in the protection and conservation of Colliers orchard. A field excursion was held, with lectures and some practical work, including some pruning of the quinces to make a couple of pathways through the two large copses.

Minister Rattenbury advised Rhonda Boxall that the **Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) had committed to investigate** whether the Coppin chimney and fireplace should be stabilised. Rhonda had written to the Minister on behalf of several descendants of John and Catherine Coppin on the matter.

Promotion of the area through drive/walks for interested groups has continued. During the recent Canberra Region Heritage Festival, for example, The Friends led an event which described some of the journeys that some of the early European settlers made before and after Glenburn/Burbong. My notes are now up on the NPA website www.npaact.org.au under The Friends of Glenburn.

Col McAlister

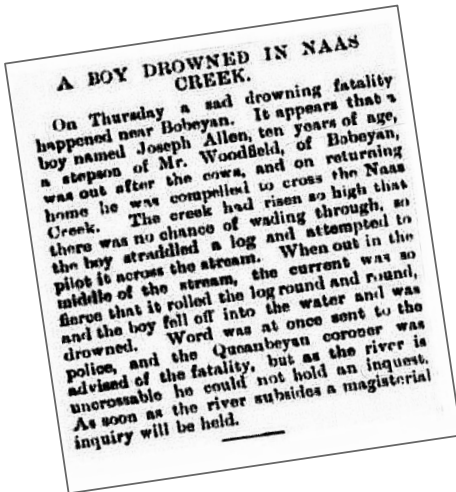


Col McAlister at the ACT Volunteer of the Year Awards, 13 May 2014. The Friends of Glenburn were nominated in the Team category, which was won by St Nicks Young Carers Program. Photo Max Lawrence

Graveyard at Boboyan Homestead

The stories behind the first two graves in a small but historic graveyard were told in an article entitled 'Boboyan tragedies' in the *NPA Bulletin* of September 2013. They concerned the 1850 deaths of Mary Westerman and her baby who were crushed under an overturned dray; and the 1865 death of Sarah, tenth child of Flora and Will Brayshaw, who died of diphtheria.

A brief article, published in the *Queanbeyan Age* of 28 March 1894, solves the mystery of the third grave.



A BOY DROWNED IN NAAS CREEK

On Thursday a sad drowning fatality happened near Bobeyan. It appears that a boy named Joseph Allen, ten years of age, a stepson of Mr. Woodfield of Bobeyan, was out after the cows, and on returning home he was compelled to cross the Naas Creek. The creek had risen so high that there was no chance of wading through, so the boy straddled a log and attempted to pilot it across the stream. When out in the middle of the stream, the current was so fierce that it rolled the log round and round, and the boy fell off into the water and was drowned. Word was at once sent to the police, and the Queanbeyan coroner was advised of the fatality, but as the river is uncrossable he could not hold an inquest. As soon as the river subsides a magisterial inquiry will be held.

A policeman from Michelago is said to have attended the burial as witness.

I have managed to find out more about the boy and his stepfather, thanks to the wonderful 'Monaro Pioneers' website (www.monaropioneers.com). The stepfather was Henry Woodfield,

youngest son of Elizabeth Crawford, third daughter of Alexander Crawford who, together with Charles McKeahnie, purchased the Bobeyan Squatting Run from John Grey in 1844. Elizabeth married Joseph Woodfield, a convict, at 'Guilhew', a property near Bungonia, in the same year, and just three months after Woodfield received his ticket-of-leave. Elizabeth's older sister, Flora, also married her convict Will Brayshaw in 1844. It is doubtful that Alexander attended either of his daughters' weddings that year. Elizabeth had met Joseph Woodfield a couple of years earlier, when the Crawford family sought employment with Ryrie on his large land grant 'Arnprior' on the Shoalhaven River near Braidwood, where Woodfield was serving his time.

After they married, Elizabeth and Joseph remained in the Braidwood-Goulburn district, as required by Joseph's conditional pardon, and had a family of six children, one at least born at Boboyan (Agnes in 1854). Joseph died in 1860. Five years later Elizabeth had another child she named Henry Woodfield (father not identified). Elizabeth had kept in close contact with her Boboyan relatives over the years, so all her children, including Henry, came to know the district well.

In 1890, Henry married Anastasia Allen (the drowned boy's mother) in Bungendore, her home town. About the same time, Henry selected two blocks of land on Grassy Creek, on the eastern side of Potters Hill, just south of Potters chimney (portion 12, a conditional purchase of 40 acres; and portion 13, a conditional lease of 80 acres). Here they tried to make a living by raising turkeys, trapping wallabies and brumby running. Their daughter (Agnes Violet) was born there in 1892. Then, in 1894, the tragic drowning in the Naas Creek took place, perhaps near its junction with Grassy Creek. The 1890s were a particularly bad time for small-time farmers. Henry and Anastasia

The neglected and decrepit gravesite as it is today. Photo Annette Smith, 2013



Old Boboyan Homestead chimney and paving. Photo Martin Chalk, 2010

(Annie) probably found it a struggle to remain independent on their smallholding and moved to Bungendore to find employment.

Unlike the Colverwell graves at Kowen, those at Boboyan Homestead have no headstones, suggesting that the families were too poor at the time to pay for one, though a wooden cross probably was placed there initially. The remoteness of the Boboyan Valley wouldn't have helped. Concern and respect for the graves was shown by the Brayshaw family by having the graves inside the perimeter fence of their home paddock, thus keeping grazing animals off them.

Each grave represents the personal grief and sorrow of a family who once made their home here. Their lives were only loosely connected back in the 1800s but within two generations all the families who are represented in this graveyard — the Crawfords, Brayshaws, Woodfields and Westermans — became one large, extended family, by marriage as well as bloodline. They form an important link with the history of the

(continued next page)



Graveyard at Boboyan Homestead *(continued)*

Boboyan district, and that history is now the Park's history. So, next time you walk in this beautiful valley, take time to visit the site. While it's quite neglected-looking right now, with metal star pickets indicating the possible site of just one grave, it has the potential to become an attractive and interesting site.

It would be more fitting perhaps if, one day, the position of each grave were to be identified, a small fence erected around each one and a sign placed nearby to explain this important heritage site.

While on the subject of graves in the Boboyan area, there's another one, north of Brayshaw's hut, but this one is still a mystery waiting to be solved.

This grave is believed to be part of a very old orchard that once grew in the paddock to the north of Davey Brayshaw's home, but long before his time there (1903–31). The site is at a bend in the Boboyan Road within view of the old slab dwelling. The wooden fence posts are all down now and hard to see from the road when the grass is long. For some reason the orchard/grave enclosure fence line was orientated differently from all the other old fence lines on the property. The enclosure is said to have been divided into two sections by an internal fence.

Roma Brayshaw, who lived in Davey's house from 1931 to 1936 with her husband Ted, said they had apples, plums, pears and cherries from the orchard. According to Noel Luton, who took over Dick Brayshaw's land in the 1950s, the trees in the orchard would have been as old as the ones growing at Boboyan Homestead (established in the 1840–50s). He thought that the trees were too old to produce fruit; at least he couldn't remember ever seeing any fruit on them.

If any reader has any information about this grave and old orchard, no matter how small, please get in touch with the Editor.

Babette Scougall



Above. Remains of an old, fenced enclosure to the north of Brayshaw's hut at a bend in the Boboyan Road. It is believed to have been a grave and orchard enclosure. Photo taken by Babette Scougall in 1985.

Below. A more recent view of Brayshaws hut taken by Babette Scougall in 2013.



Remembering Alan Ray

In the March *Bulletin* we noted the passing of Alan Ray, a long-term member and friend of NPA who was almost certainly better known to the Canberra public as something of an Aussie Rules legend. In fact, Ainslie Oval was to be renamed in his honour. Alan's wife Pam has since responded with a very nice letter. It reads in part as follows:

The grand public ceremony on the first day of the football season, 29 March, to honour him and to formally rename the oval, was a resounding

success and very moving. It was a wonderful day when all of our family returned to Canberra to join in the ceremony to celebrate their father and grandfather. The icing on the cake, of course, was that his beloved senior Ainslie team had a convincing win over their Sydney opponents on the day. I have to say, though, that bushwalking and being in the mountain country, here and abroad, was Alan's favourite thing as he got older.

Max Lawrence

Diary of a not-so-lone ranger

Canberra is known as the 'Bush Capital'. Its many nature reserves don't just manage themselves. Matthew Higgins provides an engaging insider's account of the rangers and others who keep the reserves running.

The ACT has one of the highest proportions of protected environment in Australia. Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and the multifarious reserves that combine to form Canberra Nature Park mean that a majority of the Territory is conservation estate. Canberrans are very fortunate in that.

These reserves are run by a very dedicated band of people and, in 2000, I had a chance to join them as a temporary ranger with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The notion of ranger work had been on my mind for a while, no doubt due to my frequent interaction with park staff during bushwalks and in connection with my high-country historical work.

A memorable first day

I was appointed during the intake for that year on a typical short-term contract. On a cold July morning I arrived for duty at the Canberra Nature Park (north) depot in wonderfully named Grimwade Street, in the heart of Canberra's northern industrial precinct of Mitchell. Elsewhere on the street were two brothels, a car yard, a radiator repairer and a plumbing business. Mitchell has a style all its own. Within minutes I was in

a parks 4WD accompanying Senior Ranger Peter Mills (whom I knew) as he answered a wildlife call.

The call was in response to a phone message from a member of the public reporting a kangaroo that had been hit by a car in the suburb of Hackett. As I quickly found out, usually in these cases the only option is to shoot the badly injured roo to humanely end its suffering. Peter and I found the animal lying near houses. Peter, after carefully checking the area to make sure a shot could be made safely, took aim at the kangaroo at close range and cleanly shot it. We then took the carcass into nearby bushland and laid it to rest. My first (sad) duty had been performed.

Whenever possible, other injured animals and birds were taken to the RSPCA or a dedicated band of vets who treated native wildlife for eventual return to the bush.

Urban wildlife

Most of the work for rangers attached to Canberra Nature Park (CNP) was what we called simply 'urban wildlife'. CNP is made up of a collection of separate nature reserves scattered through the city and suburbs. Given that by its very nature the Bush Capital has suburbs cheek by jowl with bushland areas, interaction between humans and wildlife is frequent and rangers are called out constantly to deal in a variety of ways with these interactions when they become problematic.



*Matthew with a baby wombat at wildlife carers Suzy and Mark Watson's home.
Photo Stephanie Haygarth*

'Maggies'

One of the busiest times of the year is in late winter and spring when all sorts of animals and birds are breeding. In particular, magpies breed during this time and, as many Australians know, can become quite aggressive in defending their nest territory until the young have hatched. People — particularly cyclists — often get swooped and are sometimes struck by the adult birds.

As soon as we received a call about swooping maggies, we'd install warning signs in that area. We always made sure we wore hats and sunglasses for protection. Once in a new Gungahlin suburb I was dive-bombed constantly as I mounted the signs. I was glad that I wasn't living near that spot — magpies can be incredibly intimidating. People sometimes souvenired the signs and that inevitably led to further swoops. Of course the birds were just doing their thing. It seems to me that magpies become badly aggressive only when they've been harassed by humans.

Snakes

Another job as the weather warmed up was capturing snakes in people's yards. Reptilian visitors to backyards are quite common in Canberra and mostly the snakes disappear again without drama.

(continued next page)

Rangers, park workers and volunteers help to maintain the ACT's extensive reserve system. This view from Old Joe hill in Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve includes Mts Majura and Ainslie at left, Black Mountain right of centre, and Namadgi and Tidbinbilla on the horizon.

Photo Matthew Higgins



Diary of a not-so-lone ranger *(continued)*

But occasionally the snakes have to be captured and removed for release into the bush. I wasn't trained in snake-handling but I accompanied other rangers who were. Once with Ranger Aaron I went to a north Canberra house and Aaron demonstrated his expertise with the long-handled net that we used. The snake was captured easily, to the relief of the householder.

Another time with ranger Andrew 'Hal' Halley, we were called to a house where the quite terrified owners were inside, calling out through the door that they'd seen a brown snake go under the front concrete path just outside the door! There was no option but for Andrew and I to get to work with sledgehammers and (with the owners' consent — and in fact their encouragement) break up the path to retrieve the snake. It was already way past normal knock-off time when we finished, and from there I went to a course as part of my ranger training. It was a big day.

Hal and I worked together on a number of different jobs and built a close friendship. To some that was odd as he was a real macho, rugby league-loving man and I was viewed as the academic, but we got on famously. His parks vehicle usually rocked to the composite music tapes that he played when we went off on a job; I've loved Fat Boy Slim and Billy Bragg ever since.

Roos

Although some wildlife call-outs could be tense (dealing with angry residents or difficult animals) there was humour too. One of the funniest incidents took place out at suburban Melba when early one morning a home owner reported a kangaroo in her yard. Roos often get into yards but if left quietly alone will make their way out again come nightfall. In this case, the Eastern Grey (which must have been frightened and chased by dogs) had jumped a 2-metre fence into the yard and couldn't get out.

So, we put into operation the usual procedure — two rangers get on each end of a tennis net and march toward the roo, blocking it into a corner. When it bounds out, the rangers net it, tie it up and remove it for release into the nearest bushland. Except on this occasion, we missed with the net and the frightened kangaroo bounded over the side fence into the next property.

There was no option but to go next door and get the roo. We knocked on the front door and the unsuspecting owner, an Asian-Australian man who appeared to have been woken up by our banging, answered the door. 'Sorry to disturb you

but we have to get the kangaroo out of your backyard.' 'But I don't have a kangaroo in my yard.' 'Yes, you do.'

So we tramped through the house (there was no space beside the houses, they were like a row of terraces) and got the net out again. This time we caught the roo. We bound it up, then hastily carried the struggling animal through the house to the parks vehicle out the front. If the roo had got loose inside the house, I don't like to think about what would have happened. The last thing the nonplussed owner saw was us driving away with a kangaroo writhing around in the back of the 4WD. We safely released it at Dunlop Grasslands nearby. By then it was about 7.30 am. Job well done.

Possums

Some of the wildlife methods that we used on the job later came in handy at home. A common problem in Canberra is with possums getting caught in roof orifices like flues. The best procedure is to drop the end of a rope down and let things be until the possum becomes active at twilight. Usually the possum will work out that it can climb the rope and it releases itself. Some time after I'd finished my ranger stint, when my wife Steph and I found black sooty footprints in our living room at home and found a possum was in our chimney just above the fireplace, I did the rope trick down the chimney and it worked a treat.

Cattle!

Cattle were still grazed quite close to Canberra suburbs, and our work included liaising with graziers. On one occasion we joined police to close busy Gungahlin Drive in order to move a mob of cattle across it to a new paddock. After the police officers closed the road we parks staff started moving the mob, on foot. All of the animals behaved themselves — except one. For some unknown reason that cow simply would not cross the road, no matter how hard I pursued it. It would run one way and I'd go to block it, then it would break the other way and I'd run after it.

Impatient drivers — who by now had been queued for maybe 15 minutes — started calling from their



Snakes are another wildlife call answered by ACT rangers.

Photo Matthew Higgins

cars. In the end we had no choice but to give up and put the recalcitrant cow back in the old paddock, and reopen the road. Still, it was good exercise!

Fond memories from Mulligans Flat

Digging holes and placing sign posts in them might not be everyone's cup of tea, but installing most of the Mulligans Flat Bird Walk signage is one of my treasured memories from rangers. It was spring, after a wet winter, which meant the ground was soft for digging and there were heaps of beautiful native wildflowers blooming. Mulligans was then far from the suburbs which have since almost engulfed it and the place had a delightful sense of isolation. It was a pleasure to do a lot of that job on my own, with just birdsong for company. Whenever I return to Mulligans I look at those signs with pleasure.

Camaraderie of a great team

One of my lasting impressions of the ranger work was the camaraderie among staff. Parks staff at these depots essentially consisted of rangers and park workers. Rangers usually did all the wildlife work and the park workers did the more manual and construction-type jobs. But often we worked together, like when having an all-out weed blitz which involved cutting woody weeds and applying weedicide, or when fumigating rabbit warrens. At lunchtime the cohesiveness of the group was again cemented at the ping-pong table in the lunch room. Table tennis was engaged in eagerly, with the players watched and encouraged (or booed, depending on personalities) by the rest of the staff.

My ranger months were a great learning experience among a group of people dedicated to the ACT's natural environment.

Matthew Higgins

‘History of horses in Australia’ — a National Museum of Australia exhibition

The National Museum of Australia (NMA) will be launching a ‘History of Horses in Australia’ exhibition in September. As reported in the March NPA Bulletin, NPA member Di Thompson has a continuing interest in the issue of feral horses in the High Country, as well as recent first-hand experience of the damage being done. Di has accordingly submitted this plea to the Museum for a balanced treatment of the issues in the exhibition.

There is no doubt that this exhibition presents a beautiful side of the history of horses in Australia. I share some of that history. My ancestors were early settlers in Gippsland and my father was a drover in Western Australia. He drove mobs of cattle to Kimberley meatworks at Wyndham and Mornington. During the 1930s he did three cattle drives along the Mullewa De Grey Route, from Anna Plains Station (on the 90 Mile Beach) to Meekatharra.

Unfortunately, we have big problems with feral horses in Australia, particularly with very large numbers in the Kosciuszko (NSW) and Alpine (Vic.) national parks.

Feral horse impacts in our alpine catchments are extremely serious. Massive damage is being caused, from the source of the Murray River to far beyond. The ‘*Man from Snowy River*’ folklore does nothing to protect these fragile environments.

Banjo Paterson wrote at

time when people accepted that horses would suffer or be injured:

*But his hardy mountain pony he
could scarcely raise a trot,
He was blood from hip to shoulder
from the spur;*

Furthermore the so-called ‘Man from Snowy River’ was in it for the reward money.

The mythology should mean ‘One man, one horse’, not ever-increasing numbers of feral horses and horseriders in national parks. Times have changed.

Last summer (2013) a party of nine walkers from Canberra and Tasmania undertook a 9-day pack walk, into southern Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) and the northern part of the Alpine NP. We met parties from Museum Victoria, 4WD Victoria, farmers from Kojonup, WA, doing the Australian Alpine Walking Track, club walkers and Latrobe University students, all of who were shocked at the feral horse damage

and its effect on their drinking water (water filters were clogged). There was evidence of damage and dung within 10 metres of virtually anywhere they went (including off-track locations).

I, and others, believe that the public, scientists, and officers of the Museum need to be aware of the extent and extreme seriousness of the damage being done by feral horses in the catchments of the Mighty Murray, Murrumbidgee and Snowy rivers. The current and proposed long-term methods of removal are not effective or efficient, and horse numbers have increased by more than 20 per cent per annum since the 2003 fires. Many wonder whether we have reached the point of no return for rehabilitation. The ‘*Caring for our Australian Alps Catchments*’ report summarised the potential cost of that damage in terms of the water supply to irrigators, downstream farmers and townspeople as \$9.6 billion per year.

I estimate that there are now between 11 000 and 14 000 feral horses in KNP, and 10 000–16 000 in the Alpine NP, Victoria. Opposition to aerial shooting, which is the only really effective method of control, is resulting in ongoing and escalating destruction. Unfortunately, most horseriding people seem to be unable to see or understand the damage being done, or how rapidly the numbers of feral horses in our national parks is increasing.

Di Thompson

Ingeegoodbee River corner collapse, KNP



Scribbly Gum

Up there, scrambling on the Ridge of Stone. Grey granite boulders tinged with orange sunlight. Dropping down off a tor into wild forest. Silver trunked gums and gold flowering pea. Slow going. Pushing through. Scratched. Scribbly gums, *Eucalyptus rossii*. Listening to wind in the trees and the song of unseen birds. Whistlers. Warblers. Screechers.

scribbly gum
growing out of solid granite
for two hundred years
pushing our roots down
into a hard land

Gerry Jacobson

Wilderness

Wilderness is where we rest and reflect,
May we continue to show it every respect.
For though we may think it will always be there,
There are others who show it very little care.
With axes, machines and whatever's around,
The forests and animals are being ground down.
We hope in the future, generations will still enjoy,
The natural world that is just not a toy!

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

Journey to the Arctic 2013

In July, 2013 Chris and I went on an Expedition cruise with G Adventures to Spitsbergen in the Svalbard Archipelago. This lies 78°N and is reached by flying from Oslo to Trondheim (where you disembark and go through customs!), before flying on to Longyearbyen — the capital. This town is named after John Longyearbyen who discovered it in 1901 while on a pleasure trip. He returned two years later to explore its mining possibilities; by 1906 the first full-scale commercial exploration was undertaken by Arctic Coal Company. Nothing changes! This operation continued until 1916.

About Spitzbergen

Spitsbergen, the largest island, was discovered much earlier, however, by the Dutch (in 1596) by the explorer, William Barents. The name means ‘pointed mountains’. The Norwegians call the whole archipelago Svalbard, which means ‘cold coast’. It is also believed that the Vikings may have reached here in the 12th Century, so it has a long history.

Part of this history was the development of a shore-based fishery at Amsterdamoya and Danskoya, on the northwest coast, in the 17th Century. Bowhead whales were almost hunted to extinction. By the mid 18th Century this activity had been abandoned. In 1925 there was ratification of the Treaty of Spitsbergen which gives full sovereignty of the archi-

pelago to Norway. They must preserve the flora and the fauna. It prohibits military activity and citizens of 40 signatory states have the right to engage in mining fishing and other commercial activity.

The purpose of our journey was mainly recreational, however, we were also interested to observe the extent of the polar melt, the animal life (primarily polar bears) and to enjoy the magnificent landscape aboard a vessel that had, as part of its crew, naturalists, historians, ornithologists, photographers and botanists. A unique experience.

Arctic terns, Polar Bears and seals

We travelled from 29 July until 5 August 2013, aboard the *MS Expedition* from Longyearbyen. Our first stop was in the magnificent Magdalena Fjord, which cuts 10km into the coast.

Here we observed the Arctic terns (protecting their nests). They nest on the beach and there is very little protection; still they manage to survive. At this site there are also the graves of 130 whalers and a blubber oven, evidence of earlier activities in the area. Some of the more hardy passengers undertook a ‘polar plunge’. We abstained.

As this was an expedition cruise, there was no set itinerary and, instead, in cooperation and communication with other vessels in the area, the boat searches for wildlife. We headed north-east towards the remains of last winter's ice. It was not long before we observed giant platforms of first year sea ice floating on the ocean, rising and falling with each passing swell. It was here that we observed our first polar bear. He had swum almost a mile just to observe us. He swam up to some ice just 20m from the bow of the ship and we had fantastic viewing. To witness a 1200lb bear haul itself up on the ice just as easily as one might (!) get out of bed was quite an experience. We also observed some harp and bearded seals during the morning. During the day the ship moved through several miles of pack



ice (no real evidence of polar melt here) and towards the evening we were rewarded with the sighting of two more polar bears. A wonderful day.

Polar Bears

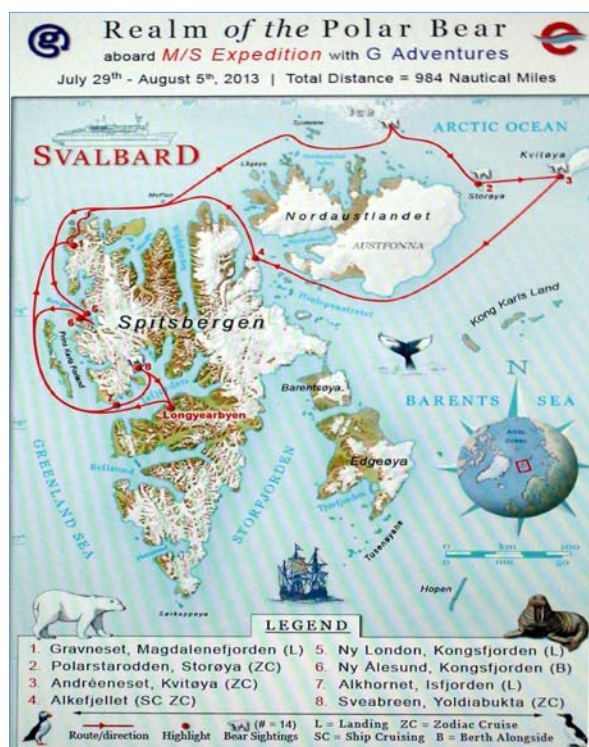
North
Arctic
Polar Bear
Ice increases
Lone Bear sighted
Excellent view
Swims away
Sea calm
Peace.

The next day we were surrounded by very thick fog, so the decision was made to launch the Zodiacs (rigid inflatable boats) so that we could observe walrus at one of their traditional haul-out sites. The *Expedition* crew do the reconnaissance, and we found them to be a very efficient group. No walrus were sighted so we sailed on further east to an island called Kvitoya. Conditions were quite unpleasant with heavy seas and rain, but with some improvement in the weather we sighted 150 walrus which were crammed onto a large rock and in the sea right next to the Zodiacs. They were quite nervous no doubt due to the presence of polar bears! Nine were sighted at this spot. Eider ducks were also sighted here.

Guillemots, Kittiwakes, Glaucous Gulls, Fin and Blue Whales, and Red-throated Divers

During the night(?) — remember it is 24-hour daylight at this latitude — we had sailed past the ice cliffs of Brasvellbreen, on the north-eastern coast of

(continued on page 14)



Journey to the Arctic 2013 *(continued from page 13)*

Svalbard. However, due to the dense fog a landing was not possible as polar bears blend quite nicely with fog! Instead we were given an informative lecture by one of the crew on walrus behaviour. We travelled on to the cliffs of Alkeffjelet (Auk) cliffs, where tens of thousands of Brunnich's Guillemots, Black Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Glaucous Gulls contributed to the cacophony of sound which reverberated around the cliffs. The Zodiacs were launched and we managed some very close up views of the birds, which lay their eggs on the ledges. There is a trick as to why they don't roll off!

Later in the day, fin whales were observed and after they departed an ornithologist gave a lecture on guillemots and a geologist explained the geology of the cliffs. A very professional group! The day was not yet over as after dinner we were treated to two blue whales (a mother and calf) swimming and diving close to the ship — an awesome sight!

The next day the weather had improved and we were treated to deep blue skies and glassy seas. At 9 am we anchored off the important historical site of Ny London on the western side of Svalbard. It was founded by a dreamer, adventurer and prospector, Ernest Mansfield from Essex, in the early nineteenth century. We went ashore here to observe the remains of the site where he attempted to mine marble. Unfortunately for him, when the marble

was transported back to London, the permafrost melted and the marble was useless. The project was abandoned in the 1920s. It was here that I experienced a 'magic' moment! John, one of the leaders, took us to a lake to observe the Red-throated divers (birds!!) and Arctic terns. This was a magnificent sight; we were surrounded by pristine wilderness and were fortunate to see the male Red-throated diver return from the sea with a fish to feed his young. Most of the other passengers had moved off and there were only a few of us to hear John recite 'If' by Rudyard Kipling. It was a lifetime moment.

The world's most northerly post office

The town of Ny Allesund was nearby. It had formerly been known as King's Bay in 1919 as it had been founded by the King's Bay Coal Company, from Norway. Here we strolled the streets(?), visited the most northerly PO in the world and the most northerly hotel, as well as visiting a statue of Roald Amundsen. This town had been the launching site for explorations to the North Pole by air (1925–28) and it was here that Amundsen had met his fate while searching for other lost explorers. It is now the site for research stations from Sweden, Korea, India, Sweden and



Austria. That evening it was so warm we enjoyed a barbecue on deck whilst observing the magnificent scenery in the distance. No daylight saving here!

Arctic Foxes

The trip was coming to a close, but there was still more to come. After breakfast, we landed at Alkhornet (a horn-shaped mountain) at the mouth of a small fjord, not far from Longyearbyen. This area had a little of everything to offer — rugged mountains, glacier scenery, rich tundra, bird cliffs and historical relics from different periods. We climbed up from the beach and walked across a moisture-laden cushion of Arctic vegetation. Here we observed several Arctic flowers, including purple saxifrage, snow buttercup and Arctic saxifrage. Our guides knew just where they were leading us, for as we moved towards some cliffs, there they were — Arctic foxes. The crew always goes ahead and sets up a perimeter which keeps us at a safe distance from the animals, and also keeps the humans under control! There were two Arctic fox pups scampering in and out of their den as well as dozing on the rocky slopes. Their mother wasn't far away and kept a close eye on us. They were in their summer coat, which is brown, so they were quite well camouflaged against the rocky cliffs. Further along a herd of reindeer was observed grazing. They had signs of their winter coat and their antlers were still in velvet. We trekked back to the shore where we were taken back to the ship by the zodiacs.

(continued next page)

Have you ever seen a polar bear?
Swimming, Resting, Threatened species.

Did you ever watch an Arctic fox?
Quiet, restful, camouflaged.

[Dylan Thomas portraits]



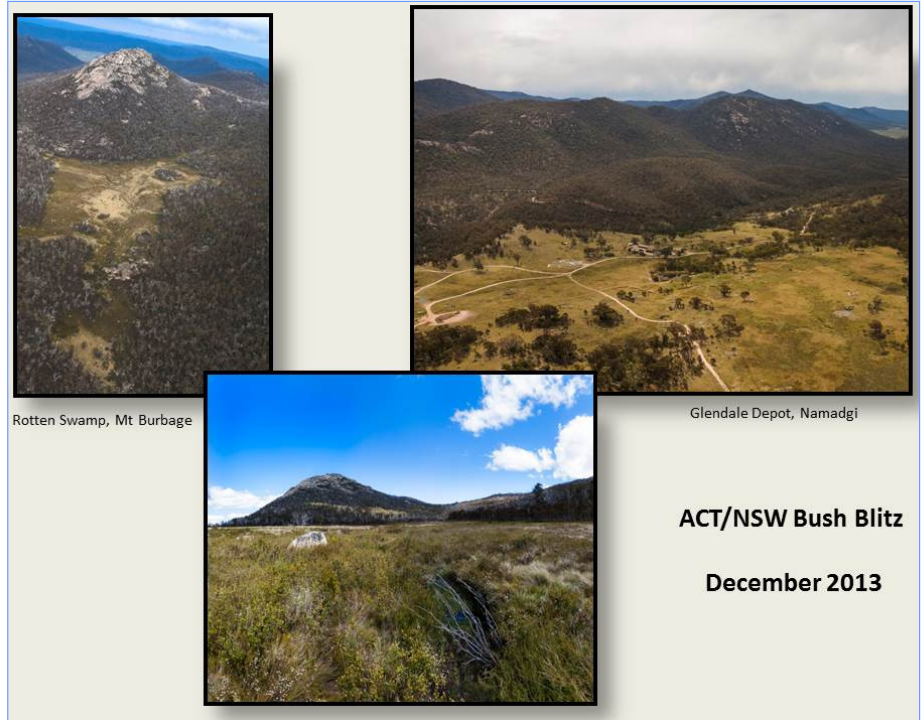
Australia's Nature: there is still more to be discovered

Jo Harding is the Manager of the Bush Blitz Program, part of the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS). As guest speaker at NPA's March general meeting, Jo gave a very interesting and informative illustrated talk about this program, which is an innovative, continent-wide, biodiversity discovery partnership between the Australian Government (through the ABRS), BHP Billiton and Earthwatch Australia. The program is funded by the federal government and BHP.

There are many plants and animals still to be discovered by science. There are estimated to be more than 500 000 species in Australia — but three-quarters of this biodiversity has yet to be identified. Forty-five per cent of continental Australia and over 90 per cent of our marine area have never been comprehensively surveyed by scientists.

... three-quarters of Australia's biodiversity has yet to be identified

Since it commenced in late 2009, the Bush Blitz Program has successfully completed 18 'snapshot' species discovery surveys on over 65 National Reserve properties throughout the length and breadth of Australia. It has involved 140 scientists from 20 of Australia's



leading scientific organisations. More than 700 new species have been found, of which 100 have also been formally named. In addition, each year a Bush Blitz TeachLive session is having five science teachers participate for a week in the survey, with real-time student communication facilitated.

The target taxa the program particularly focuses on are vascular plants, lichens, reptiles and amphibians, spiders, moths and butterflies, land snails, dragonflies, heteropterans (plant bugs), ants and carabid beetles. In addition, other agreed site-specific priorities may be included, such as for example priorities for traditional owners. Seed is collected for seed banking and to support national research projects.

Bush Blitz assists property managers to properly plan their monitoring and threat-abatement programs. It also assists the taxonomic resolution of species

found, thereby contributing to national datasets, and links taxonomic research with applied outcomes such as biosecurity. It provides baseline information to government for State of the Environment reporting, and education on, and promotion of, taxonomy at multiple levels.

It was especially interesting for members to hear that a recent Bush Blitz helicopter survey of Namadgi and Kosciuszko national parks was based at Glendale Depot and took in an area within a radius of 50 kilometres around Glendale. We await the report with much interest.

After an interesting discussion Rod thanked Jo for a very informative talk and presented her with a copy of the NPA ACT's Namadgi book.

Max Lawrence

Journey to the Arctic 2013 *(continued)*

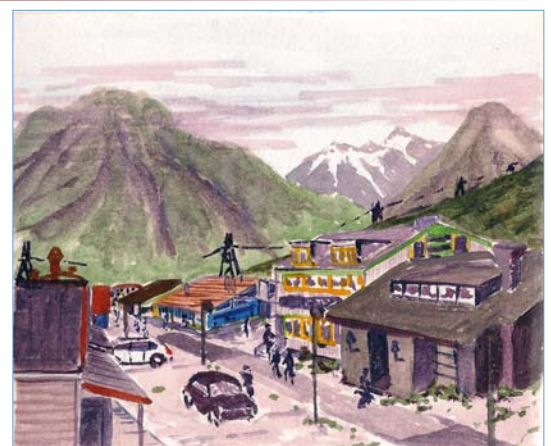
But there's more! After lunch we made a final cruise by zodiac and a polar bear had just made a kill of a bearded seal. He then took off for a swim and we were able to get quite close to the site to observe an opportunistic Ivory Gull picking at the kill before the bear returned. Our driver then took us to the foot of a nearby glacier where we were able to drive through various leads in the pack ice. How he didn't get stuck is anybody's guess. Satiated with some wonderful experiences we returned to the

ship for the final night activities. Thoroughly recommended and not as expensive as travelling in Australia!!

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

Poems by Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine.

Paintings by Chris de Bruine.



Caribou on the move — river rafting in Nunavut Territory, Canada, 2012



Two Australian winters ago, NPA member Esther Gallant ventured into the ‘summer’ of the remote wilderness of arctic North America, as she has done on several previous occasions. And as she has also done previously, she reported back on her adventures to her NPA friends and colleagues as guest speaker at a monthly general meeting. So, given proven good form, it was no surprise that the May 2014 General Meeting was very well attended.

Esther did not disappoint. She commenced her talk with a run-down on the geography of the region. The river she rafted was the Burnside River, which runs into Bathurst Inlet. It is just inside the Arctic Circle, and to the north lies nothing much but the odd island, ice and the North Pole. There is some water, but only in ‘summer’ and even then well mixed up with the white stuff (but how long before the North West Passage is open to shipping?). It is also incredibly remote, even by our outback standards — 450km from Yellowknife, itself something of an outpost. The only population is the odd tiny Inuit village, but already the mining industry (in the form of BHP!) is starting to appear. The landscape of the region is intimidating — treeless tundra kept pretty much clear of soil by millennia of ice sheets coming and going.

But, as Esther pointed out, amid all this apparent desolation is a surprising amount of wildlife, the most abundant being the great herds of migrating caribou, with their accompanying wolves and grizzlies (and rafters). Esther and her group deliberately timed their journey to coincide with the crossing of the Burnside by the herds on their way to the calving grounds. It seems that the caribou cows are very fussy about their maternity wards, preferring a particular patch in summer where they know they can find some nice clean snow, even if it does mean crossing the river and returning with their calves at foot, swimming.

Esther treated us to a fine photo display of her adventure, and shares some of her pics with us here.

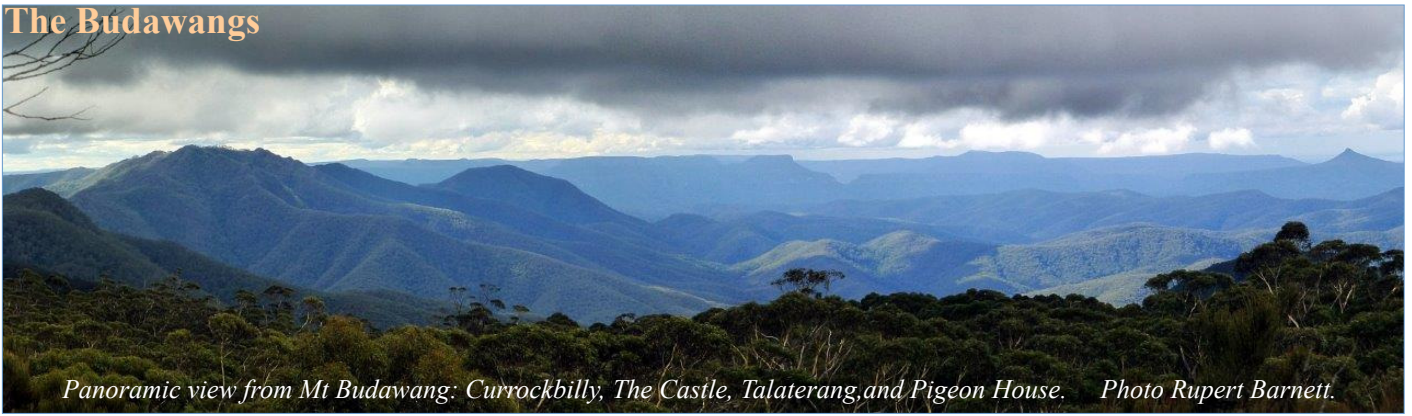
Max Lawrence



Photos
Esther Gallant

Bushwalks

The Budawangs



Panoramic view from Mt Budawang: Currockbilly, The Castle, Talaterang and Pigeon House. Photo Rupert Barnett.

Walk: Mt Budawang

Date: Sunday 11 May 2014 (Mother's Day)

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Rupert Barnett, Ed Highley, Steve Hill, Kathy Saw, Allan Sharp

Weather: Cloudy with a few sunny breaks, cool, almost no wind.

Leader's comments: Mt Budawang (1138 metres) is an easily accessed vantage point for viewing the peaks and plateaus of Budawang/Morton national parks in a sweep from Currockbilly (1132m) to Owen, The Castle (836m), Byangee, Talaterang and Pigeon House (720m). A clear sky would enhance the scene: for us cloud prevailed. We were a day early. However, the purples and blues silhouetted a fine panorama.

We had convened at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston, at 8:30am and driven via Braidwood and east through Mongarlowe to Budawang Road. At the

intersection with Mt Budawang Road there is an off-road car park but access is now difficult as heavy machinery has churned the area and several trees have been smashed to the ground. For no obvious gain. The bushwalkers' sign has also been felled.

The first 2½km on Mt Budawang Road, to the locked gate at the park boundary, can be driven but most groups walk. On a clear, fresh morning, accompanied by a deceitful sun (it soon disappeared), we undulated across the grazing land, mown to lawn by goey-nosed black Angus who just stared. A wrecked EH Holden ute rusticated. Then we walked through native forest, passing impressive ochre termite mounds. And an abandoned Volvo.

After morning tea at the park boundary (elevation 700m), we veered onto the still-navigable, disused fire trail, climbing steadily for 100m then steeply on litter-covered scree for another 100m before rejoining Mt Budawang Road.

Rupert showed us lycopods (clubmosses), ancient spore-bearing plants growing on the path. *Banksia spinulosa* was everywhere in flower and, at 800m, Epacris (red tubular bells) became common. Silence prevailed.

A further 200m climb brings you to the summit — we arrived about 12:30pm — where a fence prevents access to the fire lookout and the heath has been levelled to accommodate a communication tower. The calm air allowed us to eat in the open, gazing into the valleys and across to the ocean. After lunch we scratched our way through high veg to see the sunlit view to the west.

The descent was all on road, highlighted by flourishing tree ferns. We were back at the cars in 2 hours and slurping hot drinks at Braidwood Bakery at 3:45pm. The sun was setting at the railway station when we arrived at 5:15. Easy walk, worth repeating.

Brian Slee

Black Mountain

Walk: O'Connor and Bruce ridges, and Black Mountain

Date: Sunday 30 March 2014

Participants: Margaret Power (leader), Mike Bremers, Max Lawrence, Rene Lays, Michaela Popham, Brian Slee

Weather: Foggy to start, then cloudy with patches of sunshine.

We started the day at 10:00am, following a fire trail slightly to the western side of O'Connor Ridge. The kangaroos appeared to be satisfied to ignore our existence and Michaela had no difficulty collecting scats needed by the science laboratory where she works. We crossed over to Bruce Ridge and went up past a water reservoir then down to, and across, Belconnen Way. We climbed Black Mountain using a combination of fire trails and foot tracks that were new to some of the group. We enjoyed seeing quite a few crimson rosellas, which are plentiful around

Belconnen but, according to Brian, aren't often seen in Curtin. After a short stop on the ground level of the Black Mountain Tower we took the circuit trail around the mountain, stopping on the southern side for lunch. By then the weather had lifted enough for us to enjoy views of the city, southern suburbs, Scrivener Dam, Government House, and the National Arboretum, but not clear enough for the usual views of the Tidbinbilla Range. We descended Black Mountain on the main path, spotting a rather impressive kookaburra near the Botanic Gardens. From there the group headed back to O'Connor Ridge, this time using the underpass to get across Barry Drive. We returned to our cars along the top of the ridge, arriving back at our starting point shortly after 2:00pm. Unfortunately, due to the recent controlled burning on the Ridges and Black Mountain, the walk wasn't as much in the 'bush' as it usually



Not everyone has a road named after them, but Leader Margaret does!
Photo Max Lawrence.

is. It was a good walk just the same and we had time for afternoon tea at an outside table at Tilleys, with rain starting just minutes after we had finished our coffee — good timing!

Margaret Power

Bushwalk

Sentry Box by default

Walk: Gudgenby or bust!

Date: 29–30 March 2014

Participants: Rupert Barnett (Leader), Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Kathy Saw.

Leader's comments The goal of climbing Gudgenby was voiced a few years ago, a slow walk for older NPA and GBRG members who fancied looking down on the Gudgenby Valley where they have spent so much time revegetating the burnt-out bush, removing fences and weeding. The peak is surely on the wish list for all explorers of Namadgi National Park.

Planning focused down to late March 2014. We were running out of time, but still the weather had an ace to play. Experienced NPA walkers warned us against attempting the climb if the granite slabs were likely to be wet, and wet they were after a week of rain. The moss and lichen were like the coating of a non-stick frypan, as we discovered — but not on Gudgenby.

Rupert had a plan B, and a plan C; in the end we busted, and reluctantly adopted Plan B — Sentry Box. Yes, there are granite slabs below the summit but nothing like those on Gudgenby; not as steep or extensive.

In retrospect we should have met at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 8:00am, an hour earlier than we did. It was after 10:30 when we set out on the fire trail from the locked gate at the southern end of Old Boboyan Road, with migrating honeyeaters quietly flitting overhead on their way east to warmer climes in the opposite direction to us.

Despite all the previous weeks' rain we decided to stock up on water from a

bog on Clear Creek, the last, highest sure water before the summit. It had been a steady climb to that point, rain showers threatening at regular intervals, the fire trails easy walking and recently widened and graded with surprisingly many, regularly spaced dingo baits.

Rupert took us off-track up a ridge leading to the summit, at this stage not too steep but all uphill through eucalypt forest dominated at first by Mountain Gum giving way to Snow Gum before too long. There were a few patches of dense undergrowth and extensive fallen timber but relatively easy going, slow but not difficult. About 4:30 we had a hard decision, the sky black and threatening, the troops tiring under ~17kg packs; camp here on the last flat spot at the base of the steep final push to the top, or press on as planned to camp just beyond the summit.

It wasn't that difficult a decision really and we had only just erected our tents when the heavens opened. A wonderful rock overhang in the centre of the campsite gave some shelter from the rain as we cooked-up dinner, shared treats and then retired to bed early for a sun-up start. There were surprisingly few birds and animals, except for the male lyrebirds advertising their prowess from all directions; winter seems a strange time to nest in these mountains.

One advantage of camping early was that next morning, after a sociable



Campsite on Sentry Box

breakfast, we could scramble up to the summit refreshed and without heavy packs. And we did, slowly as planned, picking our way around or through the enormous boulder fields. Rupert has commendable patience and understanding! We saw several lyrebird display mounds and a number of unidentified animal scats. Surely rabbits don't bother scaling such heights — hares perhaps or deer? There were also myriad colourful fungi reflecting the wet conditions over recent months.

The views from the summit were spectacular, from Mt Jagungal in the south to the core of Namadgi National Park in the north and west, human agriculture to the east. We collected sparkling clear water from pools on the summit before a last lingering look at the views and then back downhill to break camp and scuttle back to the cars before dark. There were more birds on the return in fine weather. Why on earth were there migrating honeyeaters on the summit? A veritable surround-sound chorus of lyrebirds, a robin and thornbills, the ubiquitous currawongs, pied and grey, entertained us. The trees and granite tors were magnificent, but not a single dingo did we see or hear.

It was quicker going downhill, the packs lighter and we made good time, taking a short cut recommended by Kathy. We made a stop for coffee and a review of our 2-day climb at the Lanyon shops.

It was a hard walk, but rewarding, and we still have our sights set on Gudgenby — Rupert you may yet get to again enjoy the early morning and late evening views from the top of the ACT.

Kevin McCue

*Sonja, Kathy and Rupert
on Sentry Box summit.*

Photos Kevin McCue



PARKWATCH

*Edited extracts from recent journals
and newsletters*

Regional partnership key for corridor conservation

In less than a year since its formation, the Illawarra to Shoalhaven (I2S) Regional Partnership is established and is already delivering innovative environmental on-ground results. The main purpose of the I2S Partnership is to enhance regional corridors to promote the long-term viability of ecosystems and native species by fostering partnerships between landholders, community, business and government organisations, and by highlighting the importance of connectivity conservation across the region. The partnership is a working group with wide-ranging environmental skills and experience, representing various community and government organisations including Landcare, Conservation Volunteers Australia, NPA and key contacts for the university and Indigenous community sectors. It plays an important role in raising public awareness of the importance of landscape corridors for wildlife, especially to deal with the effects of climate change.

Most native animals need to access vegetation corridors for feeding, breeding and to maintain viable and healthy populations. Native vegetation was once more widespread and connected in the Illawarra–Shoalhaven but many habitats have become fragmented in the local landscape. Recent surveys carried out by ecologist Garry Daly in the Berry area as part of the I2S Start-up Project suggest that native animals like the Greater Glider could become locally endangered if they cannot move and breed with gliders in other areas. Corridor conservation is vital to allow for wildlife movement and prevent these isolation pressures.

A number of landholders who are also Berry Landcare members volunteered to become ‘citizen scientists’ to help with wildlife surveys using motion-detection cameras on their land and to control introduced weeds and feral animals, which reduces pressure and predation on native wildlife. By participating, local landowners become more aware of the wildlife on their land and also play a vital role in the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative — one of the largest conservation projects in the world.

Nature NSW, Vol. 58, No. 1
(Autumn 2014)

Dave, Steve and Jack

Three great ‘men-of-the-Alps’ are retiring. Described by their peers in terms of high esteem, they will always be known for their leadership, skill, warmth and love of this landscape.

Dave Darlington’s departure will leave a large hole. As a manager he’s been a unique combination of peer and mentor, with a style of support for his staff that was effective yet subtle. As part of his legacy, Dave has left us with the new entrances to Kosciuszko National Park; at Rawson’s Pass, the highest toilet in Australia; and major works to both the Thredbo Valley and Main Range tracks. Perhaps his greatest contribution was during the recovery period following the 2003 fires. Dave travelled the countryside to listen to people speak of their experiences, vent their anger and frustration and assist them to recover and move on. He also represented the Parks Service as its prime witness at the Coronial Enquiry.

Steve Horsley came to the Parks Service from a previous career in forestry where he’d been responsible for the softwood areas around Tumberumba and Batlow. Steve was a driving force behind the reopening of Yarrongabilly Caves House, which again welcomes guests after being closed many years. This was not a small project, but one which took many years of careful planning not only to preserve the cultural context of the place, but also negotiate a low-footprint means of offering accommodation in a national park. Steve has also engaged the community as a valuable resource in revitalising the historic Kiandra Courthouse. At Steve’s farewell, the Traditional Owners expressed profound thanks for his work in bringing a community back to Country. Much of this was through his focus on the Discover Ranger Program which employs Traditional Owners so that they are positioned appropriately to teach their culture to others.

Peter Jacobs is known for his integrity and visions, his ability to identify key areas where achievable outcomes are possible. Widely known as Jack, he began his career in the early 1980s at Mt Buffalo. He then worked with the alpine planning team when cross-border management was in its infancy. His career has been rich and full. Peter witnessed the amalgamation of three alpine parks to form the Alpine National Park, and saw the end of grazing in protected areas. He has worked through the big decade of

landscape-scale fires, and he has helped to develop appropriate nature-based sustainable tourism. Much of this was achieved through his strength in community consultation, for which he is much respected.

There are similarities between Peter, Steve and Dave. All have an incredible love and respect for the Alps and the people who work there. They have worked hard and achieved much, with dedication and intense focus.

News from the Alps, No. 45

More than seed

If you ever happen to be up on the Main Range Walking Track in autumn, there is every chance you will be greeted by a sea of white flowers. These are the flowers of the beautiful snow gentian, *Gentianella muelleriana* subsp. *alpestris*, which is found only in Kosciuszko National Park and, according to Joe McAuliffe of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), a visit to see it is well worth the effort. This gentian grows en masse in the herb fields and grass plains in the park, and flowers — not at snow melt when most flowering species do, but late in the season when there is not much else in bloom. ‘They manage to quickly flower and set seed which we suspect may even germinate in late autumn. Thousands of seeds are produced by each plant, and while there is likely a high mortality rate for these fragile seedlings, they’re protected by the thick thatch of the herb fields and grasslands’, Joe says.

In recent years we have learned a great deal about this particular plant thanks to the work being carried out by the ANBG together with the Australian National University. It is one of the hundreds of plants in the Australian Alps being studied as part of an alpine seed ecology project funded by the Australian Research Council. In essence, following many forays into the field over the past 4 years, seed from all these plants which make up the Alps landscape has been carefully collected so that it now sits in the National Seed Bank at the ANBG. The seed is vouchered, which includes making a herbarium specimen, to confirm its identity. The seed may be in the bank but so is a great deal of related information. There are many ways this resource can and will be used in future. Should there be a catastrophic event when portions of the landscape don’t recover naturally, information and seed is ready to provide active support.

Part of the information being

(continued on page 20)

gathered relates to germination. This is no small task, and one which occupies Joe as the Nursery Manager at the Gardens. In the case of the Kosciuszko snow gentian, seed has been germinated and grown in the nursery, proving it could survive the hot Canberra summer. Now planted out into the rockery section of the gardens, Joe and the team are interested to see if it will bloom in March at an altitude of 600 metres, being 1200 metres lower than its natural setting. Science aside, if the gardens are more on your beaten path than the Main Range Walking Track, this may be a good way to see this particular gentian in the flesh, if it blooms ... fingers crossed.

News from the Alps, No. 45

Deer control program to protect habitat for native species

A deer control program to reduce the numbers of introduced deer in the Dandenong Ranges National Park, Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and Warramate Hills Nature Conservation Reserve will be conducted over the next 12 months to decrease the environmental impact on native species of wildlife and vegetation. 'This program will seek to restore these parks and reduce the damage deer are causing. Deer are an introduced species in these parks and are having impacts on the biodiversity of native vegetation', said Parks Victoria District Manager Craig Bray.

The impacts of the deer are also being felt by endangered species such as the Leadbeater's Possum and the Helmeted Honeyeater whose habitat is damaged when sambar and Fallow Deer thrash their antlers on trees. The program is a partnership between Parks Victoria, the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, and is supported by local friends groups and Zoos Victoria. Dr Dan Harley from Zoos Victoria has been studying the last lowland population of Leadbeater's Possum at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve for 20 years. 'The Leadbeater's Possum population has declined to just 40 individuals and habitat restoration is the key to saving the species at this site. Minimising the impact of deer browsing on revegetation will be critical for success', said Dr Harley.

Robert Anderson, President of Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, said 'The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater have been advocates of a deer control program both within and outside of the Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve for many years.

Loss of habitat and the destruction of revegetated areas have held back the recovery program of the Helmeted Honeyeater. A program that controls deer initially and continues to decrease deer numbers is most welcome'.

The program will be conducted using accredited marksmen and in adherence with strict conditions for public safety and animal welfare standards. Highly skilled, accredited and authorised volunteer members of the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia will conduct the deer removal under very strict conditions. The affected parks will be closed for public safety during operations, with advertising signs displayed at all formal entrance points. Deer removal operations will not be conducted on peak visitor days such as weekends, public holidays or during school holiday periods.

Parks Victoria website, accessed Wednesday 5 March 2014.

Submitted by Kevin McCue, NPA ACT

Safety message – locator beacon use

In December last year, the Snowy Hydro SouthCare Rescue Helicopter was called on by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) for a search-and-rescue operation in response to an activated beacon. The crews landed at the Mugga Way rubbish tip in Canberra to find the mission was in search of an improperly disposed of beacon. While the presence of a search beacon significantly reduces response time for emergencies, disposing of a beacon correctly is just as important for the helicopter service. Cases of ill-disposed beacons occur at least once per year. Raising awareness of beacon use will assist in ensuring response time of the helicopter is maintained. For more information on use and disposal visit the AMSA website www.beacons.amsa.gov.au

Rotor Wrap Snowy Hydro SouthCare, Vol. 14, Edition 1

A busy summer for the service

The Snowy Hydro SouthCare Rescue helicopter has experienced another busy summer period, completing 52 missions from 19 December to 17 January. This is an increase of 17 missions over the same period in the previous year.

Snowy Hydro SouthCare CEO Mr Owen Finegan commented on the increase: 'The helicopter service is consistently busy throughout the year, performing an average of two missions per day. However, we certainly see a spike in missions around the Christmas holiday period and warmer months when people engage in more outdoor activities

and travel throughout the festive season. In December when many residents were gearing down for the year and heading on holidays, the Snowy Hydro SouthCare rescue helicopter and crew remained on call ready to respond to the next medical emergency. The range of missions was extensive, responding to motor vehicle accidents, search-and-rescue operations, and patient transfers between hospitals'.

The period was unfortunately marked by several motor vehicle accidents, with the helicopter being called to 12 missions on our highways and country roads. The most frequent destination was the NSW South Coast with 16 missions completed in the area, including a near drowning at Moruya. There were two secondary missions to specialised hospitals in Sydney, for a burns patient and a spinal patient.

Rotor Wrap Snowy Hydro SouthCare, Vol. 14, Edition 1

From the Executive Co-ordinator, Queensland NPA

Two recent announcements serve to illustrate some of the changes that the State Government is planning in protected areas. Both have immediacy for those of us who live in south-east Queensland.

The first is a call by the Department of National Parks, Recreation Sport and Racing (DNPRSR) for expressions of interest for an off-road motorcycling facility in Mooloolah Logging Area, in the northern part of Beerwah State Forest. While NPAQ strongly supports the removal of trail bikes from national parks, it is highly unlikely that illegal riders (mostly local teenagers) would be prepared to pay the fees that would be charged for using this facility, estimated in the order of \$50-\$100/day. In addition, establishing a trail-bike riding area would have to be combined with policing of national parks in the Glasshouse area and, to date, there is no mention of whether this is a priority for DNPRSR. There is also the issue of damage done by 4WD activity, but again no comment on how to contain this activity in the proposal. Many state forests in the recent past were converted to national parks, with the primary rationale being their parallel natural values. NPAQ notes that Beerwah State Forest provides habitat for 17 threatened plants and animals and a suite of threatened ecosystems.

The second is the proposed changes to the Scott's Point Marine National Park (green zone) within Moreton Bay Marine

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH (continued)

Park and, more broadly, the announcement that changes would be considered in other marine parks in Queensland. There is a growing body of scientific literature showing the benefits of marine national parks, free from fishing, in protecting ocean life including threatened species and critical habitats. Queensland marine parks have also proven to have positive results for conservation and fishing. Reducing the level of protection within our marine parks by allowing recreational fishing goes against the fundamental principles of these areas as safe havens for marine life, and defies the evidence demonstrating their vital role in marine conservation.

NPA News (Qld), Vol. 84, Issue 3
(April 2014)

Raiders on a storm

The *Wilderness Act 1987* requires park managers to prevent or restore environmental disturbance. As horseriding causes significant damage to natural values, surely any park administration must exclude this activity from protected areas?

Unfortunately, the memorandum of understanding between Premier O'Farrell, Deputy Premier Stoner and horseriders requires NPWS to accommodate riders in NSW wilderness areas. As Peter Lawrence, a recently retired ranger who has managed Victorian national parks and reserves for more than 35 years explains:

Interest groups are putting themselves ahead of the environment with a 'me first' attitude that is gaining political clout and putting our parks at risk. Standards are being lowered, not just for logging in Queensland, cattle grazing in Victoria and the River Red Gum parks in NSW, and fishing in the marine sanctuaries of NSW. A scientific monitoring trial is being established, with a baseline survey hurriedly being put into place in the wilderness areas of the Deua, Kosciuszko and Mummel Gulf national parks before the horseriding starts. Only a handful of riders will use remote areas and there is no identified unmet demand for this use. Riding is permitted across more than 110 reserves, on 3,000 km of trails in those reserves and almost half of Kosciuszko National Park is available to horseriders.

Ann King, CEO of NPWS, wrote to the Colong Foundation in December

2013 stating that the horseriding trial in wilderness was not an activity under NSW planning law. The letter noted that a review of environmental factors would be prepared, but would not be put on public exhibition. The Environmental Defender's Office has since written to ask the NPWS for its reasons why the horse riding trial is not an 'activity', given that the NPWS is undertaking a review of environmental factors, the purpose of which is to assess an activity before determining whether or not it should be approved?

NPWS policies recommend public consultation 'when sites of importance to the community for their recreational or other values will be affected'. It would appear that the NPWS is being directed to press on regardless with the NSW Government's horseriding in wilderness areas.

Colong Bulletin, No. 253
(March 2014)

IUCN celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Red List of Threatened Species during 2014

The IUCN Red List has guided conservation action and policy decisions over the past 50 years. It is an invaluable conservation resource, a health check for our planet – a 'barometer of life'. It is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species and their links to livelihoods. Far more than a list of species and their status, it provides information on population size and trends, geographic range and habitat need of species. The IUCN Red List is a powerful tool to inform and catalyse action for biodiversity conservation and policy change, critical to protecting the natural resources that we need for survival.

Our target is to make the IUCN Red List a more complete barometer of life. To do this we need to increase the number of species on the IUCN Red List from the current count of 71,576 to at least 160,000. By increasing the number of species and improving the taxonomic coverage this will provide a stronger base to enable better conservation and policy decisions. A provisional date of 2020 has been discussed to complete these assessments. To achieve this stretching goal, a significant increase in funding and capacity will be required. Our focus during 2014 will be to increase awareness for the IUCN Red List and generate much-needed funding to drive this project forward.

Nature NSW, Vol. 58, No. 1
(Autumn 2014)

Sailing the plastic seas

Is the coast clear? This question led Dr Jennifer Lavers of Monash University and Simon Mustoe of Wildiaries to sail away on an innovative, 10-week expedition along the east coast of Australia. The voyage commenced in Hobart with a small crew of slightly nervous scientists and experienced sailors on the fully restored 80-year-old Scandinavian tall ship *Yukon*. With 6.4 million tonnes of plastic entering the ocean every year, the research is urgent.

The project's main aim was to collect data on the amount of plastic floating in the oceans off the east coast of Australia. Using a standard plankton trawl net with a sieve of 300 microns, modified for the voyage, the crew regularly skimmed the surface for tiny, insidious fragments of plastic and had a 100% recovery rate. Every trawl on the voyage recovered plastic, a fact Dr Lavers described as 'alarming'. At least 5 gyres, or floating garbage patches, are spread across the globe, containing more than 20 million items of rubbish. Wave and ocean patterns distribute the waste across the entire globe where it contaminates the foraging and breeding areas of at least 260 species of marine life.

Data quantifying the mass, size, colour and type of plastic collected on the expedition are being integrated into a global database managed by the 5 Gyres Institute, filling the gap in existing data about this important stretch of water. Plans are underway to repeat the voyage in 2014. Repeating the study annually will allow trends and variation in prevalence to be plotted against seabird numbers and other factors.

Habitat, Vol. 42, No. 1
(January 2014)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	June	July	August	Sept
Public holidays	Mon 9	—	—	—
General meetings	Thur 19	Thur 17	Thur 21	Thur 18
Committee meetings	Tues 3	Tues 1	Tues 5	Tues 2
Gudgengy Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 14	Sat 12	Sat 9	Sat 13
Art Week at Gudgengy Cottage ²	—	—	—	Sat 6–Sat 13

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15am, or Yankee Hat car park 10:00am
 2. Contact Christine Goonrey at cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au or phone 6231 8395

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:
 Geoffrey Crossley
 Jennifer Manning & John Ollie
 Mike Ogden
 John Brickhill and
 Michaela Popham
 We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.

Membership fees are now due

You might have already received a letter in the mail asking for membership renewal 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/s, an indication whether you want to receive our e-newsletter *Burning Issues* and whether you want to receive the *Bulletin* through Australia Post, in digital format, or in both of those formats) is still correct.

Please take the time to check and correct your details, if necessary, and send the whole form with your membership dues (and donation) back to the office (for cheques and money orders). For payment by Mastercard or Visa credit card our treasurer has set up an on-line facility.

Thank you all for your cooperation and a special thank you to members who have already renewed their membership.

Sonja Lenz, Secretary

Namadgi National Park is officially 30 years old this year. NPA picnic in October

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

Any superb photos? If you have high resolution photos you would like to see in the *Bulletin*, or on its covers, contact the Editor.

(Common heath Epacris impressa by Rupert Barnett)



Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Mt Budawang road, walked during Brian Slee's walk (see page 17) Photo Ed Highley

Insets. Top. The TrailRider received a good workout at the Namadgi Visitor Centre during Heritage Week. Lily was delighted by the mushrooms (article page 4) Photo Graham Scully

Centre. Martin Chalk (NPA work party coordinator) with a feral juniper near the old Stockyard Arboretum (page 6). Photo Max Lawrence

Bottom. A 1985 photo of Brayshaws Hut from near an old orchard and grave site near the Boboyan road (see page 8). Photo Babette Scougall

Back cover

Main photo. Dananbilla sunrise March 2014 – one of the big advantages of going on multi-day work parties! Photo Max Lawrence

New payment option

Effective immediately, our credit card payments for renewal or new memberships have changed to online processing at www.trybooking.com/EWUG

You can still pay by cheque, money order, bank transfer or cash. Using the online credit card option provides you with an immediate emailed receipt suitable for your income tax return.

We would like everyone to still return the completed form to the office by posting or scanning and emailing.

Note: we no longer have a fax.



General Meetings

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



Thursday 19 June

Plenty more frogs in the gene pool? Genetic impacts of Chytridiomycosis in Alpine Tree Frogs

Amy Macris

NPA sponsored Honours student at ANU

Chytridiomycosis has been labelled the “worst wildlife disease”, and threatens hundreds of frog species worldwide. My project investigates whether genetic diversity is lower in populations of Alpine Tree Frogs exposed to this fungal disease, compared to unexposed populations.

Thursday 17 July

Communication, misinformation and exasperation: why science can't just rely on 'the facts'
Dr Rod Lamberts

Deputy Director, Australian National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science

What can pro-science, evidence-focussed people do when faced with arguments that seem to defy reason? How to make sense of some of the curious, apparently anti-science positions adopted by people who reject climate science or refuse to vaccinate their children?

It's tempting to think that the big issues facing us today should be addressed using science facts — facts that are untarnished by personal biases and politics. But in reality, human interaction and communication is always mediated by personal interests and perspectives.

Dr Lamberts explores some of the pitfalls, perils and promises of communicating risky science in the public sphere.

Thursday 21 August Annual General Meeting

followed by a short talk and supper

Kamchatka: the far east of the Russian Far East

Adrienne Nicholson

NPA member

Kamchatka is the north/south peninsula at the east of the Russian Far East. As part of the Pacific 'Ring of Fire' it has many active and inactive volcanoes, an interesting natural history, its own indigenous peoples but, for the traveller, not much high-end development. Visit lava flows, cinder cones and thermally active areas; wildflower meadows, tundra and forests; folklore of the indigenous peoples.

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers

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<i>Vice-President</i>	Vacant	
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The NPA ACT office is in Unit 14 / 28 Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, together with the Conservation Council. It is staffed by volunteers on an irregular 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.

Phone: (02) 6229 3201 (mob) 0410 875 731 (if urgent)
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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.

NPA Bulletin

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

Deadline for the September 2014 issue: 31 July 2014.

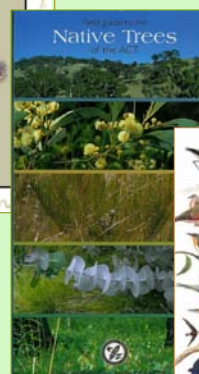
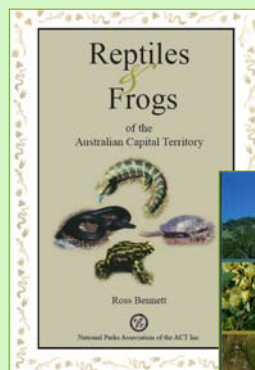
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Barelli
13 March 2013

Interesting books
Beautiful books
Informative references



ACT Souvenirs

Send to friends overseas

The great range of NPA field guides or a beautiful book about Namadgi National Park are available from the office and some bookstores. Note that the Namadgi book will be available to members at the special discount price of \$15 during Namadgi's 30th anniversary, this year.

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