



NPA *Bulletin*

Volume 53 Number 1 March 2016

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



**Examining tree
scars**



**Leaf litter and
little critters**



**Arctic wildlife
watching**

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

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From the Editor's desk

Welcome to the first *Bulletin* of 2016 brought to you by the *Bulletin* working group. This issue involved joint editor Sonja Lenz, subeditor Ed Highley and layout designer Adrienne Nicholson. You might notice a few changes; we are trialling the inclusion of the outings program in the *Bulletin* proper. It is still green and can be removed from the middle of the *Bulletin* and stuck on your fridge as before.



The lack of a president has allowed us to push the business of the committee to the top listing.



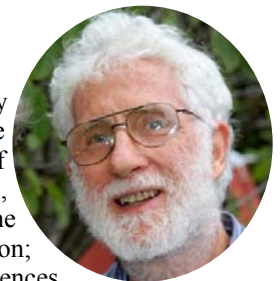
In this issue ACT lepidopterist Ted Edwards muses about leaf litter, or is it just bushfire fuel? Rupert



Barnett (hope you recover soon) has three articles: a thoughtful one on tree scars, a romp through half of the continent and a visit to national parks in Argentina. Gerry Jacobson, rapidly becoming our in-house poet, confronts us with his contribution while Esther Gallant bravely brings us up-close and uncomfortable with Polar Bears in a national park far away. Thank heavens we have Brian Slee to bring us back to the ACT with a couple of his classic walk reports. You should read what the other Australian NPAs are doing by browsing Hazel's choice of articles from their magazines in our PARKWATCH.

There are stunning photographs by Max, Rupert and Esther and much more. Be educated, amused, tantalised and most of all inspired to contribute yourself; if I can, you can.

Philip Gatenby will edit the June edition of the *Bulletin*, Judy Kelly the September edition; spot the differences and contribute an article, poem, sketch or photo. If you would like the chance to edit the December *Bulletin*, please contact one of us.



Kevin McCue, Editor



Contributions for the NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, letters, poems, drawings and photographs are always welcome. If possible keep contributions to no more than 1,000 words. 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, email admin@npaact.org.au, or the NPA ACT postal address.

Deadline for the June 2016 issue: 30 April 2016.

From the committee ...



News from NPA's management committee and subcommittees on current activities, plans and proposals.

Welcome to 2016

In October this year the ACT electorate will cast its votes for a new legislative assembly. And sometime between now and November a federal election will be called. What do these events mean for the NPA ACT?

Our association will be involved in lobbying on federal biodiversity issues through its membership of the National Parks Australia Council. Concerns about the state of Australia's National Reserve System will be a key focus for lobbying by that organisation. In addition, there is a need for an overhaul of Australia's federal legislation on biodiversity. The NPA ACT will be a strong supporter of these campaign topics.

Here in the ACT, the October election means that the NPA ACT committee and the environment subcommittee will be busy seeking commitments from the various ACT political parties for the protection of biodiversity in the ACT. There are still key omissions from the ACT's parks network, the reservation of which would improve the network's long-term viability.

The ACT parks system continues to face increasing recreational pressures, a

situation exacerbated by the lack of an overall strategy to ensure recreational activities are catered for across the breadth of the ACT's public and private lands. The implementation of such a strategy would assist in reducing the pressure on the ACT's conservation reserves.

The ACT election also provides an opportunity to raise concerns about the funding of the parks system. The area under reserve has grown significantly over recent years but the funding for the maintenance and protection of these reserves has not kept in step with the needs of the expanded estate.

The NPA ACT has been busy organising and holding a series of family-friendly outdoor activities. These have been run jointly with the Canberra Bushwalking Club and are great fun. Keep your eye out for these activities in the outings program.

The NPA ACT has reconfirmed our Honours scholarship program with the ANU Fenner School. The scholarship is now into its fourth year and has assisted with research into some exciting biodiversity and reserve-management topics.

Things are changing within NPA ACT – as well as managing without a president this year (see article below),

we are losing some of our stalwarts who have done so much for NPA over the years. Mike Smith, who has long been our hard-working Outings Convener, is retiring; our general meeting supper provider, Adrienne Nicholson, has passed on her tasks to a rostered group of members; and other active members are signalling that they need a break.

All our activities rely on the work of NPA ACT volunteers and there are always ways to become involved. The conveners of our subcommittees are listed in the *Bulletin*, so please don't hesitate to contact them if you want to be part of the many opportunities arising in 2016.

Rod Griffiths and Christine Goonrey



Why don't we have a president in 2016?

For the first time in my memory the AGM in August 2015 elected a committee to manage the affairs of NPA ACT which did not have a president. This is highly unusual but the committee would like to reassure members that quite a bit of thought has gone into dealing with this situation.

Over the past 55 years, NPA ACT has established a system of voluntary management and cooperative decision-making which has served us very well. The current committee has a lot of experience and skills including three ex-presidents, a long-term secretary and various members whose service on the committee would combine to over a hundred years in total. Meetings are effective, well-run and very convivial.

The committee is supported by a number of very valuable subcommittees which manage outings and events, the publications program, environment issues and heritage. We have a well-organised office support system managed by a small group of volunteers and a workparty program managed by Martin Chalk. It all runs like a well-oiled machine.

We have divided up the various tasks of the president among ourselves so that meetings are chaired, representations made to government, work priorities are sorted and relationships with other groups and agencies are maintained. We think we can work this way for a little while without harming our service to the community.

Personally speaking, my time on the committee has accorded me some of the most interesting and rewarding years of my life. I joined the committee in the first place only because Di Thompson told me to. I can now admit I was overawed at the expertise around the table but people were very open and supportive. It was never hard or embarrassing to ask questions, to have to have things explained; it was expected as part of the process of debate and decision-making. Good leaders make it easy to learn and participate.

So the question remains: why no president this year, why do it this way? Is the committee starting to crack up?

A hidden problem of a well-oiled machine is that people expect it to go on

forever but every organisation needs leadership renewal at some stage and this is a key reason the immediate past president hasn't stood for another term.

A long-standing committee can be intimidating to someone looking from the outside. It can look a bit unapproachable to someone who might otherwise think of offering their services.

Committee members thought it was worth leaving the position of president vacant this year to signal that we believe it is time for members who might have an interest to take action and get involved. We want to renew our leadership team so NPA ACT can continue to be the effective organisation it has been for the past 55 years.

If you are interested in helping NPA ACT in achieving this, now is a great time to become involved.

Christine Goonrey

(From the committee continued next page)





From the committee (continued)

Proposed projects – new and continuing

The NPA management committee has been discussing the NPA work plan for 2016 and beyond. The following proposals are being put out to the membership for discussion:

Honours scholarships: continue ANU Fenner School scholarship and consider a similar scholarship for University of Canberra environmental studies students.

Small environmental projects: possible partners include the ACT Government (Parks and Wildlife Research) and Mulligans Flat.

Reach out to kids: provide ACT primary schools with copies of the Bilby's Ring Trilogy by K. Kessing describing the disastrous effect of feral animals and human activities on native animals; encourage kids to participate in special nature activities.

Publications: continue the NPA publication program – new edition of

tree book, reprint of bird book, new field guide to butterflies, publish four *Bulletins* per year, produce the *Burning Issues* e-newsletter before general meetings and at other times as required, promote NPA books.

Work party support: provide consumables and petrol subsidies for drivers for NPA and GBRG work parties.

Outings: reimburse leaders for First Aid training/updates; promote NPA-funded TrailRider.

Website: redesigning and testing.

Administration: change office procedures towards electronic delivery as appropriate; train office volunteers.

General meetings and other events: continue to provide speakers; plan special events including Art Week; arrange annual exhibition at Namadgi Visitor Centre and other venues as appropriate.

Cultural heritage:

with KHA work towards preservation of historic structures and conduct survey of historic graves; continue support of The Friends of Glenburn activities.

Environment: with the Conservation Council and like-minded environmental groups (e.g. NPAC and state NPAs) lobby for environmentally sound park and reserve management and promote biodiversity.

A printed draft of the work plan will be presented to the membership at the March general meeting and published in *Burning Issues*. Members are encouraged to put forward their ideas. Discussion of the proposals will be scheduled for the April general meeting.

Esther Gallant



A new membership category

For some years now we have been providing digital as well as printed copies of the *NPA Bulletin* to members, depending on their preference. Some members request a digital copy only, which is the most environmentally friendly means of staying abreast with everything in the *Bulletin*. With the price of postage having recently increased, the management committee has decided to offer all those members who take only the digital *Bulletin* a reduced membership fee of \$22 per year, the reduction to apply from financial year 2016–17 onwards. We hope that more members will decide to join this new

membership category, so saving paper (fewer trees need to be cut down!), work to print and package the bulletins, and postage. Of course, the vast amounts of voluntary work by contributors and the *Bulletin* working group remain the same.

A special membership fee of \$22 already exists for full-time student and pensioner members and that will remain. These members can still receive both a printed and a digital version of the *Bulletin* if they so wish. And those members who do not have a computer and/or email will continue to receive their printed copy every quarter through Australia Post.

When membership renewal letters go out to all members in June, you will be asked in what format you want to receive the *Bulletin* – the options are:

- printed copy only
- digital copy only
- both printed and digital copies.

Please consider specifying digital *Bulletin* only for next financial year.

Sonja Lenz, Secretary



Preferences for donations

Donations are by far the major source of funds for our activities, from publishing field guides to advocacy for our national parks to running our office. As donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible, the Tax Office insists that all donations be spent entirely at the discretion of the management committee. However, it is possible for a donor to express a preference for the spending of their

donation, to which the committee will give full consideration. For example, we already receive donations for the Glenburn project and donations for our scholarships. In the near future we will publish a list of projects to which you may indicate a preference. This preference will be recorded in our accounting system and the committee and general meetings will receive regular

profit and loss reports against these preferences.

Please feel free to discuss any details with me.

Chris Emery, Treasurer



NPA ACT office joins the digital world

No, our office already joined the digital world in the form of computers, digital files and spreadsheets years ago, but we need to make more use of the paper-, and postage-saving possibilities that present-day office equipment can offer. With the help of our really computer-savvy treasurer (who is also our database administrator) we will start integrating

our membership database with our mail-outs such as donation thank-you letters and receipts, and correspondence with those members who have given us their email address.

That in turn means that our office procedures will change slightly and the procedure manual will have to be updated; and the office helpers will have

to receive training in the new ways. With a bit of luck and some hard work on the part of all office workers, including the members who organise book sales, we aim to have new procedures implemented in the new financial year. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Sonja Lenz, Secretary

Single conservation agency

The ACT Government announced on 12 February 2016 the creation of a single conservation agency.

Following the ministerial reshuffle in January 2016, Minister Gentleman was given the task to create a single ACT conservation agency (an item from the Parliamentary Agreement between the Greens and Labor for the current Government).

To achieve this ACT Parks and Conservation Service will merge with the Environment and Planning Directorate from 1 July 2016.

This will strengthen the ACT Government's ability to deliver good environmental outcomes for our parks, reserves, softwood plantations and rural lands.

The Chief Minister has also signed new ministerial arrangements which will see Minister Gentleman assume responsibility for ACT Parks and Conservation Service with effect from 13 February 2016.

Mr Mick Gentleman
Minister for Planning and Land Management
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister Gentleman

The National Parks Association of the ACT (NPA ACT) lobbied for 24 years for the creation of a national park for the national capital. Our association has long been a champion of the creation of a single conservation agency in the ACT and we congratulate you for your newly acquired responsibility for the creation of that agency.

The creation of Namadgi National Park required an agency to manage it for its conservation values and so the Parks and Conservation Service came into existence. The NPA ACT would particularly like to congratulate you on your ministerial responsibility for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The Parks and Conservation Service plays an important role in the management of Namadgi National Park and the ACT's other conservation reserves, a subject that the NPA ACT knows you have always had a keen interest in.

There are many challenges associated with your new responsibilities. One key challenge will be ensuring that the new conservation agency is adequately resourced. For years the NPA ACT has argued that funding for the maintenance of the ACT's natural environment has been eroding despite increases in the size of the area under reserve and consequent increased challenges of weed and feral animal control.

The NPA ACT would be keen to discuss these and other issues affecting the ACT's reserves with you and potential mechanisms for us to further assist with reserve management.

We wish you all the best in the administration of your new ministerial responsibilities.

Yours sincerely

Rod Griffiths
Immediate Past President
On behalf of the NPA ACT Committee
16 February 2016

Recalling Henry Hatch

The December 2015 *NPA Bulletin* had a last-minute note about the passing of Henry Hatch. His funeral was on 3 December 2015. Henry was one of the NPA's Wednesday Walk leaders. As most of you know, Wednesday Walks are conducted each week and are attended by walkers from the three major bushwalking clubs (NPA, CBC and BBC). Each club in turn provides a leader. Henry was one such leader and was noted for leading good, solid, off-track walks usually involving scrub bashing and rock scrambling. The following is my tribute to Henry. I know that all in the Wednesday Walk bushwalking community of the three clubs share my thoughts about Henry's contribution.

Eric Pickering

*Henry in action.
Photo by Philip Gatenby.*

Ode to Henry Hatch

*Henry,
Lover of the bush and bush-
walking,
Real bushwalking,
Off track, through scrub,
streams, rock,
Scrambling,
Elusive peak.*

*Bruises, falls, scratches, wounds,
Prices you pay happily, Henry,
And your followers,
For the thrill,
Reaching the peak.*

*Adrenalin rush,
Sheer bliss for the converted!
Not understood by others!*



*Navigation and judgment,
Spot on,
Friends NPA, BBC, and CBC,
Remember Henry,
Your walks,
Rough and exciting.*

*Rest in Peace, Henry,
But continue, Esteemed leader,
Walking, enjoying the timeless
Harmony of Paradise*

April Suen's bettong study

We have all read about the loss of biodiversity here and around the world, primarily due to human activities such as land clearing, mining and introductions of invasive species of plants and animals that overwhelm the native flora and fauna.

Reintroduction and translocation are two strategies used to overcome the demise of animal species. The former involves bringing individuals from a place where the species still exists to recolonise a place where it used to exist. The latter may entail moving individuals from a place where they are perhaps under severe threat to a more benign habitat.

Neither strategy is without problems and, indeed, there have been more failures than successes, primarily due to inadequate long-term management after the introduction and lack of attention to aspects of the genetic fitness of the incoming animals. As regards the latter issue, the aim should be to ensure initial and continuing genetic diversity, the lack of which could lead to inbreeding and a loss of vigour in the newly establishing population.

Most readers of the *Bulletin* will know that a trial to reintroduce the Eastern Bettong into the ACT is underway. Between July 2011 and September 2012, 60 Eastern Bettongs were collected from the wild in five locations across Tasmania and brought to the Mulligans Flat Wildlife Sanctuary and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Genetic analysis of the introduced population was the topic of the research conducted by April Suen, the 2015 recipient of NPA's scholarship for Honours students at the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society. April spoke to members about her work at the November 2015 general meeting.*

The overall aim of April's research was to assess whether or not the reintroduction of Eastern Bettongs using mixed-source founders created a genetically diverse population in the ACT and was therefore supportive of successful establishment. The primary target of her research was the Mulligans Flat introductions.

Collection of data by trapping is part of the ongoing bettong management plan; there have been 10 trapping events since the project began. During April's research she took a biopsy – a 2 mm circular tissue punch from the ear – from each trapped animal.

The samples collected were the source of DNA for analysis in the laboratory. The very large amount of data amassed was first 'filtered' to manageable size then subjected to various advanced genetic and molecular biological techniques, including comparative genetic analysis, principal component analysis, analysis of molecular variance (AMOVA) and spatial analysis. A foundation for this work was the bettong genetic database generated in 2014 by April's ANU colleagues Sam Banks and



Robyn Shaw (science invariably builds on science).

The results of April's research point to a favourable outcome for the reintroduction program. The introduced bettongs have high genetic diversity and are mating randomly, with no correlation between matings and collection location in Tasmania. The overall conclusion is that the introduction of Eastern Bettongs to the ACT has been successful in creating the foundation for a genetically diverse and sustainable population. Ongoing monitoring and management of the population will seek to confirm that conclusion.

Ed Highley

* April's written transcription of her talk, edited and elaborated by Max Lawrence, is available on the NPA website at <www.npaact.org.au>. This article is a digest of that.

Protecting wildlife by containing cats

When it comes to feral cats, prevention is better than the cure and Canberra needs to contain pet cats.

The ACT Government recently undertook consultation on 'retrofitting' cat containment to the Gungahlin suburb of Casey (near Kinlyside) and areas of Kingston and the Causeway (adjacent to Jerrabomberra Wetlands). This consultation commenced under former Minister Rattenbury.

The retrofitting approach was designed to deal with the late (forgotten?) declaration of Casey as a cat-containment suburb and to add to the protection of Jerrabomberra Wetlands. There is no guarantee that there will be further declarations after these two – if they occur.

There was very low public participation over three public drop-in sessions but there was greater public engagement in a short survey on 'Time

to Talk' (www.timetotalk.act.gov.au/consultations).

The discussion on Casey focused on impacts on wildlife but also noted that cats from other non-containment suburbs also affect wildlife. There was a clear strong case that retrofitting some suburbs was not equitable, especially for one resident who had moved to Casey in order to have better space for an ageing cat.

The Conservation Council's view is that there should be a declaration of cat containment in all of Canberra by 2025. This would achieve the Conservation Council's initial and principal aim for cat containment, would have the advantages of educating the broader ACT community to deal with cat containment, and would be equitable across all suburbs.

The Conservation Council is disappointed that the government is not taking a strategic approach, but also

accepts that there might be transitional 'retrofitting' along the way to reduce the impact of domestic cats and allow for broader scale management of feral and stray cats. Such retrofitting should be scientifically based and deal with all hotspots in the ACT.

Larry O'Loughlin

**Conservation Council of
the ACT and Region**

(Addendum: One unexpected outcome of a warming planet is that it triggers cats to breed throughout the year. One mature female can produce up to 40 kittens in a year. As a result we should expect and plan for an explosion in wild and managed cat numbers if no precautions are taken now to limit their numbers and/or breeding opportunities. Ed.)



Looking at leaf litter

This is an edited version of a paper written by lepidopterist Ted Edwards published in the December 2015 issue of *FronDS*, the newsletter of the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

What role does leaf litter play? It protects the soil from erosion and provides some barrier to weed invasion. It also protects the soil from desiccation and is the major source of nutrients returned to the soil and perpetually recycled. It protects and nourishes all the living organisms which feed on it and which in their turn nourish all the plant and animal life of the forests, woodlands and plains.

Most familiar to us is the dry litter of eucalypt forests, woodlands, mallee and grasslands. Here it is too dry for fungi and bacteria, and they and crustaceans can operate only in seasonally damp conditions and even then they are effective only when the litter is already partly broken down.

Who starts the breakdown process? This is the responsibility largely of insects. Many insects may be involved – termites, cockroaches, some grasshoppers; some beetles and many moths feed on the dry leaf litter. In the case of moths it is the grub or larval stage which breaks the leaf litter down. Of the moths several groups are involved.

Moths in leaf litter breakdown

Have you ever had the bone dry leaves on the forest floor scrunch under your feet in summer? These leaves are the greatest challenge for insects to break down, but moths in the families Pyralidae, Erebiidae, Tortricidae, Depressariidae, Lecithoceridae and Oecophoridae all play a part. Feeding may occur at night when there is some dampness from dew. The dryness of the litter is by no means the only challenge. Many dead leaves are full of oils, phenols, tannins and other noxious



Gharra zonospila. Photo by Paul Zborowski.

chemicals. The moth larvae have to be able to survive and thrive on this uninviting food.

Let's concentrate on the family Oecophoridae or mallee moths. Not that they have any particular affinity for mallee as plants or communities but it is at least an Australian name. Of about 6,000 world species of mallee moths over

5,000 are Australian. As Australia dried out in the Miocene, eucalypts, grasses and acacias came to dominate many of Australia's plant communities and flora, and the mallee moths went with them. Many hundreds of species feed on each of these plant groups. Mallee moths are quite small, usually with a 1–3 cm wingspan. They come in an absolutely bewildering variety of colours, patterns and behaviours.

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of species of mallee moths which feed in the leaf litter and break it down. *Heliocausta* larvae tie green gum leaves together and feed within the shelter so formed until half grown when they cut the petioles, float to the ground and continue to feed on the desiccating leaves in the litter. Others spend all their lives in the leaf litter making silken tunnels (species of *Coesyra* for example) or tying leaves together or making neat cases of dead leaf which they cart around (species of *Garrha*).

Then there are some that are more specialised. What is a koala scat but neatly packaged eucalypt leaves? The scat moths, *Telanepsia*, feed in possum and koala scats. *Oxythecta* feed on grass giftwrapped by wombats, wallabies, and kangaroos. *Ioptera* feed on kangaroo, pademelon and tree kangaroo deposits



Gharra sp larva with its case made of dead leaves. Photo by Ian Common.



A fallen branch showing leaves skeletonised by moth larvae. Photo by Ted Edwards.

and *Scatocresis* feed within possum scats but live in the soil beneath the scats.

In the absence of all these insects Australian dry leaf litter would build up, as it does in California, but here there is a balance if nature is let be.



Telanepsia stockeri larva on an animal scat. Photo by Marianne Horak.

Negative effects of prescribed burning

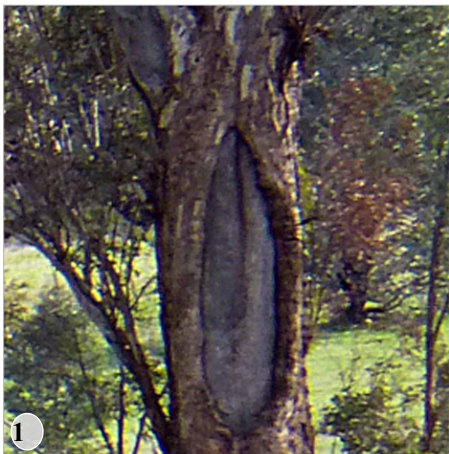
What happens when the bush is deliberately burned with the intent of reducing the amount of leaf litter or so-called 'fuel load'? All the fauna that breaks leaf litter down is wiped out in the process. This is but one of the many aspects of prescribed burning that is not considered nor has it been adequately researched. What about the huge loss of nutrients through smoke and run off? What about the natural selection for rapid-growing weed species through frequent burning? What about the extinction of plants and animals from a too-frequent burning regime?

A lot of research is still needed on these and other aspects of the biology of leaf litter and the impact of burning.

Ted Edwards

Citizen Science observations

About scarred trees



Many of us have seen scarred trees; that is, trees on which bark appears to have been removed intentionally. We're usually most interested when it was done by Aborigines as part of their tribal life, or by early settlers. The 1950s marks the end of that period, although in many areas of south-east NSW, including the ACT, traditional Aboriginal practices would have ceased in the 1860s.

A number of extant scars are widely recognised as having been cut by Aborigines, and they're protected of course. They include the 'canoe tree' at Lanyon Homestead south of Canberra and the tree from near Dananbilla Nature Reserve, near Young, shown in Photo 1.

In November 2015 David Lindley and I walked the Horseshoe and Stokes fire trails on the western slopes of Kosciuszko National Park. We saw a few trees on which bark appeared to have been intentionally removed, and discussed possible reasons.

Photo 2 shows one with sapwood about 6 cm thick spreading onto it. If thickening has been at a similar rate to that shown in a nearby stump, then the scar is about 30 years old. The face shows little weathering.

We guessed that it and a similar one (now dead) on the other side of the trail might have been cut to mark a boundary or hut site.

The stump we'd looked at had an average of five growth rings per centimetre, so with a diameter of 120 cm the tree was about 300 years old and, in 1860, would have been about 60 cm in diameter.

These observations proved useful when we saw other scars, and especially those on a tree (Photos 3 and 4) near Venables Hut in the Goobarragandra River valley. It was (I think) a Grey Box, about 130 cm diameter, with an area of bark missing on each of its southern and eastern aspects.

Both scars started below ground level and narrowed to peter out about 2 m up. Neither showed any of the shapes typical of Aboriginal uses such as canoe, coolamon or shield, though the slabs might have been useful in making a shelter. The encroaching side-growth is a little thicker than that shown in Photo 2, suggesting these scars might be older. Again, however, the faces show little weathering even though the heart has been burnt out.

We concluded that the scarring on this tree was most probably due to a natural cause like fire. That could also explain an unusual feature of this tree – a live buttress 25 cm thick that rose from the ground (and presumably healthy roots) to join it above the scars. It appears that after the fire(s) a strip of unburnt sapwood had remained between the two areas, and as this continued growing it split away from the trunk and curled around to meet itself.

A number of authors and others have explained much about scarring, and our

(continued next page)



Photographs

1. Scarred tree, near Dananbilla Nature Reserve.
2. Scarred tree, Horseshoe Fire Trail.
3. Grey Box near Venables Hut, Kosciuszko National Park – scarred south side.
4. Grey Box near Venables Hut, Kosciuszko National Park – scarred and hollow east side.
5. Hovell Tree, Albury, carved 1824; photo 2015, with a replica on the plaque.

Photos by Rupert Barnett.

The Bush in our backyard

The sound of twittering Silvereyes and an anxious Koel greeted me as I walked onto the deck thinking about this article. A pair of colourful white-cheeked Eastern Rosellas flew into our trees, barely 10 m away. A most unusual sighting was a nesting Satin Bowerbird with chicks on the Aranda Bushland boundary in mid January, a female. Not a male in sight nor a bower closer than Black Mountain. In more than 20 years I have not seen bowerbirds in the Aranda Bushland. Must have been something in the water as soon after we photographed a Channel-billed Cuckoo from our deck. The cockatoos and currawongs made a huge ruckus drawing Sonja's attention to the strange shaped bird.

People walking through the Aranda Bushland or on Black Mountain over the past year or so could hardly have missed a pair of young Wedge-tailed Eagles gliding about. Friends of Aranda Bushland (FoAB) members noticed them constructing a nest in a tall eucalypt on Bindubi Street. This was soon abandoned when they found a far superior tree with no traffic in the Aranda Bushland, not 5 km from Parliament House.

What specialities do they eat in the National Capital you might well ask? A photo by Roy McAndrew details a rather spiky dish, an Echidna, for the young eagles, but eat it they did, throwing out the skin a month or so later to be found



there by Ian Falconer. Some things it is best not to know. They didn't lay eggs in the nest so why go through such a labour-intensive exercise? Some things we just don't know.

In the course of preparing the next edition of the NPA *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* we have looked at many photos of trees, some of them adorned by human hands. Max Lawrence sent in a photo of a large Yellow Box on Mount Taylor with very unusual scars. They were high on the tree, not around a branch stem and not the usual shapes. One has nearly ring-barked the tree. On another visit a Galah was seen nibbling at the edge of the scar. It is surmised that the Galah's rather larger cousin the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo is responsible for the art work. Perhaps the bark provides some essential minerals not easily found elsewhere, but the damage was done in just 2 years, as Max's earlier forensic photos revealed. Koalas chew bark as we have seen on camera, at least down on Dierk and Rosemary von Behren's place on Black Ridge east of Bredbo, so we shouldn't be surprised that birds do too, but what mineral are they after?

Closer to home, members of FoAB were surprised to come across signs that someone had been busy on two Red Stringybarks in the Aranda Bushland, removing a large shield and a coolamon-shaped specimen of bark. This was done well into the Anthropocene, perhaps as recently as the previous few weeks. They were obviously experts with a chainsaw, forsaking traditional tools and did so with permission. Rupert took some

An Echidna in a Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest near the centre of the Bush Capital.

Photo by Roy McAndrew.

The tree at right, on Mount Taylor, is in the process of being scarred. It has been almost ring-barked by cockatoos.

Photo by Max Lawrence.

About scarred trees (continued)

observations appear consistent with theirs. Of note are the studies of:

- Josephine Flood, particularly her *Moth Hunters of the Australian Capital Territory: Aboriginal traditional life in the Canberra region*, 1996
- Andrew Long, *Aboriginal Scarred Trees in New South Wales: A field manual*, 2006 (available online at environment.nsw.gov.au).

In his comprehensive review, Long notes that callus regrowth may thicken faster than the average growth rate, so

that the age estimates above would be too long. Formal measurement would be needed to get an accurate figure.

In the Aranda bushland there are a couple of trees about 35 cm in diameter that had bark removed in mid 2014. The scars have a scab of dried sap sealing the edges, and new growth is starting to wrap over the wound.

There's also an old and well-known scarred tree in Albury that can be dated accurately. The explorer William Hovell recorded his arrival here by cutting the



Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz with the freshly scarred tree in Aranda Bushland.

Photo by Rupert Barnett.

pictures when we visited the site a few months later on another quest to distinguish man-made scars from other features and to estimate their age (see Rupert's article in this *Bulletin*).

So all in all it has been exciting walking our backyard in an effort to convert me from Nancy Burbidge's *no eyes to her eyes*.

Kevin McCue



Rupert Barnett

Half of Oz – a trip to Western Australia

We live in a wonderful land and from a young age I've felt a strong wish, even a sense of duty, to get a working familiarity with it. It's my country. Last year it was time to return to Western Australia.

My route took me through NSW onto Queensland's gas-field roads, past lots of iconic names to the Kimberley, then south through Perth and back across the Nullarbor. I set out in mid-August 2015 and returned 7 weeks later with the car coated in red and 17,000 km older.

Leaving Canberra generated the excitement of a big trip. But it was subdued – by the end of the day I'd replaced the green hills of Boorowa with the brown flats of the Lachlan, but I'd hardly reached the Western Plains yet. I had a long way to go.

A mix of roads led to Broken Hill, then Tibooburra, with a surprise – in a picnic ground was an upturned boat, high on four poles. It's a replica of Sturt's whaler of 1844, but the sculptor reminds us that Sturt's belief in an inland sea was empty. The rounded hull does reflect this granite land though; the name means Place of Rocks.

Cooper Creek and the Channel Country

The dirt roads of the next 2 days had started as a tenuous network linking remote stations and mines, but now also services the hydrocarbon exploration occurring over much of the area. They were generally in good condition, though it was a long day from Sturt National Park in NSW before I finally bedded down in Innaminka, in SA. Beside me was Cooper Creek and memories of Burke and Wills.

Next day, back in Queensland, I passed the road to the Dig Tree and onto the undulating sand and stony deserts of the Channel Country, where the main excitement was the sudden appearance of a roo, emu, bovine or occasional vehicle through a cloud of driven dust. Birdsville, at 37°, offered even less – until night fell, when the bare floodplain of the Diamantina became enlivened by the scuttles of bright-eyed spiders, 10 cm centipedes, sneaky psyllids.

So to Mt Isa, then the Barkly, Stuart and Buchanan highways to



Eastern side of Mount Bruce. Photo by Rupert Barnett.

Gregory National Park and Timber Creek. Here the lookout to the Victoria River also had memorials to a WWII Observer Unit and their Aboriginal support crew, so not forgotten. A little further and a carved tree by the river records where the explorer Gregory camped in 1856.

Keep River and croc country

Keep River National Park abuts the NT border with WA. It is an attractive area with high red ramparts, domed hills and fire-selected top-end vegetation. I was particularly interested in the walk along the Jimimum (Jimium) Valley. The river here was a scatter of shallow pools – it's croc country. Then a recess developed under the nearby cliff, with a panel of Aboriginal rock art, then more. They continued almost unbroken for a half kilometre, and for most of the distance I was on a midden terrace that's over a metre and fifty millennia deep. Many of the images were recognisable: hand prints that connect to country, great serpents of the Dreamings, the prey of the hunt. Others were new and intriguing, then I was

startled by two figures – men in space suits? They reminded me of drawings from the nearby coast described by George Grey in 1838, in attire that's been likened to 16th century Portuguese: the first Europeans? There's no expert agreement on this though, so were they Wandjina ancestral beings?

The Pilbara

From Port Hedland I drove west to Roebourne to view the old jail, then south towards Millstream National Park through spinifex-greened hills that also had extensive exposures of rock the colour of rich chocolate. That suggested a high iron content, while the internal crystalline structure indicated an igneous or metamorphic origin. The southern Pilbara has vast iron ore deposits of course, but I recalled they were sedimentary in origin.

Subsequent research showed I'd been in the East Pilbara Craton, one of the two oldest pieces of the Earth known (3.5 billion years). Despite their age, parts of the craton have petrified micro-structures (stromatolites) sufficiently intact to attest the earliest recorded form of life: bacteria. What's more, they're still being made just down the coast, at Shark Bay.

Karajini National Park is a place to explore. My first stop was at Hammersley Gorge. I'd heard of it decades ago – asbestos, iron? I'd assumed it was a big, rough place, but here it was treed, cool, a little stream cascading over people swimming, behind them a rust-coloured cliff of folded strata.

Next morning the road wound over an undulating plateau with little to indicate

(continued next page)



Aboriginal rock art in the Jimimum Valley, Keep River National Park. Photo by Rupert Barnett.

Half of Oz – a trip to Western Australia (continued)

there was more to see. Then at the car park photos revealed a dendroid of narrow gorges. With others I descended into Weano and it was fun to find our way through its twists and narrows, hop over pools, eye the ochre cliffs. Then a handrail caused unease, muffled grunts, then a sense of relief as we settled in a sinkhole of watercolour washes and water washing colours and a dragon peering.



*Hammersley Gorge, on the way to Karajini National Park.
Photo by Rupert Barnett.*

The park's visitor centre was imaginative, the pictures of water and strata cool. I continued to Dales Gorge with enough time to walk it, and the softening light spread shimmers of gold, shadows of purple, cool. I'd planned the trip with a rough list of things to do. One of them reached back to school days when Mount Brown, 1,234 m, was WA's highest mountain. Next day an interesting pad took me up and I could look south-east at ranges that included the usurper – by 15 m, Mount Meharry; but who's going to walk up its road? To the south was another list item, a Pilbara iron-ore mine; the long trains crawling were expected but not the irrigation of big paddocks of green and yellow, nor the gambol of colours in its hillside workface.

Hamelin Bay is the super-saline end of Shark Bay, with a scatter of black-topped humps around its edge. They could have been rocks, but these are the structures resulting from mats of microorganisms – stromatolites in the making. Out on the middle peninsula of Shark Bay the village of Denham faces Dirk Hartog Island. It was named for the captain who made the second known landing by Europeans on the Australian continent, in 1616.

WA floribunda and the southern capes

Photos of flowers tell much of the story of the following fortnight; driving south towards Geraldton the roadsides were uncleared and connected to reserves preserving this special botanic

*Wreath leschenaultia, Leschenaultia macrantha,
Carnarvon Road, Pindar. Photo by Rupert Barnett.*

provenance. Striking blooms stopped me often so my progress was slow but rewarded, and that continued when I turned into Kalbarri National Park and its broad Murchison River valley. Two days later I'd turned inland to Malawi/Pindar and found a new range of inland flora, including the dainty wreath flower.

The Capes were on my list, not the four-day walk between them but first, Cape Naturaliste. The windswept scrub behind it was no surprise; a tall *Diuris* orchid and whales breaching just offshore, was. Cape Leeuwin had its flowers too, and history: the Dutchman Nuyts in 1626 deviated here from the usual route to Batavia and explored the south coast as far as Ceduna; Flinders in 1801 passed by on his circumnavigation and later naming of the continent.

In the Porongurup Range a steel walkway hung off the airy tors of The Castle. Inland was another line of peaks;

the Stirling Ranges proved to be also 'full' of flowers and on this showery day looked rugged. Happily the next day was fine as I ascended its highest peak, Bluff Knoll.

Then to Fitzgerald River National Park – here are 1,400 different plants. Many of them are endemic, some make attractive garden specimens despite being 'difficult'. Then near Norseman I lunched amongst the ruins of Douglas; that gave me an hour in the largest area of temperate forest remaining in the world, yet only 7 per cent of the original remains. So as I sipped a hot choc that night I thrilled when a big bird stepped regally by – a bustard. It's now rare in the south of its range.

The run home

It was another day's drive to Eucla and the historic signal station. Then I entered SA, and no, there wasn't much to see on the Nullarbor but that made its long and misty sea cliffs the more impressive. It was another 500 km to the 'border' checkpoint though, at Ceduna. To its south, at Point Labatt, was the largest sea lion colony on Australian coasts; it's a protected place on which dozens of them lounged, with fur seals.

There were still many kilometres to go to reach home but I would be in familiar country – the gentle Flinders Ranges, Broken Hill's new solar farm, empty lakes at Menindee. It's been good to experience more of my country.

Rupert Barnett



Whose country?

it's 5.30
kookaburra cackles
our long dark night
is coming to an end
our dancing day approaches

empty shells
litter the sandhills
mussel ... oyster
nothing else left
for us who inherit

fading day
and cloudy sky
quiet land
and lonely
brooding hills of Gunnebah

smoke
welcomes us to country
whose country?
whipbirds ... creek murmurs
gravel pricks my feet

beside
the forest track
carcasses
of ancient utes
rust silently in the rain

Gerry Jacobson

NPA ACT Christmas Party 2015, Orroral Valley



1. Rod Griffiths has the attention of members during lunch at the picnic ground at the site of the former Orroral Valley Deep Space Tracking Station.
2. Some party-goers were early enough to go for a walk to explore around the Orroral Homestead site.
3. Maria and Kathy about to create 'Simon's Mohawk Mistake'.
4. Annette and Mike.
5. Rupert and Dave.
6. Jacqui and Esther.

Photos by Max Lawrence.



Observant readers will spot the red hair and beard highlights which spread throughout the gathering. Of course highlights are most effective on actual hair!



NPA outings program



March–June 2016

Bushwalk Grading Guide

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A Road, fire-trail or track | E Rock scrambling |
| B Open forest | F Exploratory |
| C Light scrub | |
| D Patches of thick scrub, regrowth | |

Day walks Carry lunch and snacks, drinks, protective clothing, a first aid kit and any required medication.

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

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

Work parties Carry items as for day walks plus work gloves and any tools required. Work party details and location sometimes change, check NPA website, www.npaact.org.au, for any last minute changes.

Other activities include ski trips, canoe trips, nature rambles, and environment or field guide studies.

Wednesday walks (WW). Medium or somewhat harder walks arranged on a joint NPA, BBC (*Brindabella Bushwalking Club*) and CBC (*Canberra Bushwalking Club*) basis for fit and experienced club walkers. Notification and details are only emailed to members registered for WW. Only NPA hosted WW are shown in this program. For WW email registration, contact the *Outings Convener*.

Transport The NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of **forty cents per kilometre** for the distance driven divided by the number of occupants of the car including the driver, rounded to the nearest dollar. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Drive and walk distances shown in the program are approximate for return journeys.

NPA ACT members undertaking walks or other activities in this program are advised they should have PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE or, at least, AMBULANCE COVER in case of an accident requiring evacuation by ambulance or helicopter.

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The *Outings Convener* is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind yourself. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings with a suggested date to the *Outings Convener* by email to outings@npaact.org.au

All persons joining an outing of the *National Parks Association of the ACT* do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders, are absolved from any liability in respect of injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

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

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

Children under 18 years of age are welcome to come on NPA ACT activities provided they are accompanied by a parent, guardian or close relative. Parents or Guardians will be required to sign a specific *Risk Waiver for a Child* form.

6 March

Sunday Walk

McMAHONS HUT SITE

Map Williamsdale 1:25,000

Grading 3 A

Leader Margaret Power

Contact 0418 645 303 or

power000@tpg.com.au

Walk from Honeysuckle campground to Booroomba Rocks for morning tea. Anyone not wanting to make the climb up Booroomba Rocks is welcome to have their morning tea in the Booroomba

Rocks campground and wait for the group to return. Continue on the Australian Alps Walking Track to Bushfold Flats and then to the former site of McMahons Hut for lunch. In the afternoon proceed via Reads Hut (aka Bushfold Hut) to the Mount Tennent summit fire trail and continue to Apollo Road. Car shuffle involved.

Meet 8.30 am Kambah Village Shops.

Drive 75 km, \$30 per car.

12 March

Saturday Work Party

GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Contact Michael Goonrey, 6231 8395
mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15 am. Work will include weeding and spraying around Eleanor's Grove and Hospital Creek. Tools provided.

Car pool: drive 80 km, \$10 pp.

NPA ACT Outings program March–June 2016 (page 2 of 4)

14 March Monday Walk

MOUNT TANTANGARA

Map Denison, Tantangara 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B/C

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 (h)

Depart Kambah Village shops 7.30 am. Drive to Adaminaby and follow Snowy Mountains Highway to Alpine Creek Fire Trail. Walk north on trail through forest to Boggy Plain and climb Mount Tantangara (1,745 m), mostly on brumby tracks. Continue north 1 km to unnamed peak for views of frost plains north of Kiandra. Descend to Tantangara Hut for lunch. In afternoon, walk through open country to ridge further west for views of Jagungal and Tabletop. Return via Mount Tantangara. 15 km, but can be shortened, depending on preferences of group. Afternoon tea Adaminaby.

Drive 250 km, \$100 per car.

19 March Saturday Work Party

HONEYSUCKLE AREA

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 6292 3502

In May 2015 we removed a number of exotic plants from this area. Cut and dab equipment will be provided but suggest you bring gloves and your favourite bush saw.

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. Drive 90 km, \$36 per car.

20 March Sunday Walk

MOUNT PAINTER AND THE PINNACLE

Map Canberra Nature Parks

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Esther

Contact 0429 356 212 or

galla001@umn.edu

Walk off track to Mount Painter (100 m climb) for views over Lake Burley Griffin and Molonglo Valley and then on to The Pinnacle for lunch with a view. Several historic sites are along the way. Return along the south edge of Cook.

Meet on the Aranda side of Bindubi Street under the HV powerline (about 1 km from William Hovell Drive) at 9.00 am.

23 March Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity

Leader Mike Smith

Contact 0412 179 907

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

25–28 March Easter Car Camp

FORESTS FOREVER ECOLOGY CAMP

ERRINUNDRA PLATEAU

Map Rooftop's Cann River–Orbost–Delegate Adventure Map

Leaders Gary and Di Thompson

Contact 0401 590 046 or

garyt@iinet.net.au

See the great and interesting write-up in the Spring *NPA Bulletin* by Judy Kelly. This is right up NPA's alley, and an area, together with the SE Forests, that many members have fought to protect for decades.

For full details see <http://www.eastgippsland.net.au/forestsforever>. As the site says, camp with like-minded people, tour with expert botanists. The Goongerah camp site is large. Make your own bookings and associated payment(s). Let us know if you are interested please.

Drive 600–800 km.

30 March Wednesday Walk

JOINT NPA / BBC / CBC ACTIVITY

Leader Philip Gatenby

Contact 6254 3094

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

1–3 April Car camp with day walks

SNOWY PLAIN, KNP

Maps Kalkite Mountain 1:25,000,

Nimmo 1:25,000

Grading 1 A

Leader Graham Scully

Contact 6230 3352 or scully-mob@southernphone.com.au

The trip will feature Henry Willis who is seeking volunteers to retrace and GPS the original stock route he followed in the grazing period from Kalkite Gap to Lake Jindabyne. Henry has been a major source of historical detail on Snowy Plain and its people and continues to contribute with his recollections and stories.

Whilst the caretakers of Botherum Plain Hut carry out some maintenance, Robert Green and others, (see Graham Scully's article on *Exploring the Jagungal Wilderness*, page 21), will introduce participants to the multitude of sites, ruins, stockyards, graves, gold workings, sluicing lines, sawmills and historic tracks and routes in this most fascinating area.

Detailed directions will be emailed to participants as well as a comprehensive set of GPS coordinates.

4–7 April Car Camp

SOUTH EAST FORESTS, NUNNOCK SWAMP

Map Touring Map Snowy Mountains

Leaders Gary and Di Thompson

Contact 0401 590 046 or

garyt@iinet.net.au

Camp at Nunnock Swamp 2–3 nights, possibly Six Mile Creek Rest Area third night. Grasslands, frost hollows, old

growth forests, gorge, Alexanders Hut, lookouts. Easy exploratory pace. Dry weather 2WD roads. Limit of 12.

Drive approx 500 km.

5–8 April Pack Walk

PRETTY PLAIN

Maps Greg Greg, Toolong Range, Jagungal 1:25,000

Grading 4 A/B/C

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 (h)

Leave car at Tooma Dam and set out 3.5 km further west at Snakey Plain Fire Trail. Hut destinations: Day 1 Wheelers; Day 2 Pretty Plain; Day 3 Patons. Approx 40 km, partly on fire trails. Daily minimum 4, maximum 8. Contact leader before 30 March.

Drive 500 km, \$200 per car.

9 April Saturday Work Party

GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Contact Michael Goonrey, 6231 8395 or mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15 am. Work will include weeding and spraying around Gudgenby Readycut Cottage and towards Peppermint Hill. Tools provided.

Car pool: drive 80 km, \$10 pp.

10 April Sunday Drive/Walk

HERITAGE FESTIVAL – GLENBURN

PRECINCT, KOWEN

Grading 1 A/B

Leader Col McAlister

Contact 6288 4171

The Glenburn Precinct is a new ACT Heritage Place. It contains several early European relics from a once vibrant, small rural community that is no more. We will visit several sites and learn about what, when and who. Only a small amount of easy walking. Meet at Canberra railway station, Kingston at 9.00 am. We should be back by 3.30 pm.

Drive 50 km, \$20 per car.

16–17 April Pack Walk

BROKEN DAM AND TABLETOP

Map Mt Selwyn Ski Touring Map

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Contact leader by Wednesday. A walk from Mount Selwyn ski area to camp at the Broken Dam Hut site. Back out the next day with a side trip to Tabletop Mountain, a total distance of around 24 km. The walk traverses alpine grasslands and forest hollows but is mainly

NPA ACT Outings program March–June 2016 (page 3 of 4)

on track. There are views south to Mount Jagungal and beyond as well as north to the Bimberi Peak.

Drive 300 km, \$108 per car.

17 April **Sunday Walk**
MOUNT TAYLOR WITH A DIFFERENCE
Maps Tuggeranong and Canberra 1:25,000
Grading 1 A/B/D/E
Leader Steve Hill
Contact 6231 9186 (h)

This walk can be as easy or tough as the group likes. Apart from visiting the summit, the idea is to explore off-track some of the rugged features of Mount Taylor. Meet at 'car park' Sulwood Drive adjacent to Mannheim Street at 10 am.

23 April **Saturday Work Party**
PINE ISLAND SNOW GUMS
Leader Martin Chalk
Contact 0411 161 056

This is a continuation of the work we started in February 2015. The task consists of pine control in the northern end of the Pine Island Reserve Snow Gums. Please bring gloves, bush saw and/or loppers. Meet at Kambah Village at 8.45 am. Drive 25 km, \$10 per car.

28 April **Thursday Activity**
NO-WASTE TOUR, VISIT THE TIP
Leader Esther
Contact 0429 356 212 or galla001@umn.edu

Learn how recyclable waste is sorted and processed during a one hour visit to Mugga Landfill. There will be an educational presentation and a short bus tour of the recycling facility. We will meet nearby at 9.30 am as parking is limited at the site. Afterwards we will return to our meeting point for morning tea at local cafe.

Contact leader for meeting place details and to reserve your place by 25 April. Group limited to 20.

30 April–1 May **Family Car Camp**
MOUNT CLEAR CAMPING GROUND
Leader Graham Scully
Contact 6230 3352 or scully-mob@southernphone.com.au

This camp is designed to be family friendly and members are encouraged to bring along their children or grandchildren to enable them to experience nature in and around Mount Clear. Botanist Isobel Crawford will show us some of the secrets of plants, swamps and wetlands as well as birds. Graham will take us on short walks to the site of the smallest school you will ever see and

some old graves, ruins and huts. Those who prefer to visit without camping overnight are also welcome. Expressions of interest to Graham please.

1 May **Sunday Walk**
MOUNT CLEAR
Map Bredbo. 1:25,000
Grading 3 A/D/F
Leader David Dedenczuk
Contact 0417 222 154 or ddedentz@bigpond.net.au

Meet at Kambah Village Shops 8.00 am. From the Mount Clear Campground in the far south of Namadgi National Park, we commence walking on the Mt Clear fire trail. Leave the fire trail to head cross-country up ridges to the summit of Mt Clear. There will be some scrub of varying calibre to contend with on the climb, but this will be compensated for by nice views. Return same route. Around 17 km and 500 m climb.

Drive 160 km \$60 per car.

2–6 May **Car Camp**
WEDDIN MOUNTAINS
Leader John Brickhill
Contact 0427 668 112 or johnbrickhill@gmail.com

A five-day trip camping at Ben Halls campsite in Weddin Mountains National Park for two nights and Boginderra Hills Nature Reserve (no facilities) for two nights. Travel to Weddin Mountains will be by stock routes and leafy back roads, visiting Monteagle cemetery on the way. Walks to be attempted at Weddin will be the Black Spring trig circuit (about 15 km) and to Eualdrie trig, (6 km) and short walks to historic Seatons farm.

At Boginderra Hills Nature Reserve, base rocks are granite in contrast to the sedimentary rocks at Weddin so expect different plants. A walk to the summit of this small reserve with a circuit return, all off-track with some scrub bashing expected.

Return to Canberra will include visits to Flagstaff Memorial Nature Reserve and Jindalee National Park.

Round trip of about 550 km, about one third on gravel roads.

3 May **Tuesday Work Party**
GLENBURN PRECINCT, KOWEN
Leader Col McAlister
Contact 6288 4171

Tasks to be negotiated with the Parks Service. Meet at Canberra railway station, Kingston at 9.00 am.

Drive 50 km, \$50 per car.

8 May **Sunday Walk**
DEVILS GAP – GIBRALTAR ROCKS – TIDBINBILLA RIVER
Map Tidbinbilla 1:25,000
Grading 3 A/B
Leader Margaret Power
Contact 0418 645 303 or 6253 0131 or power000@tpg.com.au

The walk will start from Flints picnic area in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Walk up to Devils Gap then descend down the other side, from where we'll follow a fire trail around to Gibraltar Rocks. We'll take the foot track up onto Gibraltar Rocks. After a break we'll descend towards Birrigai and continue on to the visitor centre. From here we'll follow a walking track to Tidbinbilla River and then return to the cars, via Dalsetta.

Meet at Park and Ride car park, east end of Kirkpatrick Street (off Cotter Road) near the RSPCA at 8.30 am.

Drive 60 km; \$24 per car plus reserve entry fee.

14 May **Saturday Work Party**
GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP
Contact Michael Goonrey, 6231 8395 or mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9.15 am. Work will include maintenance of the Gudgenby Track towards Hospital Creek. Tools provided.

Car pool drive 80 km, \$10pp.

15 May **Sunday Walk**
RED ROCKS AND MURRUMBIDGE SCENES
Map Tuggeranong 1:25,000
Grading 1/2 grade negotiable
Leader Steve Hill
Contact 6231 9186 (h)

A day enjoying the quite beautiful sculptured scenes offered by our river as it drops from Tuggeranong Creek to the 'rapids' past Red Rocks. We can pop up Urambi Hill for views, too, if so desired. Fence hopping skills helpful. Meet at 'car park' near the bottom of Learmonth Drive about 150 metres from the Athllon Drive traffic lights at 9.30 am.

15 May **Sunday Walk**
MOUNT YARARA
Map Michelago 1:25,000
Grading 3 A/D/F
Leader David Dedenczuk
Contact 0417 222 154 or ddedentz@bigpond.net.au

Meet Kambah Shops 8.00 am. Parking near to Caloola Farm, walk south down the Naas Valley fire trail. At a certain point, leave the trail, ford the Naas River and then climb cross-country up

NPA ACT Outings program March–June 2016 (page 4 of 4)

ridges to the summit of Mount Yarara. There will be some scrub of varying calibre to contend with on the climb. Return same route.

Drive 104 km \$42 per car.

22 May Sunday Walk HUTS AND RUINS OF SOUTHERN NAMADGI

Map Yaouk and Shannons Flat
1:25,000

Grading 3 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. A day walk of about 18 km visiting Westermans, Waterhole, and Brayshaws huts and the ruins of the Boboyan homestead. A walk up Naas Creek valley over the ridge and down Back of Grassy Creek along the Settlers Trail. Mainly on track but with some cross country following animal trails and tracks.

Drive 160 km, \$60 per car.

25 May Wednesday Walk JOINT NPA / BBC / CBC ACTIVITY

Leader Barrie Ridgway

Contact 0437 023 140

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

28 May Saturday Work Party FENCE REMOVAL GUDGENBY VALLEY

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 0411 161 056

In 2015 NPA and the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group started removing the remaining stock fencing that criss-crosses the old Gudgenby Station. This will be a continuation of that task. All tools will be provided. Meet at Kambah

Village shops at 8.00 am.

Drive 80 km, \$32 per car.

29 May Sunday Walk BLACK MOUNTAIN AND THE ARBORETUM (via Aranda Bushland and Dairy Farmers Hill)

Map Canberra Nature Parks

Grading 3 A/B

Leader Esther

Contact 0429 356 212 or

galla001@umn.edu

Walk starts in Aranda Bushland on the way to the top of Black Mountain. We will then enter the National Arboretum through the Cork Oak plantation (morning tea) and continue on to Dairy Farmers Hill for great views over southern Canberra and lunch. Return to cars by way of the Himalayan Cedars and Frost Hollow Snow Gums. Meet on the Aranda side of Bindubi Street under the HV powerline (about 1 km from William Hovell Drive) at 9.00 am.

5 June Sunday Walk MOUNT McDONALD, URIARRA

Map Cotter Dam 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 (h)

Depart 9.30 am Cooleman Court car park (Liardet Street, just south of McDonalds) and drive to Brindabella Road car park, just north of Cotter Reserve. Climb through open forest and on track to Mount McDonald for views over Cotter Dam and Brindabella Mountains. Descend west to Uriarra Settlement for lunch. Return on lower level trails near the dam. 11 km, one steep climb.

Afternoon tea Sakeena's, Cooleman Court.

Drive 30 km, \$12 per car.

11 June Saturday Work Party GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Contact Michael Goonrey, 6231 8395 or
mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9:15am. Work will include mapping of rabbit warrens in Ranger selected areas of the Gudgenby Valley. Tools provided.

Car pool drive 80 km, \$10pp.

19 June Sunday Walk LOWER ORRORAL LOOP

Map Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@acma.gov.au

Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8.30 am. A walk from the Orroral Valley Camping area along the valley to the ruins of the Orroral valley tracking station. Morning tea at the historic Orroral Homestead in which the NPA was involved in its early preservation and restoration.

Drive 95 km, \$33 per car.



Mike Smith has retired as Outings Convener. Mike has used his strength, enthusiasm and extensive knowledge of walks in the ACT and beyond to produce NPA's quarterly Outings Program for 10 years. He and Annette (both Life Members of the association) have also extended their hospitality to walks leaders meeting at their home. NPA thanks Mike very sincerely for his great contribution to the association.



Bushwalks

Goorooyarroo and Mulligans Flat nature reserves

Date: Sunday 19 July 2015

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader – replacing Steve Hill), Allen Bills, Kerri Bradford, Michaela Popham, Margaret Power, Tim Walsh

Weather: Mostly clear sky; cool; hardly any breeze.

Since Goorooyarroo NR was established, NPA walks in the area have been circuits from Horse Park Drive. Now that Canberra Centenary Trail (CC) bisects the reserve, however, through traffic has developed. Going with this trend, our walk began in Goorooyarroo but after the three main peaks had been climbed, it connected to the CC and continued west to Mulligans Flat NR, ending after 10 km in Forde.

So having gathered at Horse Park Drive and positioned a vehicle in Amy Ackman Street, Forde, we set off for Burnt Stump Hill at 9.50 am. A minus 5° frost was still burning off as we plodded

to the summit for the now famous view, propped up as it is by the ruin of a giant hollow tree.

Descending from there to the CC we were blocked by the first of numerous fences but none were to prove difficult. Magnificent white-trunked eucalypts occupied a hillock. We left the trail, contoured around Gecko Hills, climbed to the NSW border, then steeply north to Old Joe Hill (813 m), where we parked our bottoms on a rocky outcrop for elevenses. Steve's absence was commemorated with white choc Tim Tams. Mt Gingera, on the southern horizon, was snow covered. A distant eagle circled.

Another kilometre north was the next peak, Gooroo Hill (766 m), with its stone trig (and discarded bottles). Allen had photographed a beautiful ancient eucalypt on the way. A kookaburra laughed. From Gooroo we ambled down

grassy slopes and through open forest until we found a lunch tree – one of its massive twin trunks had died and dropped logs for seats. Wattles were about to flower. Delightful place.

At 12.45 pm we continued down the slope, found the trail, turned west and passed through the gate into fenced off Mulligans Flat Sanctuary. Frogs croaked, roos fled, but bettong burrows evaded us. Experimental exclosures everywhere, as were small blue flags and green flags, signifying what? At the reconstructed woolshed people were gathered but surprisingly, we had seen little through traffic, walkers or cyclists.

We were at the car at 2.30 pm and after shuffling around, reuniting bodies with internal combustion engines, we adjourned to *Da Nunzio* at Yerrabi Pond for coffee and delicious pastries.

Brian Slee

Gungahlin's ponds

Date: Sunday 10 January 2016

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Peter Anderson-Smith, Allen Bills, Mike Bremers, Esther Gallant, Steve Hill, Max Lawrence, Julie May, Michaela Popham, Margaret Power

Weather: Blue sky, very warm, some cool breezes.

El Niño, where is thy sting? Canberra was promised the worst drought in decades but on this walk we found clear ponds, flowing water and greenery. Plenty of waterbirds but, oddly, no ducks – maybe they were flying to Lake Eyre.

This walk of 8 km connected The Valley Ponds, Gungahlin Pond and Yerrabi Pond, all impoundments of Ginninderra Creek and its tributaries. We departed 8.30 am from the Scout Hall at The Valley Ponds. This set of three recently created pools have different water levels designed to encourage the growth of different vegetation and attract a variety of birds. A novelty is the outdoor classroom. An area of great potential, it is already infested with weeds. Wild oats dominate the adjacent native grassland. Needs a 'Friends of'.

A short walk west under Gundaroo Drive into Ngunnawal took us to the northern end of Gungahlin Pond. It is surrounded by a pretty but exceedingly

manicured golf course. Negotiating passage across the privatised land is a convoluted exercise. Near Gungahlin Drive, concrete paths festooned with 'At Your Risk' signs wend close to playing areas. However, gravel service tracks, in trees away from links, exhibit exclusion signs. Abandoned golf balls litter water channels.

It was getting warm, so once west of the golfers we climbed past lovely eucalypts to Hill Reserve's cool breeze and all-round views. A pair of cute puppies were happy to be waylaid. After ambling the ridge we descended to Crinigan Park and gambolled briefly at the hut ruins. Next stop was cold drinks from Ngunnawal IGA: we could not wait and gulped them in the courtyard outside, not at the next lake. The nearby platypus sculpture was too hot to straddle for more than one photo.

Yerrabi Pond is the Goldilocks among the lakes, neither neglected nor overly pampered. No. 1 with coots and swans for sure, and local residents. We followed the path up the western side and crossed the

bridges for brunch at *Da Nunzio* but it was closed. So we continued south, across Mirabei Drive, and after being shouted at for daring to walk in shade next to the golf course fence, diverted to the parallel cul-de-sacs and back to The Valley Avenue, arriving at noon. Seven of us repaired to ultra-modern Crace for lunch at *the district* (pub + food).

Should the walk be repeated? On the current route only if led by someone with knowledge of how locals deal with crossing the golf course. I thought I had worked that out in three recce walks but am left wondering why clear rights of way were not established in such a central location from the outset.

Brian Slee



On the hot seat platypus at Ngunnawal. Photo by Max Lawrence.

Two national parks in north-west Argentina

Argentina is a large country, as long as Australia is wide. Many of us have enjoyed walking its grand Patagonian mountains, but perhaps without knowing that other regions also offer much to the visitor. So in February 2014 a few of us spent a week in the north-west provinces, where the main centre is Salta. To its west, the ranges build up to the 6,000m peaks of the Andes; to the east great plains stretch with little interruption to the Atlantic Ocean.

Salta is a modern city of over half a million people that nevertheless retains some of the rich and ancient heritage of its region, and an easy style. Local agriculture includes extensive areas of sugarcane, maize and grapes on the plains and, on the high plateau, the farming of llamas – all are now domesticated. The mountainous areas can reveal in-your-face geology that makes for startling scenery; of the five designated national parks we visited two – Calilegua and Los Cardones.

Calilegua National Park

From Salta a 2-hour drive north-east on good highways brought us to the turnoff into Calilegua National Park. The side road to the camping area was short though rough but the camp, under a canopy of rainforest trees, was clean, cool and quiet. A committee of bright blue birds with the deserved name of Plush-crested Jays welcomed us, and just below the camp a channel of the San Lorenzo River glided by.

The park, almost the size of Namadgi National Park, is bisected by the river. It's at an altitude of 450 m and drains



Los Cardones National Park. Photo by Rupert Barnett.

ranges that exceed 3,000m. This and a high rainfall give the park habitats that range from jungle-covered foothills through rain and montane forests to sparse alpine tops. They sustain 300 bird species and many animals, including jaguars, ocelots, pumas and the tapir. The road continues north to isolated villages from which the rugged ranges beyond could be scaled, while a number of walking tracks wander through the park's forests. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see a tapir!

Leaving Salta once more we drove west, initially through fields of maize and sugarcane. Hours later we were still going west, mostly by going north, then south, north, south ... as the road tacked up the wall of a great valley. Finally it turned between low hills where a sign pointed us to a nearby lookout, the 'Eye of the Condor'. We started the walk with enthusiasm, but soon slowed down – we were at 3,000 m.

A wide plain spread out before us – alpine desert, its vegetation sparse. However, dotted across it were tall cacti called the cardon. They were reminiscent of those in western movies of old, some metres in height, up to 40 cm thick, fluted and often branched, and covered in sharp spines many centimetres long. The name presumably comes from a spiny-leaved European plant, but they're unrelated. Before us the cardons faded into the distance like shapeless, tall Easter Island statues.

Plush crested Jay, Cyanocorax chrysops, in Calilegua National Park.

Photo by Rupert Barnett.

Surrounding the plain were high ranges, some topped with a layer of cloud or carrying a sheen of fresh snow. Beneath those to our north was a shallow valley, apparently dry, but with an area of multi-coloured 'badlands' hillocks.

Los Cardones National Park

But we needed to camp, so continued to Los Cardones National Park. This is also almost the size of Namadgi. The signs said 'no camping', but we were fortunate the road runs across its narrow north end so we were soon beyond the boundary and in low bare hills that gave shelter from a cold wind.

Most of the region's mountains have been raised in the formation of the Andes Mountains, and those upheavals also resulted in volcanoes that have left a scatter of massive cones built from ejected rock, lava and ash. Over time, changes in the chemistry of the source magmas have resulted in different coloured rock strata, and next morning some were highlighted here, along with a few adobe ruins and the parade of the cardons. North of Salta the Humahuaca Valley is famed for its vivid slashes of colour; here the palette was of gentle pastels.

We drove back to the park to check its information boards. The first one told us the gravel track we were walking had origins that go back at least to the Incas (C12–C16) – their expansion was in part achieved by a system of good roads that enabled communication, trade, regal

(continued next page)

TrailRider at Heritage Festival

On 4 April, NPA and ACT Parks will again be cooperating to demonstrate the TrailRider off-road wheelchair to the community, this time during our Heritage Festival. With the support of the Arboretum, the demonstration will be in the Himalayan Cedar section.

It is pleasing that usage of this device has gradually increased and we are hoping for expanded interest this coming year.

Volunteer 'sherpas' will again be needed and if you can give a couple of hours during the day please contact Graham Scully on 6230 3352 or at scullymob@southernphone.com.au



News on the Glenburn Precinct, Kowen

As mentioned in the December 2015 *Bulletin*, the 'Glenburn Precinct, Kowen' has been placed on the ACT Heritage Register. This action significantly increases the status of its early European relics and places an obligation on the ACT Government to protect and conserve the precinct for the benefit of future generations.

It should make it easier for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service to obtain resources to carry out work in the precinct. Over the past 7–8 years they have done a marvellous job, with some financial assistance from NPA and much help from volunteers. But much more needs to be done.

Phillip Leeson Architects will prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the precinct for the Parks Service with the help of an ACT Heritage Grant to the NPA. David Hobbs has started work on the CMP and, on 19 January, he accompanied ranger

Colin Schofield on a drive to several of the historic sites. In the coming months, Colin and I will give him detailed briefings on what we believe should be included in the CMP for each site.

The CMP is expected to be finalised in October 2016. It will provide a blueprint for all future protection and conservation work in the precinct.

With the changes to the ACT Ministry announced by Chief Minister Barr on 22 January 2016, I wrote to Shane Rattenbury and Meegan Fitzharris congratulating them. I also thanked Shane Rattenbury for his past support for the Glenburn area. I asked Meegan Fitzharris if one of her staff could contact me when things settle down a bit so that I could brief the staff member on the precinct. I also invited her to visit the sites.

I decided to relaunch *The Friends of Glenburn Newsletter* because of the many requests for information on the

precinct, and the first one was issued in February 2016. Anyone who wishes to be included on the distribution list, please contact me on

cvmac@grapevine.com.au

The Friends of Glenburn work parties continue. In December 2015 the post-and-rail fences at Glenburn Homestead and the Colverwell Graves were sprayed and painted with a mixture of linseed oil and turps to help protect them. Unfortunately, because of rain, the work party scheduled for 2 February had to be cancelled.

The next work party is on Tuesday 3 May 2016. The main activities will relate to the construction of the Glenburn Heritage Trail for walkers and cyclists, including the erection of route markers and an interpretative sign at the intersection of Charcoal Kiln Road and the Kings Highway. All welcome. You will have fun. Guaranteed.

Col McAlister

Two national parks in north-west Argentina *(continued)*

progress and dominance. If possible, their roads were straight; we could look along this, the Tin Tin Royal Way, and see where modern engineers had merged their construction onto it – straight as a plumb line over this plain and the next.

Other tracks walked us through forests of cardons. The air was sharp, the mountains clear, parrots darted. Around us the cardons stood waiting, spines shining.

Rupert Barnett

Humahuaca Valley zig-zag slopes.

Photo by Rupert Barnett.



Polar Bears and Belugas – close up and personal



Large flocks of Snow Geese were seen flying over the tundra. Photo by Esther Gallant.



Imagine putting on your hiking boots and walking out to see Polar Bears! That is exactly what I did for 6 days at the fly-in Seal River Lodge on the shore of Hudson Bay. The trip started with a 60 km small-plane flight north from Churchill, Manitoba, Canada – ‘the Polar Bear Capital of the World’. Rather than looking at bears in Churchill from the safety of immense tundra buggies, we were going to meet them on foot, accompanied by watchful guides with big guns. We saw bears from the rustic lodge compound, from boats and on hikes – 29 bears in total including six with cubs.

The Hudson Bay Polar Bear population is 500–600 animals. In the winter they live on the pack ice and hunt seals by snatching them from their breathing holes. When the pack ice in the bay melts in summer, bears swim to

land and stay until freeze-up the next autumn. Although they are closely related to Grizzly Bears, they cannot digest the abundant tundra berries as Grizzlies do. Some may fast for their several-month stay on land, and we saw some very thin bears. There are tens of thousands of Snow Geese nesting along the coast, and Polar Bears are known to feast on the eggs and goslings. Some bears have reportedly learned how to stalk and kill Beluga Whales (small white whales, 5–6 m long).

‘Bob the Bear’ is frequently near the lodge and quite accustomed to people, although we always stayed a respectful distance from him. From the lodge we watched him chew on a Beluga Whale carcass for most of a day until he could no longer stand. Then we walked out for a closer view of the immobilised bear. At least two other bears also fed on the whale. It was not known how the whale died.

Bears were not enticed to the lodge. About a dozen simply wandered by while we stayed in our fenced compound with furiously clicking cameras. One bear actually settled for a nap in some scrub only a few metres distant. The real highlight for all of us was a very elegant mama bear with two 2-year-old cubs that wandered by. Mother stopped long enough for her cubs to have a very good look at the tourists and vice versa – less than a metre from our feet. WOW! As they departed our guide called out ‘thanks Mama for bringing your cubs’.

On another day we watched a female and her two cubs playing in the water – climbing on rocks and jumping off with much splashing and play wrestling. What a privilege to watch Polar Bears doing normal bear things at close range.

There were numerous other attractions: very tall Sand Hill Cranes and many other birds, Sik-Siks (Arctic ground squirrels) living under the lodge, wild flowers with colourful berries, and ancient Inuit habitation sites. However, the second most exciting thing was ‘swimming’ with the Beluga Whales. This was accomplished in a dry suit with snorkel and mask while towed by our feet behind a Zodiac. The curious whales came within arm’s length and sometimes much closer. We could hear their high-pitched songs and appreciate why they are named the canaries of the sea. Tens of thousands of Beluga Whales migrate each year from the Arctic Ocean to these ‘warmer’ waters for calving. From the Zodiac we also saw several Polar Bears. They are excellent swimmers using only their huge front paws.

Endangered Polar Bears: In some other areas Polar Bears come ashore when the ice melts but most of the world’s population depends absolutely on the Arctic ice pack – staying there and feeding on seals year round. Polar Bears can apparently swim 200–300 km or float on icebergs and floes and so reach

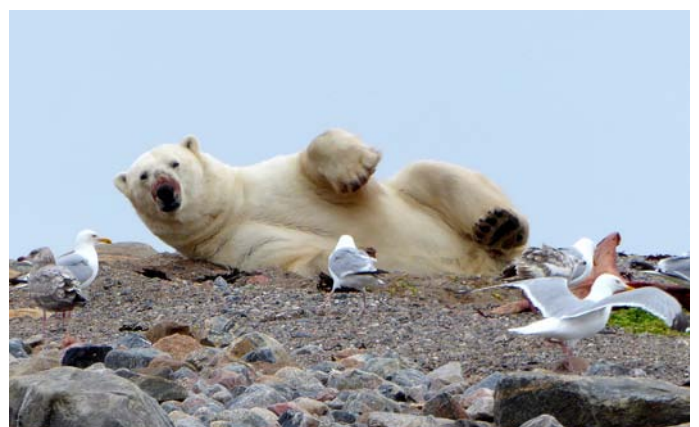
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Left. Two guides always walked out with us after first scanning the very flat tundra for bears. They have never shot a bear.

Right. Bob the Bear fed on whale carcass until he collapsed. Remains of whale tail are to bear’s right – note the bear’s bloody snout.

Photos by Esther Gallant.



Book review

Bilby's Ring – The Trilogy

Book 1 Out of the Spinifex

Book 2 Across a Great Wide Land

Book 3 Into the Bowels of the Biggest City

by Kaye Kessing

Kaye Kessing Productions, 2015

Price \$53 for three-book set at the Australian National Botanic Gardens bookshop, or \$45 plus shipping from www.kayekessing.com

Bilby (the Pink-eared Bandicoot) and Chuditch (the Spotted Quoll) are both the last of their kind in their home ranges on the sundown side of the great land. What to do? Set out on a quest, of course. And so begins an epic adventure as a band of five endangered native mammals ('The Five') heads across the great wide land to the biggest city by the endless sea. There they hope to find humans with kindness in them who will influence the decision-makers in the house on the hill in the coldest city to protect all native animals. Places are not specifically named but those who have travelled across this great wide land in person or vicariously will recognise most.

Bilby is the quiet thinker and planner. Chuditch is the fierce protector of the group – all others being herbivores and/or insectivores. These two are joined by Mala (the Rufous Hare Wallaby) who jumps high to help choose the route, Sticky (the Stick-nest Rat) a clever problem solver and Numbat a grumpy but dedicated follower. Along the way The Five seek advice from an old Pink Cockatoo, a wise Golden Mole and others. Many (but not all) native animals and a few ferals help with the journey. Foxes, feral cats, rats and wild dogs chase and attack them. Great eagles patrol their route to protect them from these predators. The Five are poisoned by crop dusters and chased by humans with barking dogs. Danger and adventure are around every corner.

There are sections of pure joy, such as the bursting forth of life when the great white lake is in flood. Beauty abounds as they float through extensive bird-filled marshes and wind their way through majestic blue mountains. In contrast, ugliness surrounds them in horse- and pig-damaged wetlands.



Starvation threatens as they cross lands munched bare by cattle, sheep and goats and when crossing extensive one-plant paddocks with only toxic (to them) golden seed plants. Sadly some of the animals helping The Five are killed at the paws of feral and even native predators.

Other endangered native animals tell them of their troubles. The Five come to appreciate how complex and complicated an issue they are facing and debate the best solutions. Along the way we learn a bit about the geography of this land and about the creatures that inhabit it. We also learn of the many and varied negative impacts of our kind.

Books suitable for ages 8–80 and definitely worth the read.

Esther Gallant

Exploring the Jagungal Wilderness

This small book summarises the work done by many people in recording the hut ruins, graves, mining and other relics which became visible in Kosciuszko National Park following the 2003 fires. Of particular interest was the rediscovery of historic dray and bridle tracks, which had been used by graziers, miners and Snowy Mountains Authority personnel. Those routes, and the old

maps which show them, are included in the book, along with their GPS coordinates, enabling people to follow them today.

Klaus Hueneke, author of *Huts of the High Country* and *Kiandra to Kosciusko* describes the book as 'The most detailed coverage of track and hut sites in the Jagungal Wilderness ever compiled'.

The book has been published as an

ebook and a sample can be seen at Amazon.com by searching the eBooks section for *Exploring the Jagungal Wilderness*.

Robert Green at rvhgreen@outlook.com or on either of 6282 2667 or 0402 647 040 can provide further information.

Graham Scully

Polar Bears and Belugas close up and personal (continued)



distant land when their patch of ice melts – or not.

Recently there was a great outcry when two bears were shot in Iceland. When I was visiting there several years ago, I learned that they are automatically shot. They have floated and/or swum a very long way to reach Iceland and are extremely hungry and thus extremely dangerous. Since there is no ice sheet

around Iceland, there is no way they can go back to hunting seals on the ice as Polar Bears are meant to do. The only large animals in Iceland for them to hunt are humans and domestic animals. So they are shot. Presumably other Polar Bears don't reach land and perish at sea.

Esther Gallant

An elegant bear with two 2-year-old cubs walked by the lodge. The very cute cubs inspected us through our 'cage' at very close range. Photo by Esther Gallant.

Cut back on costs and the weeds sing

The ACT Government's funding for weed management under the Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) has fallen dramatically, from an average of \$2.3 million for the five budgets between 2009 and 2014 to \$1.5 million in the 2015–16 budget. The dedicated work of Parkcare groups over many years will be reversed unless funding is increased to more than the previous level of \$2.3 million.

Invasive weeds compete with native plants for space, nutrients and light, altering the ecosystem, frequently to the detriment of native animals, birds and insects.

The ACT's nature reserves and national park are threatened by weeds that grow and proliferate at their boundaries and within. 'Between 2009 and 2014, fifteen new incursions occurred in the ACT, most being environmental weeds of great concern' (Conservation Council Weeds Officer, Geoff Butler).

Geoff Butler also pointed out that ministerial media releases showing a rise in 'base recurrent weed funding' are incorrect because 'the Minister included weed funding for biodiversity offsets, catchment restoration, road and infrastructure maintenance (primarily mowing), fuel reduction and agricultural lands as part of base recurrent weed funding. These items should be separate funding allocations'.

Budget figures can slip and slide between different categories and components, giving misleading impressions.

The ACT *State of the Environment Report 2015* was released on Friday 19 February and is available online or at public libraries and at the Conservation Council's office. Under its Biodiversity Report Summary 10.1.4, 'What are we doing and what effect is it having? Main findings' we read:

Although strategies and plans are in place for the management of pest animals and weeds, their impact on biodiversity is not monitored. Improvements in monitoring and reporting on outputs and outcomes are planned and will improve the management effectiveness of biodiversity considerably. The impact of fire on biodiversity is being considered, but it is yet to be determined if processes in place will deliver the positive outcomes anticipated.

How can strategies and plans for the management of pest animals and weeds be implemented when funding has been dramatically cut and when there is no monitoring? After fires, areas are vulnerable to weed infestation but the 'impact of fire on biodiversity' is only being 'considered'.

Recommendation 8 of the Report suggests 'That the ACT Government provides the necessary resources to

complete the next phases of the Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program'.

To persuade the ACT Legislative Assembly to allocate funding to an appropriate level for weed control and monitoring so that such a recommendation can be implemented, please send an email message or write a short letter as soon as possible to the ministers because budget considerations for 2016–17 are nearing completion. Ask for a realistic recurrent annual budget allocation for managing weeds in the ACT, otherwise the dedicated efforts of volunteers and Parks staff will be negated. You could also add the points raised in paragraphs 2 and 3.

Mick Gentleman, Minister for Planning and Land Management, and Meegan Fitzharris, Minister for Transport and Municipal Services, now share the responsibility for weeds and have replaced Minister Rattenbury.

Write to the ministers at:

ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601,

or email:

gentleman@act.gov.au and
meegan.fitzharris@act.gov.au

Judy Kelly

Climate march last November



29 November 2015. Photo by Adrienne Nicholson.

World Environment Day

The World Environment Day dinner is on again on Saturday 4 June 2016, celebrating our environment and the people who work to protect it. This is the Conservation Council's flagship social event that supports all of their work. Put this date in your calendar and join our NPA table. Further details will be in *Burning Issues* closer to the date.



The 2015 Environment Day dinner was held at the National Arboretum. Photo by Sabine Friedrich.

PARKWATCH

Edited extracts from recent issues of journals and newsletters, and online sources.

Getting kids into national parks

Whether the idea of taking your children out into nature fills you with a sense of excited anticipation or nervous dread, one thing is certain – today, more than ever, we are well aware of the benefits of childhood contact with nature:

- positive mental outcomes
- physical health benefits
- enhanced intellectual development
- a stronger sense of concern and care for the environment in later life.

Please don't let your expectation of what should happen as you embark on a bush adventure prevent you from truly experiencing and enjoying what does happen. Here are some tips, ideas and activities to help you along the way.

- Be prepared: Choose your walk wisely, pack a backpack with a first aid kit, water bottles, snacks and any materials for genuine 'Bush Explorers' e.g. map, magnifying glass, compass, pen and paper.
- Lead by example: If you are genuinely engaged and enthusiastic, your children will discover with fresh eyes, respond in the moment and invite curiosity through your words and actions.
- Get smart with your smart phone: Be clear with your 'Bush Explorers' that your phone may be used as an Explorer tool to navigate and capture memories.
- As you walk: Vary your pace and select a walking stick as all children love carrying sticks in the bush.
- Move silently: Bush exploring can be very noisy, but switch off your voices and you will find your senses become 'hyper-alert' like those of a bush creature. Agree on a length of time or set distance and then try a 'silent walk' during which you may only communicate without using words.
- Find a bush seat: It's fun to find good sitting spots as you walk and it can provide a much needed moment of rest. Stop to try out each bush seat and don't forget to take a photograph!
- Find your favourite stories: Engage the imaginations of your 'Bush Explorers' and spur them on by linking their experience to their favourite stories or movies. Find a leaf that reminds you of Nemo and swim him through the forest, locate the perfect 'Faraway tree' or spot a home for a Hobbit!

Remember on this adventure you are not a tour guide or a teacher, but a fellow explorer!

Neck of the Woods ebulletin
NPA Qld, Issue 24, 18 January 2016

The Tarkine

The Tarkine, the second largest cool temperate rainforest on earth is currently at risk from mining and logging proposals. The region is home to ancient untouched forests, Aboriginal heritage sites, wild rivers, a windswept coastline of big swells and surging kelp, vast button grass plains and coastal heathlands. Despite meeting all of the natural and cultural values necessary to have the region listed and protected as World Heritage, the federal and Tasmanian governments are both against listing because forestry logging coupes and mineral exploration leases cover the bulk of the area.

The Tarkine is named after the Tarkiner Aboriginal clan which lived in and managed this area sustainably for at least 40,000 years. The ancient complex rainforest include giant Celery Pines, ancient Huon Pines, 40 metre tall Antarctic Beech and Leatherwood trees, all icons of Australia's largest temperate rainforest here in Tasmania's north west. The abundance and diversity of native species, of which 60 are listed as rare, threatened and endangered, equals that of nearby regions already carrying World Heritage status awarded to protect their unique values. Motion detector cameras placed deep in the wilderness and maintained by researchers associated with Tarkine Trails have captured images of healthy Tasmanian Devils, Spotted Quolls and the Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Tourism and ecotourism have been growth industries in recent years but mining and logging still provide the lure of easily made big profits. Following a brief gold rush in 1881, mineral exploration has revealed economically viable quantities of tin, silver and osmiridium as well as gold. These deposits are close to the surface making the area ideal for open-cut mining.

So far the area has been able to avoid the loggers despite the occurrence of the ancient Gondwanan relic, the Antarctic Beech, *Nothofagus moorei*, known by the loggers as red myrtle. The wood remains highly sought after, bringing a premium price to timber getters. As the timber is slow growing, planting is not seen as viable, putting extra pressure on naturally occurring trees.

The Cradle Coast Authority believes that tourism in the Tarkine region has the potential to create 1,100 jobs and generate \$58.2 million annually by 2017. We sincerely hope that the protection and promotion of this special destination as a world-class ecotourism area will overcome the lure of short-term profits. The Bob Brown Foundation is currently garnering support for the Tarkine to become a 450,000 hectare national park. Bob Brown himself says 'go and see it for yourself and then you will want to fight for it'.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59
No. 4 (Summer 2015)

Creature feature – the Mistletoe Bird

The Australian Mistletoe Bird, *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*, is found through mainland Australia and north to Papua New Guinea. It is more common in woodland and forest ecosystems. The male Mistletoe Bird is 9–10 cm in length. The female is duller in colour with grey back, white breast with a grey streak, and dull red undertail.

Mistletoe Birds feed predominantly on fruit of various native mistletoes (including *Ameyema spp.*). They also eat insects when feeding their young. The female builds a pear-shaped nest of crushed plant material bound together with spider web, and lays 3–4 eggs. Both parents are involved in feeding the young. The gut of the Mistletoe Bird is very simple, with no gizzard for crushing food. As a result the berries of the mistletoe plant are digested very quickly (between 5 and 45 minutes after ingestion) with no damage to the seed. The droppings containing seeds are sticky and the bird scrapes them along tree branches.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59
No. 4 (Summer 2015)

Securing an Australian icon

The Great Koala National Park (GKNP) was born out of serious concern for Australia's most iconic species. Once abundant, koalas have declined sharply – to the point that, in 2012, the koala populations of NSW, Qld and the ACT were listed as vulnerable under Commonwealth legislations. In NSW, koala numbers have fallen 30% in just 20 years. On that trend, koalas will be extinct in NSW by 2055 if nothing is done!

Causes of decline are varied. Drought has had a serious impact, with

(continued on page 24)

PARKWATCH (continued)

koala populations in the Pilliga Forest crashing from tens of thousands to just hundreds. On the coast, koalas compete with humans: the more fertile soils on the coastal flats provide good koala habitat, but most humans live there too. Unfortunately, our planning system has been unable to marry the needs of koalas and development. The Pacific Highway is a huge barrier to east-west koala movement and fragments populations. Logging is a major threat. Koalas don't require old growth trees or hollows, but they do require food trees, shelter trees and well-connected habitat.

Concern about koalas led to several groups developing the GKNP proposal. It was felt that the koala is so special a symbol of Australia that it deserved a dedicated reserve – similar to the approach taken by China to protect the Giant Panda. The GKNP proposal would combine 140,000 ha of existing reserves with 175,000 ha of state forest. It stretches from the Chelundi area, NW of Coffs Harbour, south to just inland of South West Rocks. This area is likely to become even more important as climate change pushes koalas eastwards. In essence, the GKNP is designed to encompass the maximum number of koalas in the smallest area.

In order to maximise the tourism potential of the GKNP, the NPA (NSW) along with the Bellingen Environment Centre, commissioned drawings of a visitor centre to be located on the Pacific Highway, south of Coffs Harbour and adjacent to Bongil Bongil National Park. The centre would also house a koala hospital which would care for animals infected with chlamydia and those injured by dog attacks or vehicle strikes. We will be working to persuade both local and state governments that reserves, especially the GKNP, are the best tools we have for securing the future of koalas. We need to keep the pressure on our MPs. As our patron Tim Faulkner said 'it is public pressure that will make the GKNP happen. Visit the website <koalapark.org.au>.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59,
No. 4 (Summer 2015)

Honouring Dane Wimbush

We were very saddened to hear of the recent passing of Dane Wimbush, a long-time NPA (NSW) member and Far South Coast branch executive. Dane was a committed conservationist who devoted much time and energy to protecting our environment. He brought to his work a fine analytical mind and wealth of scientific knowledge. His significant

contributions to conservation will continue to inspire and influence for decades to come. We extend our respects to Dane's family at this difficult time and honour him for his tireless dedication to conserving NSW's natural heritage.

E-newsletter NPA NSW,
December 2015

Hawkweed alert!

Authorities have been on alert after a patch of a highly invasive weed, Mouse-ear Hawkweed, was discovered in Kosciuszko National Park last year. If uncontrolled, this noxious weed has the potential to overrun the region's alpine ecosystem and impact on the grazing and agricultural industry. NPWS has been working with Greening Australia and Canberra Bushwalking Club to monitor the outbreak as part of the Alpine Weeds Project. If you are out walking in Kosciuszko and see a plant that you think might be a weed please take photos, record the location (GPS GDA Zone 55) and report your weed sighting to the nearest NPWS Office or to cbr.alpineweeds@greeningaustralia.org.au.

E-newsletter NPA NSW,
December 2015

Our parks in trouble if Parks Victoria doesn't get serious injection of funds

The management of Victoria's national parks and nature conservation reserves is in serious decline and can be rectified only through a major boost in long-term funding. Since 2010 state government funding to Parks Victoria has fallen by almost a third from an already low base. As well as being hit by these massive funding shortfalls there have been staff cuts, placing serious stress on those that remain. There has also been a reduction in the skills needed to manage the many threats Victoria's parks face, and funding for a number of weed and feral animal programs has been cut altogether.

The Victorian National Parks Association is calling on the Victorian Government to immediately return Parks Victoria funding to at least 2010 levels, with substantial increases over following years so that the organisation can rebuild the resources and expertise it needs to reverse declines in the condition of many of our most important national parks. This would be consistent with the government's election commitment to invest in a world class national parks system with Parks Victoria reporting directly to the Environment Minister.

We have welcomed comments from Environment Minister Lisa Neville that her government is reinvesting in national parks to improve their facilities and management. A recent survey commissioned by the VNPA showed that 96% of Victorians recognise the importance of national parks for conserving nature and protecting native wildlife, and 81% support increasing funding for protecting nature. Victoria's national parks draw 35 million visitors every year. The parks system generates \$1 billion a year through tourism, \$330 million in water services and \$180 million in avoided health costs.

At www.vnpa.org.au,
accessed 24 January 2016

The case of Portsea's disappearing beach

The Portsea Beach has vanished, a victim of the Port Phillip Bay Channel Deepening Project. The Victorian Government and the Port of Melbourne Authority might choose to disagree with that assessment but studies by scientists and the observations of local experts lay the blame squarely at the project.

After the Port Phillip Heads was dredged in 2008 to deepen the shipping channel, tidal currents increased, wave patterns changed and the Portsea Beach began its disappearing act.

Years and millions of dollars later the beach is covered in giant sandbags in a futile attempt to halt the erosion – according to the CSIRO the sandbag wall is part of the problem. New solutions being proposed include groynes and artificial reefs, but each of these will create its own environmental issues. It is time the government and the Port of Melbourne Authority came clean on the issue, admitted the cause of the vanishing Portsea Beach and established an inclusive, transparent and scientifically robust consultation process to explore future options for the beach.

At the time of the channel deepening project the Port of Melbourne Authority was required to establish a \$100 million bond to cover any environmental damage. This has since been refunded but should now be reactivated.

At www.vnpa.org.au,
accessed 24 January 2016

The 5% burn target

In mid-November, the Victorian Government finally announced the inevitable: the policy to perform fuel reduction burns on at least 5% of public land annually would be abandoned. Our

(concluded on page 25)

PARKWATCH (continued)

fire managers are free to manage the state's fuel loads strategically. The independent monitor of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission's recommendations had already pointed out serious problems with the target. And early last year, Victoria's Inspector-General of Emergency Services had advised moving to a 'risk-based approach'.

The official line is that burns will remain much the same for now, with 'risk-based' planning taking hold in mid 2016. What is missing so far is the complete assessment of fire management that the release from the 5% target allows. It's time for complete reassessment of the whole spectrum of fire planning and mitigation activity, so we can most effectively allocate our expertise and resources. We should look at the need to reassess Victoria's planning regulation, at mandating shelters in existing houses in fire-prone areas. And we should look at a range of options for controlling fire ignition points.

We should also look at fuel reduction burns in that broad fire management context – what gives the best bang for the community's buck, in each very different part of Victoria. Only then can we be sure we are doing our best to look after our communities. And in that process we might also manage a burning regime for Victoria that supports our overstressed native ecosystems.

Park Watch (Vic. NPA),
No. 263 (December 2015)

Native vegetation laws: are they enough?

The Andrews Government's review of Victoria's native vegetation clearing regulations is on track to deliver some results within the government's first term. This review, the result of an election promise, comes after the Baillieu and Napthine governments undertook their own reviews and introduced regulations which aimed to streamline the permitted clearing process, with a focus on using the offset market to regulate clearing.

Their policy moved away from valuing large old trees and threatened vegetation communities. It also introduced the use of computer models and flawed mapping products for fundamental decision-making. The VNPA was a strong advocate for a better policy in the past review and is now in the current review, and is participating as a member of the Stakeholder Reference

Group as well as encouraging the participation of others. This review is not intended to change the policy fundamentally, but does aim to improve it in practical ways.

The government is stating that there are links between the Native Vegetation policy review and the review of the Biodiversity Strategy and Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, under which decisions around larger policy change will be made. The Victorian review is taking place at a time when we are seeing weakening of native vegetation protection laws around the country under conservative governments.

NSW is about to abandon its Native Vegetation Act in favour of a biodiversity conservation Act that will result in reduced protection for native vegetation. SA is considering adopting some of the elements of Victoria's 'streamlined' policy, and Queensland under the Newman Government opened up large swathes of the countryside for clearing, a policy which the Palaszczuk Government has not yet reversed. Victoria is the most cleared state in Australia but the others are catching up.

At the recent Biodiversity and Climate Change Symposium, we heard about the devastating changes that are already occurring within our landscape, and the importance of refuge areas for wildlife. We also know of the importance of conserving native vegetation for myriad benefits to people, agriculture and the environment. The review of the clearing regulation is due to provide some draft policy recommendation in early 2016 with adoption planned by mid 2016.

Park Watch (Vic. NPA),
No. 263 (December 2015)

Going, going ... saved!

While our national and state environment laws are under immense threat from mining companies and conservative governments, this year has still seen new or additional legislative protections given to seven endangered ecosystems, thanks to HSI's scientific nomination program. These often critically endangered ecosystems include the first ever national listing for the Seagrass Meadows of the Manning–Hawkesbury Ecoregion, the protection of Cooks River–Castlereagh Ironbark Forests, Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands, Castlereagh Scribbly Gum and Ages Bank Woodlands, Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland and Shale Sandstone Transition Forest of the Sydney Basin Bioregion. These critical-

species habitats represent the last remaining 100,000 hectares of quintessentially Australian landscapes. Their listing under the federal government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* and NSW law will also further protect other threatened species.

We have also financially supported a Tasmanian Supreme Court case brought by our colleagues at the Tasmanian Conservation Trust against a land owner who wants to destroy nearly 2,000 hectares of woodland. Protected under national law (thanks to a nomination by HSI many years ago), this area is critical for the survival of key endangered species.

Humane Society International,
campaign report 2015.

Marine and coastal update

We continue to await the release of planning processes for the Point Nepean Quarantine Station and the Moolap coastal wetlands. There are also only scant details of progress on the Anglesea Heathlands in the Great Otway NP. It is hoped that Parks Victoria will conduct a summertime consultation process on the draft 2010 Point Nepean master plan for what the government refers to as a 'refreshment' of the plan. At the time of writing there were no details.

For Moolap, the first stage of the planning process will be for 12–15 months and cover the wetlands and also the closed Alcoa smelter and adjoining Alcoa land further east. This should give the flexibility needed to get the right level of protection for the wetlands, a conservation reserve that also offers passive recreational opportunities for Geelong residents.

The population of Hooded Plovers in the Mornington Peninsula NP is threatened by disturbance and attacks by leashed and unleashed pet dogs. There is now a strong local campaign, spearheaded by state MP Martin Dixon, to have dogs banned from the national park. The VNPA supports this campaign and spent some time meeting with Martin in late November to talk about this and other conservation issues on the peninsula.

Park Watch (Vic. NPA),
No. 263 (December 2015)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar

	March	April	May	June
Public holidays	Fri 25–Mon 28	Mon 25	—	Mon 13
General meetings	Thurs 17	Thurs 21	Thurs 19	Thurs 16
Committee meetings	Tues 1	Tues 5	Tues 3	Tues 7
Gudgenby Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 12	Sat 9	Sat 14	Sat 11
Glenburn work party ²	—	—	Tues 3	—

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15 am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00am.
 2. Friends of Glenburn meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 9:00 am, or at the locked gate off the Kings Highway at 9:20 am.

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Suzy Watson,
 Russell Whitewood and Sue Robinson,
 Peter and Jeanette Johnson
 Kate Waghorn.

and Kerri Bradford has rejoined.

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.

Honorary Life Membership



The committee is again calling for nominations for Honorary Life Membership.

If you think that a member has done something very special for our association and is worthy of this recognition, please send a confidential nomination to the secretary Sonja Lenz by mid-April (signed by yourself and another member who seconds the nomination). Further information on what to put into the nomination can be found on the NPA website or by contacting Kevin McCue on 6251 1291 or email mccue.kevin@gmail.com.

Vale Thelma Hunter

A death notice in the *Canberra Times* brought back memories of a past member of the National Parks Association of the ACT.

Dr Thelma Hunter was known for her work as an academic and feminist whose research interests included women's issues and social policy, health policy and Indian politics. Thelma Hunter did her MA, Dip. Ed. in Political Economy and Politics at the University of Glasgow. She arrived in Australia in 1958 where she held the position of Lecturer, Department of Political Science at the Australian National University (ANU) during 1965–79.

She completed her PhD in Political Science – The Politics of National Health – at ANU in 1969. Between 1991 and 1994 she was a Visiting Fellow at the same university. In 1999 she published *Not a Dutiful Daughter: the personal story of a migrant academic*.

But for some early members of our association in the 1970s she was a lively bushwalking companion with a Scottish accent and very dark eyes that came from her Italian heritage. One member vividly remembers her from a car camp at South Durras when there was no Murrumbidgee Resort there, and being invited to her home for a spontaneous dinner of pasta and pesto – an Italian meal in those days quite unknown to many Australians.

Thelma Hunter died at the age of 92 on 9 January 2016.

Various sources, including NPA members
 Tim Walsh and Judith Webster

NPA AUTUMN ART WEEK

8-15 May Gudgenby Cottage

Contact Christine
cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

The Parks Service has accepted our request for an additional Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage this year, in autumn; book soon to secure your place. Further information in *Burning Issues* and on the website.



VISIT THE TIP

28 April Thursday Activity

Learn how recyclable waste is sorted and processed during a visit to Mugga Landfill. There will be an educational presentation and a short bus tour of the recycling facility. We will meet nearby at 9.30 am as parking is limited at the site. Afterwards we will return to our meeting point and have morning tea at a local cafe. Group limited to 20. See Outings Program. For meeting place and to reserve your place please contact Esther by 25 April on 0429 356 212 or email galla001@umn.edu

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Hammersley Gorge, folded ironstone rock strata (article page 10).

Photo by Rupert Barnett.

Insets. Left. Galah at tree scar, Mount Taylor (article page 8).

Photo by Max Lawrence.

Centre. A tiny moth *Oxythecta* sp of leaf litter (article page 7).

Photo by Paul Zborowski.

Right. Hudson Bay Polar Bear (article page 20).

Photo by Esther Gallant.

Back cover

Critters come in all shapes and sizes, but the photo scale does matter!

Photos by NPA members.

Key to back page photographers: Kevin McCue (KM),
 Max Lawrence (ML), Adrienne Nicholson (AN).

General Meetings

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



Thursday 17 March

Krakatoa

Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz

NPA ACT members

Few national parks worldwide have had their genesis in a massive volcanic eruption as did Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia – Krakatoa 1883. Kevin and Sonja will talk about their recent visit, with surprising Australian connections.

Thursday 21 April

*Where the Murrumbidgee's flowing
... from the mountains to the sea*

Barrie Virtue

Raconteur

From the river's source in the Snowy Mountains to its junction with the Murray, we trace some of the history of the Murrumbidgee's exploration by Charles Sturt, and the interesting connection Sturt had to our region.

Thursday 19 May

Polar Bears – endangered

Esther Gallant

NPA ACT member

Awe-inspiring Polar Bears are very threatened by climatic warming. The bears of Hudson Bay, Canada come ashore in summer and can be seen at close range even on foot. We watched bears for 6 days learning about bear behaviour and why they are so endangered.

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

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

Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	vacant
<i>Vice-President</i>	Christine Goonrey 6231 8395 (h) cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au
<i>Secretary</i>	Sonja Lenz 6251 1291 (h) sonjalenz67@gmail.com
<i>Treasurer</i>	Chris Emery 6249 7604 (h) chris.emery@optusnet.com.au

Committee members

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Mike Smith	0412 179 907 (mob) admin@npaact.org.au

Conveners

<i>Outings Subcommittee</i>	Vacant admin@npaact.org.au
<i>Environment Subcommittee</i>	Rod Griffiths 6288 6988 (h) rod.blackdog@gmail.com
<i>Cultural Subcommittee</i>	David Large 0428 914 837 (mob) egralmd@gmail.com
<i>Publications Subcommittee</i>	Kevin McCue 6251 1291 (h) mccue.kevin@gmail.com
<i>Promotion and Engagement Subcommittee</i>	Vacant
<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Kevin McCue 6251 1291 (h) mccue.kevin@gmail.com
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<i>Glenburn/Burbong Work Parties</i>	Col McAlister 6288 4171 (h) cvmac@grapevine.com.au

The NPA ACT office is in Unit 14 / 26 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)

Website: www.npaact.org.au

Email: admin@npaact.org.au

Address: GPO Box 544, Canberra ACT 2601

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheAct

Membership subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

The new subscription rate is \$22, which includes a digital copy only of our *Bulletin*.

If you want to receive a printed copy of the *Bulletin*, the subscription rates are:

Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	Full-time student/Pensioner	\$22

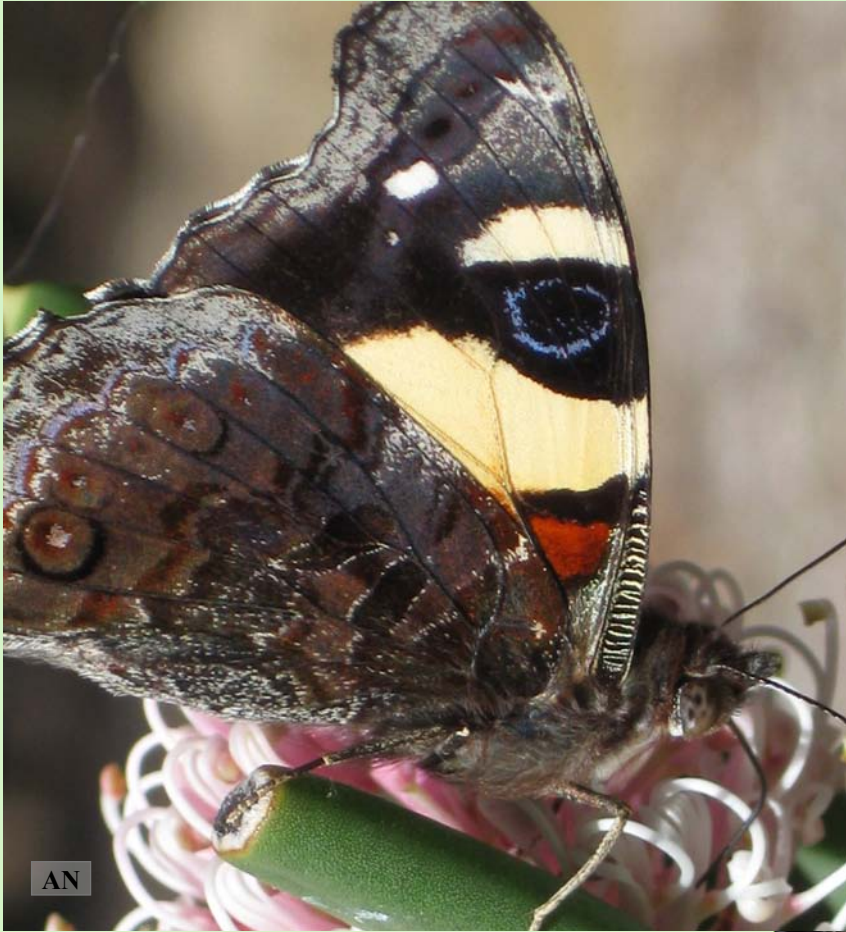
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*I live in the
Bush Capital.*



What am I?

