



NPA Bulletin

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



**ACT Environmentalist
of the Year**



**Antarctic
Adventure**



**NPA Scholarship for
Emily Stringer**



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

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From the President

The NPA ACT Committee is a collaborative effort. This has been especially evident over the past 2 years, when there was no named leader. Others were concerned that this situation meant the committee and the NPA ACT in general were in grave trouble. Not at all. Projects were carried out successfully (e.g. Bushfire Symposium) and new projects were initiated (e.g. coir recycling, Rosenberg’s Goanna monitoring, new scholarship and research grants). Field guides were written, edited, published and sold. A parade of informative and interesting speakers addressed our general meetings. Bushwalks and social events were planned and scheduled. Political lobbying resulted in matters of environmental concern being addressed by the Legislative Assembly, and MLAs were taken to see special parts of the ACT. That is just a sample of what your ‘leaderless’ committee achieved. My hope is that this level of accomplishment will continue unabated due to the

enthusiasm and hard work of dedicated committee members. I am very pleased to be president of such a talented and motivated group.

A project that particularly excites me can be loosely described as ‘Books for Kids’. It started a couple of years ago when I heard Threatened Species Commissioner Gregory Andrews say that every school should have the set of Kaye Kessing’s Bilby Trilogy books describing threats to many native species. I decided to make it happen, and subsequently NPA ACT gave a set of the books to all 109 ACT primary schools.

A second book opportunity was to offer our Namadgi book (*Namadgi: A National Park for the National Capital*) to ACT Parks for their proposed Namadgi Junior Ranger Program. Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the Australian National Botanic Gardens already have junior ranger programs and eagerly accepted Namadgi books for their registrants. When these programs were recently asked if they would like more books the

response was ‘yes thanks!’.

Namadgi books also went to Namadgi School as student prizes and to Canberra Bushwalking Club for repeat participants in their kids outings program. This project is fulfilling an NPA objective of promoting environmental education, especially among the young. So far 360 copies of the Namadgi book have been removed from storage to be put in the hands of children and young families. The next step will be to offer the book to other youth organizations with outdoor and/or environmental programs. The books are to be used as a reward for those who complete the program.

As a result of some very generous donors, the Committee faces the exciting challenge of finding creative and environmentally significant ways to invest these funds. We have recently initiated an honours scholarship at the University of Canberra (UC) while

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From the President *(continued)*

continuing to fund a similar award at the Australian National University (ANU). We have awarded a research grant to develop a model for predicting bushfire behaviour and have just agreed to match a Parks and Conservation Service grant for research to establish methods to evaluate the effectiveness of government environmental offsets. We have enabled a pilot study of the Rosenberg's Goanna (likely threatened in the ACT) in partnership with UC, ANU and PCL through the purchase of \$10,000 worth of tracking equipment.

The newest NPA initiative is the funding of 10 advanced undergraduate

and/or graduate students in environmental sciences to attend the Forests Forever Easter Camp in East Gippsland. This two-day event is an immersion in the problems and possibilities for preserving old-growth forests and their endangered native fauna. This is accomplished through walks, drives, lectures and discussions. Eleven NPA ACT members have attended the event in recent years, and all found it very worthwhile and inspiring. Details of the NPA visit to the event are given in the Outings Program pages.

As always, our volunteers are providing the necessary energy for many

projects. In this issue Coir Recycling into erosion control logs is featured. This project is a collaboration with the Friends of Aranda Bushland and the Soft Landing Mattress Recycling facility in Hume. It arose as a result of an NPA outing to Soft Landing. Volunteers also provided support and walking companions for Rod Griffiths on his very successful Conservation Council fund-raising Border Walk. And one of our extraordinary volunteers, Martin Chalk, was recently recognised as the Conservation Council Environmentalist of the Year. Well done all!

Esther Gallant

Introducing Esther Gallant, NPA's new president



Esther has been a member of NPA for many years, and has been very active as a walks leader, presenter at general meetings, and as a member of the NPA's management committee. She actively promotes NPA philosophy to young people. She is also Emeritus Professor at the ANU's John Curtin School of Medical Research.



NPA ACT Christmas Party

Gudgenby Cottage

**Sunday
10 December
from 11.00 am**

Bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer. If possible, bring a chair.

Nibbles, some drinks and Christmas cake will be provided.

Check *Burning Issues* or the NPA website for last minute details.

Contact an NPA committee member if you need a lift, or for further information.

Come earlier, 10.00 am, if you want to join a walk to Peppermint Hill, or visit a platypus pool.

National park proposal hits a snag

NPA has put a lot of effort over a number of years into campaigning for the establishment of a national park incorporating the existing nature reserves around northern Canberra and the high-value but vulnerable lowland grassy woodlands – 69 per cent of which lie outside of the protected-area network. This proposal was initially the subject of a favourable report commissioned by the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (then Dr Maxine Cooper), but more recently it has been the subject of a further report by a National Park Feasibility Reference

Group comprising community representatives (including NPA). This latter report was commissioned by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, and its findings were less than favourable to our cause.

In short, the reference group recommended that the ACT Government should not support the establishment of a new, northern Canberra region national park. However, it did go on to recommend that the government should support enhanced management and additional protection for lowland grassy woodland currently located outside the

ACT protected-area network. Further, it recommended that the government should consider establishing a continuing role for a representative group (possibly the reference group itself) to support conservation outcomes for the ACT's lowland grassy woodlands.

The Minister has accepted the reference group's recommendations, and NPA will be looking to take a very active role in the consultative process. Watch this space.

Max Lawrence

The management committee of the NPA ACT wishes all members and their families a safe and happy Christmas break and health and happiness for the New Year.

Rosenberg's Goanna

The project to monitor Rosenberg's Goanna, outlined in the September NPA *Bulletin*, is proceeding at a rapid pace.

Quick work by Chris Emery saw the order for the two tracking packs and a base station placed, followed by near-seamless delivery of the equipment through Customs, though we have been hit with a questionable \$1,000 import-duty bill. Don Fletcher is now putting the equipment through some tests before he attaches the packs to a couple of lizards. There are some bells and whistles in the

software to come to terms with, calibration, and handshaking between the transmitter attached to the lizard and the base station.

Rosenberg's Goanna spends time underground, which is probably why it has survived European arrival; the very similar and once common Lace Monitor, which climbs trees to escape predators, was too easy to shoot and there are probably none left in the ACT. Unfortunately, the high-frequency radio waves don't transmit well through soil,

so we don't expect a signal when they are sleeping or resting in their burrows. But we don't know a lot about them yet.

Don Fletcher gave an excellent presentation on the project to a large and very interested group at the October NPA general meeting. Brett McNamara is very positive about ACT Parks and Conservation Service staff being involved, so we are waiting to hear which ranger will be nominated to participate.

NPAC Annual Meeting

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) was held in Adelaide on 10–12 November. NPA ACT delegate Esther Gallant and I (NPAC Public Officer) attended. Delegates from six member groups summarised their accomplishments over the year and joined in discussion of mutually important issues. Discussion was stimulated by guest speakers on the following topics: prescribed burning in protected areas, the

Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary, and nature-based tourism in protected areas. The last topic generated considerable discussion, as all groups are especially concerned about the trend toward commercial development in national parks. Several hours were spent discussing a document being prepared to present our case to politicians before the next federal election. A half-day of visits to local reserves included discussions with restoration managers and rangers.

We spent a further half-day touring small nature reserves in the Adelaide Hills with local park carers. It was particularly interesting to see the problems faced and solutions implemented by all these groups.

Kevin McCue

The trees are back!

As I write this a new edition of the *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* is about to go to press. It has been a long time coming.

The working group had to incorporate a new vegetation classification system for the ACT and have the map changed to reflect those classifications in a meaningful way for the size of the map in this small field guide. Two additional trees, White Box and Mountain Tea-tree have been included in this edition (see Isobel Crawford's article in the September NPA

Bulletin), and many new photos, taken mainly by NPA photographers, have replaced some of the rather tired-looking old ones. The botanical illustrations for the new trees were drawn by Maria Boreham, NPA member and botanical artist. The designer Mariana Rollgejser who has designed all of NPA's field guides and the Namadgi book has again done a wonderful job on this new-look field guide.

I thank my fellow-workers on this publication, Clive Hurlstone, Philip Gatenby, Kevin McCue and Ed Highley,

for persevering with the seemingly endless task of carefully reading and correcting one PDF-file after another until we were happy that our job was done.

I hope all of our members – and many more non-members - will find pleasure in this little informative book.

Sonja Lenz

Scholarship for University of Canberra student Emily Stringer

As was stated in the March 2017 issue of the NPA *Bulletin*, NPA has decided to fund a scholarship for a University of Canberra student to conduct research into the viability of populations of Grassland Earless Dragons in the ACT. We have now been advised that the university has selected Ms Emily Stringer for the project. Emily will start in first semester of 2018, and will be



available to give us a general meeting presentation at the completion of her work.

Emily has very strong support from her superbvisors.

Chris Emery

The Charles and Viki Bubb Memorial Fund



Charles and Viki Bubb.

Charles Bubb was a philosopher, car enthusiast and First Assistant Secretary and Director of Engineering in the Commonwealth Department of Works. He was responsible for providing earthquake engineering advice for all Commonwealth facilities, including hospitals and other Commonwealth buildings Australia-wide and the Black Mountain Tower in Canberra. He was

heavily involved in rebuilding Darwin after cyclone Tracy and formulating building codes for wind and earthquake design. Charles, David Rossiter and I established the Australian Earthquake Engineering Society in 1990.

Charles's wife Viki was the love of his life and a great support. They both loved animals, had prize-winning Afghan Hounds, Standard Poodles and cats. Ken Macmillan and his wife Pat were close family friends, Ken a colleague in CommWorks.

Charles predeceased Viki and when she died Ken was the major beneficiary. Ken carried out Charles's wish that a sum should be donated to NPA ACT, specifically to support research into the conservation of large Australian native animals. This might be in the form of a postgraduate scholarship for students



Ken and Pat Macmillan.
Photos supplied by Kevin McCue

studying the conservation of large animals.

Already the gift has been used to purchase equipment to investigate the status of Rosenberg's Monitor, a ground-dwelling lizard or goanna that grows to at least 1.5 m on maturity.

Kevin McCue

And the Environmentalist of the Year Award goes to ... Martin Chalk!

At the Conservation Council's Spring Mingle social event on 27 October the council announced its environment award winners for 2017.

Among them was NPA's very own Martin Chalk, who was named Environmentalist of the Year. This important award comes hot on the heels of Martin receiving Life Membership of NPA (see the September NPA Bulletin). This just goes to show that while Martin has been beavering away with NPA for years and years, his efforts have not gone unnoticed, and he is at last getting the public recognition he so deserves.

In presenting the award to Martin, Conservation Council President Rod Griffiths noted:

Martin has been an active member of NPA ACT for over 20 years and has been the Work Party Co-ordinator since 2003. As an ex-navigator of F111s,

Martin uses his navigation skills to lead bushwalks and provide navigation courses. He also organised the NPA ACT photographic competition; represents NPA ACT in the debate about feral horse management in Kosciuszko National Park; and was a founding member of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group, undertaking back-breaking ACT Waterwatch activities with the group every month since May 2003.

Three other awards were made:

The Moira and John Rowland Young Environmentalist of the Year was awarded to Violet Cully of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC).

The Ginninderra Catchment Group was named Member Group of the Year.



Martin in Waterwatch mode near Yankee Hat.
Photo by Max Lawrence.

The Senior School Sustainability Award went to Julia Heather from Merici College.

Max Lawrence

Coir logs

Work proceeds on the project outlined in the September NPA Bulletin. The first batch of coir logs wasn't great, though admittedly we didn't provide a good sample. John Brickhill, with two Friends of Aranda Bushland volunteers, Horhe and Luke, re-crafted them into thicker, stiffer logs, and John sourced a better rope to bind them together. The 10 coir logs they made have now been deployed

for erosion control in the Aranda Bushland! We took the precaution to armour them with woody debris which we hope will deter the kangaroos from chewing them to pieces. An extra coir log has gone back to the mattress recycler as a prototype and we are awaiting the next batch.

Kevin McCue



Rod's big border walk

Rod Griffiths, President of the Conservation Council and Immediate Past President of NPA, does not let the grass grow under his feet. In fact in recent weeks his feet have been very busy.

As reported in the November issue of the Conservation Council's *Yellow Box Dispatch*, Rod spent October leading a fundraising bushwalk around the ACT border:

Walk the Border ACT – A Watershed Walk was no small feat and was a landmark event that saw Rod and various volunteer walking companions travel for 21 days on foot, traversing a range of interesting and diverse landscapes as they followed in the footsteps of ACT's original surveyors.

The first steps of Walk the Border ACT fundraising event took place on Saturday 7 October at the Centenary Trail

Track Head in Hall. Heading along the Centenary Trail, the walk followed the border in a clock-wise direction, taking in some of ACT's roughest and most beautiful country, including the source of ACT's water supply.

The walkers were out of human contact for days at a time, crossed gorgeous grassy woodlands, went through pine forests, onto railway lines, urban streets, industrial sites, and up into the beautiful mountain ash country. They encountered a wide range of local plant and animal life and observed how the landscape is changing.

The walk crossed some of the area's most remote and rugged terrain, making it even longer



Rod and David Howe at Bendora Arboretum on Day 18. Photo by Max Lawrence.

than the outlined 306 kilometre border as Rod and his companions were occasionally forced to venture off course to avoid cliffs and other obstacles.

We're incredibly proud of Rod and everyone who got involved in Walk the Border ACT. The event was a great success that piqued the interest of local and national media, with ABC News, The Canberra Times and other local papers featuring the event several times.

It was also a big fundraising success, so again we'd like to say THANK YOU to everyone who sponsored the walkers and made donations! The money raised will go towards protecting ACT's urban and natural environment.

Note: In fact the fundraising goal of \$10,000 was not just exceeded, it was more than doubled! And they're still counting.

Max Lawrence

The Day 2 walking team by the Federal Highway. Photo by Max Lawrence.



'Walking club' presidents

Photo from the 8 November 2017 meeting of ACT bushwalking club presidents – to informally discuss matters of mutual concern.

Peter Ford BBC, Michael de Raadt CBC, and Esther Gallant NPA. Photo by Michael.



News on Glenburn Precinct activities

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

The CMP has been handed over to ACT Heritage for final approvals/sign-off before being passed back to the Parks Service for its final sign-off. It has been a long, difficult journey.

The CMP will provide a formal framework for all future protection and conservation work in the Glenburn Precinct.

Some of the proposals will be expensive, particularly work at the shearing shed complex and at Glenburn Homestead to make the structures secure and safe.

The Parks Service will require additional resources if it is to make a major dint in what is required to protect and conserve all the historic sites for the benefit of current and future generations of residents of the Capital region.

Irrespective of whether or not the Parks Service is successful in gaining additional resources, it will have to set priorities. I do not envy the Parks Service staff, who will have to make some tough decisions.

The Friends of Glenburn – a scaling back of activities

The CMP will provide the Parks Service with a comprehensive plan to guide all future work in the Precinct. It will provide a clear statement of the Parks Service's responsibilities.

Against this background, I have decided that the Friends should scale back its activities to tasks requested by the Parks Service:

- to help maintain the immediate areas surrounding the historic sites
- to help with organising guided drives and walks in the Precinct.

In practical terms this means that the Friends will no longer conduct research into the historic places and the people associated with them. Neither will the Friends be involved directly in promoting the Precinct for walkers and cyclists to enjoy the historic sites along the heritage trails. Nor will the Friends/NPA lobby for more funds for the Precinct.

These matters are now the sole responsibility of the Parks Service.



The huge pear tree in flower and the quince copses at Colliers orchard 9 October 2017. Photo by Ian Loiterton.

Tim the Yowie Man and a drive/walk in the Precinct

In 'Panorama' in *The Canberra Times* of 23 September, Tim had an interesting article on the Glenburn Precinct that generated quite a few phone calls and email messages to me.

As a result, I had a good turnout for my NPA drive/walk in the Precinct on Sunday 9 October. A copy of the notes I drew on are under Friends of Glenburn on www.npaact.org.au. Thanks Chris Emery.

A real bonus was that the huge pear tree at Colliers orchard was in full flower. Magnificent!

One of the people on the drive/walk had walked the 12 kilometre loop heritage trail a few days earlier. Since then, I have heard of several other people who have walked and enjoyed the heritage trails with their interesting and informative interpretive signs.

Thanks Tim for helping to promote the Precinct.

Consolidation of information on the interpretive signs in the Precinct

The information on the texts of 14 interpretive signs under Friends of Glenburn on the NPA website www.npaact.org.au is now in one spot. Thanks Chris Emery.

Work Parties

One work party was held in early August when a very large skip was filled with metal scrap from the previous clean-up of the outside of the Glenburn Shearing

Shed complex. The remaining material from the clean-up and the material inside the buildings will be assessed by an archaeologist to see what should be kept and what should be removed. A start was also made on cutting and dabbing the invasion of blackberries at the site of the Glenburn hay/machinery shed and yards.

The work party for November was cancelled while the Parks Service reviews the use of herbicides by volunteers.

The other tasks – repainting the locked gate and erecting a bench at Atkinson trig – were carried out separately.

In future, there will be no regular schedule of work parties. Instead, they will be held when the Parks Service asks the Friends to carry out specific tasks.

Asbestos and contamination at the sheep dips

Remedial work on the small amount of asbestos in the Glenburn shearing shed complex has been carried out.

The investigation of contamination issues at the sheep dip at Glenburn shearing shed and the dip near Glen Burn Creek is continuing. It is likely that the former will be fenced after filling with concrete or gravel, leaving an exposed 'footprint', and that the latter will be covered with steel mesh and the site fenced.

Glenburn Precinct signs on the Kings Highway

It is expected that Glenburn Precinct signs will soon be erected on both the Queanbeyan and Bungendore sides of the intersection with Charcoal Kiln Road.

This should increase awareness of the Precinct and, we hope, induce more walkers and cyclists to use the heritage trails.

Col McAlister

ECO FOCUS 2017

Presentation by ACT EPSDD

The annual Information Seminar by the Conservation Research Unit of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) was held this year at Gold Creek Station near Hall on 30 August 2017. There was a large attendance, with a wide and interesting variety of subjects covered. Abstracts of presentations can be found on the EPSDD website.

Opening of Seminar: Annie Lane, Executive Director, Environment Division, EPSDD, opened the seminar. Annie noted how they were increasingly drawing upon the knowledge of Aboriginal people in their work around restoring landscapes. Just about all research occurs in partnership, with managing country conservation research an important part.

Overview of current Conservation Research Unit research: Margaret Kitchin, Manager, Conservation Research Unit, then gave a short summary of work of the unit not covered in the seminar.

The captive breeding program of Northern Corroboree Frogs continues at the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Juvenile frogs have been released since 2011, with monitoring in 2015 showing that some had survived and were breeding.

The fertility control program for Eastern Grey Kangaroos continues, with monitoring showing there were no pouch young in those hand-injected and 20 per cent in those dart injected.

The Pink-tailed Worm-lizard action plan has been released and is on the EPSDD website.

The riparian condition survey for 2016–17 has been undertaken.

The second stage of the Engineered Log Jam Program at Tharwa is being undertaken.

Program reports are issued every 2 years with the report for 2015–17 expected to be on the EPSDD website in the next month.

Carping at Isabella Ponds: Matt Beitzel, Aquatic Ecologist, spoke about the project to remove carp from the Upper Stranger and Isabella Ponds in Tuggeranong. Carp are one of the most invasive species on the planet. They dominate the fish biomass in the lakes and rivers across the ACT region and reduce water quality by increasing turbidity, removing water plants and resuspending nutrients for algal outbreaks.

The aim in part was to correlate actual carp numbers and biomass to standard electro-fishing sampling numbers, rescue native fauna and improve ponds ecosystems.

Removed from Stranger Pond (4.4 hectares) were 1,510 carp and 765 from Isabella Pond (6.7 hectares) with the maximum sizes being 9 kg and 11 kg, respectively. More than 80 per cent of the total weight removed was in fish larger than 3 kg. The lakes will be restocked with native fish and the habitat for both lakes improved.

Grassland results for Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP): Renee Brawata, CEMP Officer, explained the CEMP framework, which can be found on the EPSDD website. It is an ecosystem monitoring framework for the ACT conservation estate that aims to detect signs of change to ecosystem condition, evaluate the effectiveness of management conditions in achieving conservation outcomes, provide evidence to support land-management decisions through an adaptive management approach and to identify knowledge gaps to aid selection of future research priorities.

Under the program, baseline data are developed (starting conditions), the reference condition (pre-European settlement) characterised and practicable target conditions identified.

Over the next 2 years the program aims to develop monitoring plans for eight broad ecosystems identified within ACT nature reserves. The first completed plan is the Lowland Native Grasslands Ecosystem Monitoring Plan. Some key findings from this plan include the need for increased ecological burning in grasslands and improved mapping of grassland associations, and research on grassland restoration techniques that have minimal impact on fauna. Work has commenced on the Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Condition Monitoring Plan.

Grappling with ground cover: Nicki Taws, Project Manager, Greening Australia, discussed the challenge of how to restore grassy undercover to native species. Ecosystem restoration has typically focused on restoring trees and shrubs. Restoring the ground cover is more challenging due to competition from introduced species, changed soil properties, and altered grazing and fire regimes.

Greening Australia has been working with the ACT Government and other partners to restore native ground cover through seeding, with trials this year to enhance the native forbs component of grasslands.

Rather than using herbicides, they remove topsoil to a depth of 15 cm using a grader. This reduces high nutrient levels due to the application of fertilisers and removes the weed seed bank in the soil. A diverse mix of native grasses and forbs is then sown across the site. Seeding is at the rate of 30 kg per hectare. Collecting seed is very expensive.

The ongoing challenges include weed management, recruitment of forbs and the availability and quality of seed to carry out further restoration.

Little Eagle – flying across Australia: Sam Reid, Fauna Ecologist, advised that the Little Eagle has been declared vulnerable in the ACT and NSW. It is about a quarter the size of a Wedge-tailed Eagle and has a diet of rabbits and birds. Its main threat in the ACT is its loss of habitat due to the encroachment of urban development.

To inform planning and conservation a lightweight satellite GPS tracking device was fitted to the male of a pair of Little Eagles nesting in West Belconnen. The resulting analysis showed that Little Eagles can move staggering distances, which has important implications for the conservation of the species.

Over 18 days the tagged Little Eagle flew over 3,300 km, settling just north of Daly Waters in the NT. It remained there for about 5 months before returning to the ACT. During its flight it reached heights of over 8,000 m and speeds of up to 127 km per hour.

Spatial data for decision-making – flying through the landscape: Jennifer Smits, Spatial Ecologist, explained that geographical information systems (GIS) and spatial analysis are more than just maps of where environmental phenomena occur. Spatial analysis and modelling, remote sensing and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) provide innovative ways of gathering information about a landscape.

Examples included GPS collars tracking kangaroos to determine home ranges and habitat use; modelling and prediction of Canberra Spider Orchid habitat to select potential sites for

(continued next page)

A successful spring working party in the Gudgenby Valley

Ten volunteers from Gudgenby Bushies set out on Saturday 14 October 2017 to remove a barbed wire fence going east and steeply uphill away from the Old Boboyan Road near Yankee Hat car park. By the end of the day we had removed about 0.5 km of fence with three strands of barbed wire and three strands of tough old fencing wire. On top of this, Brian Slee by himself removed 115 steel posts, a wonderful effort.

Fortunately, our very supportive ACT Parks and Conservation staff will in due course remove the piles of wire and posts we left stretched out up the hill. Our thanks go to Ranger Ben Stevenson for arranging this and for joining us for lunch on the day.

As Rupert said, it was another lovely example of how a number of people can act individually yet achieve a communal 'good' with little supervision; all that's needed is a sense of purpose and a willingness to learn and cooperate – very much like ants!

Michael Goonrey
Rupert Barnett



Above. Collecting wire during a previous work party.

Below. Hazel Rath with the pile of wire accumulated at the Gudgenby Homestead yards by NPA and GBRG

Photos by Max Lawrence.



ECO FOCUS 2017 *(continued)*

translocations; detecting over 100 potential new bogs and fens in Namadgi National Park; determining potential tree height preferences for foraging Superb Parrots; and testing drone detection methods to survey kangaroo populations in Canberra Nature Park.

Quolls and bettongs – how are our new residents going? Will Batson, Manager, Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, discussed the release of Eastern Bettongs and Eastern Quolls into the predator-free environment of the sanctuary. Both species were, until recently, extinct on mainland Australia. Bettongs were selected to fill the ecological gap left by the loss of native diggers. They are truffle eaters and can move up to 3 tonnes of soil a year. The bettong population fluctuates between 160 and 180. This has provided the opportunity to undertake a trial beyond-the-fence reintroduction of them in the Lower Cotter Catchment. There was an 85 per cent loss rate in the first 2 months but this had fallen to 50 per cent in the next 6 months.

With the quolls, initially nearly half escaped over the fence but this has now been reduced to 10 per cent. The survival rate in the first year was 50 per cent but this has now climbed to 80 per cent.

The reintroductions of these species not only help their longevity but also help stock other mainland reintroductions.

Dieback in the eucalyptus – recent survey and mapping: this was presented by Margaret Kitchin on behalf of Greg Baines, Vegetation Ecologist. Tree decline (often called dieback) is a worldwide phenomenon in which strands of trees progressively lose vigour and health without any clearly identifiable cause. Despite research, the causes and solutions to local tree decline remain elusive and the problem is getting worse.

The multiple factors which could be causing tree decline include climate change, seasonal water stress, overabundance of insects, soil pathogens, fire exclusion and agricultural practices.

Multiple projects are being undertaken in this area to see what can be done. They include: trial burning in woodlands; collecting locations of Blakley's Red Gum; the effects on remnant trees of thinning dense regrowth stands in reserves; determining whether there is a relationship between decline and Phytophthora infection; provenance trials to identify genetically resistant populations; temporal and spatial modelling of the severity of the decline in the ACT; and detailed landscape relational analysis to quantify the contribution of multiple environmental factors to the problem of decline.

Overall, the seminar was very informative and much appreciated by the audience which included park carers, rangers and researchers.

Michael Goonrey

Antarctica – the trip of a lifetime!

21 January to 17 February 2017

All I can say about this trip is that it was amazing! There were so many highlights and it surpassed all my expectations. I had chosen these dates, later in the season, as this would be the time when I would see the penguin chicks starting to moult. The company I travelled with was Aurora Expeditions and they were very professional in all respects. It is committed to education and preservation of the environment and their highly experienced crew comprised naturalists, ornithologists, historians and geologists (to name a few specialisations!). The team leader Christiaan Guillard had sailed a 13-metre yacht in the polar regions for over 20 years, and his experience proved invaluable (as you will find out). The ship, the *Polar Pioneer*, was an ice-strengthened 71.6 m passenger ship. It was not 5-star, but it did the job. The cuisine was excellent (somehow they even managed to have fresh lettuce at sea after 18 days!). Want to know the secret – just ask. Also the Russian crew could not be faulted, and it was nice that there were only 50 passengers.

The trip started in Santiago, where the group gathered for the flight to Punta Arenas and Stanley (in the Falklands). It was here that we boarded the ship.

The Falklands

The Falklands is a British outpost that still has a Governor General, gaol, post office, Maggie Thatcher Drive and memorials to the soldiers who lost their lives in the Argentinian conflict in April 1982. The 12,000 soldiers who attempted the coup were quickly suppressed by the British in 11 weeks.

After boarding we were given the necessary 'abandon ship' drills, donned life jackets and gumboots of the right

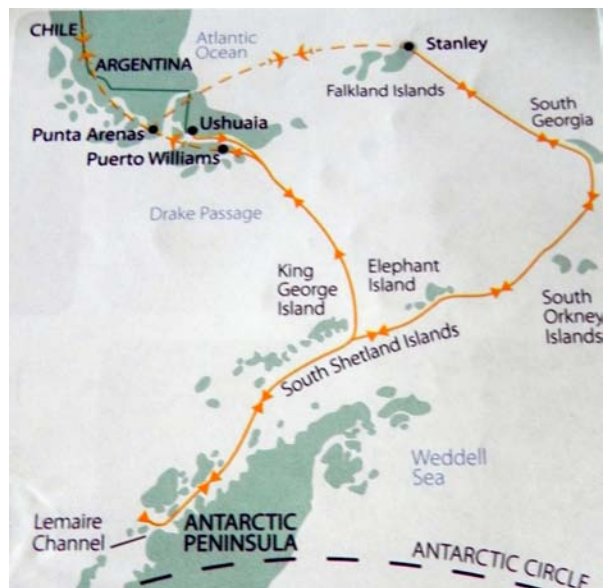
size and were ready for our adventure! As we departed Stanley Harbour we were treated to sightings of Sooty Shearwaters, Blue-eyed Shags, Rock Shags, Giant Petrels, a Soft-plumaged Petrel, Magellanic Penguins and three Black-browed Albatrosses. We were on our way!

Land was not sighted again until 24 January – the Shag Rocks near South Georgia, which were shrouded in mist. These are isolated relics of the supercontinent Gondwana and are the last remnants of the Andes. We proceeded to do our domestic chores, vacuuming our clothing and equipment as biosecurity measures in preparation for landing on South Georgia. We were fortunate to have experienced calm seas during the crossing, and we were treated to ornithological and historical lectures as well as having sightings of Minke Whales, Wandering Albatrosses, Giant Petrels, a Great Shearwater and a Wilson's Storm Petrel. Anticipation mounted!

South Georgia

Landfall was imminent at Peggotty Bluff in King Haakon Bay. Here we walked amongst the tussocks being careful to avoid young, aggressive Fur Seals.

We also observed, at close quarters, snoozing Elephant Seals and sightings of the odd Gentoo Penguin and King Penguin. It was nice to stretch our legs! We observed Camp Cove, where Shackleton and his men had overnighted before seeking help on the eastern side of the island. Christiaan presented the



weather forecast for the next day and it was here that his experience showed! As strong winds were forecast for the eastern side of the island, he made the decision (after consultation with the captain) to stay on the west. We would then head south, and head north up the eastern side in a few days time, by which time the winds would have abated. This meant a 'bit of double tracking', but enabled us to enjoy 12 landings (instead of the scheduled 8) while two other ships (on the eastern side) decided to abort their landings and head straight to Antarctica. This meant that their landing sites were now free and we had a magnificent time! A brilliant decision!

Our first landing, on the eastern side, was at Gold Harbour. This was the site of a King Penguin colony of 60,000 penguins! Wow! One didn't know where to look! We were restricted to a distance of 10 metres, but that didn't stop the penguins! We were treated to feeding of chicks and a game of 'king of the rock' – to name a few of the activities going on. It was hard to drag ourselves away, but lunch beckoned!

That afternoon saw a visit to Ocean Harbour and remnants of a whaling station, a wreck in the harbour (the *Bayard*) which was now home to nesting Blue-eyed Cormorants and, of course, numerous Fur Seals, the odd Gentoo and a scattering of King Penguins. We now moved further northwards to Jason Harbour (our sixth landing). It was here that we were delighted to discover 18 King Penguins incubating their eggs while at the same time keeping

(continued next page)



King Penguin colony, South Georgia.

Antarctica – the trip of a lifetime! *(continued)*

marauding skuas at bay. There was also evidence of reproductive activity! Apparently it takes 16 months of incubation for a chick to emerge. I thought it was a bit late in the season, but, not so! This was a magic place, though aggressive seal pups still had to be avoided. All aboard once more and we proceeded to Prion Island to observe the Wandering Albatrosses and their courtship dances. A special time!

Excitement mounted that night as the next day was the landing at Fortuna Bay for those enthusiasts wishing to tackle the final leg of Shackleton's historic walk to Stromness – a trek of three and a half hours over very rocky ground. The next day was clear as a bell and sunny so the intrepid explorers (37) set off by zodiac to start the trek. I stayed behind, communed with nature, watched the Antarctic Terns feed their chicks, the penguins contemplating and seal pups frolicking in the water. The crossing was successfully achieved and it was back on board to sail on to Grytviken (landing 10) where Shackleton spent some time recuperating after the crossing. We visited his grave (he died on a later trip), the whaling station, where approximately 30 whales had been processed per day (!) and then on to the ship for an outdoor barbecue to celebrate Australia Day!!

We were now coming to the end of the feast that had been South Georgia. Cooper Bay was the home of Macaroni Penguins (a species we had not yet seen). Unfortunately, we did see one being attacked by a Giant Petrel. Somehow it survived! The boat then did an inspiring cruise up the Drygalski Fiord (14 km long). We were entertained by Shearwaters landing on a couple of passengers' heads (a good omen) and



Sea birds and ice.

numerous bird species feeding at the base of the glacier. These included Magellanic Penguins, Wandering Albatross, Cape Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters. We now had 3 days sailing to the Antarctic giving us time to reflect on nature's wonders over the past week.

On to Antarctica!

We sailed across the Scotia Sea in benign conditions, heading southwards towards Elephant Island. Most of Shackleton's crew had remained here while he sailed north (with five other members) in a small life raft (the *James Caird*) to get help from South Georgia. This was 1,300 km to the north and he chose this route because of the ocean currents which would assist him. The crew members left on Elephant Island camped under two other life rafts, and miraculously survived. During this crossing we were treated to lectures on the history of Antarctica, a DVD *The Private Life of Ice*, which was fascinating, and we also prepared our clothes once again to meet biosecurity standards for our landings in Antarctica. We couldn't land at Point Wild because

of the weather conditions, but we did enjoy collecting ice for our drinks that night and seeing the Chinstrap Penguins leaping into the boiling seas.

The next day we landed at Brown Bluff. It was just as well the crew took a GPS reading as we left the ship before we went ashore, as a deep mist rolled in and completely enshrouded the ship making it invisible. Without the GPS reading, where would it be? After some exploring we headed back on board and sailed towards the Weddell Sea. This was where we had our first experience of incredible tabular icebergs. We were now officially in Antarctica. Sculpted icebergs, towering cliffs and sleeping seals were all the order of the day. But there's more! After lunch, just when we were thinking it was time for a snooze, we were called on to the bridge as 40 Humpback Whales were close to the ship and were gorging on krill! What a sight! What more could one want?

Early starts (6.00 am) were becoming the norm and today was no exception. We entered the Lemaire Channel and though it was a maze of icebergs, we managed to reach our designated landing spot, Port Charcot. This was our southernmost point 65°7'S. Considering Cook reached 72°S in a wooden ship, we were certainly not as intrepid. At this site there was a magnificent observation hut and tower. Many of the younger brigade climbed up to this spot and cavorted on the snowy slopes. Back on board, a few of the hardy souls braved the polar plunge!!

After lunch, we sailed northwards to Port Lockroy – the southernmost post office in the world. It was only \$US1 to post a letter to anywhere in the world. Australia Post, take note! The downside is that we had just missed a ship and the

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King Penguins, South Georgia.

Antarctica – the trip of a lifetime! *(continued)*

post wouldn't leave for another 6 weeks. It was here that we had to meet Nigel's challenge to photograph a Gentoo Penguin carrying the largest rock! Apparently, they carry the rocks to their 'nest'. After this we headed northwards again to Deception Island where there was further evidence of whaling. This

was part of a vast volcanic caldera and was one of the easier landings. As we returned to the ship by zodiac, we also enjoyed fantastic ice images, closeups of Weddell and Crabeater Seals and managed to spot a couple of Minke Whales.

Cape Horn

We were definitely heading homeward with only the Drake Passage (the 'shaky Drake' or the 'Drake Lake') between us and South America. Fortunately for us, because of the benign conditions our leader Christiaan decided to land at Cape Horn – a bonus! Despite our respective educations, most of us had no idea that it was just a small island at the southernmost point of South America – 56°S. A landing was achieved and many climbed the 200+ steps to view the memorial sculpture in the shape of an albatross at the top. Passports were stamped and we sailed up the Beagle Channel to Port William to conclude our expedition to Antarctica.

From there we went on to enjoy the wonders of Patagonia, but that is another story. As I said at the beginning – The Trip of a Lifetime!

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine



Photos supplied by Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine.

On viewing *Dombrovskis: Journeys into the wild*, exhibition at the National Library

'I took photographs for the simple pleasure of recording objects and places that were important to me and because the discipline of photography increased my awareness of Tasmania's beauty and made me appreciate more clearly the value of its wilderness.' **Peter Dombrovskis.**

Wilderness now in my mind
from Dombrovskis's photographs
I can see the kelp, beaded seaweed curl and abalone,
beaches of shell, sand and wave smoothed granite.
Tiny details of she-oak cones, bark, rainforest fungi, beech leaves.
From aged myrtle to frost on grass,
icicles on tree and rock, ice patterns on water,
snow on shrubs and tors.
From places we know, the Tarkine Wilderness,
Franklin–Gordon Wild Rivers National Park,
Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park.

If asked which is my favourite I couldn't say,
though my thoughts return to the abalone shell
a little worn by beach battering, now at rest,
its inner pearl lining exposed.
I think back to my recent sketch,
of beach and bush from a headland view,
marking details of near trunk patterns and grasses,
lines to show distant waves on sand, the rock platform,
and beyond, a forested slope of Murramarang.
After an hour I felt I had merged with this place,
calm and at peace.

I understand Dombrovskis
through his artistry
the beauty he saw in nature
in wilderness.
He takes me right there
it is, as if I step into his photos,
just as I feel when I recall making my drawing.

Ailsa Brown

NPA outings program

December 2017 – March 2018



Bushwalk Grading Guide

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A Road, 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 **40 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. 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.

Leaders to note. Please send copies of completed *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Forms* to Brian Slee, contact 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
NPA has a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) available to leaders. The PLB, can be obtained from Steven Forst, contact 0428 195 236 or steven.forst@iinet.net.au



Kayakers set off down the Snowy River. Photo by Mike Bremers.

NPA outings program December 2017 – March 2018 (page 2 of 4)

2 December **Saturday Walk**

SETTLERS TRACK AND THE BORDER

Maps Yaouk and Shannons Flat
1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. A walk from Brayshaws Hut along the Settlers Track, then crossing Grassy Creek to follow the border fire trail back to Westermans Homestead before returning to the cars. The walk is mainly on track in forest shade.

Drive 160 km, \$64 per car.

3 December **Sunday Walk**

MOUNT MAJURA AND MOUNT AINSLIE

Map Canberra street directory

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Margaret

Contact 0448 924 357 or

power000@tpg.com.au

This walk has variations to the usual path. After a short car shuffle, we'll start walking on track up Mount Majura but then make a steep off-track ascent to the summit. After morning tea head south towards Mount Ainslie, following bush tracks. Ascend Mount Ainslie from the east, stopping for lunch along the way, and then descend on the main track down to the War Memorial and our waiting car(s). Climbs of approximately 450 m. Optional afternoon tea at Wilbur's in Hackett. Meet at 9.00 am at the parking area beside 39 Mackenzie Street, Hackett (near end of Grayson Street). NB: The walk will not proceed if the forecast temperature is 30 degrees or higher.

9 December **Saturday Work Party**

AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Leader Michael Goonrey

Contact 6231 8395 or 0419 494 142

mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Weeding and spraying around Gudgenby Cottage. Tools provided. Stay for Christmas lunch at the cottage. Bring a plate to share. Some drinks provided. Bring a chair if possible.



10 December **Sunday**

NPA CHRISTMAS PARTY

Leader President, Esther Gallant

To be held at the Gudgenby Cottage. Bring your own lunch. Snacks, dessert and some drinks provided. Bring a chair if possible. Arrive from 11 am or 10 am to join optional walk to Peppermint Hill revegetation site. There will also be a walk to a nearby platypus pool.



24 December **Sunday Walk**

MOUNT TENNENT VIA THE SCAR

Map Williamsdale 1:25,000

Grading 2 D/E/F

Leader David Dedenczuk

Contact 0417 222 154,

ddedentz@bigpond.net.au.

A rugged scramble just before the comforts of Christmas. We will walk from the Namadgi Visitor Centre up to Cypress Pine Lookout and then it is off-track, through the scrub and on to the rocky terrain of the scar itself. We will climb up the scar, perhaps as far as the summit area. Contact leader to indicate wish to participate by Thursday 21 December.

Drive 80 km return, \$32 per car.

28–30 December **Pack Walk**

SNOWY MOUNTAINS MAIN RANGE

Maps Perisher Valley and Geehi

Dam 1:25,000

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

A wander along the Main Range, starting from Guthega, climbing up to Consett Stephen Pass, then heading south along the divide, over Mount Tate to Mount Anderson and Little Twynan, and back to

Guthega. Numbers limited. Deadline for booking 12 December.

Drive 446 km, \$178 per car + park entry fee.

31 December **Sunday Walk**

MOUNT TOWNSEND

Map Perisher Valley 1:25,000

Grading 4 A/C

Leader David Dedenczuk

Contact 0417 222 154 or

ddedentz@bigpond.net.au

A beautiful walk to Australia's second-highest mountain. The walk will include a visit to Australia's highest tarn. Depending on the preferences and availability of participants, we might travel down and camp the previous evening. Contact leader to indicate wish to participate by Thursday 28 December.

Drive 440 km, \$176 per car + park entry fee.

7 January **Sunday Walk**

SOUTH RAMSHEAD RANGE

Map Rooftop's *Snowy Mountains Central*

Grading 1 A/B/C

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 7.00 am. Drive past Thredbo to Dead Horse Gap. Climb slope west to unnamed 2 040 m peak for a break. Descend north to ridge overlooking Leatherbarrel Creek where alpine sunrays are likely to be prolific. After lunch, climb Ramshead or divert around it to walking track east of Bogong Creek. Great views, some steep climbs. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Contact leader by Friday evening for weather check and departure point.

Drive 420 km, \$168 per car + park entry fee.

13 January **Saturday Walk**

OLD FORESTRY HUT – STOCKYARD CREEK

Map Corin Dam 1:25,000

Grading 3 A/C/D

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

The walk commences from the Mount Ginini Car Park. About half is off track, and will include Cheyenne and Morass Flats, the remains of the Stockyard Creek Arboretum, the old Forestry Hut on Stockyard Creek and the ski hut on Stockyard Saddle, as well as a border marker on the Mount Franklin Road. Time permitting, we will also go to the summit of Mount Franklin. About 16 km with a climb of 300 m. High clearance cars needed for the Mount Franklin Road. Meet at the north-east corner of the

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Coolleman Court car park opposite McDonalds for departure at 8.00 am.

Drive: 125 km, \$50 per car.

13–14 January Weekend car camp

BLUE WATERHOLES – CLARKE AND NICHOLS GORGES

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC Activity

Maps Peppercorn and Rules Point 1:25,000 or

Rooftop's *Kosciuszko Northern Activities*

Grading 1 A/E

Leader David Dedenczuk

Contact 0417 222 154 or

ddedentz@bigpond.net.au

Depart Canberra on Saturday morning and drive via Adaminaby and Long Plain Road to the Blue Waterholes camping area. There we set up camp. On Saturday afternoon, we will do the 5 km Clarke Gorge walk. On Sunday we will do the 7 km Nichols Gorge walk. Both of these walks cross rough rocky terrain. About 12 km and 300 m climb over the two walks. There are caves to explore – so bring a torch. Swimming opportunities. Book with leader before 5.00 pm Thursday 11 January.

Drive ~ 360 km, \$140 per car.

15–18 January Pack Walk

JAGUNGAL WILDERNESS

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

Grading 2 A

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

Four days in the lovely Jagungal Wilderness. About 40 km, mostly along fire trails and footpads. Visiting Wheelers, Pretty Plain and Patons huts where we will camp each night. Numbers limited, experienced and fit bushwalkers only please. Deadline for bookings 1 January.

Drive 500 km, \$200 per car.

21 January Sunday Walk

MOUNT TWYNAM AND MOUNT CARRUTHERS

Map Perisher Valley 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Margaret

Contact 0448 924 357 or

power000@tpg.com.au

Depart 6.30 am and drive to Charlotte Pass. Take the Main Range track to the Snowy River, then to Blue Lake lookout. From here, ascend steeply off-track to a ridge and then proceed to Mount Twynam. After a break, follow the ridge south, with fabulous views in front of us, and then rejoin the Main Range track. If time and energy permit, we'll follow the track up to Mount Carruthers before

returning to Charlotte Pass. Book with leader by Saturday morning.

Drive 420 km, \$168 per car + park entry fee.



24 January Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Philip Gatenby

Contact 0401 415 446 or

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

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

28 January Sunday Walk

SQUARE ROCK SMOKERS TRAIL LOOP

Map Corin Dam 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Meet at Kambah Village Shops carpark at 8.00 am. A walk through subalpine forest to Square Rock returning along Smokers Trail. The early start, altitude and mainly shaded track should allow us to avoid the heat.

Drive 75 km, \$30 per car.

31 January Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Mike S

Contact 0412 179 907

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

4 February Sunday Morning Walk

YERRABI POND

Map UBD Canberra Street

Directory, p 29.

Grading 1 A

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Meet 9.00 am at Phyllis Ashton Circuit, just west of intersection with Nellie Hamilton Avenue, Gungahlin (overlooking Yerrabi Pond). Follow path east along lake shore and complete circuit of high points in Forde, taking in the huge Apple Boxes, maybe see Superb Parrots, before stopping for coffee at 'Frankies'.

Afterwards, return to Yerrabi Pond on western side (numerous waterbirds) and circle lake back to beginning. Lunch for stayers across road at 'Da Nunzio'. Eight km; designed to avoid heat of the day.

11 February Sunday Walk

GOOGONG DAM – LONDON BRIDGE AND

COMPO CANYON

Map Captains Flat 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/C/E

Leader Mike S

Contact 0412 179 907

Meet at Kingston Railway Station car park to leave at 8.30 am. A walk from the car park at the southern end of Googong Reservoir past London Bridge limestone arch, across the Queanbeyan River at Curley Falls and on to Compo Canyon. Return to cars along fire trails, crossing river at Galignite Crossing. Footwear for crossing rivers would be advisable.

Drive 50 km, \$20 per car.

17 February Saturday Walk

BRINDABELLA RAMBLE

Maps Cotter and Tidbinbilla

1:25,000

Grading 3 A

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Meet at Park and Ride car park, Kirkpatrick Street (Weston) near the Australian Defence College (turn into Kirkpatrick Street from Cotter Road, and follow it around to the right) departing at 8.30 am. A walk in the slightly cooler, tall mountain forest of a south-facing fold of the Brindabella Range. The walk, mostly on fire trail, follows Old Mill Road and Warks Road before climbing back to Brindabella Road.

Drive 85 km, \$35 per car.

24–25 February Weekend Work Party

BRIAR ROSE CONTROL – UPPER COTTER

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 6292 3502 or 0411 161 056

NPA hasn't worked in this area since March 2014. The activity will concentrate on briar control north and west of Cotter Hut and along Murray Gap Fire Trail. The work party will involve an overnight stay, so numbers are limited by the in-hut accommodation. Call leader by 17 February for bookings.

Drive 94 km, \$38 per car.



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28 February Wednesday Walk Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Barrie R
Contact 0437 023 140

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

4 March Sunday Walk

THREE MILE DAM

Maps Cabramurra, Ravine
1:25,000 and Rooftop's
Kiandra-Tumut Map

Grading 2 A/B/C/F

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 or
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 7.00 am. Drive via Kiandra to Three Mile Dam. Walk north along Great Dividing Range and Wallaces Creek Fire Trail and return via local hills. In afternoon, follow Ravine Road to Wallaces Creek Lookout. Spectacular views to western depths of Kosciuszko National Park. Afternoon tea at Adaminaby. Contact leader by Saturday morning for meeting place.

Drive 280 km, \$112 per car.

10 March Saturday Work Party

GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Leader Michael Goonrey
Contact 6231 8395 or 0419 494 142 or
mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa, at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Weeding and spraying

around Frank and Jacks Hut. Check on plantings at track rehabilitation site. Tools provided.



24 March Saturday Walk

MOUNTS MAJOR AND MINORS

Map Bombay 1:25,000.

Grading 2 A/C/D/E

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

This walk in Tallaganda National Park offers a variety of terrain, vegetation and geology, and some good views. It starts and ends on the Jinglemoney Fire Trail east of Rossi, climbs to the summit of Mount Major with its Snow Gums and Snow Grass, descends to a saddle before climbing again to the summit of the first of the two 'minors'. A descent to another saddle follows then the final climb to the 2nd 'minor', which is really a long ridge, with some scrambling and rainforest. From here we have a long descent back to the cars. About 12 km and 600 m climb. High clearance vehicles needed.

Meet at Spotlight car park, Bungendore Road (Kings Highway) Queanbeyan, for a prompt departure at 8.30 am.

Drive 90 km, \$36 per car.

24 March Saturday Work Party

POPLAR CONTROL – BLUNDELLS FLAT

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 6292 3502 or 0411 161 056

NPA commenced work on this site in March 2017. The area has heritage-listed exotics but the weeds include wilding exotics and the usual suspects – plenty to do. Some tools provided but a bush saw and/or loppers and gloves would be handy. Meet at Cooleman Court (behind McDonald's) at 8.15 am.

Drive 45 km, \$18 per car.

28 March Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or
steven.forst@iinet.net.au

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

30 March – 2 April

Easter camp

SPEND EASTER IN THE HEART OF EAST GIPPSLAND FORESTS

Map Rooftop's *Cann River- Orbost- Delegate Adventure Map*

Leader Di

Contact 0401 590 046 or garyt@iinet.net.au

Be guided by expert ecologists revealing the delicate workings of these ancient ecosystems; be awed by the diversity of a pristine rainforest; and be outraged by the logging and continuing destruction. See the interesting write-up by Judy Kelly in the September 2015 *NPA Bulletin* of her Easter trip that year.

The camp is on the Errinundra Plateau in East Gippsland, Central Victoria. You will see and learn about spectacular forest threatened with logging, and be helping the campaign for vital forest protection. Some of the places to be visited are mountain tops, old-growth forests, rainforests and alpine wetlands. We will learn about these areas (and the politics of their management) from expert biologists and forest campaigners.

For more information see <http://eastgippsland.net.au/forestsforever>

Make your own bookings and associated payments early. Registration \$75 for adults (\$50 concession and teens) or \$35 per day (\$25 concession and teens); under 13s free.

Contact NPA leader so we know who is going from NPA ACT and we can discuss transport arrangements. Drive 600–800 km.

Vale Ederic Slater

Ed died in Canberra aged 94, on 18 May 2017. He was one of the CSIRO people who helped Nancy Burbidge establish the NPA ACT: it was Ed's photos which attracted Canberrans to a 1959 display of natural-history photography at the Academy of Science. At this exhibition, attendees were asked if they supported lobbying for the establishment of a national park in the ACT. Their positive response led to the creation of the NPA ACT. Ed also designed the NPA logo.

Ed was always interested in the natural world, especially insects and birds. He loved bushwalking, camping and caving, and was a Scout and Ranger for many years. He was very musical, played the piano very competently, and was able to play Beethoven on a mouth organ. He also enjoyed chemistry: he experimented with photographic chemicals, and created some very early colour photos when he was young.

Ed's career as a photographer started at age 20, in New Guinea, where he served in the Air Interpretation Unit of Army Intelligence. He flew over areas invaded by the Japanese, spying and photographing, and, in his spare time, photographing butterflies and birds of paradise.

When he returned from the war, Ed worked at the Dental Hospital in Sydney as a photographer. This is where he really started to develop his skills. He then moved to CSIRO in Canberra, and was the photographer initially for Plant Industry, and later for Wildlife Research.

In 1970, the Australian Government commissioned Ed to produce 24 photographs illustrating 'Some Australian Wildlife', for presentation to Prince Philip during his visit here.

He was awarded the Order of the British Empire Medal in 1976 for his natural-history photography, and won international awards for both film-making and photography. He was also responsible for pioneering work filming

wildlife with groundbreaking and award-winning contributions to several CSIRO films, including the *Birth of the Red Kangaroo* (1965), *The Echidna (or Spiny-Anteater)* (1969), and *The Rabbit in Australia* (1979).

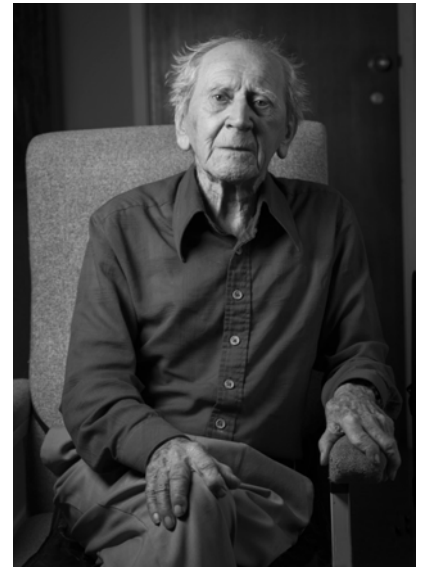
When Ed retired from CSIRO in 1983, he was best and internationally known for his wildlife photography. CSIRO colleague and close friend Peter Fullagar, considers that Ed in his working years was regarded as Australia's supreme wildlife photographer.

After retirement, Ed turned his attention to the recording of wildlife sounds, and became a world leader also in this field. In both fields he devised new methods and new equipment, and produced work of outstanding quality.

In 1992, Ed and Peter Fullagar produced a cassette and CD, *Sound Portrait of an Island: Montagu, Island of Birds*, commissioned by the ABC. It was probably the second CD of wildlife sounds to be published in Australia. Larrikin recording studios commissioned the 1996 CD, *A Sound Portrait of Antarctica*. It included the first digital wildlife sounds ever recorded in the Antarctic (late 1989–early 1990) and covered all the birds of the Australian Antarctic Territory. Ed helped compile at least one other CD for Larrikin, recording sounds from the Macquarie Marshes.

In 1995 he received the Australian Sound Recording Association's 'Award for Excellence' for his 'outstanding contribution to Nature Sound Recording'. This is the recording industry's highest award.

Ed and Peter later compiled and produced several CDs themselves. A particularly successful CD was prepared in 2004 for the Canberra Ornithologists Group: a *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT – the Calls and Songs*. This CD utilised the cover graphics from the



Ed Slater.
Photo by Bob Dunn.

NPA's *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*. Ed also produced a beautiful CD of the Tidbinbilla lyrebirds, and some really valuable cassettes of frog calls to assist with field identification.

Ed was also extremely well-read in the history of the natural sciences in Australia.

He was renowned for his generosity to many students over the years. He would lend or recommend photographic and sound-recording equipment and patiently explain its use, to young and enthusiastic school, Honours and PhD students alike. From ants to koalas, from Yellow-bellied Gliders to owls and frogs to waterfowl – and especially lyrebirds, Ed was always out there helping others achieve their goals.

Isobel Crawford

Note: This obituary is based on one by Peter Fullagar, and published in *Audiowings*, the *Journal of the Australian Wildlife Sound Recording Group*, 19 (1), August 2017, and another by his family which was read at Ed's life celebration.

Ripples on Lake Waters

She's there, every morning of my life. The Lake. I often walk her shore. I call it the 5 km track. Up Maxwell Street, through the pine forest, down Dunrossil Drive and around the lake. Once it was a 5 km jog, and for a long time it was a 5 km dog walk, border collie straining at the leash. Now I'm on sticks, take an hour or two, stop at the cafe, check the nursery for plants. Then up Banks Street to home. The lake in all her moods. This hot sunny day she sparkles, tempting me to swim. Is the water still cold? Swans gliding past. Moorhens busy nesting. Unseen reed warblers.

ripples
on lake waters
blue wrens in the reeds ...
their upturned tails
mock my mortality

Gerry Jacobson

Book review

Murray–Darling Journeys

Two hundred years of significant rowing and paddling journeys on the rivers of the Murray–Darling Basin: 1817 to 2016

by Angela Bremers and Mike Bremers
Vivid Publishing, Fremantle.

2017 288 pp.

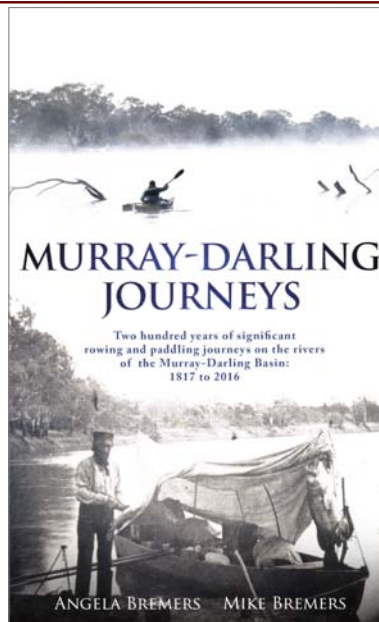
RRP \$37.95

free shipping within Australia, from
<http://www.vividpublishing.com.au/murraydarlingjourneys/>

This beautiful book is very much an NPA ACT family production. Its authors are Angela Bremers and her father Mike Bremers. Mother and wife Christine also features as photographer, and is recognised for her ideas and proofreading. Mike is a long-term NPA member, especially well known to fellow members as a leader and participant in our bushwalking program, and as a former member of our management committee. He is perhaps less well known in NPA circles as a marathon paddler, but over the years he has in fact paddled most of the Murrumbidgee, all of the Murray, and parts of other rivers in the Basin as well. And on some of these expeditions Mike's family went along as happy campers.

Angela is a history buff, and has just completed a University of Canberra Masters thesis on the subject of this book. Her research unearthed many interesting stories about real people on the rivers, and she thought these stories and people deserved a place in history. I agree.

As the blurb on the back cover states *Murray–Darling Journeys explores the history of significant journeys in human-powered craft i.e. rowing and paddling journeys, on the rivers of the Murray Darling Basin over the last 200 years. This book provides a comprehensive listing of over 430 published accounts covering journeys of exploration, surveying journeys related to the paddle steamer trade, gold rush journeys, depression era journeys, recreational and fund raising journeys. It brings back to life long-forgotten journeys that are a reflection of the times in which they occurred. Each entry includes interesting facts about the journeys themselves and, where available, information about the fascinating characters involved in such journeys. ... This book will appeal to people interested in a different aspect of the*



history of the rivers of the Murray Darling Basin. It will also appeal to canoeists, adventurers and those who dream of doing such journeys.

The book is laid out in a very structured fashion, with seven chapters, each relating to a set time span, the first being 1817 to 1871. Within the chapters, each of the 430 journeys is allocated a separate section of varying length depending on its assessed interest and the availability of information, but in each case presented in a standard format. This format includes the year it happened, who was involved, which river(s) were travelled, where along those rivers they went, what happened along the way and, in some cases, how the rest of their lives went. In the odd case only the intent of such journeys is recorded, and details of whether or not ambitions were realised is unrecorded. The book includes a list of river distances, a bibliography and an extensive list of references. It also includes a 'big picture' map of the rivers in the Murray–Darling Basin, but many of the place names mentioned in the text are not shown on the map. My personal preference would have been for more maps.

A recurring theme of virtually all of the journeys documented is the effect of variable water levels and stream flows on the navigability of the rivers, even for small craft such as canoes and kayaks. This applies not only to those tributaries in the headwaters of the catchment, but also to large sections of major streams such as the Lachlan, the Murrumbidgee and the Darling. This was a problem encountered by both the earliest

European explorers and by modern-day adventurers. The book does not attempt to assess the effect of the massive water extractions for irrigation etc. that have occurred in the meantime, but it does seem highly likely that conditions must have worsened.

The first of the explorers to put boats in the water was Oxley in 1817 (the Lachlan) and 1818 (the Macquarie). In each case the boats were used to transport gear and equipment, while most of the party travelled overland. Oxley's choice of rivers was unfortunate, for in each case after 200–300 km they encountered marshes, and the boats were abandoned.

Sturt had better luck in his famous 1830 journey down the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers to the sea and back again. Sturt followed the Murrumbidgee overland from near Gundagai for over 700 km to a point near present-day Maude, where the wagons were getting bogged. Sturt and six of his men then launched their 25 ft whaleboat and made history. By the time they arrived back at the site of present-day Narrandera they had rowed their boat around 3,400 km.

Following the explorers came a wonderful and colourful cast of characters, ranging from diggers in search of gold or, possibly more often, diggers departing the goldfields. Later came surveyors assessing and mapping the rivers for the following paddle steamers, and a whole range of itinerant job seekers, adventurers and even (wait for it) honeymooners. In the early days, these travellers all carried firearms and fishing gear, and they largely lived off the land, so to speak. But unlike modern adventurers I suspect they did not wear life jackets, and I wonder how many of them were good swimmers. They certainly did not have good maps, mobile phones, GPSs, or emergency locator beacons.

While very well written and presented, this is not the sort of fireside reading many readers would knock off at a single go, but I do believe it is the sort of book readers will keep coming back to as they ponder various aspects of Australian history since European settlement, and the changing conditions over time faced by settlers and travellers along the rivers. It is also a most attractively presented book that I for one would be very happy to have just sitting on my shelf.

Max Lawrence

Bushwalks

Gavels Hut, Monaro Range

Date: 5 November 2017

Participants: Brian Slee (leader),
Michaela Popham, Margaret
Power

Weather: Cool; increasingly cloudy;
occasionally still, occasionally
breezy.

Nungar Plain from the east, via Bugtown Creek, was the original plan. However, a group of four was needed as the route is remote and off-track. So a switch was made to the more accessible western side of the plain. We would park at Schofields Trail (off Tantangara Road) and follow Nungar Creek, turning south at the ford and heading to Gavels Hut. The return would be via Monaro Range. 13 km and what a delight.

After leaving Kambah at 7.00 am, it was a white-knuckle drive through Namadgi National Park, teeming with crazy macropods – even normally sane wallabies joined in. Thank you Adaminaby Bakery for a calming breakfast. By 9.30 we were at Schofields Trail. Note: Gooandra FT was recently upgraded for the Tantangara–Talbingo tunnel feasibility study and work is now beginning on Tantangara Road.

It was an easy first 2 km walk through a ravine and onto a sidetrack leading to Nungar Plain. The footpad petered out but the going on flat tussocks and occasional soggy drainage lines was uncomplicated, except for dodging a dark-brown slitherer. As we neared the hut, the brilliantly purple Hovea colouring the slopes to our right came down to meet us. We were too early for Golden Moth Orchids, however.

Soon after arriving at Gavels we were joined by three riders from Wares Yards. The logbook indicates they are its main users – the hut has been decorated with a framed likeness of a horse constructed from found timber and lichen tufts. We left at noon after a relax, following a creek due west and climbing onto Monaro Range. To the south, Jagungal was still striped with snow. The mountains to the east that we had viewed crossing the plain were now dramatically enlarged. Wows all round.

A harem of Gang-gangs nattered above as we settled for lunch amid a grove of eucalypts. The ants shuffled us a little, a sudden cold wind got us

rugging up, but it was otherwise a pleasant spot to contemplate the gorgeousness of the environment.

In 2013, on maybe NPA's first walk along Monaro Range, lunch was on a rocky outcrop a kilometre further north and, after departing at 1.10 pm, that was our first stop. The horse pad descends west at that point but we continued climbing gently north through magnificent scribbly gums to the now-collapsed SMA trig 1149 (1,600 metres) with its full view of Nungar Plain. From there Mount Nungar was a beacon as we completed a 300 metre descent to the car, arriving there at 2.40 pm.

The return trip was via Cooma Cafe and its home-made specialty, baklava. Back in Kambah at 5.45 pm

A walk well worth repeating: Gavels is usually approached from Snowy Mountains Highway to its south but it proved to be easier from the north; with Monaro Range as a bonus, a better walk than NPA's traditional climb up Mount Nungar.

Brian Slee

What a difference 27 years makes

1932

W.J. Bournes rowed a boat down the **Darling and Murray Rivers** from Bourke to Lake Alexandrina. His intended destination was a new opal field to the west of Oodnadatta. He launched from Bourke on 17 November 1932 with a 'heavy rowing boat' which, with gear and supplies, weighed more than half a ton. The river was low and falling rapidly which meant that the river as far as Wentworth was a trap for hundreds of sheep who became bogged along the water's edge. Bournes completed a shorter journey in 1905 and the difference between 1905 and 1932 was

At that time hundreds of beautiful colts and fillies could be seen watering all along the river. The

stations were breeding remounts for India, Japan and other countries then. Swagmen at that time were numerous; on this trip I met only one swagman. Rabbits in millions, sheep in hundreds of thousands, and hundreds of foxes are now seen along the river. But there are few horses. Game is plentiful.

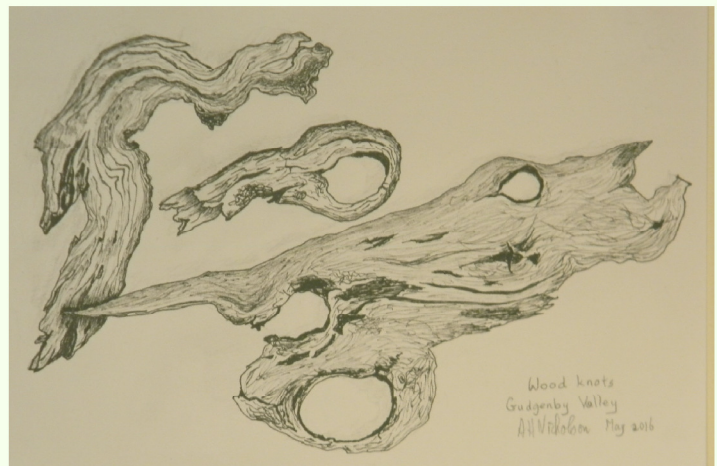
Extract from *Murray Darling Journeys*, by Angela and Mike Bremers.

See *Book Review* opposite page.

Art week at Gudgenby Cottage

The postponed spring Art Week is now a summer one. NPA ACT members will be at the Gudgenby Cottage from Saturday 2 December to Sunday 10 December. As the second weekend encompasses both the Gudgenby Bushies and the NPA Christmas parties, not surprisingly overnight beds are all booked for the second part of the week. However, a couple of places may still be available for the first few nights (Saturday to Tuesday).

Day visitors are welcome anytime.



Bushwalks *(continued)*

Kiandra Plain, via Shaw Hill and Marica Trig



Date: 17 September 2017.

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Mike Bremers, Margaret Power.

Weather: Sunny; mild; occasional breeze.

The snowshoe walk programmed for Little Twynam was abandoned as traffic delays in Jindabyne were expected to make it difficult to complete. Instead we headed to an area 4 km north of Kiandra, between Snowy Mountains Highway and, to its west, the Great Dividing Range. Only trouble was, there was no snow. Well, there was some on Shaw Hill but our snowshoes were piggy-backed all day.

Snow levels on the Main Range were at a 17-year high but this bounty was obviously not widespread. And here we had landed in an area none of us had visited before. However, the terrain turned out to be pleasantly diverse and we eventually walked 16 km on a variety of icy, slippery, puddly, grassy and littery surfaces.

Having departed Calwell at 6.30 am in two cars, we surrendered one at Adaminaby when our fourth participant returned home to deal with family matters. The rest of us finished breakfast

at the bakery and continued to where Three Mile Creek passes under the aforesaid highway. We set out at 9.30 on Racecourse Trail, cracking icy puddles and slipping on greasy clay before climbing from Gibsons Plains onto a ridge and up to the Great Divide. Twenty-two brumbies led the way.

Somehow you expect views from such sites but they eluded us, even on Shaw Hill (1,514 m) where we stopped for a break. We were in a brightly lit forest with a snowy floor. Mike dug out his \$1 red plastic snowball maker and built a cannonball mound - work of art or mischief in mind? More usefully, however, he discovered on his Rooftop's map that Wallaces Creek Fire Trail was nearby (not shown on CMA) so we linked up with that and followed its almost level surface along the Great Divide for 3 km to Marica Trig for lunch. Froggy tarns along the way. Occasional gaps in the forested edge allowed for dramatic views west (drop of 900 m) down to Yarrangobilly River, Lobs Hole and Talbingo Reservoir.

Trig stations were built so they could be seen from a distance. Marica is now kinda completely irrelevant as not only

is it collapsing, it is surrounded by trees. A taped track leads down from it to a narrow viewpoint from which Yarrangobilly Mountain (1,629 m) can be seen - neat silhouette, not much snow.

On the way back, once we had descended from Wallaces Creek Fire Trail, snowy Mount Tantangara was our guide. Kiandra Plain's gentle tussocks were intersected with streams, low ridges and lovely trees. The high-tension powerline came into view, then the highway and we were back at the car at 3.10 pm, two hours after lunch.

We again stopped at Adaminaby Bakery but took Boboyan Road for the return journey rather than Monaro Highway and were rewarded with a newly graded surface. At Calwell before 6 pm. We had effectively done a summer walk in a place we would happily further explore. Three Mile Dam would be a good starting point.

Brian Slee



22 brumbies (and still counting) on Kiandra Plain.

Photos by Mike Bremers.

The Rolling Ground

Date: 20 August 2017.

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Mike Bremers, Stephen Marchant, Margaret Power.

Weather: Sunny; cool; light breeze, strengthening above 1,900 metres.

This snowshoe walk was on the NPA program for the first time in August 2016 but was cancelled due to the weather. Four of us set out to complete it as a private walk a week later but again weather intervened, pulling us up short (*NPA Bulletin*, December 2016, p. 17). We have now finally made it to the Rolling Ground, but were pushed for time the whole way.

We had set out early enough, 6.15 am, and traffic did not seem unduly heavy. The pity was the forecast was no secret: following rain, gales and heavy snow, the weather in the mountains would be the best in 10 days. Reality dawned when we came to a halt before reaching Jindabyne Dam wall. Snowshoe outings are tightly scheduled and the 55 minutes spent transiting the town would be a problem. Then when we finally arrived at Mulyang, the carpark was full; only a sudden departure saved further delay. Kayakers were launching into the Snowy.

Snow had first appeared on Kosciuszko Road at Sawpit Creek (1,200 m) and was soon general. When we stepped onto Mulyang–Geehi Road at 10 am, it was half a metre deep. A lyrebird flitted across the path (oddly, it crossed back to the other side hours later on our return). Trees were full of snow



Wind-sculpted ice on Rolling Ground.

and an area rarely remarked upon for its beauty looked beautiful.

Horse Camp Hut was reached at 11.20 am for a brief break. From the track beyond the hut we climbed steeply west up the ridge. We were running out of puff so lunch was declared at 12.30 pm, out of the wind. We were to discover that we were just down from where we had sheltered under Snow Gums in 2016, i.e. a kilometre still to go.

The direct route to the top of the ridge was steep so we headed north on a

gentle slope (field ice in parts) before turning west, adding half a kilometre. Altitude almost 2,000 m, and we were 300 m south of Granite Peaks, with great views to Twynam, Watsons Crag and Tate West Ridge. It sure had been worth it.

But we were soon on our way back: At the lunch spot at 2 pm, descending the spectacular slope to the hut (2.30), at the car at 3.40 and on the road at 4.00. On the way met three guys + backpacks going to Jagungal. Hey, on snowshoes.

A pie and coffee stop in Jindabyne was a necessity after such a tough 15 km workout. Traffic was again delayed entering Cooma (a vehicle had tumbled off the road) and at odd spots along the Monaro Highway. We were in Calwell at 7.10 pm.

Thanks everyone for a patient and cooperative effort. It could be a while before this walk is repeated!

Brian Slee



*Climbing to the Rolling Ground.
Photos by Mike Bremers.*

Bushwalks *(continued)*

Yathong Nature Reserve

Date: 9–13 October 2017.

Participants: John Brickhill (leader) Isobel Crawford, Philip and Jan Gatenby, Kathy Saw, Deidre Shaw, Mike and Annette Smith, Di Thompson.

Weather: Fine and warm.

Yathong Nature Reserve is in central NSW, about 150 km south of Cobar, and about 500 km from Canberra. The full-day trip to the reserve included morning tea at Flagstaff Memorial Nature Reserve, with its woodland of Yellow Box, Blakely's Red Gum, Grey Box and White Box. After lunch, we visited The Charcoal Tank Nature Reserve 10 km south of West Wyalong, to see an endangered ecological community of Blue Mallee, Bull Mallee and Green Mallee, with Dwyers Mallee Gum nearby. At Ungarie there was a short stop to see a woodland of Yarran, *Acacia homalophylla*, and after Lake Cargelligo a short walk to the top of Round Hill in Round Hill Nature Reserve, where Grey Mallee was mixed with Mulga.

Yathong Nature Reserve is 115,604 ha, with rocky hills, downlands, open woodlands and extensive mallee shrublands. Three former grazing properties were declared Nature Reserve in 1971–76, and an adjoining state forest was added in 2012. Accommodation for our trip was in shearers quarters modified for visiting groups.

On our first day we looked at woodland vegetation of Bimble Box, Gum-barked Coolabah and Cypress Pine. A Warrior Bush had a few Caper White Butterflies circling to lay eggs on this food plant, and we found several larvae. Then a visit to an old hut site, with beer bottles dated 1966, and morning tea at a large dam (called a 'ground tank' in western NSW) which

had been recently modified to stop it collecting water, to remove an essential resource for feral goats. Then into the mallee to look at sand dunes, Pointed Mallee and Congoo Mallee. Another stop later for lunch and Yorrell Mallee. More dusty kilometres on, a visit to the ruins of a former homestead. Here the highlight was a very sleek and shiny Western Brown Snake, much photographed and subsequently identified as *Nuchalis aspidorhyncha*. Farther on we looked for an original hut site before heading home, seeing Red Kangaroos, Western Grey Kangaroos and many emu families of dad with chicks.

Day two was warm, so we travelled by vehicle to the southern end of the reserve to see a threatened Curlybark Wattle, *Acacia curranii*. This wattle occurs here in seven clumps estimated to contain 10,000 plants, so it is the largest population in NSW. On our return we stopped at a small creek line containing a scatter of Aboriginal stone tools and waste flakes. In the afternoon we inspected the old stables at Yathong homestead, built of horizontal logs of Cypress Pine, looked for birds at the house tank, and found a few scarred trees.

Day three started with a drive up a narrow track through dry creek beds, then a walk of about a kilometre up a boulder-strewn creek line to see a shallow cave with Aboriginal art. Fortunately, this had been protected with steel mesh in the 1970s to prevent further goat damage. There were other small sites in the vicinity, and there was some guesswork as to the subjects of the original images, which are now faded. The faster walkers then left to find another art site, while the rest went slowly uphill to a patch of Brigalow, *Acacia harpophylla*, and to the top of the



Leader John Brickhill explains the meaning of life and everything. Photo by Di Thompson.

ridgeline for an extensive view over the mallee in Yathong and Nombinnie Nature Reserves. Before returning to the quarters we found some patches of wild lime trees *Citrus glauca* and their prickly regeneration.

We headed home through Round Hill Nature Reserve, stopping to look at the only known population of *Grevillea ilicifolia*, now only three plants. Then a visit to another Curlybark Wattle patch, where Mike and Annette identified several species of cactus threatening to infest the site.

This trip was popular, with several people missing out, so it will probably run again in mid September next year. Last year was cancelled due to rain, this year was dry, and maybe next year will be a good spring.

John Brickhill



Philip Gatenby in the shearers quarters. Photo by Di Thompson.

PARKWATCH

News from state associations.

New South Wales <https://npansw.org/>

In what appears to be a pragmatic response to community pressure, the NSW Government has not committed to stage 4 of the F6 motorway which would have resulted in 60 ha of Royal National Park being bulldozed.

The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) welcomes the reprieve from the proposal – originally rejected in 2004 by the NSW Labor Government – but calls on the government to commit to permanently protecting the entire Royal National Park from development.

Alix Goodwin, Chief Executive Officer said:

Many in Sydney, and beyond, were rightly shocked when it emerged that the Government would consider putting a road through Royal just a few years after acknowledging its potential World Heritage values.

The decision is a win for citizens who have rallied together to show their opposition to this response to Sydney's transport pressures; pressures which require a broad integrated transport strategy with public transport as a key pillar.

NPA calls on the NSW Government to rule out any future planning for stage 4 and extension of the F6 into Royal National Park.

NPA is also concerned about a number of endangered ecological communities in other stages and calls on the government to ensure that these are fully documented and protected from construction of the new M5 Arncliffe to President Avenue, Kogarah, extension and its impacts.

Colong Foundation The NSW Government plans to raise Warragamba Dam. An enlarged dam would flood 4,700 hectares of National Park and 1,000 hectares of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Over 60 kilometres of riverine habitat, home to dozens of threatened and endangered species, would be inundated and destroyed. Please join the Colong Foundation campaign to protect our beautiful Blue Mountains wilderness.

Contact Harry Burkitt:

harry@colongwilderness.org.au ;
mob 0490 010 909

Victoria <https://vnpa.org.au>

Great Victorian Fish Count Now in its thirteenth year, the Great Victorian Fish Count is organised by the Victorian National Parks Association in partnership with local dive operators and community groups. It is supported by Parks Victoria, Museums Victoria, Redmap Australia and Coastcare Victoria.

This summer hundreds of divers and snorkellers will take to the water as part of the Great Victorian Fish Count, the largest marine citizen science event in Victoria.

‘People across the state band together to collect important information on the distribution and relative abundance of some of Victoria’s unique marine life. The collection of so much data over such a large area would not be possible without the incredible support of the community’, said Kade Mills, ReefWatch coordinator for the Victorian National Parks Association.

This year the event will run over a record five weekends from Saturday November 18 until Sunday December 17 at sites along the Victorian coastline.

‘Marine national parks and sanctuaries help protect some of our unique marine life in Victoria’, Parks Victoria’s Marine Science Manager Steffan Howe said. ‘Around 85% of species along Australia’s southern coast don’t occur anywhere else in the world. Volunteers and citizen scientists play a very important role providing information about the parks to help us manage them more effectively.’

Hands off Parks Our national parks and conservation reserves are priceless community assets. Their protection has been hard won over many years but, even when parks have at last been proclaimed in law, the community still has to work hard to keep them safe.

Our capacity for the exploitation of nature goes right back through human history. But we are now at a time when the population of the earth is far above historic levels, and we have powerful tools to ‘harvest’ returns from nature that would have been previously unimaginable.

Over the past 200 years, the natural world has taken a real beating. We are fast learning that there are huge benefits from protecting the nature, but the many pressures on these areas, some big and some smaller, remain.

These pressures on our parks and other natural areas include:

- clearing for agriculture and other purposes
- domestic grazing
- prospecting and mining for minerals, gold and gems, oil and gas
- timber production and firewood collection
- hunting and fishing
- recreational pressures such as horseriding, mountain- and trail-bike riding – even bushwalking
- tourism developments.

Fortunately, the prime purpose for the management of parks is made very clear in legislation: the protection of nature.

Queensland <http://www.npaq.org.au/>

National Parks for Sale Queensland is currently facing one of the greatest threats to national parks in recent years.

Prior to the recalling of Parliament, a proposal was before the Queensland Government regarding the redevelopment of the Lindeman Island derelict resort – closed since being battered by Cyclone Yasi in 2011. The proposal includes revocation of part of the national park on Lindeman Island.

Chinese developers White Horse Australia Lindeman Pty Ltd propose the revocation of 36.9 ha of national park land as part of a luxury multi-resort complex on Lindeman Island. They are proposing 325 suites and villas, upgrades to the golf course, expansion of the dam and airstrip and more. The proposal also includes a specific authority over 9.473 ha of national park for private commercial use as a glamping facility. This development would significantly increase the land use intensity on the island within the Great Barrier Reef.

Within the complexity of tenure arrangements and questions over the conservation value of the land involved, it is clear the national park would be reduced by 31 ha.

Key aspects of the proposed revocation are:

- 36.931 ha proposed to be revoked from national park and added to perpetual lease, with 5.919 ha of this land to be subject to a Nature Refuge Agreement.
- 9.406 ha of national park currently subject to a term lease to be surrendered to national park – this lease expires soon and the conservation values are debateable.
- 5.299 ha of existing perpetual lease to be dedicated as national park, at a later date and following construction works.

(continued next page)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

The land proposed for revocation is currently nearing the end of its 30-year tourism lease on national park (due to expire 31 October 2019). The lease was granted by the Bjelke-Petersen government for the development of a golf course, following the failure of the State Government's bid in 1986 to sell off 605 ha of national park to developers.

If this proposal goes ahead, it sets a precedent that national park land is up for sale; and that past poor decisions can result in eventual removal from the national park estate. National parks do not exist to provide a land bank to other land uses and private profit.

Regardless of the expiring tourist lease over this section of national park, revoking national park land for private development and commercial gain is unacceptable!

Selling pieces of national parks to investors for development, undermines the very essence of our national parks – the conservation of nature. National parks are too precious to lose!

South Australia

<http://www.ncssa.asn.au/>

'The Nature of SA' In February 2017, a forum was held at the Adelaide Zoo to progress development of a new nature conservation strategy for South Australia that is intended to replace the *No Species Loss – A Nature Conservation Strategy for South Australia 2007–2017*.

Some significant achievements were made over the past decade for nature conservation across the state, but the impacts of climate change and other landscape threats are leading to further declines in South Australia's environmental assets.

In response, an alliance of South Australian Government and environment non-government organisations was formed through 'The Nature of SA' project in 2015 to collaborate and trial a new approach for the state's biodiversity conservation strategy. The February forum provided the opportunity for over 200 representatives from the conservation sector and broader community to come together and discuss the pros and cons of some of the proposed 'shifts' in thinking that will be needed to face future challenges over the next decade and beyond.

A discussion paper providing background on the issues and outlining seven key themes for further refinement was released prior to the forum. The discussion paper recognises the importance of building on the legacy of those who have worked tirelessly to conserve, manage and celebrate South

Australia's natural heritage. It also acknowledged that 'protecting and sustainably managing nature through traditional conservation practices such as native vegetation protection, revegetation, protected area management and landscape connectivity will be as crucial in the future as they ever have been'.

Following on from the forum, we will continue to work with the conservation sector and broader community to further refine the new strategy and encourage partnerships to trial some of the concepts put forward, to develop a practicable and achievable state-wide conservation strategy that will guide positive change in our approach to nature conservation in the coming decades.

Further information about 'The Nature of SA' project and the discussion paper can be accessed at the project's website: <http://www.natureofsa.org>

Western Australia

<http://www.cc.wa.org.au/>

WA's peak conservation group has strongly backed the EPA's calls for a review of the WA Government's climate change policy and action on land clearing in the authority's *Annual Report for 2017*. The report highlighted the need for an 'effective and contemporary' climate change policy and a comprehensive database of information on land clearing in WA.

Conservation Council of WA Director Piers Verstegen said the EPA had picked up on two of the most significant and concerning environmental issues facing the state and which demanded action by the McGowan Government, adding:

The climate change policy inherited from the previous government is a policy to do nothing, and it's no surprise that as a result Western Australia's carbon pollution is rapidly rising. We strongly back the EPA's call for a review of this policy and this should be done in a way that engages the whole community to find solutions.

While the EPA has stopped short of recommending a specific carbon pollution reduction target, we must also be guided by the Paris Agreement here in WA.

Western Australia has abundant renewable energy resources, world-leading technology, and the potential for major employment and investment growth in carbon farming and clean tech industries. The fact that our pollution is

rising rapidly due to fossil fuel developments with no emissions controls, while we ignore our potential as a global leader in clean tech and renewable energy, is embarrassing.

The EPA considers it timely for the State to ensure its climate policy remains appropriate, effective and contemporary and calls for its review.

Land clearing is another priority issue for conservation groups given that loss of habitat is the primary threat to WA's native wildlife and biodiversity.

There is still no comprehensive system for monitoring and reporting on the remaining extent of native vegetation and how it is changing. There has been little progress in comprehensively capturing and collating this information in the past year.

Tasmania

All significant developments on private land in Tasmania are subject to a statutory assessment process which includes a legal right for the public to:

- Know what is proposed at an adequate level of detail (e.g. plans);
- Comment on the proposal as part of the assessment process; and
- Appeal the approval (this limits how far proponents can push the boundaries of what is allowed by the planning scheme).

There has never been such a process for developments within national parks because the key parts of Tasmania's planning legislation (the Resource Management and Planning System) date from the early 1990s when there was consensus that national parks were out-of-bounds for development (therefore no need for a process to assess such development).

The current State government has been only too happy to exploit this loophole to avoid scrutiny of projects proposed in accordance with its policy to 'unlock' Tasmania's national parks for development.

Once the new Statewide Planning Scheme takes effect, a development which has received the necessary approvals from Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) does not need to be advertised for public comment. This removes the current 'excuse' for not making the Reserve Activity Assessments available for public comment so it makes a strong argument for formalising increased scrutiny of

(concluded next page)

Woe to woody weeds – a bit of science in the field

‘Dunno’, I think as I thread the loppers through a tangle of branchlets to close on a hawthorn. ‘Maybe, this shoot is 4 cm but we might get through it’. I struggle until the top falls. ‘But that’s a metre up it, and there’s no way I can cut it at ground level with these’.

Behind me is the infant Gudgenby River. Its flow is small but it has a small gorge to get down and chatters on about it. But there is no one nearby from whom I can get a saw, or advice about the herbicide. So the thought grew, ‘Maybe the stuff doesn’t have to be applied near the roots to work – let’s find out’.

The normal treatment is to cut weeds at ground level then apply herbicide. That speeds their breakdown, lessens the fuel load in a fire, and improves access and appearance. I’d also understood it helps get the herbicide into the roots. But maybe this was an assumption, and it seemed to me better that the plant be part standing and dead than on-growing and seeding. Sometimes too the base can’t be reached, between rocks for example, so it would be useful to know.

Soon the half-dozen leaders on this hawthorn are cut and sprayed with the standard mix of glyphosate (familiar to many as ‘Roundup’).

I turn to a stand of briar rose canes. These aren’t as thick and despite the thorns it’s soon reduced to low stumps, sprayed. Next is a low spread of holly-shaped leaves ... ah yes, I’d met Mahonia before and knew it suckers from strong spreading roots, seeming herbaceous yet supporting woody stems. Here it wound through a jumble of rocks and cutting it out was impractical.

‘What’s glyphosate like as a foliage spray?’ I tried it on part of the clump.

That was in April. I returned to the gorge in October where the results of the experiment were clear – as the photos show, the treated hawthorn was dead, its unsprayed neighbours were in full leaf; the treated leaves of the Mahonia were brown, the untreated parts the usual green and red.

Rupert Barnett

Footnote: The Parks Service is currently reviewing its rules relating to the use of glyphosate by volunteers, and may exclude unsupervised use by untrained personnel.

Top right. Hawthorn; 6 months after being lopped at 1 m then Glyphosate applied.

Right. Mahonia, 6 months after some leaves were sprayed.

Photos by Rupert Barnett.



PARKWATCH *(continued)*

RAAs, but the current situation clearly suits the current state government, and any really satisfactory solution will require legislative change, so it is unlikely until there is a change of government (election due by May 2018). In the absence of a change of government, the best that we can hope for is a more enlightened approach to public consultation by the PWS.

Of course, no amount of public scrutiny can stop a determined government from pushing through inappropriate developments, but the public has no chance of stopping, or even changing, them if they are unaware of a proposal until construction/operation commences.

Compiled by Kevin McCue

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar

| | December | January | February | March |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Public holidays | Mon 23 – Tues 26 | Sun 1–Mon 2, Fri 26 | — | Mon 12, Fri 30 – Sat 31 |
| General meetings | — | — | Thurs 15 | Thurs 15 |
| Committee meetings | Tues 5 | — | Tues 6 | Tues 6 |
| NPA Christmas Party | Sun 10 | | | |
| Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ¹ | Sat 9 ² | — | — | Sat 10 |
| Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage ³ | Sat 2 – Sun 10 | | | |

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9.15 am.
 2. GBRG Christmas Party in afternoon.
 3. See notice on page 19.

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes
 Linda Beveridge
 David Funnell
 as new members, and welcome back
 Ann Gibbs-Jordan
 Leonie and Phil Bubb.
 We look forward to seeing you at NPA activities.

Call for volunteers

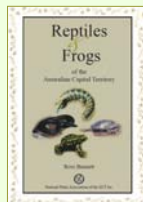
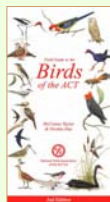
At NPA general meetings volunteer members set up the hall and the supper. We need more volunteers for 2018 as the roster is by no means full. Please contact Quentin Moran if you can help. qmoran@webone.com.au
 Thank you

This Bulletin was prepared by:
 Editor, Max Lawrence
 Copyeditor, Ed Highley
 Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson.



This little fellow is probably hoping his Christmas will not be quite as white as winter in the alps. Photo by Mike Bremers.

NPA books available from some bookshops (eg ANBG), or contact the association office.



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 to the NPA ACT postal address (see page 27).

**Deadline for the March 2018 issue:
 31 January 2018.**

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. Rod Griffiths on Mountain Creek Road on Day 19 of his 21 day stroll around the ACT border (article page 6).

Photo by Max Lawrence.

Insets. Top. Martin Chalk, ACT environment award winner (article page 5).

Photo by Adrienne Nicholson.

Centre. Macaroni penguin, South Georgia (article page 10).

Photo supplied by Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine.

Bottom. Emily Stringer, NPA scholarship winner (article page 4).

Photo supplied by the University of Canberra.

General Meetings

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



Thursday 15 February

Topic to be advised

Kate Auty

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.



Motoring upriver towards Angel Falls in Venezuela. Subject of last November's General Meeting talk. Photo by Adrienne Nicholson.

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.

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| <i>Promotion and Engagement Subcommittee</i> | Vacant | |
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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.

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Facebook:

www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheAct

Membership subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

The 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 |

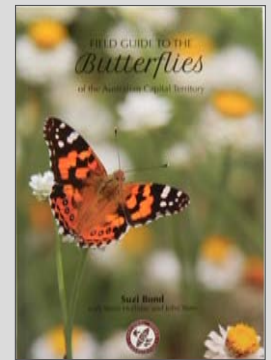
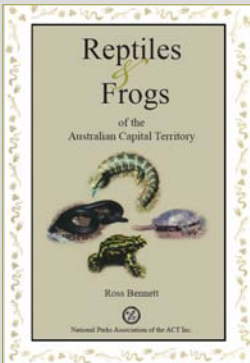
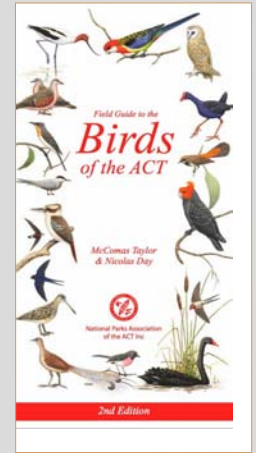
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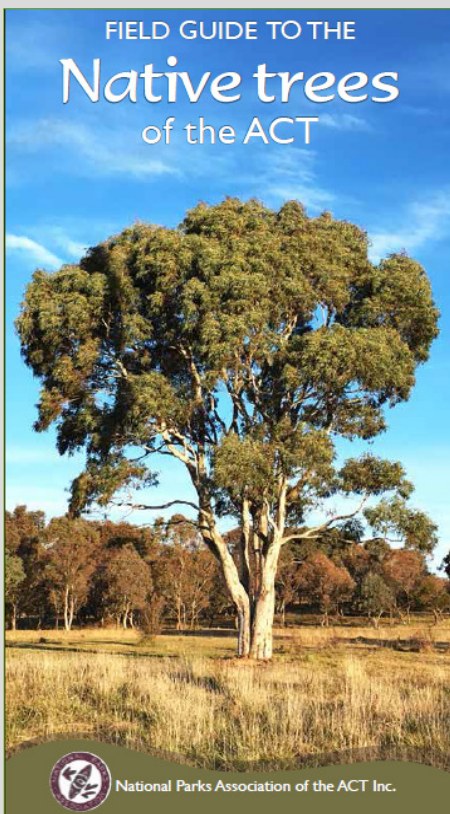
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Think friends; think outdoors; think rewards; think gifts with a use.

Think Christmas-time!

NPA books are available from some bookshops (eg ANBG), or contact the association office.



And just in time, this new edition is ready!

Field Guide to the Native trees of the ACT

Books will be on sale at the NPA Christmas Party.

For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our website <http://www.npaact.org.au>
and follow us at www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheAct