



## **INTERVIEW WITH BEVERLEY HAMMOND**

(NPA President 1991-94)

*MATTHEW:- This is an interview with Beverley Hammond by Matthew Higgins for the NPA Oral History Project taking place at Beverley's home in Canberra on 22 Dec 1999.*

*Beverley, thanks very much for agreeing to the interview, and I know the NPA appreciates it. Now, just to begin with very briefly your pre-NPA years. Now, you were born in 1935 in Sydney, went to Sydney Teachers College and taught at various locations before coming to Canberra in 1967, and then you joined the NPA about 11 years later in 1978. Just before we get to 1978, can you tell me whether there were any influences in your early life that might have led you to have an interest in the outdoors, camping, that sort of thing?*

**BEVERLEY:-** Well, camping was a major thing because my family have always been campers. My father lived at Helensburgh and from Helensburgh they used to go down to the coast to Garie Beach when he was a child, and that tradition was continued in my family. I have two brothers and a sister older than I am and we always went to Garie Beach, every single Christmas holidays for a month at a time. So that I grew up on the beach and the foreshores and on the beaches south of Garie; we didn't much go north because it's just rocky headlands.

In those days there wasn't the access to written material that there is now and I regret that, we didn't really study any of the marine creatures or plants; you know the books just weren't there to encourage people to do that. I used to go walking as well. As a young person I belonged to a youth group that often went walking, so I've always had that in my background.

*MATTHEW:- OK, and as we said a moment ago you joined the NPA in 1978. How was it that you came to hear about NPA and decided to join?*

**BEVERLEY:-** One of my neighbours, Norma Price, was a member of NPA and showed me some slides that she had taken on a trek in Nepal. I decided that was a good holiday for me as I'm a great traveller, I go overseas every two years. So she took me along to NPA in the July of that year and I tried to get a bit fit to go to Nepal in December. I've just maintained it.

*MATTHEW:- So she took you along to a general meeting, and that's it?*

**BEVERLEY:-** Yes, and then I started walking, as I say, it was to get fit really for the walk in Nepal.

*MATTHEW:- Now that was in 1978, a year later the Gudgenby Nature Reserve was declared, do you remember much activity around that time?*

**BEVERLEY:-** Not really, I was into bushwalking more than anything to do with conservation. I can't remember when I joined the Committee actually.

*MATTHEW:- About 1981.*

**BEVERLEY:-** Was it, thank you.

*MATTHEW:- Alright, we'll say 1981 you joined the Committee. Why did you decide to get on the Committee?*

**BEVERLEY:-** Oh, I suppose, as usual, people were looking for committee members. I was enjoying the bushwalking and I was enjoying the people that I was getting to know, and I usually go on committees because that's the way to get to know people better. If you want to be part of a group you have to get to know them and be part of it. That was partly why I then offered to convene the Outings Committee. I forget when I did that, you probably have it written down.

*MATTHEW:- It was in the same year, pretty soon after it, from my record.*

**BEVERLEY:-** Oh well, I decided that was the best way for me to contribute; I'm an organiser, a



practical person, I'm not a philosopher and, you know, it suited me to get in and do something practical rather than assessing reports or analysing things.

*MATTHEW:- We will talk about the outings side of NPA in due course, but if we could just concentrate for a moment on the politics of Namadgi National Park because in those few years leading up to 1984, of course, things must have been going on in the background because in 1984 Namadgi was declared. Do you remember any activities that NPA was undertaking at that stage to get Gudgenby Nature Reserve expanded or made into a formal national park?*

BEVERLEY:- Well no, only as part of the committee discussions, as I say, in a way I was only on the periphery of those issues.

*MATTHEW:- You were on the Gudgenby sub-committee in 1982/83, do you recall any of the particular issues being discussed?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I'm sorry.

*MATTHEW:- I know that Tom Uren was taken into the park, into the reserve by several NPA members, Den Robin and Sheila Kruse perhaps, were you involved in that at all?*

BEVERLEY:- As a school teacher one doesn't have days off from work, because that would have been done on a work day, and I couldn't get time off to do that sort of thing.

*MATTHEW:- Well, let's take the story up a little bit further to you getting more involved at the leadership level, you became vice-president in 1989. Now, you must have been more willing to make a more political contribution, I guess. at that stage, would that be right?*

BEVERLEY:- No, but I could see myself coming up for retirement and I did offer, in 1990 was it, before I went overseas in 1991, to be President if they needed somebody. I could see that would be quite a good early retirement project.

At the time the President was a very big job, it still is and, in fact, I think the President does too big a job. I think more people should be willing to accept responsibility. It's very hard to dole out the jobs. You know what happens, of course, is that a few people become knowledgeable and the more knowledgeable they are, the more sought after they are, and the more valuable they are to go on committees or to go and lobby people because they have all the background information. I do think it's a pity that so few people sometimes get involved in those things.

*MATTHEW:- You became President in 1991 and then it was either in 1990 or 1991 that Namadgi was extended in size, for example, the northern Cotter area was added and that followed on a report which had been commissioned by NPA of Ian Fraser. Did you play any part in that?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I didn't.

*MATTHEW:- OK, well you were President for about 3 years through to 1994, can you tell me about some of the issues that were dealt with during that time, firstly relating to Namadgi?*

BEVERLEY:- The first issue, of course, was when I got back from overseas and went to a meeting almost the next week with John Feint and somebody from Kosciuszko Huts Association about the Orroral Homestead. We had been working on the Orroral Homestead for a number of years and been very frustrated about the fact that nothing was being done. Suddenly we were sort of being given the go-ahead that something could be done. The KHA recommended a stone mason who might be able to work on the chimney. So I was involved in that then, and some of the money we had left over from the project that Peter Corkery did with writing the Conservation Plan was used then on the chimney and some of the other work that was done on the homestead.

*MATTHEW:- So, although that Conservation Plan had been written back in about 1983 or somewhere around there, there was still money left over?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, there was a little bit left over from the Conservation Plan because that was



really all that we had done, just paid Peter Corkery. He used quite a few of his students, so I suppose, the fact that he used them to draw up plans and so forth meant that his personal time wasn't involved, or perhaps it didn't cost as much as it might have done.

*MATTHEW:- OK, can you tell me how the Orroral project went, what was achieved out there?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, we started off, of course, years before with cleaning the place out because it had been used for storing hay, and it had been used by the sheep in wet weather and there were lots of old tins of poison and sheep-dip, and I don't know what else, in the building. We had cleared all that out some years before as one of our early projects, but this one involved making posts for corners and things. Reg [Alder] has probably told you all of this in his interview because he was one of the main people who had some knowledge about the techniques to be used and so forth, and we were grateful he was there.

We had very good cooperation with the Parks Service, they used to come out and help, so we appreciated the fact that we were working together on that project. We had to do some drainage work as that was part of the trouble, the water was running under the floors. Then, of course, Pip Giovanelli came in and the Parks Service put the money in to do a lot more work than we had done.

*MATTHEW:- And what was Pip's role?*

BEVERLEY:- As a carpenter/builder he replaced floor boards, you know, did a huge reconstruction job, the timber-work really.

*MATTHEW:- And NPA members were sort of working under him to his direction, is that how it worked?*

BEVERLEY:- Occasionally. Not entirely because he seemed to be working on his own, he did a fair bit on his own.

*MATTHEW:- How did you feel in 1997 when there was the opening ceremony at Orroral Homestead?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, I was quite delighted with all of that. I was invited to be involved because we had a new President who hadn't had any involvement with it at all. I was sort of invited to represent NPA because I had been involved at the time.

We had concerns at the time, and we still have concerns, about vandalism, but strangely it just doesn't seem to have happened. It just amazes me because some years later the board-walk we worked on - we had working parties to put the board-walk in - made it now very accessible, whereas before it was a bit hard to get to. The gateway entrance from the road coming in was locked. There was a stile over it, but somehow people didn't seem to find it and go over there. From the tracking station it wasn't an obvious sort of an access to walk down to the homestead whereas now, of course, it is. There is a new track coming in from the camping area too. So that it's much more accessible now, but somehow it hasn't been vandalised.

*MATTHEW:- Would you agree that vandalism is more of a problem where would-be vandals can actually drive to a site. rather than be forced to walk?*

BEVERLEY:- Oh yes, I guess so.

*MATTHEW:- So that's Orroral Homestead. What other issues came up, now for example Mulligans Flat, that was a big issue at your time I think?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, there were concerns. That's one thing we have always had very good people on the committees, and some of them have been there because they have a particular barrow to push and the NPA's been a good way in which to push it, you know, a recognised organisation. We have always appreciated people like that because that's been good for the Association as well as



for them. Kevin Frawley was the one who was interested in the grasslands and had written a document about the preservation of grasslands, and which led him to be our representative on the committee of six conservation groups which wrote a submission to Bill Wood, I think, and the local government about the preservation of Mulligans Flat as a grasslands. Most of the other Canberra Nature Parks had been so misused through the years there were no grasslands left in those areas.

*MATTHEW:- No native grasses?*

BEVERLEY:- No native grasses, and the rest of it was of high country that had been put into national park or reserves. Mulligans Flat hadn't been over-grazed and there was still a lot of kangaroo grass and other grasses out there.

*MATTHEW:- And that document that Kevin wrote, was that commissioned by NPA, the original document that he wrote on grasslands?*

BEVERLEY:- I can't remember whether we commissioned it, we certainly had a big meeting at the foot of Mount Ainslie when it was launched, so perhaps we did commission it. I can't remember because that was when Les Pyke was President before I became President.

*MATTHEW:- So, apart from that document going to Bill Wood, the then Minister for the Environment, what other lobbying did NPA do to try to get Mulligans Flat reserved, incorporated into the Canberra Nature Park?*

BEVERLEY:- I don't remember, sorry.

*MATTHEW:- It was really that report?*

BEVERLEY:- It was really that report, and because the Conservation Council was behind it. It wasn't an NPA project, it was the six groups who got in and wrote a very detailed report. The ornithologists wrote a big section of it. They also called upon the skills and expertise of people in the various conservation groups to contribute aspects of the need for the conservation of that area.

*MATTHEW:- So, would it be true to say though, that NPA played a significant role in getting that area conserved?*

BEVERLEY:- I wouldn't say it was any more significant than any of the other six groups.

*MATTHEW:- It played its part?*

BEVERLEY:- Certainly.

*MATTHEW:- Were there any other issues elsewhere in Canberra Nature Park that came up during your 3 years in the chair?*

BEVERLEY:- I can't think of any.

*MATTHEW:- What about the telecommunication towers for example?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, there was an issue with that. There was concern that the responsibility for the placement of the towers was left with the telecommunication provider, and that they didn't really have to get permission for the siting of those towers. They assured everybody that they were aware of environmental concerns and would abide by them, but of course they didn't or their idea of what was not a blot on the landscape was different from everybody else's. They were just concerned about putting them up there where they would be effective for their purposes without really thinking of the environment. So there was a lot of concern later on that that happened.

*MATTHEW:- How did NPA express its concern, was this a matter of putting in submissions?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, putting in submissions. I can't think of the girl's name now but somebody who worked in the Parks Service, in fact, was on the Committee and she was the one who was able to contribute a lot to our submission because she had all the background information from their side of it.



*MATTHEW:- Murrumbidgee River Corridor, were there any dealings there that NPA was involved in?*

*BEVERLEY:- Well, it always has been, something to do with leases, I think, but I can't remember that there was anything specific about that.*

*MATTHEW:- Did NPA during your term adopt a role other than putting in submissions, for example, did you use the media very much on any issues?*

*BEVERLEY:- No, probably not as much as we should have. I can remember, for example, when the issue came up about the tracking stations, Honeysuckle and Orroral Tracking Stations, that a couple of members wished the Committee would do a little bit more.*

*MATTHEW:- To conserve those places?*

*BEVERLEY:- Well, a lot of members didn't want them conserved. I mean, within NPA we have always had very diverse people with quite a continuum of interests in the environment. Some people wanted absolutely no buildings conserved within Namadgi at all. So this was part of the trouble, I think, the main person who was worried about the tracking stations wanted them removed completely, but other people within the organisation thought that they shouldn't be removed. So, that was one of the things that as President I was always very aware of; you know that you couldn't always satisfy all the members on cultural issues.*

*This came up, of course, when we were looking at constitution changes, the Aims and Objectives of the Association. It was in my time that we added a little clause about cultural heritage, and some of the members were quite opposed to that going within our Aims and Objectives. They sort of thought that you could still look after cultural heritage, but you need not have it in the Aims and Objectives. We did have a vote on that, we had a special meeting, and it was decided to put it into the Aims and Objectives. So that was one, at that time, that came up as an issue, really because of diverse views of members.*

*MATTHEW:- Yes, that was in 1994 and how easily or otherwise was that motion passed at the meeting?*

*BEVERLEY:- Quite easily, I can't just remember now.*

*MATTHEW:- So, it appeared to have a lot of support?*

*BEVERLEY:- It had support. I think most people appreciated the fact that there is a place within the national park to recognise the contribution of the pioneers or the work done by people prior to the declaration of the national park. We had to respect what was done, it was selected for a purpose, the area was selected as being ideal for a purpose and we had to respect what previous people had thought. It was certainly grazing area; Honeysuckle Creek was a little bit more bushy, wasn't it, whereas the Orroral Valley was an open valley, an open grazing valley, so you would not see that as a wilderness area. I think there might have been more concern if it had been further afield.*

*MATTHEW:- Was there much concern, Beverley, at that time about tourism pressure on either Namadgi or other reserves in the ACT?*

*BEVERLEY:- Well in fact, Syd Comfort and I represented the NPA on a Government committee. We went to quite a few meetings on ecotourism. It was about the third time, I think, we were there that they had tried to bring up a policy; to develop a policy on ecotourism, and that still didn't get off the ground. They had a fourth go. A lot of money has been spent in the Territory on papers and pamphlets and booklets that somehow or other just haven't been accepted and acted upon. That was yet another one where hours and hours went into preparing a document about ecotourism that was finally just put on the shelf and never acted upon.*

*MATTHEW:- So this was the ACT Government?*



BEVERLEY:- Yes, so we represented the NPA on that.

MATTHEW:- *You mentioned Syd Comfort. Would you like to name other individuals who you thought were making an important contribution to the organisation, either during your time as President or at any time, people who have stood out in your mind?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, Syd always has. I've been impressed with what Eleanor Stodart has done in recent years, because she only came in the year before she accepted the role as President, and in the last few years she really has done a lot of work for the Association. Of course, you have the old diehards, the Storys and Reg [Alder] and Fiona [Brand]. And those people who have been around for many, many years, Ian Currie and Jean, the Pykes, Babette [Scougall] are people who have worked hard for the Association for a long time, Neville [Esau].

MATTHEW:- *Looking again at other places within the ACT where there may have been issues NPA was involved in, what about Tidbinbilla, did NPA get involved in any issues there in your term as President?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, I'm just trying to think, I know Len Haskew and I went out to a few meetings at Tidbinbilla. I think, there has been some lobbying by NPA at the instigation of Steven Johnston, really for the mountain parts of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to be incorporated in Namadgi National Park, and for the Tidbinbilla 'zoo', what Steven Johnston thinks it is, to just be that. So that just the lowlands be for caged animals and the clipped birds or whatever they do to maintain their population of waterbirds (I'm not sure, but they must do something to their wings to keep them there). He felt that that should just be a little area in itself as a 'zoo' and that the rest should go into the national park. So papers were written, and we did do some lobbying about that.

MATTHEW:- *There has also been the issue of, and this might have been after your time, of mountain bikes in parts of Canberra Nature Park. Was that an issue during your time?*

BEVERLEY:- No, that has been since, it was mostly on Majura Mountain.

MATTHEW:- *I might take that up with Eleanor. During the 1980s, though, there was quite a bit of unrest about the tower to be built on Black Mountain, and NPA got quite involved in that in different ways. Now do you, just as a member at that time, recall much of that activity?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, you realise that happened in the 1960s. I've just been working on the history with a group preparing a 40th supplement to go in the *Bulletin* in March for the 40th anniversary of the Association, and the Black Mountain tower was one of the first three issues that the Association took up in 1960s. So there has always been concerns about Black Mountain, and they lobbied in those days for Black Mountain to be set aside as a reserve. So it has been an issue all that time. With the tower, I know, some people were more concerned about the tower than others. It's interesting that now that tower's on there it's such an icon for the ACT, and I don't know that it's any worse than the 2 or 3 metal towers that were there before it.

MATTHEW:- *It's interesting that people get used to new features in the landscape. There was also a plan and, I think, this was in the early 1980s, to have a gondola type of chairlift up there, do you recall that?*

BEVERLEY:- No, the issue that NPA was concerned about at that time was about a gondola on Ayers Rock, more than on Black Mountain.

MATTHEW:- *So, NPA actually got involved in the Uluru one, did it write a submission?*

BEVERLEY:- This was in the 1960s, well it's written up in the minutes as being one of the issues they talked about, so they probably did write letters about it as well.

MATTHEW:- *The Corin Forest ski proposal that came up in the 1980s, do you recall that being much debated in the NPA?*



BEVERLEY:- Yes, it was because it was a commercial group that seemed to be coming into the national park, and people were concerned about the modifications that would have to be made to the natural environment. Also, of course, we couldn't see that it was going to be a viable operation and it turned out they had to make all the snow because there certainly isn't enough snow either at that altitude or higher altitudes. There just hasn't been as much snow, as we can see from Mount Franklin Ski Lodge, where there just isn't the snow there used to be when it was first built.

MATTHEW:- *Was some of the NPA concern related to where the water would come from to make snow at the Corin Forest facility?*

BEVERLEY:- Not that I remember, I don't remember that, but it may have been.

MATTHEW:- *Do you think that NPA has more or less accepted the Corin Forest presence there since then?*

BEVERLEY:- It hasn't been mentioned. I don't know whether they have accepted it, but I haven't heard it mentioned as I still go to some of the environment sub-committee meetings. It certainly hasn't been raised for some years.

MATTHEW:- *The whole committee structure of NPA, now you had a particular attitude towards that when you were President or particular policy, I guess, of how things should operate. Can you tell me about that?*

BEVERLEY:- I've always believed that people should accept responsibility. They should own jobs and accept responsibility for their jobs, so that you don't get management from on top, and you get a better working relationship. This was applied to the school's staff and school philosophy that I was involved in, everybody thought they were responsible for their job. So when I was President I tried to not be the person who was the instigator of everything and doer of everything. I didn't go to all sub-committee meetings as most presidents have done in the past and are still doing, because I thought it was the responsibility of the conveners of the sub-committees to do things. So perhaps I didn't become as knowledgeable about things that were going on within NPA for that reason; because I didn't go to all their meetings and hear all their discussions. Most of it was brought by the conveners of the sub-committees to the main management committee.

MATTHEW:- *OK, now grant funding has, I guess, gradually over a fairly long period of time, come to be more significant to the organisation. In the earliest years there were hardly any grant funds around. What sort of uses have the grants been put to and, say, during your term as President how significant were they to the organisation?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, during my term, the grants didn't have to be as specific in things for which we were applying. I wrote several applications for grants, and they were really for office management. We always had to say what we were going to use the money for, and a lot of it was to be a response to things, you know, we would say we are going to respond to the Namadgi Management Plan which we are still waiting for after all these years, it's just criminal that it still isn't there. So a lot of the money we were applying for was saying, we need this money to respond to these things when they come.

We used it for the publication of the *Bulletin*; we got a special *Bulletin* grant in my time because that was an educational tool. They were assessing that, seeing how much of it was educational about Namadgi or about the ACT environment, because there was some concern that some of the articles were about things other than environmental issues, you know, reporting of peoples' travels in Europe or something like that. I think that has changed now, it's gone back to being a more local concern.

MATTHEW:- *Now, there was a fairly significant change in terms of the NPA's office at the time of your presidency, moving from the ROCKS area down to Woden?*



BEVERLEY:- That was partly because I was very concerned about the safety of our secretary. To me it was not a very pleasant environment in which someone was going to work on her own for three days a week, or whatever the office hours were. They had fires and they had drunks all around the place. It was just a personal concern, that that wasn't a good environment for our office and for people to call in. I just thought we could do better than that. At the time we had a good membership and we did have some funds so we were able to hire a better place and that meant that we had more space in the office. Still not enough as it turned out, because we ended up hiring a storage area down in the Tuggeranong Valley for some of the things. But that meant that we were able to call in a lot of the materials that people had in their garages or under the bed and get them into one place. That was when Sheila Kruse did quite a big job. Well, that was in Syd's [*Comfort*] time she started as an archivist to record a lot of the materials.

MATTHEW:- *The work that Sheila was doing, was that necessitated by the move and the need to get materials back out of peoples' garages and living rooms?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, yes. But it was also seen as something we should do because we should be more responsible, I guess, for the history of the Association.

MATTHEW:- *I guess with the office being in that ROCKS area there was some sort of link with the Environment Centre and Conservation Council, and maybe on that level it was a good place for NPA to be. How did you feel that relationship actually worked out in practice, was there much of a real link between those kindred organisations?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, I guess, there was at that time, and that was probably one of the disadvantages of moving away from that area. Lorraine Frawley was the paid secretary with us for about nine years, and then she left us to go to the Conservation Council. So that was a good link for us, you know, in with the Conservation Council.

MATTHEW:- *How did you get the building at Chifley, was that part of the old primary school?*

BEVERLEY:- It was the Health Centre, the Baby Health Centre, which was adjacent to the pre-school at Chifley. It was just a matter of looking around for some public buildings that were on offer to rent. It had two rooms and it was quite a pleasant location.

MATTHEW:- *Was that advertised in the paper or did you go to a particular part of the ACT Government and say what have you got?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, the latter. Places like the Griffin Centre were very expensive. This was cheaper than the Griffin Centre. It just seemed to be easy for people to access, rather than going into somewhere like the Griffin Centre and having nowhere to park or having to pay for parking.

MATTHEW:- *If we can talk for a little while about issues outside the ACT during your time as President essentially. Now Kosciuszko is right next door, Kosciuszko National Park. Did NPA have any concerns about what was going on there in the early 1990s?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, it always has had, I think. We were involved at that time with NSW and Victoria in the [*Tri-State*] Alps Agreement. Some members have always been concerned with that. We had a few walking trips up in the Bogong Range and so forth, and we were always concerned about the Victorian side. The same Minister there was responsible for national parks as was responsible for mining and the cattle leases and everything else. We always worried that the environment wasn't getting the best end of the stick there. The national park in Victoria, of course, is just so little; bits of it scattered through the Alps. It never has been given the attention it should, and so we were pleased for the Tri-State Alpine Agreement because we hoped that it might help the Victorian conservation movement get a bit more status to agitate for the control of things within the national park.

MATTHEW:- *During the 1980s, 1985, NPA had hosted a seminar on the Australian Alps, especially cooperative management, and the agreement to manage the alpine areas cooperatively followed*



*not so long after that. Did you take any part in that conference that NPA arranged?*

BEVERLEY:- Only as a listener. I went along to the meetings at the University, but I didn't have a particular role.

*MATTHEW:- It seems that NPA should have some of the credit for helping to move things along with regard to that Tri-State agreement. Would you agree?*

BEVERLEY:- Definitely! Well, at the time we had Kevin Frawley and Neville Esau, and we were lucky to have people like that who were able to organise these things and had the respect of the people whom they invited to be speakers, etc.

*MATTHEW:- Now other areas outside the Territory. Brindabella National Park I was interested to see, had been mooted back in about 1980 although it's only come into being in 1996. Was there any discussion about that during your time?*

BEVERLEY:- Not to my recollection. The Bimberi Range Nature Reserve came in but that was later on, wasn't it. When was Bimberi Nature Reserve declared?

*MATTHEW:- I'm not sure, but I would say it would be around your time or earlier.*

BEVERLEY:- About that time, yes.

*MATTHEW:- The Budawangs, was there much to do with the Budawangs?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, Dianne Thompson who was Vice-president at the time and convener of the Outings Committee, when I was the President, was interested in the Budawangs, and she initiated some work parties down there. I didn't ever go on any of those. We had, I don't know, half a dozen I suppose work parties there, with track maintenance, building walkways through muddy areas and re-routing the track in some places. I didn't ever go on those, but quite a few people did.

*MATTHEW:- Yes, some of the others have talked about that. Jervis Bay often seems to have been under threat, whether it was nuclear power stations back in the 1960s or industrial development or navy development. What was the situation in your time?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, Den Robin was the one who was very interested in Jervis Bay, and she was the one who carried the responsibility for the work and we were pleased she was willing and wanted to do that through the National Parks Association.

*MATTHEW:- So, was coverage of these sorts of issues, I guess in any community group, dependent, do you think, on the individual interest of committee members?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, I would say it is. I've often been concerned that some people have said to me that National Parks Association should do this, you know the committee should do that and I've said to them, "OK you do it". Who in the committee would do it? Somebody who is really knowledgeable and interested is the one that can write the letter. They are the ones that are concerned. We were always happy to accept their letter, perhaps re-form it and send it off under the National Parks Association's name. So yes, I think a lot of the good work that has been done because of individuals pursuing their interest.

*MATTHEW:- There were other coastal parks, Murramarang, no issues there or the Eden wood-chipping issue?*

BEVERLEY:- That was one where we had Debbie somebody or other, I forget her name,...

*MATTHEW:- Quarmby was it?*

BEVERLEY:- Quarmby yes, she did write a paper for us on the issue. We used some grant money to pay for her to write that paper. That was before my time, I can't remember just why a particular interest was taken in it. I know we had a few house parties down at Edrom Lodge in the heart



of the wood-chipping. I think in the end they refused to have us in there because they realised who we were.

*MATTHEW:- All these greenies on their doorstep. I've heard it said that that whole building seemed to shake when wood-chip loading operations were underway down at the wharf?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, it didn't ever happen when we were there. They had, of course, a conveyor belt going from shore out to the ship at sea which was half a kilometre or something; I forget how far it was, but several hundred metres to where the ship was anchored. With the conveyor belt going out it was really a very noisy operation, but it didn't happen on any of the three weekends, I think, I was down there.

*MATTHEW:- So were these outings part of the outings program or were they committee weekends?*

BEVERLEY:- No, just part of the outings program. We were always looking for different places to go. In part what we have tried with outings is to have longer walks, medium walks and easy walks, and car-camps and house-parties and educational walks as well; geology walks or flower walks or tree guide walks or bird guide walks, something of that nature, and it was of interest for people to go down to that south coast area.

*MATTHEW:- Do you think there has ever been tension within the committee or the NPA membership between what the NPA of the ACT should be doing; should it concentrate wholly and solely on issues in the ACT, especially Namadji National Park, or should it be just as interested in what's going on outside in the region and even beyond the borders of NSW?*

BEVERLEY:- Well no, I wouldn't say there has been tension because I think it's recognised that with a small organisation like ours we just don't have the resources. There are other people like the Wilderness Society to go all over Australia, and there is the Conservation Council of Canberra and the South-East Region to worry about things in the broader region. I think we have always seen our role as being within the ACT, but as I said, because some people have been interested in some of the south coast issues they have been brought to us and we have gone on with them because they are within our region, especially Jervis Bay which was, in fact, part of the ACT. Kosciuszko, of course, abuts the ACT, therefore is of importance to our forests. I wouldn't say that had been an issue. Some people thought we were getting too involved with Canberra Nature Park and that we should stay with the national park more when we had limited resources. In my time we had enough people to be interested in a separate sub-committee for Namadji and then another one for the environment so that people who were more interested in the broader issues beyond the ACT could be part of the Environment Sub-Committee. Some people went to both and some people just went to one or the other.

*MATTHEW:- You made the point earlier, and I guess, it's linked with what we have been talking about here, about the health of the membership in terms of size during your years. Do you have an idea of what size it was?*

BEVERLEY:- At one stage Les Pyke estimated we had 700 members, but I think that was based mostly on counting a family membership as being four people, and I don't know they were all terribly active, every single one of them as a member. So a lot of membership estimates have been done on how many *Bulletins* we publish, and how many single memberships and family memberships there are.

*MATTHEW:- Was there any program, active program, to recruit members during your years?*

BEVERLEY:- We have always tried to recruit new members, that has always been something we have wanted to do. So we go along to things like 'ACT Alive', the spring one that they have at the Botanical Gardens, and the Conservation Council was responsible for a few outdoor events, Environment Day. We have a set of pictures and things that we use for those displays. At one stage



when I was President, Les Pyke and Adrienne Nicholson and a few other people were involved in setting up a display in some of the libraries to try and get people aware of what we are doing in the environment.

*MATTHEW:- Have you noticed any change in the nature of the membership over the years, not just in your term as President but from when you joined up to the present, the type of people that have been attracted to NPA, has that changed very much?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I think we have always been very fortunate in the sort of people we have had. We could do with a lot younger members, but I don't know whether they are taking people to football more than they used to or their weekends are busy with other things, and perhaps with more women working people have to do more things around the house at the weekends. Also, I think, once the national park was declared in 1984, perhaps we lost a little of the impetus for our existence because the whole purpose of the NPA was to lobby for a national park for the national capital; then once that was achieved we needed to perhaps refocus, or somehow or other, get people involved in something else. That was one of the reasons why Ross Carlton suggested we look at the Orroral Homestead as a project that we could get involved in.

I think, the fact that in the early days there weren't the walking tracks there are now. You can buy the maps of course from the Namadgi Visitors Centre which have twenty walks on them, marked walks that are easy access for people to do, and then there have been many publications. When I first joined the NPA there were two books out, one put out by the Bushwalkers [CBC] and one put out by the NPA with walks in our area and a bit beyond, some in Kosciuszko. So that if you wanted to go on walks within the park you had to go with a leader, so you went with the Bushwalkers [CBC] or the FBI or with us, whereas now there are all these books available; there are ranger guided walks you can go with the rangers, or you can go with 'Walking for Pleasure'. It doesn't appeal to me to walk around the streets with 60 people and I know they do other things than that, but it still doesn't appeal. I'd rather go out in the bush with 10 people than walk around the streets with 60.

*MATTHEW:- You mentioned there the FBI for the sake of people who aren't familiar with Canberra walking groups that is of course the 'Family Bushwalkers Inc' (who all wear dark glasses when they go bushwalking). We talked a little bit about some of the physical works that NPA members have done in Namadgi and elsewhere, Orroral Homestead, track work in the Budawang. Have you had any involvement with Tennent Homestead?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, I went out there with some of the first visits to have a look at the homestead and see the sort of things that had to be done, and of course we were disappointed with Tennent as we had great plans that it should be preserved in some way. Roger ??? was commissioned to do a paper [conservation plan] on Tennent Homestead. One idea was, a great big roof could be put over it, something like Molonglo - Kowen Forest. That house there has got a sort of second roof over the top of the whole thing. Some of us, Babette [Scougall] in particular I think, was one of the movers in that, had an idea that a similar construction could be put over the pisé section of the Tennent Homestead. But the decision was made to let it just fall into ruin and apparently, I haven't been out there for a while, that is happening, walls are falling in.

*MATTHEW:- So, no roof was ever put over, no sheltering roof was ever put over?*

BEVERLEY:- They had some plastic, the Kosciuszko Huts Association put some plastic over the roof but it just blew away, it wasn't substantial enough to do any good.

*MATTHEW:- A temporary measure.*

BEVERLEY:- Yes.

*MATTHEW:- Of course, work at Tennent is still going on, especially with the shearing shed. There has been work done there.*



BEVERLEY:- Has there? I haven't been out there for a couple of years.

MATTHEW:- *Other sorts of projects, for example the tree planting at Glendale back in 1983, were you involved in that at all?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, that was a great project. Once the national park was declared, I suppose, that was when we started on the work parties and some of those projects, to get people involved. One of the big projects was the restoration of the Nursery Swamp trail that was blazed in to put out the bushfires in January 1983. Then Charles Hill suggested that we plant the trees down at Glendale. That was a good project - it got a lot of people involved but unfortunately, there wasn't a very good success rate for those trees.

MATTHEW:- *What sort of work did you do?*

BEVERLEY:- I went out on the main planting days. We had two initial planting days, and then we had lots of maintenance days when we went out to do some weeding.

MATTHEW:- *And watering or was this left up to nature?*

BEVERLEY:- Can't remember. We probably did water in those first few weeks. I think we put tyres or something around some of the trees to try and hold some of the water in, but I can't remember really. It was before the days of those green plastic tree surrounds to keep the rabbits away but, of course, a lot of the trees were lost from insect infestations.

MATTHEW:- *And did you have to dig the holes for the trees, or had they been made by the park staff?*

BEVERLEY:- The park staff had some sort of a rotary hoe that went through and softened the earth. It was very hardened earth because they had been using that area as storage for blue metal and other things when the road was sealed. So that was one of the reasons it was hoed to regenerate it. Seeds were taken from some of the trees in the area as it was hoped that by doing that we might get a better success rate. Some of the members took the little plantings home in their ice cream containers to nurture them at home ready for planting.

MATTHEW:- *The other project you mentioned was the revegetation of the fire trail that had been put in towards Nursery Swamp. What sort of work did you do on that, Beverley?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, we were dragging logs across to try and stop erosion, and we planted rye-grass which wouldn't seed itself, would not regenerate. The plan was that the rye-grass would grow and then would be a holding place for natural seeds that blew around the area and they could establish themselves. That, of course, has happened, and I think it was a fairly successful project.

MATTHEW:- *How many work parties were there?*

BEVERLEY:- I don't remember that, probably only two or three.

MATTHEW:- *Do you remember the size of the parties?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, as usual with those sort of things, you get about twenty for the first day and ten the ones after. We have always had a hard core of people who go along to work parties and enjoy doing that sort of thing.

MATTHEW:- *The route followed now by the walking track to Nursery Swamp from that car park in Orroral Valley, is that basically the route?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, it follows the same path along. The left hand side of that is where they blazed the trail through for fire fighting.

MATTHEW:- *Now, there has been other work on tracks, with the Yerrabi Track for example. Were you involved in that at all?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I wasn't involved. That was mainly some of the retirees at the time who went out



mid-week and did that. I was involved in some of the things before the track was put in properly. We had one of the Heritage Week walks up to the top of the hill there, up to the trig-station, so I was involved in carrying cartons of water and biscuits and whatever it was we served as morning tea or afternoon tea for the people that came up.

*MATTHEW:- That was very sophisticated?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, we decided to have a fire up there, we had billy-tea and damper to give to the visitors.

*MATTHEW:- The fact that it's such an exposed place you would want a reasonably calm day to light a fire without it blowing out or blowing everywhere.*

BEVERLEY:- I don't remember that we had any trouble with it.

*MATTHEW:- Was that a good experience for you personally, things like that, interacting with the public and showing them what Namadgi is.*

BEVERLEY:- Yes, it's always good to take people who aren't familiar with being outside. Since I've retired I've taken a group of my friends walking once a month, some of my ex-colleagues. I'd rather do something with people rather than drink cups of tea, and I've enjoyed taking them down and into some of those places. We have been up the Yerrabi Track and lots of other places. Reasonably easy walks, as I don't want to turn them off altogether.

*MATTHEW:- The pines down at Boboyan, or Gudgenby as it really is. I realise that the clearing of that pine forest and re-vegetation is a more recent activity since you were President, but during your time in the chair was there much clearing of the wildings, was that a big project at that time?*

BEVERLEY:- No. At the time the contribution we made to that was initiated by Syd Comfort really, he suggested that we should perhaps get involved with trees down there. Nicky Taws was our project officer at the time and so we asked her to write a paper for us about the pines. She visited Jounama over at Tumut and saw what had happened there with some of the clearing of some of the pines and the re-vegetation, and so we asked her to write a paper for us about that. Of course, quite a few of those trees had been burnt out in the 1983 fires, so that was a good start. The trees weren't doing very well, it wasn't a good site for trees and the forestry had more or less given up on them. It was just amazing, really, that they didn't just leave them there; that they did agree to remove them.

*MATTHEW:- So there were no 'wilding' work parties during your time as President?*

BEVERLEY:- No, that wasn't really until after my time.

*MATTHEW:- Well, what about 'briar' work parties, getting rid of briars down that way or Orroral?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, I haven't ever been on any of those work parties, but Reg [Alder] and Fiona [Brand] and Len Haskew, of course, are the ones that have always been keen to do that sort of work party. It's a worry because it seems a never-ending job.

*MATTHEW:- It is often the case with community groups, I suppose, that these sort of tasks fall on the same shoulders and hence the need you commented on earlier, for younger members. Now the outings program which is another major aspect of NPA's activities, and you have already made some comments on types of walks and the types of walks you prefer, do you think you had a particular or personal philosophy on bushwalking while you were leading trips, did you go out with a sort of particular idea about what you were trying to achieve?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, I've always sort of prepared things for walks but mostly, I suppose, on the cultural issues. I usually lead walks on very well formed tracks. I'm not one to head off into the bush with a compass. So my walks would have been, say, down to the Rendezvous Creek paintings,



and I've always researched it in the early days and kept it there for whenever I lead those walks, so when we get to the hut I talk about the hut, and when we get to the paintings I tell people about the paintings. I lead walks, say, to Mulligans Flat and I usually give a little historical background at lunch time or morning tea time about the things that are there.

*MATTHEW:- When you were convener of the Outings Sub-Committee, I guess it was called that in the early 1980s, was it a matter of really just trying to get a program of walks together any way you could, or was it a matter of really trying to strategically shape the program in terms of places you were going and the sort of trips that were being done?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I think I said before, no, not the places we were going to; that was just depending on the offers of the people. We used to have a committee and we would have about 15 people come to the committee meetings, and so we would say, we really haven't an educational walk in and let's ask somebody, say, Matt Higgins or somebody like that to lead a walk for us about the geology of the place. Or we did some tree walks and we would ask somebody to lead specific walks for us. John Hook did some tree ones for us. You know, we were trying to cater for an easy walk and a hard walk every weekend. We had a lot more walks than we do now and had more people going to walks.

*MATTHEW:- Does that make you a bit sad that NPA is perhaps not in as good a shape as it was years ago?*

BEVERLEY:- It seems to be the way of a lot of organisations. I don't know what groups people join these days, but they don't seem to be joining groups like ours for some reason. Perhaps they think it's a government responsibility to declare national parks and look after the national parks but it's not for the people to do.

*MATTHEW:- Do you have some places which are personal favourites for you?*

BEVERLEY:- I always like going up to Mt Gingera, I just think it's superb up on the top there. I love those snow gums, the wide views down towards Mt Jagungal. I always get amused by the way we stand up on top of these mountains and name all the mountains we can see and have big discussions about whether it is Mt Boboyon or whether it is some other mountain because obviously from different angles they all look very different. So I always enjoy that area. I'm a bit worried about access now, I haven't heard the latest whether they are going to stop us at Mt Franklin.

*MATTHEW:- I understand that proposal has been dropped, but how did you feel when you first heard about it?*

BEVERLEY:- I was disappointed about that because I could see that I couldn't walk from Mt Franklin all the way up to Mt Gingera. That would be just too far for me to go. So I'm happy with the access. Also I can see the problem somebody mentioned, if people are going to be walking from Mt Franklin they'll be cutting through the areas that we are trying to preserve, cutting through some of those wetlands that are so important up there at Ginini Flats.

*MATTHEW:- Would you like to name people who you think have made a major contribution to the outings programs during your time as a member? The particular people who stand out for their leadership on walks and the sorts of places they opened up for NPA walks?*

BEVERLEY:- There have been so many of them. If you look through the programs you will see the same old names popping up all the time with their favourite walks. No, I don't think I'd like to do that.

*MATTHEW:- Now the Bulletin, I don't think you've been involved in actually editing the Bulletin at any stage or anything like that, although you have contributed articles.*

BEVERLEY:- When I was President I sort of did a little bit, like take things over to Roger. At that time Roger did most of the work really, Roger Green of Green Words who was publishing it and



doing all the rest of it really, he was responsible for most of it.

*MATTHEW:- So there have been some significant changes in the format of the Bulletin during your time as a member, for example that moving of the production of the Bulletin outside of the organisation, and the look of the Bulletin changed at that time too when it went out to Green Words. Have there been other changes to the Bulletin that you think have been significant, either in its content or look?*

BEVERLEY:- I think we have tried to keep up with the times with a modern sort of way what magazines should look like. We have obviously got to produce something that people want to read, so we felt it had to have a slightly more professional look than could be done with amateur people. Unless you have somebody who is a keen word processor or able to do these things then it's probably worth it and we were getting the grants so it was probably worth it to get professionals to do it.

*MATTHEW:- You were just continuing with another point about the outings program?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, through the years I have led many walks. I suppose I've got my set ones because I like to keep on tracks. I haven't led any for a little while now, and part of the reason is that I'm involved in something else on a Tuesday night and committee meetings have been on Tuesday night. I know that Max [Lawrence] always sends me a form to fill in for a walk that I am prepared to lead, but somehow it's different for me. When I went along to the meetings I took along a walk with me that I was prepared to put on. Sometimes it is hard, you have got to offer to lead a walk 6 months or something in advance, and I guess I don't like being tied down too much. So when I do lead a walk I tend to sort of pick the weekend before I'm going away somewhere, so I think surely I'll be at home the weekend before I'm going to Europe or Western Australia or wherever I'm going.

*MATTHEW:- Yes, your comment about there not being many women walks leaders at the moment. I guess you have an interest in women who have played a part in the outdoors in the past. I noticed you wrote a biography of Marie Byles in the Bulletin back in 1983, so is she someone that's sort of captured your imagination a bit?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I was just asked to do that by Reg Alder. He gave me all the materials for it and, I think, he thought it was a good idea for other people to be writing, not for him to be doing them all.

*MATTHEW:- Was there anything further you wanted to say about the Bulletin and sort of keeping it up with the times in terms of its presentation and issues?*

BEVERLEY:- One of the things that I've sort of felt is that at one stage they were thinking of dropping the 'Park Watch' section, and I just felt that that was worth keeping in and I'm pleased that that's still part of the *Bulletin*. I just felt we needed snippets from other issues around Australia, that's our broad part of the *Bulletin*, those snippets from other peoples' magazines. I think it's good that some of the rangers have been asked to contribute articles to the *Bulletin* on issues in Namadgi, and they've been willing to do that for us. We still have things about history or issues and I think it's important to have reports on some of the sub-committees. I used to have to work hard at some of the conveners of sub-committees, because unless people knew what was going on in the sub-committee they weren't going to be interested in joining. So I think it's quite a good *Bulletin* now.

*MATTHEW:- Now NPA has also put out various other publications over the years, starting way back in 1971 with Mountain Slopes and Plains and several titles since then. Of course the one that came out during your term as President was the Field Guide to Birds of the ACT in 1993. Could you tell me a little bit about the process that went on there?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, Les Pyke carried that for the Association, so I was glad he was willing to accept responsibility. He did a lot of negotiating with Alastair [Morrison] but Alastair, of course, was the



one who did the work with McComas [Taylor] and the artist Nicolas Day. So that Les Pyke was our contact person who had dealings over that.

*MATTHEW:- Were you personally pleased with the result?*

BEVERLEY:- I thought it was a wonderful little booklet. I have heard criticisms about it from a member of the Canberra Ornithological Group and some of them are rather critical. It's meant to be a field guide; it's meant to be a book that helps you identify the birds that are here, and it's not meant to give you a lot of detail. Having identified the bird you can go home and look up other books to see any detail you want. So I think it's been very successful.

*MATTHEW:- It's certainly sold well. I remember seeing that it was in Dymock's top ten list during that Christmas?*

BEVERLEY:- That's right, we were lucky we got it out just a few weeks before Christmas. Initially, I think, we published 6000 copies. Alastair gave us fewer than that and we decided it was worth having an extra 2000, I think, and, of course, now it's being reprinted again. So that's very good.

*MATTHEW:- Yes, a very good sales history, and of course the most recent book in 1998 was the Guide to Reptiles and Frogs. Now, did you have any input into that at all?*

BEVERLEY:- No, I didn't. That hasn't had as good a sales record as the bird one. I don't think that appeals to many visitors. We did try with the bird book to put it in tourist sort of venues. It wasn't very expensive so that people just here for a short time might buy it.

*MATTHEW:- I guess there's a lot more birdwatchers than herpetologists. A few comments perhaps about the general meetings of the organisation and how they run and how they have changed over the years: they do have both a business part of the meeting and then the invited speaker? Do you think that is successful and is that how you used to run it too?*

BEVERLEY:- Yes. I don't think we used to do quite as much reporting in the business section as is done now, but probably it is better to report to the members otherwise the members aren't aware of what's going on. That's an opportunity for the representatives of committees to tell us what they are doing, otherwise we wouldn't know. Certainly we don't have as many people coming, I mean, we now have about 30 people whereas we used to have about 50. Now our membership is ageing so some of the regulars, people I know who have been going for the last 20 years, are still going except for the older ones who have dropped out, and we just don't seem to be getting many new ones coming in. So that's a bit sad.

*MATTHEW:- The number of members at meetings today is about 30 or so, what would it have been when you joined?*

BEVERLEY:- It was more like 50 or 60. I think people are looking for soft options these days, they seem to want to be entertained a bit more than they did in those days; they were more ready to listen to much more factual sort of materials than they are now, I think.

*MATTHEW:- Too many competitors with videos, etc. Before you talked about some of the displays and public events that NPA gets involved with, ACT Alive, etc. Just finally, I guess, what do you think the NPA's major achievements have been over the years?*

BEVERLEY:- Well, of course the major one was getting the national park declared, and we were delighted at the size of the national park. Reading through some of the minutes and some *Bulletins* it just went on and on and on, people were so frustrated; people kept saying, "We have got to do more about this"; "How can we liven this up" and there was a lot of heart pulling, what's the word, to try and get people more involved and to go and lobby. But when you read some of the materials and find out just how many parcels of land had to be taken from the landholders down in the valley you realise why some of it did take so long. They obviously weren't wanting to give up properties that had been in their families since the 1860s or something or other. We were



expecting these people to just walk off their properties and so you can see when you read into this material why it did take so long. And of course, once the national park was declared we were delighted with the size of it. The Association had been asking for a small area near Mt Kelly which is now sort of the wilderness area. We were delighted with the size and then, of course, suddenly we get even more extensions with the Tennent area, Blue Gum Creek and so forth; nobody really expected that people would be willing to add parts to the park.

*MATTHEW:- Just perusing that question of resumption of landholdings. How do you personally feel for those landholders who had to go as those resumptions went through in the 1970s?*

BEVERLEY:- I think it was extremely difficult for them. Some of them may have done better out of it because the land isn't very good for grazing, except the Gudgenby property seemed to be pretty successful with the cattle on it. In some ways you can't help thinking that maybe the cattle could be left there; a lot of people think that that could have been left as an excision within the park; national parks in other countries, like in Britain for example, still have the properties all there. I don't know what their criteria is to call an area a national park, but it's certainly not like ours with wilderness areas in them and the exclusion of people and the exclusion of vehicles and horses and all the rest, which is wonderful for the preservation of the park. It doesn't seem to happen to the same extent in other countries.

*MATTHEW:- Do you think that the NPA over its years of existence, nearly 40 years, has achieved a balance between being an advocate for conservation on one hand and being a bushwalking group on the other, or is it really just one of those things and the bushwalking is ancillary?*

BEVERLEY:- Well I guess, it starts with bushwalking, people come along as bushwalkers and then we try and get them involved in some of the conservation issues. Some people think there is too much of the conservation line, they just want bushwalking really but, I think, that is the way we have to go to get them in. We have got to get them to go bushwalking and then talk to them about some of the issues as we walk along or at the places we visit, talk about the needs of those places.

*MATTHEW:- I guess finally a personal question, what has Namadgi given you?*

BEVERLEY:- I just love getting out in the bush. I'm just a very different person when I go bushwalking, and so I enjoy the environment. I love the trees and the rocks and the flowers and things. Just walking along with people of similar interests and backgrounds, I always find the people very stimulating, the things that they talk about and have made some very good friends there.

*MATTHEW:- Alright, well that brings me pretty well to the end of the questions I had in mind, is there anything else you would like to say, Beverley?*

BEVERLEY:- No. I don't know what the future brings for the NPA because as I said with this 40th anniversary booklet we're looking back and trying to do a little bit of a record of some of the issues that we've been involved in, some of the people that have been involved in those issues. I hope that we can maintain the interest in the Association and keep our membership up and keep people working for the environment.

*MATTHEW:- Thanks very much for your time this afternoon.*