TNPA NEWS

TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

Newsletter No 2 Spring 2003

DOHERTY'S HYPOCRISY ATTRACTS NATIONAL ATTENTION!

Chris Bell's decision to decline the invitation to display his work in Doherty's new Wilderness Photography Gallery at Cradle Valley, in protest against tourism development within our national parks, was the subject of national radio coverage over the weekend of 30-31st August.

Chris, one of Tasmania's leading wilderness photographers, drew attention to the hypocrisy of Michael Doherty opening a wilderness photography gallery (outside the park) at one end of the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park and his intention to develop a luxury resort (inside the park) at the other.

The Tasmanian National Parks Association Inc (TNPA) has been campaigning for Doherty to build his luxury development outside the national park at the southern end of the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park just exactly as he has been happy to do at the northern end of the national park.

If wilderness can't be found in national parks – areas specifically set aside to preserve exactly that – where will photographers find and photograph wilderness?

The TNPA wonders how many of the wilderness photos displayed in Doherty's Wilderness Gallery contain images of luxury accommodation developments and the necessary associated infrastructure, roads, modern cars and delivery trucks that are essential for their existence?

Does it have photos of the increasing road-kill and other drastic disturbances to our endangered native wildlife inherent in this type of development?

The modern world encroaches on the homes of Tasmania's native wildlife – and on the sanctuaries of our sanity. It is vital that would-be tourism developers acquaint themselves with the history of our national parks, the ideals that were inherent in the concept and which were hard won. The TNPA fosters these ideals determined that our national parks will not suffer the incremental erosion of natural values that we see occurring elsewhere. In particular, TNPA reminds Tasmanians of the egalitarian nature of our parks where the haves and have nots are on the same level. It is absolutely essential that all are equal within the boundaries of our parks.

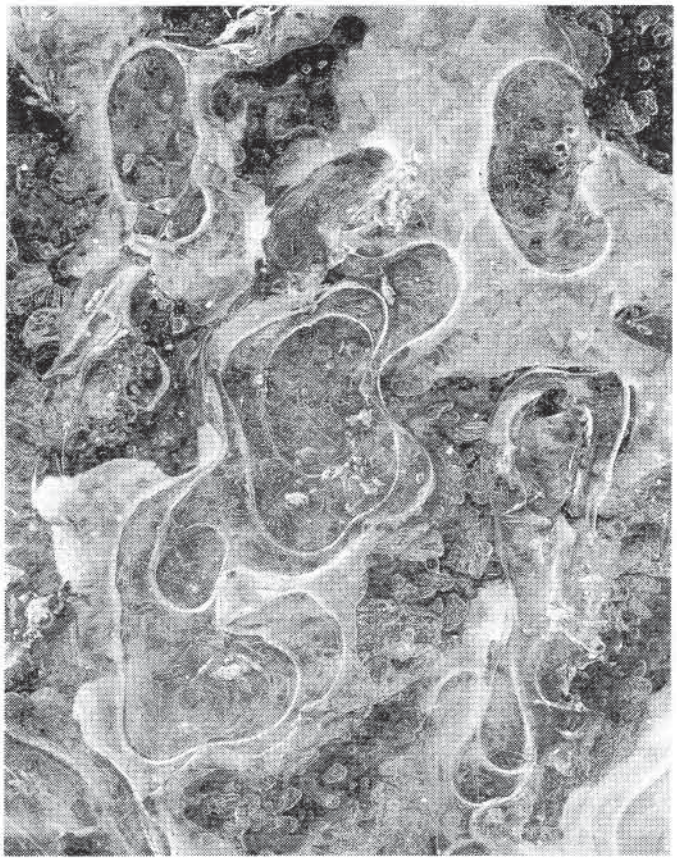
Michael Doherty the TNPA, people of Tasmania, Australia and the World can guarantee you this, when this last, outdated, contradiction of a proposal for luxury in the 'wilderness' is finally put to rest, no development you build outside the Park will ever face competition from a development at Pumphouse Point.

We call on you Michael Doherty to prove you have the sincerity, integrity foresight and leadership to match the responsibility and moment in history that is now yours.

No longer, Michael, can there be justification for your astounding hypocrisy.

Chris Bell we applaud your integrity.

Greg Wood



Bubbled Ice, Chris Bell

To identify, protect, conserve, present, and where appropriate, rehabilitate the area and to transmit that heritage to future generations in as good or better condition than at present.

Overall objectives of the World Heritage Area management plan 1999

NEWS UPDATE

Well it's been very exciting to see how much the Tasmanian National Parks Association has grown this year. Yes since our Summer Newsletter our membership has more than doubled. Every week we receive new memberships. Thank you all!

We also have the media ringing us and chasing up our opinion on national park matters. They know we are out there and want to include our viewpoint. As well as that we are getting more and more folk involved in the organization in many different ways.

Hobart Town Hall Public meeting stating opposition to developments in National Parks.

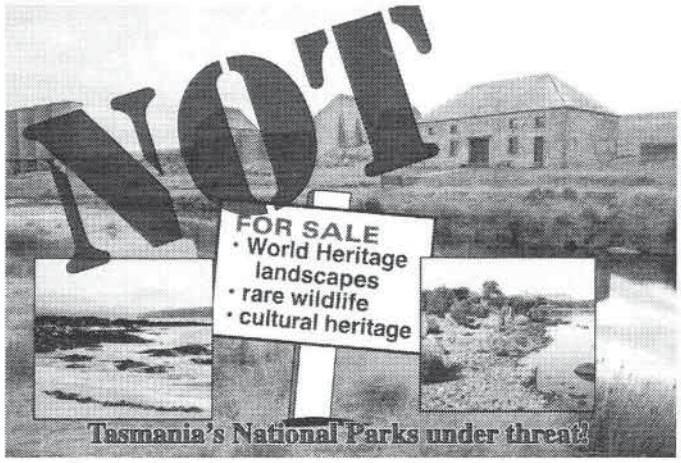
The Public Town Hall Meeting on Friday 24th January saw over 200 people attend the lunchtime meeting. We heard the opening speech from Dianne Coon, an ecotourism guide, operator and manager at Strahan. Dianne stressed the importance of the visitor experience received through high quality interpretation being a powerful educational experience, and one that will affect conservation outcomes. Dianne also reiterated the message of the value of towns such as Strahan being situated outside the National Park. This allows the values of Parks to be retained.

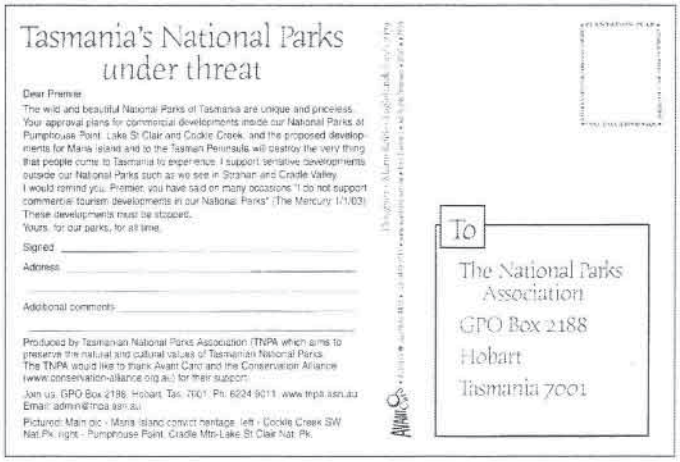
We then heard from Greg Buckman (author of *A Visitors Guide to Tasmania's National Parks*) who gave us a very graphic and hard-hitting history of the progressive watering down of our Parks and Wildlife department over the years, Parks revocations that have occurred, and the threats that we face now.

Our very own spokesperson Greg Wood wrapped up with an update of the campaigns the TNPA has taken on. Greg specifically mentioned the threats that we have to commercial accommodation developments at Planters Beach (Cockle Creek East), Pumphouse Point (Lake St Clair), Maria Island, and Fortescue Bay and Canoe Bay in the Tasman National Park. We gathered vital momentum as a result of the Public Meeting.

AIMS OF THE TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

- To preserve the natural and cultural values of National Parks.
- To maintain conservation as a primary role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- To secure the reservation of suitable areas as National Parks.
- To encourage community involvement in National Park Management.
- To promote effective legislation for our National Parks.
- To increase community awareness of the value and importance of National Parks. ('National Park' means any National Park, State Reserve, Nature Reserve, Game Reserve, Conservation Area, Nature Recreation Area, Regional Reserve, Historic Site, Sanctuary or any public lands or marine areas reserved for conservation.)




Tasmania's National Parks under threat

Dear Premier,
The wild and beautiful National Parks of Tasmania are unique and priceless. Your approval plans for commercial developments inside our National Parks at Pumphouse Point, Lake St Clair and Cockle Creek, and the proposed developments for Maria Island and to the Tasman Peninsula will destroy the very thing that people come to Tasmania to experience. I support sensitive developments outside our National Parks such as we see in Strahan and Cradle Valley.
I would remind you, Premier, you have said on many occasions "I do not support commercial tourism developments in our National Parks" (The Mercury 1/1/03)
These developments must be stopped.
Yours, for our parks, for all time.

Signed _____

Address _____

Additional comments _____

Produced by Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA which aims to preserve the natural and cultural values of Tasmanian National Parks. The TNPA would like to thank Avant Card and the Conservation Alliance (www.conservation-alliance.org.au) for their support.

Join us. GPO Box 2188, Hobart, Tas. 7001. Ph. 6224 9011. www.tnpa.asn.au
Email: admin@tnpa.asn.au

Pictured: Main pic - Maria Island convict heritage. left - Cockle Creek SW Nat.Pk. right - Pumphouse Point, Cradle Mtn-Lake St Clair Nat. Pk.

To
The National Parks Association
GPO Box 2188
Hobart
Tasmania 7001

National attention – The TNPA has begun getting national attention on the issue of the developments planned for inside our national parks. Wild magazine has run articles in both their Autumn and recent Winter issues on the matter, and have a readership of around 50,000.

We also had amazing support from Avant cards in Sydney who have virtually fully sponsored the entire production of 10,000 postcards protesting Developments in Tasmania's National Parks. These have been circulated through the Avant card networks across the country. Postcards are available from the Environment Centre, Bathurst Street.

Maria Island weekend of Celebration and Protest – A stunning event that attracted capacity crowds and showed the support that we have out there in the community (see Margie Jenkin's Article, opposite page).

I was thrilled to hand the position of Campaign Officer over to Helen Gee, one of our nation's most experienced and effective campaigners. I've had a wonderful six months as the Campaign Officer (October to March). Thank you to all those amazing people I've worked with. I will be back in September. Meanwhile, I'm off leading a 35-day outdoor education backpacking program in the Kimberley ...goodbye to the thermals for a while!

Heather Kirkpatrick

THE TNPA DESPERATELY NEEDS A COMPUTER!

We now have an office in the Environment Centre and require a portable computer for use by our members.
Can anyone help? Please call 6224 9011.

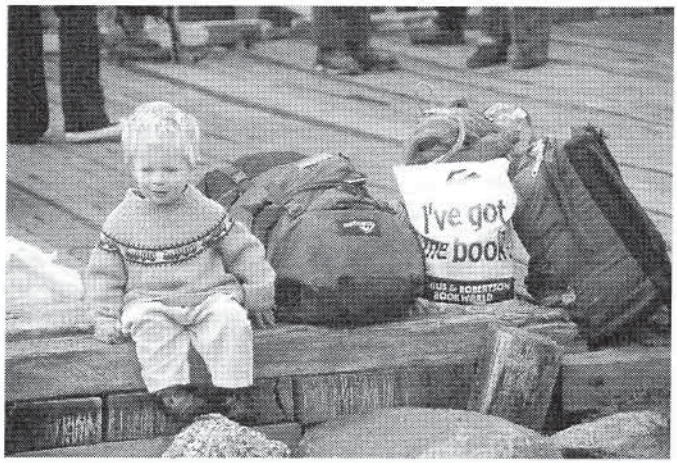
MARIA ISLAND – WEEKEND OF CELEBRATION AND PROTEST

During May the TNPA held a weekend of protest and celebration on Maria Island to demonstrate against the 200 bed conference facility proposed by Dennis Bignold.

The TNPA's opposition to the development was widely supported. Over 180 visitors travelled from around the State to fill the Maria Island ferry, while a dozen people sea kayaked from Orford in ideal conditions. Hundreds of other impassioned visitors sent well wishes.

Guest speaks during the weekend included Richard Davies, Emeritus Professor in History and avid Irish Historian, John Todd, Environmental Technologist, and Denis Walter, school-teacher and visitor to the island for nearly four decades. Guided walks and bike rides, spot lighting tours and live music were widely enjoyed. The studio of the current artist in residence was also open during the weekend.

The gathering highlighted what Maria Island means to



Tasmanians. It is a place of immense natural and cultural value. A place of profound meaning in understanding our Aboriginal and European heritage. A place in our childhood memories that we fondly revisit as adults. A place that deserves our care.

While the maintenance of Maria's heritage buildings remains an issue for the Parks and Wildlife Service, the TNPA vehemently disagrees with the privatisation approach. The solution is not in commercial development that butchers the specialness of these places, promoting luxury and exclusivity. The solution is in innovative, authentic, inclusive and community-supported alternatives.

Bignold's deadline lapsed on the 30th of June without delivery of his proposal. The TNPA look forward to contributing to the review and revision of the Maria Island Management Plan to ensure such inappropriate development remains outside our national parks.

We extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped organising, promoting and running the weekend. We thank National Park staff for their assistance and to everyone who attended or sent their support.

Postcards are still available to sign that testify your opposition to development within our national parks, including proposals for Maria Island, Cockle Creek and Pumphouse Point. These are being returned to the TNPA for a timely delivery to Jim Bacon. Contact the TNPA today for more information. Please help us keep developments outside our National Parks.

Margie Jenkin

THANK YOU

The TNPA gratefully acknowledges the support of The Mullum Trust.

MULLUM TRUST
environmental conservation

Thank you also to Conservation Volunteers Australia for their kind support in making their offices available for monthly meetings.

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, THE PRESERVATION OF WILDERNESS WILL BE ONE OF HUMANITY'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS.

In its editorial of 7 March, The Mercury tells its readers that Maria Island "is no wilderness". It has been occupied by "Aborigines, soldiers and convicts, graziers and industrialists" and all have left their mark, it says.

The paper continues that any serious proposals to develop the island's tourism potential, in keeping with its enormous historical and environmental importance and its status as a national park, should not be ruled out.

But later, the same editorial – while supporting more development – acknowledges: "Maria Island's largely undeveloped nature remains the main attraction for many visitors who return regularly for holidays."

Yet again, Tasmania is facing a divisive argument over the use of its national parks – an argument made no easier by the failure of its capital city paper to avoid contradiction even in the one editorial.

It is an argument that we will have over and over again while our public officials see our parks as either favours to bestow on a chosen few or as a means of separating tourists from their dollars, or – most commonly - both.

The lack of an open process needs investigation, but I mention it here because of the resonance it offers to the Bacon Government's attempt three years ago to give helicopters access to several sites in the World Heritage Area. It was a badly thought-out and poorly executed attempt to appeal to some operators who thought that Port Davey, the Franklin River and several remote central lakes should be accessible to people who only had time to lunch.

But as well as the lack of bureaucratic process, two points raised then apply now.

First, we heard the cry – as always – of "accessibility". We heard it over Pedder. We heard it over the Gordon-below-Franklin. In April 2000, we heard the Tourism Council of Australia's Michael Roberts defend the council's initial support for chopper access to the WHA by saying: "A key trigger for most tourists visiting Tasmania is the wilderness experience. Air access to the WHA is a way for the disabled and elderly to experience Tasmania's stunning wilderness and it would provide those visitors with limited time an opportunity to view the area without physical environmental impact."

Now, we're hearing it again. "At the moment there is backpacker accommodation, no cooking facilities or power," Maria Island development proponent, Dennis Bignold, said early in March. "That is fine for some but the proposal I am working on would involve offering all categories of accommodation."

Or in *The Mercury* editorial: "But camping among the wallabies and geese or sleeping in a dark convict cell doesn't suit everyone."

The question we need to ask – again – is why should it? Why do we expect national parks to provide all things for all people when we do not impose this expectation on much else.

(Personally, I find Maria Island one of the few still accessible parks in Tasmania, particularly in terms of finances. A family of five or six – including at various times babies and elderly grandparents – can stay in the comfortable if basic accommodation there for less than $30 a night. Huts at Cradle Mountain now come at about $150 a night if you are lucky enough to get one.)

Why even have bike hire facilities or a coffee shop in the Coffee Palace, as the Greens have suggested? Does it hurt to have to think ahead or to go without for a day or two?

The "precedent" argument is also strong – one that Victorians acknowledged when they objected in the late 1990s to Ken Latona's proposal for a development in their most cherished national park, Wilson's Promontory. Tasmanians, on the other hand, ignored the thin-edge-of-the-wedge argument in favour of Latona's Cradle Huts development and has had to deal with a string of proposals for other developments inside national parks since.

The expectation that national parks should be all things to all people – even to provide a "wilderness experience" while heavily visited – should be put to rest.

As the American nature photographer, Ansel Adams, said: "Is it a matter of snobbery that the priest does not permit the sale of peanuts in the aisles of the church? Is it snobbery that the Metropolitan Museum of Art objects to my playing my portable radio in the Egyptian Room?"

Second, the helicopter debate called on us to consider the value of wilderness. It prompted author Richard Flanagan to write:

"What has happened to us? Have we become so numb to the wonder of our world that we would allow the proposal for helicopters to regularly land in areas that acquire their value to us because of the absence of modern technology, their distance from the noise, the horror of modern urban life?"

And also:

"It is about whether we revert to our old folly of seeing this land only as a quarry, as an economic resource, and not as about having any other values of meaning to us.

"It is about whether Parks and Wildlife has become the new HEC, a bureaucracy that increasingly identifies its interests with the big end of town, rather than being as it once was, guardian of our island's soul..."

And:

"It is about whether Tasmanians care enough about our future to call for some sensible management of our wild lands that does not allow them to be entirely debased in the interest of short-term gain by a handful of entrepreneurs."

But, one can hear proponents of the development claim – as did *The Mercury's* editorial – this debate is not about wild lands because Maria Island "is no wilderness".

Wilderness is a notoriously difficult thing to define. American historian Roderick Frazier Nash writes that "one man's wilderness may be another's roadside picnic".

He continues: "Wilderness, in short, is so heavily freighted with meaning of a personal, symbolic, and changing kind as to resist easy definition."

Flanagan, perhaps, brings us close when he talks of the "island's soul".

And there are other assumptions about wilderness that we can make: wilderness as uncultivated, wilderness as uninhabited by people, wilderness as a place of wild animals, or – as Nash writes – wilderness as a place where a person can feel both stripped of guidance, lost and perplexed, or a sanctuary in which those in need of consolation can find respite from the pressures of civilisation.

Using these criteria, Maria Island is wilderness.

In the 21st Century, the preservation of wilderness will be one of humanity's greatest achievements.

But an even greater one may be what we can glimpse in Maria Island – a place that was marked by "Aborigines, soldiers and convicts, graziers and industrialists", yet was left to regroup, to quietly incorporate what had happened in its very recent past, and to start the slow journey to being wild again.

By Libby Lester

The original version of this was posted on tasmaniantimes.com on Wednesday, March 19, 2003.

***Libby Lester** is a senior journalist and writer who has worked for* The Examiner, The Age, *and* The Sunday Tasmanian *and currently lectures in Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Tasmania*

POSTCARD COMMENTS

- *Development – yes. Sensitive and outside national parks*
- *Not smart long-term policy*
- *Leave Maria Island as is for everyone to go and see*
- *Clean up your act 'Premier'!*
- *National parks are for the people, not the wealthy*
- *Keep national parks for the next generation*
- *Heritage before profits*
- *Leave this place alone*
- *Absolutely despicable idea. I'm shocked that you would even entertain such an idea.*
- *National parks are a tourist drawcard because they're unspoilt!*
- *I want access whenever I want it, these parks belong to the people.*
- *Visited Tassie last Summer and the most desireable places were its National parks to us (family) as tourists.*
- *Parks are for the preservation of ecosystems, not commercial profiteering.*
- *The beauty of Tasmania is in its raw state. Don't commercialise*
- *What's the difference between Labor and Liberal? Nothing. Bacon – listen to the people! Once it's gone, it's gone!*
- *Enough pencil planning, secret deals and window dressing with empty rhetoric*
- *The current infrastructure would not support a major development. Who is going to pay for the development of water, electricity and sewage systems?*
- *Do not destroy the goose that lays the golden egg*

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT IN NATIONAL PARKS TAKES PUBLIC LAND FROM ORDINARY PEOPLE AND NATURE.

National parks, and other reserves, have been established under law as places in which beauty, nature, historical artefacts and opportunities for ordinary people to recreate could be available for the enjoyment of future generations. The present incremental development of our national parks is justified in the minds of our politicians by the potential of ecotourism to fuel economic growth. Ecotourists want the very experiences that national parks provide. It is hard not to spend money if fleeing Melbourne, Sydney, London or New York to gain these experiences in Tasmania. Private developments in national parks are an attractive option. The government gains the political benefit of a development. The developer obtains a priceless position. Only the public who use the place, and the plants and animals who live in it, lose.

It is the rich that mostly gain from such developments, through profit in their establishment and running, and through being the only people who can afford to enjoy the experience they offer. This is usually an excellent experience if one can numb one's moral sense or persist in ignorance. Our past and present governments have given away much of our common heritage to the rich – Overland Track private huts, Freycinet Lodge, Pumphouse Point, Cockle Creek East, the Lake St Clair holiday conurbation, now Maria Island?

It is hard to see why the ecotourism experience could not be provided without using public reserves or inducing guilt in the ecorecreator. It is not as if there are not large areas of private land with the very same or better qualities for ecotourism as the sites our government offers. For example, some of the most spectacular coast in Tasmania lies privately owned opposite Maria Island. The ecotourism development outside the World Heritage Area at Cradle Mountain has been highly successful. If developers believe that it is important to be in a national park, they have always got the opportunity to buy private land, develop part of it, then donate the rest to the public estate. If the government believes that ecotourism development needs government subsidy, it should look after the parks people come to experience and do its subsidisation outside the parks.

Private development in national parks takes public land from ordinary people and nature. It is neither necessary nor desirable for economic growth. It should cease.

Jamie Kirkpatrick

Mission Statement of the Tasmanian National Park Association:
To preserve and expand Tasmanian National Parks, and to ensure appropriate management of their natural and cultural values.

CONTINUED VIGILANCE NEEDED TO COMBAT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN NATIONAL PARKS

Members and supporters of the TNPA can feel proud of the efforts made by the Association to highlight the threats to the Maria Island National Park. The weekend of action organised by the TNPA on Maria Island at the end of May, the ensuing media coverage of the event and the media's exposure of the shoddy and secret manner in which the Tasmanian Government had dealt with this issue, and the ultimate lack of support for the proposed development was a wonderful outcome. To top off a great effort, the Examiner newspaper reported the results of poll they had run which indicated that 73% of respondents did not support developments in National Parks. However, the fight to ensure that Tasmania's National Parks remain havens for nature and not resort developments continues.

A dam in Freycinet National Park

Federal Hotels are currently building a large luxury lodge at Coles Bay. Lodges consume a lot of water and Coles Bay has a chronic water supply problem that the local council is reluctant to buy into. Federal Hotels are proposing to source the water needed for their new lodge from three dams, one of which would be located within Freycinet National Park. The national park dam would be located on the site of an old tin mine (which finished operating in the 1960s or 1970s) about 3km north-west of Whitewater Wall. The construction of the dam will require a change to the Freycinet National Park Management Plan as well as approval under dedicated state water resources legislation. Public input into both of these will be sought soon.

The latest on the proposed lodge at Planters Beach (near Cockle Creek)

Approval was given some time ago, and the management plan was subsequently changed to allow it, for a developer to build a lodge within the South-West National Park at Planters Beach near Cockle Creek. The TNPA have learned that the developer was only ever interested in on-selling the rights to the proposed luxury tourist accommodation to another developer but the approval he had for the site does not allow this. In June the developer asked the Huon Valley Council for an extension to his development approval. It was recommended to the council that the developer get the standard two-year extension but the council only gave him a one-year extension which expires on 4 July 2004. Hopefully, this entrepreneur, whose desire seems only to make a quick buck out of the government's willingness to sell off our national parks, will have no more luck than he has had to date.

Pumphouse Point Proposed Develpment

Doherty Hotels continues to work on plans to construct a luxury tourist accommodation facility at Pump House Point on the shores of Lake St Clair. This is despite the fact that the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (WHA) Management Plan (1999) argues that in order to ensure that the types and levels of development do not compromise the WHA values, accommodation should be provided in nearby townships and areas adjacent to the WHA. Indeed, it specifically states that 'if adequate facilities or services exist or can be developed outside the WHA that meet visitor needs, such facilities and services will not be provided as concessions within the WHA.' A site within Derwent Bridge, or a nearby locality outside the National Park and WHA, should be chosen.

Lake St Clair

TNPA found this interesting piece about Garry Yost under the list of directors of ESLink the concessionaire who has taken over Lakeside St Clair Wilderness Holidays from Richard Dax (note the mention of ecotourism projects including the Lost City in Southern Africa). Please see picture below!

'Garry Yost – Garry is manager of Lake St.Clair Wilderness Park and Power Plus. He has extensive experience in electrical engineering, fibre optic network infrastructure and international ***ecotourism*** *projects including the Lost City in Southern Africa. Garry is a member of Rotary and has undertaken numerous welfare and community projects in Tasmania'.*

Wouldn't this 'ecotourism' development look nice at Cynthia Bay?

Private lodges at Fortescue Bay?

A site plan will shortly be released by the Parks and Wildlife Service for Fortescue Bay in Tasman National Park. Amongst other things, the site plan identifies two visitor service zones where private lodge development could take place within the national park. The two zones are behind Fortescue Bay but are within the national park. Some potential developers have already been investigating the potential of the area. Unfortunately, like Planters Beach, Pumphouse Point and the once-proposed private development at Maria Island, the idea of locating potential development outside the national park boundaries does not get a look-in and the public are being asked to accept more encroachment into a national park. There is good news in Tasman National Park though. A private developer had been showing some interest in developing an operation based on some of the walking tracks in the park. After discussions with the Parks and Wildlife Service they have decided that the conditions they would probably have to comply with would be too stringent for them and they have dropped the idea.

Ships in Bathurst Harbour?

In recent years, Port Davey/Bathurst Harbour, in the far south-west of the state near Melaleuca, has become an increasingly popular destination for visits by cruise ships. These shipping interests have recently asked for permission to send passengers further into Bathurst Harbour (in smaller vessels). The National Parks and Wildlife Service are just about to release new draft guidelines on passenger vessels going into the area. The new guidelines are subject to further testing and monitoring but will recommend that only vessels no longer than 120m and with a draught no more than 3.5m be allowed into the western part of Bathurst Harbour. The boat length is longer than the 75m which had been allowed under the previous guidelines but is the same as the length allowed in the original set of guidelines for the area. The longer length was returned to after testing of a boat of that size that did not appear to have any impact on the fragile harbour floor environment of the area. On the face of it, the new guidelines probably aren't something to be too worried about as long as there isn't yet more pressure to further relax the guidelines.

The Park Watch Crew

OBITUARY
IDA WEST 1919 – 2003

The matriarch of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community passed away on September 8 after a long battle with cancer. Her death came on the eve of the bicentenary of European settlement on this island. As a much revered Patron of Pedder 2000, the campaign to restore Lake Pedder, Ida dreamed of the healing that could take place with the restoration of the lake. She was not alone: the campaign to restore the lake fired the imagination of such figures as the Aga Khan, Prince Philip, John Farnham, Allan Ginsberg, Arne Naess and Bryce Courtenay. After visiting the Huon-Serpentine Impoundment, Ida West met David Bellamy at the launch of Pedder 2000 in 1994 and together they endorsed the visionary and inspiring project that even now continues to gather momentum slowly but surely.

Ida came from a background of material poverty, but she enjoyed cultural richness. She had a passion that all people be proud of who they are, but show respect for everyone regardless of creed or colour. As evidenced at her funeral in an overflowing St Davids Cathedral, she has inspired the bridge building that so many of us want desperately to undertake as modern warriors for peace. Her dream of a peace garden at Wybalenna would be a most fitting symbol of the future that challenges us all. Thank you Auntie Ida.

Helen Gee

Lake Pedder restoration website is www.lakepedder.org

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH RECHERCHE?

Following the rediscovery of the French garden in February, the Tasmanian Heritage Council has convened a series of meetings to consider the protection of the immediate sites and nominations for larger listings. A 30-metre radius of La Haie's Botanic Garden has been deemed sufficient protection of the site. The Observatory at Bennetts Point has an 8090m² reservation. These tiny provisional listings on the Tasmanian Heritage Register are totally inadequate in view of the significance of the entire peninsula, crisscrossed by members of the D'Entrecasteaux Expedition with several more sites insufficiently studied to date. The owners of the peninsula are still intending to log the area and are trying to establish legal right of access through the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area, where the road was illegally pushed last year. The Tasmanian Government has a perfect right, if not a responsibility, to uphold the National Estate listing of the Conservation Area – the collection site for the 1792 expedition with biogeographical significance for floral endemism and refugia. Please write to the Premier demanding a more responsible approach than his current stance of waiting to see if the French or Australian Governments will come to the party financially. See www.RechercheBay.org

Helen Gee

TNPA MEMBERSHIP – BECOME A MEMBER OF THE TNPA

Have your say... join up with the TNPA!

☐ New membership

☐ Renewal

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Telephone:

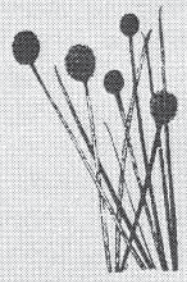
Membership Fees

☐ Unwaged $20

☐ Waged $40

☐ Family $60

All donations gratefully accepted



TASMANIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION INC

BUSHWALKING AND TRACK REVIEW – STAGE 2

Having completed the first stage of the track review process last year (Overnight Bushwalking Opportunities in the Tasmanian Wilderness), over the last six months the BATR panel has undertaken a review of bushwalking tracks and their management within the Western Arthur Range. The approach adopted for this review is based on the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), the premise of which is to develop a plan that allows mangers to determine how much recreational impact a particular area can tolerate; then adjusting management actions once impacts reach predetermined levels of acceptable change. The core issues which have been considered by the panel are:

1. to determine at what point deterioration of environmental and social conditions become unacceptable (ie. defining the LAC standards), and:
2. to identify what management actions are required to maintain conditions within acceptable limits, or to halt further deterioration.

These actions will include the options of reducing walker impact via track maintenance and hardening through to possible restrictions on access and usage. A review of standards and management actions for campsites has also been undertaken.

A document detailing what has been agreed by the panel, and detailing a number of track and management options for the Western Arthurs, will be released for public comment at the end of August (and will be available for the BATR website, see below). One of the options on which public opinion is being sought is the standard at which the track will be maintained along each of the three main sections of the Arthur Range. The central part is recommended to be kept as a distinct track with modifications primarily for environmental purposes (T3). However, for the western end there is an option of maintaining the track as a T3 or of upgrading to a generally modified track surface that includes hardening to make walking more comfortable (T2). For the better preserved eastern section there is the option of maintaining a generally obvious and natural track that may be indistinct in places with minimal modifications and only where unavoidable due to environmental considerations (T4) or to upgrade to T3. While acknowledging existing track work and the need to further track repairs, the TNPA has supported the option that the track should be maintained in as near a natural condition as possible (ie. T3 at the western end and T4 at the eastern end).

At present, funding levels are insufficient to repair existing damage to tracks within Western Arthur Range and for other areas that need work. Public comment is therefore also being sought on a number of options to increase funding levels, though the BATR panel is recommending that an overnight walking fee, probably in the order of $50 per year, be introduced. This suggestion is conditional on government continuing to preserve existing levels of funding.

The situation in the Western Arthurs is complex, and a range of factors will need to be taken into account in order to find a balanced solution that is acceptable to most stakeholders. Track monitoring indicates that the number of walkers visiting the area has remained relatively constant over the past decade at around 6000-7000 per annum. However, given the fragility of the vegetative communities in the Western Arthurs, research indicates that significant periods of time (likely to be in excess of 10 years) will be required to allow impacted alpine areas to recover. Nevertheless, track work undertaken in recent years in the western section of the range has gone some way to ameliorating past damage.

Those wishing to know more about the BATR process, and who would like to provide input into the process, are encouraged to contact Robert Campbell (ph 6229 1839) or visit the BATR website via logging onto the PWS website at www.parks.tas.gov.au and following the links to 'Services and Management' / 'Bushwalking and Track Review (BATR)'

Robert Campbell

SUCCESS IN OBTAINING GRANT FROM MULLUM TRUST

In August this year the TNPA was successful in obtaining a grant of $7500 from the Mullum Trust. These funds will be used to establish a Parks Guardian and Monitoring Program over the next year. Based on the Neighbourhood Watch concept, the objective of this project is to develop a network of partnerships with user groups, government and other community organizations to ensure the continued environmental protection and promotion of the conservation and heritage values within Tasmania's reserve system. This will be achieved by monitoring ongoing and proposed activities within Tasmania's parks and reserves and via the collection and dissemination of information through associated public educational and awareness campaigns. Those interested in finding out more about this project are encouraged to contact the TNPA.

The Mullum Trust is a private charitable trust whose main objective is to support and engender projects which have significant ongoing, or catalytic, environmental outcomes. The TNPA extends its thanks to the Mullum Trust for its generous support of the above project.

Robert Campbell

KENT GROUP NATIONAL PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Copies of the draft Plan are available from Service Tasmania outlets. Released for public comment on 16 August, representations should be with the Director, National Parks & Wildlife, by 30 September 2003.

The Kent Group (2.374 ha) is Tasmania's newest national park. Its isolation creates unique and critical management issues and cost is uppermost in the Government's tourism deliberations. To date, a volunteer caretaker program has been producing on-ground results and generating enthusiasm and commitment from a steadily growing number of 'Deal Islanders' and Wildcare volunteers. The Government would like to co-manage the island with a volunteer system or an ecotourism operator (see the *Plan* pps 51-53). There is acknowledgement of the damage to natural and cultural values that can result from ecotourism. Operational constraints and prescriptions are outlined, but in reality an operator, once ensconced, would be pretty much a law unto him/herself in the Kent Group.

While Ken Latona has expressed some interest there is no indication at this stage that any serious contender is on the horizon. There is certainly no guarantee that an ecotourism venture would provide real management outcomes, including the upkeep of the infrastructure and weed surveillance. A tourism operator, most likely intermittent – in this remote and often inhospitable region – is not the solution to the cost issue. It is best dealt with by increasing the ranger resourcing levels for the Furneaux and Kent Group, in line with the increased interest in these areas and working on positive solutions to the volunteer liability issue. To date, volunteers have provided considerable visitor services and routine maintenance in addition to their full-time presence. The cost of providing access, fuel and materials has been offset by this huge voluntary contribution. TNPA will be scrutinizing any ecotourism proposal very closely indeed and recommends a continuation of the current system, with an increased level of ranger funding for fuel reduction burning, horehound and ragwort control.

In March the RPDC released draft recommendations for the establishment of a Marine Protected Area in the Kent Group. Obtain a copy of the Report and please write to Minister Bryan Green indicating your views. You may wish to propose joint patrolling of the Kent Group MPA and the existing Wilsons Prom Marine National Park. The indigenous community support 'no-take' MPA's at both Port Davey and the Kent Group and TNPA supports their stand (Option 1) in favour of the multi-zoned MPA (Option 2) surrounding the Kent Group of islands.

Helen Gee

MARIA, MORE MOVES AFOOT: SEPTEMBER 2003

Having created waves with our successful Maria weekend in May, after which the Bignold secret deals were exposed for what they were, TNPA is cautiously and closely watching the new process as Parks & Wildlife call once again for expressions of interest in development for the island (advert placed in Tasmanian papers, 30 August 2003).

The TNPA has had an initial meeting with Parks Planning Officer Peter Mooney to establish a very good working relationship from the outset. TNPA's vision for the island is most exciting as we look to world's best practice ecotourism ventures and prepare a wish-list for the island. This is TNPA's position:

1 Any development or increased footprint on the island should be very, very carefully thought through. We don't have to 'do up the island' to increase numbers. Its isolation and its unadulterated old-world historical ambience and simplicity of lifestyle are potential marketing advantages not yet understood at the political level.

2 The Government cannot just walk away from its management responsibilities for the island. While it is acknowledged that Parks staff ought to be freed up a little to get on with conservation management, it is simplistic to do a Dax-style concessionaire hand-over and expect no problems.

3 The island has limited infrastructure and its carrying capacity has not been researched adequately. The water supply is one extremely limiting factor. Current basic accommodation is popular with a wide range of people, it has a levelling effect in harmony with the National Park ideal. There is no shop and no TV, no upmarket plethora of activities cut and pasted from the city. One commercial operator already provides opportunities on the island for those who require personal guiding for recreation, or natural and historical interpretation beyond the level provided already by the Ranger staff on the island.

Anyone with interest in joining a discussion group to advance our vision of appropriate development for Maria should contact the TNPA on 6224 9011.

Helen Gee

The film we've all been waiting for...

***Wildness*, the Story of Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis**

also Film Australia's *Lake Pedder*

Available now at The Wilderness Society Shop, Salamanca

DEVELOPMENTS IN TASMANIA'S RESERVES

Reproduced from *nirmena manena* (Mother Earth) with kind premission from **Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council**

It appears that Tasmania is on the eve of allowing ongoing developments within Tasmania's National Parks. Even the World Heritage Management Plan had to be altered to allow for a major resort development at Cockle Creek. There has also been approval given for accommodation facilities at Pumphouse Point in the Lake St Clair National Park and proposals for developments on Maria Island and on the Tasman Peninsula.

The recent controversy concerning the State Government's secret deals to develop Maria Island National Park bought matters to head with opposing parties.

Tourism Tasmania defines National Parks as "areas set aside to preserve outstanding natural and cultural features"; thousands of taxpayer dollars are expended annually to police users in doing so, yet the Government is going to allow the economically privileged to erect resorts in these places.

However, it is an interesting fact that Premier Jim Bacon, Minister for Tourism, Parks, Heritage and Arts, in January 2003, wrote to *The Mercury* saying: "I have said unequivocally and on many occasions said that I do not support commercial tourism developments in our National Parks."

At a time when the outskirts of cities are forever expanding and buildings are reaching further towards the sky, one can visit Tasmania's National Parks or World Heritage Areas to escape from this. In recent years Tasmanian motorists have witnessed the state change from the apple isle to the holiday isle and now the State Government is marketing us as the Wilderness State; and very successful we, as a state, have been in attracting tourists; even last year with a global downturn in travel, the number of visitors to Tasmania increased by 9.1% on the year before.

The state is in danger of cutting off its nose to spite its face; of destroying the very thing that people come to Tasmania to experience.

If you ask me, I think these areas are of five star quality without the addition of resorts for the privileged few. I say nip it in the bud – kick up a stink – make a noise!!!!

Jillian Mundy
Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council

THE QUESTION

How do you feel about exclusive resorts being built in Tasmania's National Parks and World Heritage Areas?

OPINIONS

I think there are too many of them and I think the place is being exploited too much by everyone.
Peter Scotney

Exclusive resorts in the WHA rely on the beauty of its natural surroundings. Aboriginal history is merely an added attraction. It appears money conquers all.
Graeme Gardner

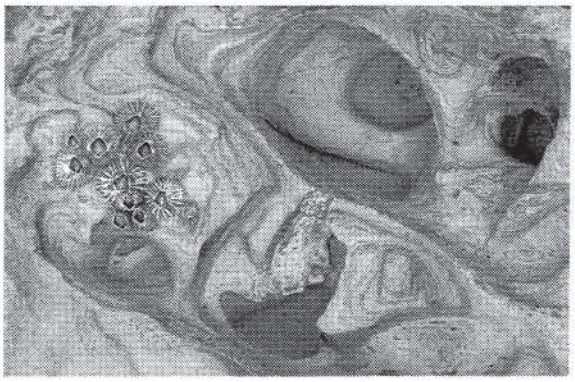
It stinks!
Karen Brown

Basically it's our land and we don't want 'em spoiling it.
Jim Everett

I don't like it.
Marita Young

National Parks should be National Parks. I don't like the idea of big tourist resorts, with people trampling all over the terrain. Those 5 star hotels, how often would you get Aboriginal people in them anyway?
Dorothy Murray

Defeats the purpose of having them. It's all for economic gain; that's f'n tourism.
Andry Sculthorpe



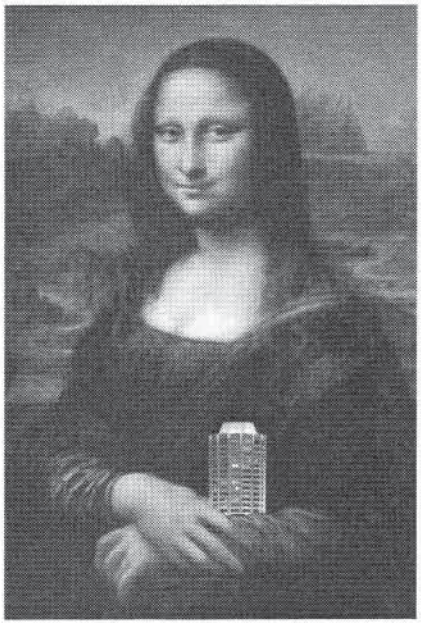
Barnacles, Chris Bell

If we are going to preserve the greatness of our national parks they must be held inviolate. They represent the last stand of the primitive. If we are going to whittle away at them we should recognise from the very beginning that all such whittlings are cumulative, and that the end result will be mediocrity. Greatness will be gone.

Newton Drury

The missing masterpiece

The TNPA has been following with great interest the incredible tale of the recently found 'missing masterpiece' by Italian Master Leonardo da Vinci. To those who have not heard this amazing story... as the mainstream media has an agreement with the Bacon Government not to report on it until an official announcement is made by Jim (with all the associated fanfare, publicity and backslapping!) ...this is the story so far.



Unbelievably, it seems, the much talked about, searched for almost mythical 'missing masterpiece' by Leonardo da Vinci has turned up in Tasmania and, what's more, it was found in the basement of a State-owned building making it the property of the people of Tasmania!

Until now art experts and historians around the world have argued not only over the existence of this priceless masterpiece, most commonly believed to have been either destroyed or spirited to South America by remnants of the escaping Nazi Army at the end of WW2, but where if it was ever rediscovered would be the most appropriate place to house such a masterpiece.

Most agree that a work of this magnitude, as undoubtedly it will become the most revered, valuable piece of artwork on the planet, deserves it's own specially built museum. Where they disagree is where this museum should be located, as obviously the spin-offs from having the most valuable piece of art heritage on earth will generate millions in income to whoever may be lucky enough to host this great work.

Where this unbelievable story of good fortune for the people of Tasmania turns to the incredible is the decision by Premier Jim Bacon, who is both Minister for the Arts and Tourism, to allow an advertising agency the rights to advertise different Tasmanian tourist attractions right, apparently, in the middle of this incredible work of art!

It seems that the painting has suffered some very slight damage at some stage and the Premier has come out, in the face of overwhelming condemnation, and said that "as a rule" he does not support advertising on great works of art but in this case the section of painting has clearly been degraded in the past and that the advertising will not have any impact on parts of the artwork previously undamaged.

Though this does seems to contradict the statement he made earlier in the year: "I have said unequivocally and on many occasions that I do not support commercial advertising on great works of art."

The damage though is nothing out of the ordinary or that couldn't be repaired and returned to virtually it's original condition, according to the Tasmanian Great Artworks Association Inc, spokesperson Gerg Doow "it is certainly nothing unusual for artworks of this heritage to suffer slight damage such as this," he said.

Doow went on to say that in fact the "1999 Great Art Works Management Plan", produced by the Premier's own department, clearly states as it's overall management objective; "To identify, protect, conserve, present and where appropriate, rehabilitate works of great art and to transmit them to future generations in as good or better condition than at present".

In a surprising twist to the story a spokesperson for the Tasmanian Great Art Works Trust has come out in support of the advertising placement claiming it will somehow help meet the objectives of the '1999 Great Art Works Management Plan' quoted above!!!!

On further investigation it was discovered that the President of the Tasmanian Great Art Works Trust is the same person (acting as a private consultant) putting forward the advertising placement application on behalf of the advertising agency 'Hoderty's Promotions'.

Very, very strange indeed.

A spokesperson for Hoderty's Promotions has said that though they realise they are setting a terrible precedent and destroying the integrity of the whole work of art, the Premier Jim Bacon is determined to have advertising placed on this great work of art and if they don't place the advertising another agency will probably do something worse!

Gerg Doow from the Tasmanian Great Art Works Association Inc agrees that it's up to the Premier Jim Bacon to put a stop to this ridiculous idea once and for all.

"Please Jim tell us you aren't serious, tell us that surely you can see that advertising here is just plain and simply wrong. Please tell us that you understand you have an obligation to all the people of the world and to our children and our children's children and so on. Tell us you understand that advertising, no matter how small it is, in the middle of a great work of art will destroy the integrity of the whole work of art and in doing so also destroy something recognised worldwide as totally unique and priceless. Tell us you can see the bigger picture and rise above the short-sighted self interest of a tiny minority. There is a very simple solution, place the advertising to the side of the painting outside the framework, put it on the wall next to the painting and everyone will be a winner," he said.

Shown above is an example of Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) NEXT most famous work of art showing artist impression of Jim Bacon's intended advertising promotion.

NOT THE PRESIDENTS LETTER

In Chris Bell's absence I thank everyone for tremendous support over the last year. Our membership numbers have increased dramatically since January 2003 and although the TNPA is a very young organisation, we have received high levels of interest from a broad spectrum of people who care for our natural areas.

The time is ripe for our organisation to burgeon. More and more people are becoming appalled at our political leaders' toxic visions for Tasmania's National Parks. More and more people feel frustrated by the shackling of Parks and Wildlife staff, and the fusion of the agency (less the Nature Conservation Branch) with Tourism, Heritage and the Arts. More and more people loathe the encroachment of tourist resorts in our most prized and sacred areas. More and more people reject capitalism outshining conservation as a park management objective. More and more people are joining a unified community voice to pressure government as custodians of these special places.

Already the TNPA have provided a valuable voice to Tasmania's political leaders opposing developments in National Parks. We seek to provide alternative and innovative visions for park management – and to celebrate the beauty in these wild places. We have a long way to go, especially beside the Victorian National Parks Association, an enormously successful, environmentally committed organisation founded in 1952. With 3,000 members, 10,000 supporters and 16 staff members the VNPA provides advice for parks managers and politicians, runs campaigns and operates outdoors activities and conservation programs. Modelled on aspects of this system, the TNPA aspires to develop into a strong, politically smart and well- supported organisation.

The future of Tasmania's National Parks and the TNPA could be bright – but your involvement is imperative. We encourage your membership and invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We are also compiling a database of skilled supporters. If you are available to help in any area – from critiquing management plans to photography, organising special events, helping staff the occasional Salamanca Market stall or envelope stuffing – please contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Margie Jenkin

TNPA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

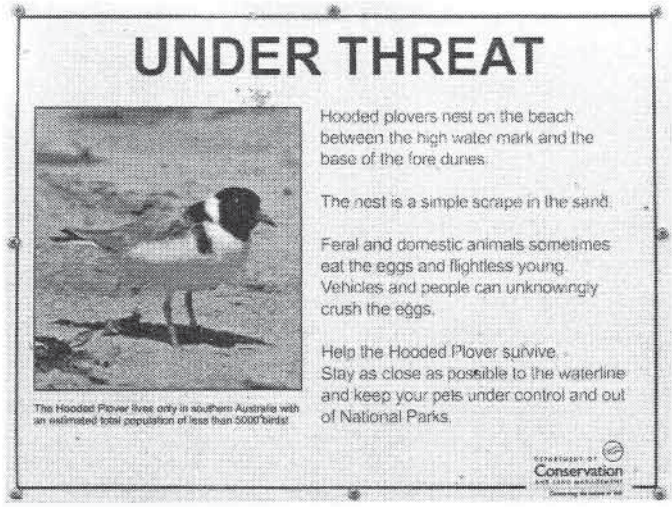
15 September 2003 at 6pm

Invitation to attend the AGM and public meeting to be held upstairs at the New Sydney Hotel, 87 Bathurst St, Hobart.

The AGM will be followed by a public meeting at 7pm.

Speakers: Christian Bell and Helen Gee

All welcome



Helen Gee took these photos during her recent investigations into park management in Western Australia. Signs such as these could be used at a few locations around Tasmania!

The Annual Buttongrass Ball

Saturday 25 October

Vintage dances and tunes as once done from Geeveston to Cape Barren Island. Starring the well dressed, *Apple Shed Sugar Gliders* who entertain with lively rural rythyms on banjolin, melodeon, ukulele, trombone, washboard and blundstones.

Special guest appearance by:

The Oldtime string Band Thingy - for that hard to find hillbilly experience. A 15-piece string band featuring flannel shirts, banjos, fiddles, mandolins, guitars and mountain music.

Where: Sandfly Hall, cnr Sandfly Rd and Pelverata Rd, Sandfly (opposite turnoff to Longley), 20mins drive from the Hobart GPO

Time: 7.30-11.30pm.

Cost: $11, $9 (conc), $7 (mem), $2 (U/14)

Proceeds donated to The National Parks Association.

All dances taught.

No experience needed – why, you don't even need a partner!

For the costume-minded there is a button grass or heritage theme.

The bands scrub up pretty well, so don't be outdone.

Prizes for the best dressed.

Bring a plate of supper if you want to be extra appreciated.

For further information ring 6273 2127 or email folkdance@primus.com.au

Presented by the Folk Federation of Tasmania.