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Voice of the Mountains

JOURNAL OF
THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INC.

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Editorial Committee: Debra Squires, Linda Barraclough, Sue Silvers and Graeme Stoney

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: (Front) The late Eric Weston, formerly of Eurobin, who had a lifelong association with the High Country. Originally on a lease on Buffalo River he took up a run on the Bogong High Plains in 1922.

(Rear) The Hurley girls, Rosemary and Diana, are the new generation on the High Country. They are competent horsewomen, who regularly assist with the stock work on the family run from the Dargo River across to the Pioneer River.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In a letter to Heather Mitchell, dated 4 December 1991, Victoria's Premier, Joan Kirner, wrote, *I am particularly pleased that Freda Treasure's pioneering contribution to the wonderful Dargo High Plains country is being recognised today and in the future.*

The letter, read out by Heather at the unveiling and dedication ceremony of the Freda Treasure Tree Reserve, north of Dargo, indicates the growing awareness of the community of the importance of our culture and heritage.

Perhaps our resource management (our greatest resource being our people) has been so dismal in the past few years, that we need to look back a while to get a clearer picture of what should be our future path in this country.

One of the highlights of my year as President was to attend a symposium on the cultural heritage of the Australian alps at Jindabyne in October. The majority of those attending were on a government payroll, be it Commonwealth or State, and the general consensus was that governments should spend more money on preserving our culture and heritage—or 'Please taxpayers, don't let our bureaucratic empires crumble in these tough times'. The very group who have destroyed so much of our culture and heritage, now want to jump on the bandwagon.

The problem is that by the time this system administers itself there is very little left for doing the real work. If we have a living heritage, such as the mountain cattlemen are in Victoria, we have the benefits of culture, heritage and active land managers, without being a burden on the taxpayer.

As a result of threatened litigation the Minister (of the DCE) issued the seven year licences to mountain cattlemen in August/September 1991 that were due 18 months earlier.

All previous licence holders on the Bogong High Plains have now been issued with licences, although the final numbers of cattle to be grazed under these licences is under dispute. A panel has been set up by the Minister to attempt to resolve this dispute.

The long running dispute, regarding numbers of stock allocated on the Bogong High Plains, was referred to an independent panel of three people appointed by the Minister. The panel sat, listened, deliberated, and gave its recommendation, at Wodonga on 16, 17 and 18 December 1991. An article in this edition of *Voice of the Mountains* goes into this issue in more detail. Our next step is yet to be decided.

We were all sad to hear that Fitzgerald Hut has been burnt and we were involved with the issue as it developed in *The Age* 'Letters' column. We are right behind moves by the family and others to have the hut rebuilt as it was.

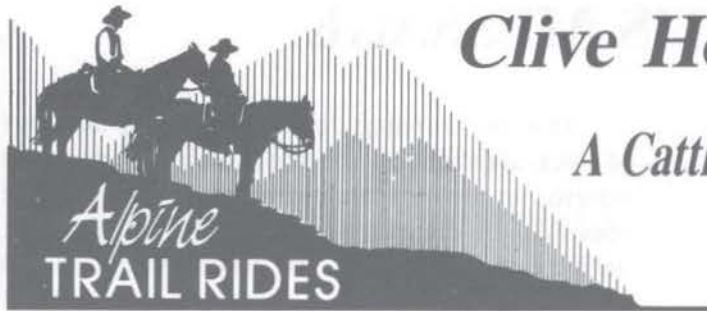
The value of alpine grazing is now being seen in the current dry conditions. The mountain herds have always come out of drought times well, ensuring a source of cattle for the restockers after the break.

The bus tour to the Longreach and the Stockmans Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre was an immeasurable success. Anyone who needs to know anything about helicopter mustering should contact our MCAV consultant on the matter, Leonard Ryan. Rumour has it, he still prefers a horse. There are suggestions we have another tour in 1992—Birdsville or Cooper Pedy races perhaps?

To all citizens of this great country, please do your bit to make our system work. Don't leave decisions to others. Instead of cracking a tinny in front of the telly, write a letter or make a phone call about an issue that affects you. We all know there are many things not right at present.

Best wishes to all for 1992.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Treasure". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.



Clive Hodge

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1992 IS HERE,

SO WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHERE DO WE GO?

An Overview of the Association

The MCAV Council and members are bitter and disillusioned both with the attitude of the Department of Conservation and Environment, and with events which have occurred since the passing of the Alpine Park legislation in May 1989.

The Agreement which was written into the legislation was designed both so that cattle grazing continued on the High Plains, and to ease the pressure on the cattlemen having to constantly defend themselves against Government pressure.

In return it was agreed that large areas of country would be closed to grazing, and the Alpine Park created.

Whilst not liking the deal, the cattlemen agreed, and on the above basis the opposition parties allowed the legislation to pass.

However, since that time the MCAV has spent more than \$80,000 defending its position as well as to force the Department to issue licences to which our members were legally entitled.

We have had to spend that money on:

1. Fighting outrageous pricing proposals, and actual accounts (designed to make grazing uneconomical).
2. Collate scientific information to:
 - (a) fight flora and fauna proposals and to present information on the effects of fire in the High Country,
 - (b) report on the state of the Kosciusko National Park,
 - (c) to keep honest, DCE scientific interpretations and trials, which are highly coloured and based against grazing. These trials are being conducted, in our opinion, with the direct intent of proving that grazing should be totally withdrawn, and are **not** addressing the wider picture of the impact of all uses of the area. Our information indicates that use of the area is in a balance with the recovery rate of the country, the High Plains are certainly **not** being degraded and are in very good shape.

3. Prepare an expensive and detailed legal case to force the Department to issue seven year licences.
4. To prepare our defence to Wilderness proposals which would have withdrawn grazing in areas already eligible for seven year licences.
5. To attend many meetings with DCE to discuss disputes regarding licence conditions, phase out relocations and defend South Bogong members who were proposed to be partly phased out due to relocation of the northern Bogong Plains licencees. This was never the intention of the legislation and contrary to firm promises made by the Minister and other Government Ministers that cattlemen would not be disadvantaged by the Alpine Park legislation, and the phase outs.
6. For some members to attend DCE-run ecology courses in order to familiarise the MCAV with what is being said against grazing and defend our industry.
7. To prepare detailed responses to DCE Management Plans which also threaten our industry.

For three years we have had to combat an attitude from DCE which had obviously hardened. It was obvious that the striking of the Agreement had upset DCE ideologues who have a strong conservation group network and connection.

It was also obvious that senior management of DCE had decided to 'take MCAV to the wire' on every issue. The result of this is that the MCAV is impoverished, and our Council and Secretary snowed under with DCE paperwork.

This Spring the issue came to a head.

1. The MCAV forced the issue of seven year licences after threatening Supreme Court action.
2. Two individual cattlemen have been involved in actions against the DCE in the Supreme Court to obtain licences to which they were legally entitled.
3. The DCE, after haggling for 18 months, finally agreed to settle 13 of 14 defined differences in licence conditions.

4. The DCE would not agree to the 14th issue in dispute, which was the historic method of assessing calves in stock allocations on the Bogong High Plains. Where historically, calves had not been assessed in allocations, the DCE suddenly claimed that calves would be assessed as a full adult beast. They later amended this decree to a position where a calf would be assessed as half one adult.

The MCAV would not agree to this, and claimed that cattlemen should have allocations assessed on historic methods because this was the spirit of the Alpine Grazing Agreement. The cattlemen did agree, in a spirit of co-operation with their fellow runholders, that allocations would be cut by 30% for the northern licences and 15% for the southern licences to accommodate the cattle on the southern end of the Plains. However, these percentage reductions were to be based on historic allocations.

An independent panel was convened at Wodonga in December 1991 to decide the specific issue:

In stock allocation authorising in each licence the maximum number of cattle to be grazed on the licensed area, whether such number referred solely to adult cattle or whether calves were to be included in the total.

The Panel decided that historic assessment of calves was to remain for the 1991/92 season, and after that two calves would be treated as one adult as per DCE prior offer to the MCAV.

In its findings, the Panel were critical of the DCE treatment of the cattlemen, and may have left the door open for further negotiation next year on the issue of calves. However, as detailed above, this means more expense and more lengthy discussions with DCE.

The positive side of the Panel hearing was that the DCE scientific evidence and stated opinion on the question of the actual damage done by cattle, crumbled under persistent cross examination by MCAV legal representative Mr Martin Hunt. The Panel found that whilst there was change on the Bogong High Plains, the area had remained stable for a decade under current grazing pressure, and further that calves had not been counted if they were born on the licenced area.

The question and challenge facing MCAV now, is how to expose the fact that DCE scientific assessments are highly questionable, and how, economically to take advantage of a lead shown in the Panel finding, that numbers may be reviewed in the future, but not reduced unless a major catastrophe has occurred.

MCAV can appeal against the Panel finding, which assesses two calves to one adult, however a decision on this has not yet been made, and would be a Supreme Court exercise, and of course more expense!

Whatever happens, nothing will change without further intensive effort by the MCAV in the coming year.

A productive and valuable industry such as ours should not have been subjected to extreme harassment by a Government Department in order to exist.

This is especially true when one considers the future of Mountain Grazing has supposedly been secured in legislation.

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Fitzgeralds Hut Destroyed by Fire

At approximately 10pm on 4 December 1991, Fitzgeralds Hut was raised to the ground by a fire that was bigger than the fireplace was ever intended to cater for.

A group of school children, (13 and 14 year old boys) were using Fitzgerald Hut as a base camp for storing their gear and sleeping in tents around the hut. Another group of boys were at Wallaces and the teachers were at Kellys. The boys were reportedly outside the hut in their tents, when one noticed a red glow and that the timber on the outside of the chimney was on fire. They then opened the door to find the hut alight.

The group was fortunate enough to rescue all of their equipment however they were unable to rescue anything relating to the hut such as the visitors book (which was estimated to have 1,000 names

since last April) or any other item that belonged to the history of this building.

This traumatic experience has resulted in some of the boys receiving counselling so they can cope with the experience.

A letter received by the Fitzgerald family stated that the boys were holding a 'cake stall' to raise money. We would hope that this cake stall is an outraging success for the cost of faithfully rebuilding this hut will not come cheaply. The proceeds of a cake stall would seem to be poor restitution for the loss of a building that would have been 90 years old next year.

Perhaps the group of boys responsible should also be involved in the hard yacka of the actual rebuilding? We wish the Fitzgeralds well in their endeavour to put Fitzgerald Hut back on the map.



It is ironic that the Fitzgerald family would have been occupying the hut at the time of the fire had they not been removed from their run.

A LONG FIGHT FOR THE VALUES OF MOUNTAIN HUTS

Dean Turner and Pieter Arriens

(The views expressed in this article are the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the committee of the Kosciusko Huts Association.)

We read with interest Debra Squires' article on 'The Nineties—A Personal View' (No. 13, 1990), which among other things, focussed on the maintenance, use and values of the Victorian mountain huts. She touched on the voluntary work of the Kosciusko Huts Association (KHA) which maintains most of the huts in Kosciusko National Park, and raised the question whether mountain huts in Victoria may be doomed unless a similar organisation is established in Victoria.

We are both members of the KHA (Dean presently in the committee; Pieter a founder member and former President) and hope that our account of the origins of the KHA, and some thoughts on the future for mountain huts in Victoria will be of interest to readers of the *Voice of the Mountains*. But to put things in context, may we first outline some of the historical differences between high country grazing in Victoria and in NSW.

In Victoria, the cattle which are taken up for summer grazing mostly come from nearby family land holdings which are often located in valleys leading into the mountains. By contrast there was far greater impact from sheep grazing in NSW, and the sheep not only came from nearby family landholdings but also from distant properties owned by large pastoral companies. Drought years saw much of the Snowy Mountains grazed to bare earth, especially on the higher alpine areas above 6000 feet near Mt Kosciusko. This was a popular area for tourism even before World War 2, because a road led to the summit of Mt Kosciusko. The results of overgrazing were plain for all to see, and the general public therefore supported State government measures for nature protection and soil conservation.

The advent of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme (SMHEA) marked another major difference between Victoria and NSW. The Snowy

Scheme was a Federal and State government sponsored project backed up by a strong public relations department, with bipartisan political support. When SMHEA engineers sought to have grazing banned from the catchment areas as a means of reducing the rate of potential siltation of water storages, and when this was supported by conservationists, legislation soon followed. Summer grazing leases were progressively phased out from all but a few fringe areas, and land management came under control of the Kosciusko State (later National) Park.

The stockmen abandoned maintenance of their huts when deprived of the summer grazing leases, and recreational users who benefited from the long tradition of open hospitality at the huts found them falling into disrepair. The embryonic Kosciusko State Park administration was so absurdly understaffed that even if willing it would have been quite unable to maintain any of the huts.

Fortunately various individuals and groups, mostly ski-tourers and fishermen, took on the maintenance of some of the huts—especially those prized for their strategic location in relation to back country snowfields or good trout streams.

In 1967 the State Park became Kosciusko National Park with management passing to the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW. The National Parks and Wildlife Act also established the requirement for a Plan of Management for the Park.

In 1970, (prior to completion of a first Management Plan in 1974) with rumours flying that the NPWS intended to demolish the huts, the then Park Superintendent, Neville Gar, circulated a questionnaire on 'Huts in Wilderness and other Remote Areas of the Kosciusko National Park', and convened a public meeting on 5 December at Sawpit Creek. The questionnaire, among other things, tested opinion on how far apart huts (if any) should



A Kosciusko Huts Association work party busy at Boltons Hut. (Dean Turner)

be spaced; noted the disrepair of many existing huts; expressed concern over problems such as hut maintenance and removal of rubbish; and speculated that huts vested in the care of specific groups might tend to be upgraded gradually so that the management and servicing would become a bigger job each year.

The near-unanimous response from participants in the meeting was that huts were essential for mountain safety, enjoyable for legitimate recreation, and could be maintained by volunteers as simple shelters open to the public at little or no cost to the park management. In addressing the public meeting, Mr Gare quoted the following extract from one of the submissions:

My final plea again is for that tolerance and breadth of outlook which matches the scale of the mountains. There is no place for the narrow view, and the only thing which cannot be tolerated is that intolerance which disregards the proper and reasonable aspirations of other Park users. The construction and regular maintenance of huts will take much effort, but I believe a sufficient pool of goodwill exists among hut users to get the job done. If the huts are destroyed, something precious and irretrievable will have been lost from the mountains. What else can be said?

This summed up the general feeling of the various user groups present, especially with regard to the practicalities of hut use and maintenance. The perception that significant cultural heritage was enshrined in the huts was not brought up as major issue in 1970, but emerged strongly later.

The meeting resolved to form the Kosciusko Huts Association (KHA), with objectives broadly; to foster enjoyment of the mountains; to advise and assist the NPWS on the use, management, maintenance and development of the huts; and to promote conservation of the natural environment. A further objective 'to undertake historical research and promote conservation of the cultural heritage of the mountains' was added to the KHA constitution in 1980.

Following the initial good spirit of co-operation which prevailed in the KHA's formative years, the mid 1970s saw relations between the NPWS and KHA deteriorate. This was largely due to the growing influence within the NPWS of wilderness ideologies which had their origins in the United States and were being expounded in Australia by organisations such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and by environmental consultants.

Bushwalkers and ski tourers who had long enjoyed recreational use of the huts were told that this was not compatible with having a 'wilderness experience' and that the use of huts, as distinct from tents, was not compatible with wilderness management. Fortunately such views did not prevail in Kosciusko and huts still survive and are actively maintained by the KHA with NPWS support in designated 'wilderness areas' of the Park.

A 'wilderness experience' is supposed to embrace the natural environment on its own terms, but the mandatory tents nearly always are manufactured from products derived from the petrochemical industry such as nylon, gortex etc. Not only are such materials perishable under repeated exposure to UV light (and therefore liable to eventual failure) but they are also often stridently coloured. Likewise much of the brightly coloured clothing worn by some wilderness protagonists is derived from non-renewable petrochemical sources.

A further optional adjunct to having a 'wilderness experience' involves the consumption of unspeakable dehydrated foods, or for those who can afford the expense, freeze dried rations. The latter, although more palatable, incur the environmental costs of high energy consumption for manufacturing and the use of metal foil packaging.

Not all bushwalkers, ski tourers and fishermen sought to have such 'wilderness experiences', and remained attracted to the huts with their rudimentary comforts and companionship to be found around the hut fireplace. This simple view of things was not comprehended by a new generation of park managers which emerged in the 1970s, many of them college educated. Some had little knowledge or interest in cultural resource management and were so exclusively zealous for wilderness and natural values that several of the few buildings surviving from the historic goldmining town of Kiandra were demolished.

Some years later a ranger illegally burned down two huts, one of which was being maintained by a caretaker group affiliated with the KHA. When questions were asked in the State Parliament after the burning of these huts, any observers felt that the answers given were unsatisfactory. The KHA found it difficult to get straight answers from the NPWS on a number of questions related to future policies for the huts. This may have reflected internal divisions of opinion within the Service, but it did little to build trust within the KHA regarding the Service's real intentions.



A new chimney for one of the Kosciusko huts courtesy of the Kosciusko Huts Association. (Dean Turner)

The Management Plan for the Park was revised in 1982 and was preceded by the release of a 'Huts Issue Statement' for public comment. 'The Huts Issue Statement' sought to discredit the safety value of huts and said **'Because no hut can ensure the safety of every party, however well or poorly equipped, the existence of a hut can never be essential for visitor safety'**. This fatuous statement reflected opinion from some quarters that very restrictive wilderness management should apply widely over the Kosciusko National Park. The logic can be tested by substituting the words 'lighthouse' or 'fire engine' for the word hut.

The Huts Issue Statement, which outlined reasons for the removal of 18 huts, was based on an internal Plan of Management Review Report which identified 45 huts as 'redundant/merit demolition' and proposed that all maintenance

should be withdrawn from a further 11 huts, foreshadowing demolition in each instance when **'its existence is a threat to public safety or presents problems in the management of the area'**. This internal document was not released to the public.

The NPWS proposals, even in the attenuated form as released in the Huts Issue Statement, dismayed the KHA and other user groups, and the 'sampling strategy' whereby the historical or shelter values of some huts were deemed to be 'duplicated' by other similar or proximate huts was greater than on any other issue, and significantly influenced the final plan. As a result, many huts which might have been destroyed were reprieved.

During the 1980s some huts were engulfed by uncontrollable wildfires, and other huts were destroyed by fires originating from the fireplace. Owing to the absence of management briefs for

these huts, the NPWS declined to sanction their reconstruction or replacement. This, together with the demolition of Albina Lodge and Rawson Hut on the Main Range, sustained public perception that the NPWS was still bent on destroying huts.

Despite that perception, other huts were saved from wildfire only by strenuous efforts of NPWS staff. Meanwhile, superb restoration work proceeded with wholehearted co-operation between KHA volunteers and NPWS staff on a number of huts. And then, in 1988 the NPWS agreed to the construction of a new shelter hut near the site where Constances Hut once stood. All this did much to restore good relations between KHA and the NPWS and in the process, NPWS field staff gained valuable practical experience in the management of cultural resources.

The Plan of Management for Kosciusko National Park is again under revision. NPWS policy from the 1982 Plan of Management acknowledges that huts can have shelter value, but we are concerned that the huts policy may be revised solely in accordance with cultural heritage restoration principles as defined in a document known as the Burra Charter, without proper weight for the safety and recreation values of huts. This would create a policy vacuum concerning replacement of huts which are totally destroyed by fire, with the effect of gradually eliminating huts from the mountains by attrition.

The KHA was satisfied with the number of shelter huts in 1980 but at that time expressed utmost concern that further losses should be balanced by the construction of new huts. There have since been further net losses from accidental fires, but one new shelter—Burrungabugee Hut—which was completed in 1990, has raised hopes that this trend may be reversed. The Burrungabugee shelter hut was built to a new design on a new foundation, and so was not constrained by the heritage and restoration principles of the Burra Charter. This hut already has contributed to the safety and enjoyment of many park visitors, and sets a good precedent whereby the present generation has created something which will be of cultural significance for future generations.

THE WORK OF THE HUTS ASSOCIATION IN THE 1990s

Today it is accepted that the cultural significance of a hut lies not only in its architecture and quality of construction, but also in the history of associated activities. The KHA's oral history

program, in addition to those run by NPWS staff, local historical societies and individuals in the community, has brought local families formerly involved with particular huts into active involvement with the conservation of these huts. The KHA's education program through the Australian National University has also aided community understanding and awareness of cultural heritage.

Historical research conducted by the KHA, NPWS staff and local historical societies has stimulated community interest in the history of the mountains, which is of importance for the conservation of the Park's cultural resources. Apart from huts, these resources include sites of copper, gold and tin mining, stockyards, fences, sites of sawmills (both water and steam powered), eucalypt oil stills, bullock tracks, stock routes, old taverns, guesthouses, villages, Aboriginal relics and Aboriginal special sites.

The KHA also organises workparties to maintain the huts and has affiliated caretaker groups assigned to many huts in the Park. Minor maintenance is usually within the competence of the caretaker group responsible for a hut, but on major projects other members of the KHA may assist by bringing specialist skills and traditional woodcraft tools such as adzes and the broad axe. The supply and transport of materials for hut restoration and management is borne either by the NPWS, KHA or the caretaker group. The NPWS has also hired the services of a traditional axe man, Bill Boyd, who has excellently restored a number of slab buildings in the Park.

Relations in 1991 are now much improved. Two Park Rangers attend the monthly committee meetings of the KHA and informal meetings and site visits are commonplace. The continuing role of the KHA in looking after a public resource is openly acknowledged, and the authentic work done and practical expertise gained by the KHA over the last twenty years is respected by the NPWS.

From our point of view, the KHA has regained the warm spirit of co-operation which characterised its relationship with the NPWS in the founding years, and is glad to be actively involved in preserving traditional bush woodcraft as a living skill. Above all, the KHA will always strive to preserve the stockman's long tradition of open hospitality at mountain huts for the safety and pleasure of passing visitors.

THE NEED FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

We believe that a civilised society should protect landscape values in scenic areas, and should strive to protect native flora and fauna from declining into extinction. We therefore accept that some areas in the mountains should be set aside as nature reserves to achieve these objectives.

A fundamentalist perception of wilderness management is something quite different and goes far beyond the necessities of nature conservation. Concerted attempts to assert such management upon much of Kosciusko National Park never were appropriate and failed. Had they succeeded, few huts would have survived despite the fact that neither the major downhill ski resorts nor the hydro-electric scheme with its access roads, dams, pipelines, power stations and high voltage transmission lines would have been affected.

The Victorian mountains are even less well suited for fundamentalist wilderness management because of the alpine areas are closely bordered by settled land, and are traversed by major roads crossing the mountains or leading to major ski resorts. Even within those areas closed to vehicles, the steep nature of the country dictates that the ridgetops become recreational and pedestrian highways. In almost every saddle it is hard not to stumble over another fireplace. Such topographical realities increase the chance of encountering other parties, thereby decreasing the chances for travelling in solitude, which is essential to the perception of having a 'wilderness experience'.

In our experience meeting other parties, either on the move or in huts, rarely if ever spoils our enjoyment of the mountains; on the contrary, such contacts more often than not are agreeable, giving a mutual chance to share recent experiences and exchange local knowledge of the mountains. Perhaps the main cause for any disappointment over meeting other parties arises from pre-conceived expectations of finding solitude as defined by wilderness doctrines. We prefer to travel light without the burden of carrying such intellectual excess baggage—it improves our enjoyment of the mountains.

ADVENTURE AND HERITAGE TOURISM

We were happy, earlier this year, to enjoy the hospitality of Graeme Stoney and his family at Bluff Hut. His *High Country Adventure* family business is an excellent example of adaption by a cattleman

who is losing one third of his summer grazing area, and has been favourably reviewed both within Australia and by visitors from abroad. The Sierra Club Adventure Travel Guide for example rated Graeme Stoney's operation 'at the top for enthusiasm, authenticity and professionalism' among 'the scores of adventure and safari outfits experienced in Australia'. High praise indeed, and with the imprimatur of a club whose standing is at the very forefront of the American conservation movement.

Visitors paying to stay at Bluff Hut come for horse riding in summer or ski touring in winter. They enjoy great bush tucker and magnificent camp oven roasts with basic bunkhouse accommodation and a few other rudimentary comforts. It adds up to a memorable experience for all involved, with authentic insights on the lifestyle of the mountain cattlemen.

The sacrifices and adaptations made by mountain cattlemen such as Graeme who are faced with the loss of all or part of their grazing leases should be respected by all conservationists and by the new National Park managers. We hope that the surviving cattlemen will be given a fair go, preferably on a basis of self regulation. Small businesses such as *High Country Adventure* which attract visitors from interstate and abroad can only help to reverse the parlous state of the Victorian economy. We also hope that the Victorian mountains will continue to sustain a wider cultural diversity than presently exists in NSW.

A ROLE FOR THE HUTS ASSOCIATION IN VICTORIA?

With events unfolding as they now are in Victoria, the question arises about the future maintenance of those mountain huts which are open to the public. The KHA has a considerable number of members of Victoria and under its constitution could become involved in voluntary huts maintenance work if this were welcomed by the lessees and/or by the Alpine Park managers. That was the pattern in the ACT when the KHA extended its work to include mountain huts in the newly established Namadgi National Park. Alternatively, a separate organisation could be established in Victoria, as was done recently in Tasmania with a helpful initial donation of funds from the KHA. Either way it would give an opportunity for recreational users of the huts to put something back into the mountains.

THE VALUE OF HUTS

We would like to offer our appraisal of the values of the mountain huts and of the cultural heritage which is enshrined in them. These may prove to be a handy reference in the months and years to come as recreational use of the mountains and the ambit claims of other user/interest groups become larger. Most cattlemen will already know these values, but some may not readily apparent to persons dropped in by helicopter at the front door.

1. Destination Values Usage Control/Monitoring
The usefulness of the logbooks for data collection on visitation rates and mode of recreation.

Search and rescue The trip information provided in the logbooks and the role of the huts as objectives i.e. something to aim for!

2. Shelter Values Hypothermia-Self Reliance and Self Illusion The huts role as the only effective place to dry out once gear is wet (Australian snow conditioned are rarely dry cold as in the Northern Hemisphere but often wet cold. For tents, UV deterioration of the synthetic material is a reality. It is foolhardy to always have 100% faith in your equipment).

3. Cultural Heritage Values *'A mature society venerates and embraces its heritage, no matter how humble, and provides some safety buffers'* (Klaus Huenke, author of *Huts of the High Country*)

Cultural Significance The cultural significance of a hut lies not only in its architecture and quality of construction, but also in the history of associated activities.

4. Environmental Values Controlled/

Concentrated Use The use of huts and associated toilets plays an important role in preventing the spread of rubbish, human waste, campsites and fireplaces in popular locations and along popular routes. Protected fireplaces also reduce fire risks.

5. Aesthetic/Visual Values The role of the huts in enhancing the landscape qualities of their surroundings and the appreciation of huts by painters, photographers and poets. The relative aesthetic/visual impact of huts is small in comparison with other artificial obtrusions eg. brightly coloured tents, large dams, resorts which sprawl across the mountain tops, the presence of jet contrails overhead, fences, gold diggings, rangers on skidoos etc etc.

6. Community Values 'The Huts Ethic'

:: interdependence

:: a willingness to share

:: equality of access

('a Park for all people for all time')

:: freedom of choice

:: private contribution to the public benefit—by groups and by cattlemen

:: balancing the expectations of all Park users including such things as: age, fitness, strength, wealth, and green hue—iridescent green versus oilskin green (cattlemen are conservationists too!)

Public Education The 'Mountain Huts Code' developed by the KHA and installed in all Kosciusko huts is a very useful management tool which encourages hut users to act responsibly by advising them of acceptable and commonsense practices to adopt in order to ensure that the next group's stay is just as enjoyable.

Harry Smith's Hut Preserved

A small piece of Australian pioneering heritage and high country history has been preserved through faithful restoration of Harry Smith's hut at Eaglevale. The hut is located on Mr Bruce Dungey's property, north west of Dargo and was opened by 85 year old Mr Alex Trahair, a former bushwalker who knew Harry Smith, albeit when Harry was elderly.

The restoration work was meticulously carried out by a Melbourne based team comprising the Worsley brothers, John Ricketts, Graeme Sheed, Brian Johnson and friends.

Harry Smith after whom the hut is known was one of the family who originally took up Wonnangatta Station. He was regarded as an excellent bushman. As a fearless rider Harry was immortalised in Annie Bryce's poem 'Gippsland Riders'.

Guests at the opening ceremony on Sunday 9 June 1991 included a former owner of Wonnangatta Station, Mr Arthur Guy, veteran cattleman Mr Jack Lovick and Mrs June Smith of Bairnsdale, a member of the Barclay family.

On behalf of those present at the opening function, Mr Buff Baggs thanked the restoration team for their fine efforts and especially commented on the support and sacrifices made by the wives of the restoration team.

HARRY SMITH'S EAGLEVALE HUT BUILT C 1870

HUT RESTORED 1989 / 1991 BY

JIM WORSLEY	BRIAN JOHNSON
KEN WORSLEY	JOHN RICKETTS
GORDON WORSLEY	GRAHAM SHEED
BRIAN WORSLEY	AND MANY FRIENDS

OFFICIALLY REOPENED 9 JUNE 1991
BY ALEX TREHAIR
A CLOSE FRIEND OF HARRY SMITH



Harry Smith's hut fully restored to its original condition.

Stoney's

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Chris, Helen
and Graeme Stoney

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POSTCARDS FROM LONGREACH

The trip to the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre at Longreach, Queensland could only be described as a roaring success. En route to Longreach, a day was spent at Planet Downs station where some of the group took part in a helicopter assisted muster. The stock were later described as being unpredictable, temperamental and fast! While at Planet Downs we also visited the site of Aboriginal cave paintings estimated at being 3,000 years old. When the group arrived at Longreach we suddenly realised that summer in outback Queensland is considerably warmer than Victoria!

The group were guests of honour at the annual Ringer's Muster and were made welcome wherever they ventured. A very pleasant evening was spent at the 'Corned Beef and Damper' night, the first official function for the weekend. They visited the

Hall several times and also toured several stations around Longreach. The Mountain Cattlemen were invited to Longreach in recognition of their important cultural heritage.

An invitation to participate in the National Outback Performers Award was accepted. The cattlemen entered a combined act of whipcracking, yarn spinning and singing which won the audience over in an instant. After successfully placing well through the heats their performance was judged as one of the best for the final in the evening.

Other sites visited included the Tree of Knowledge at Barcaldine, under which the Labor Party was formed, and the memorial to shearer Jackie Howe at Blackall.

The party returned to Victoria quite weary and we all could have done with about 48 hours sleep!

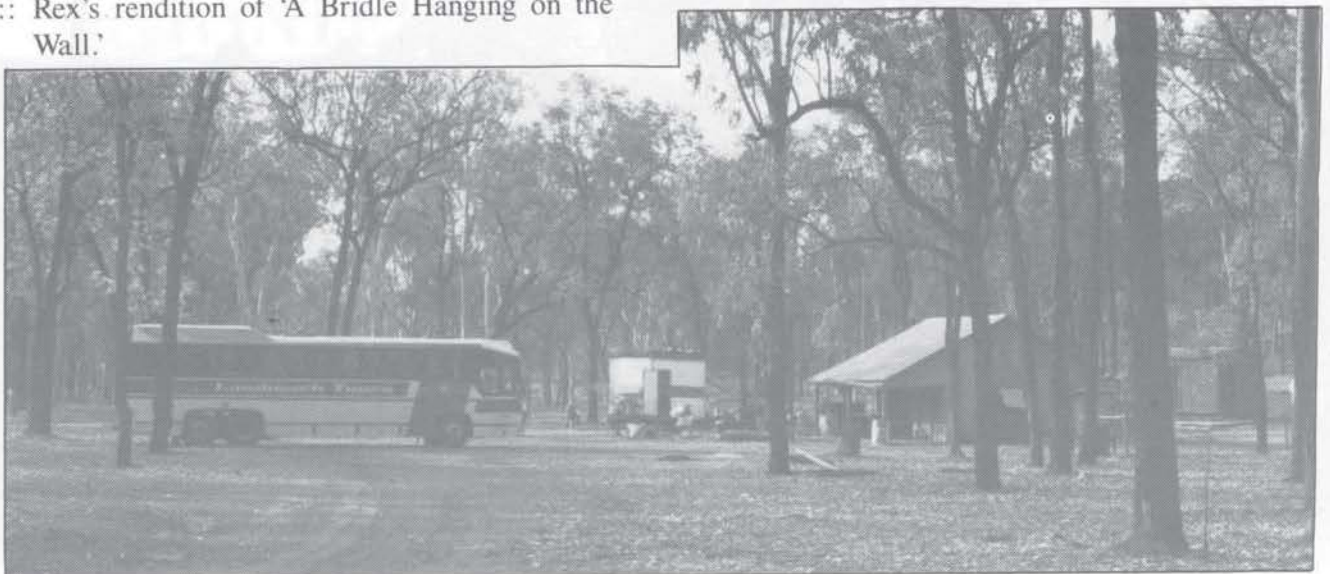
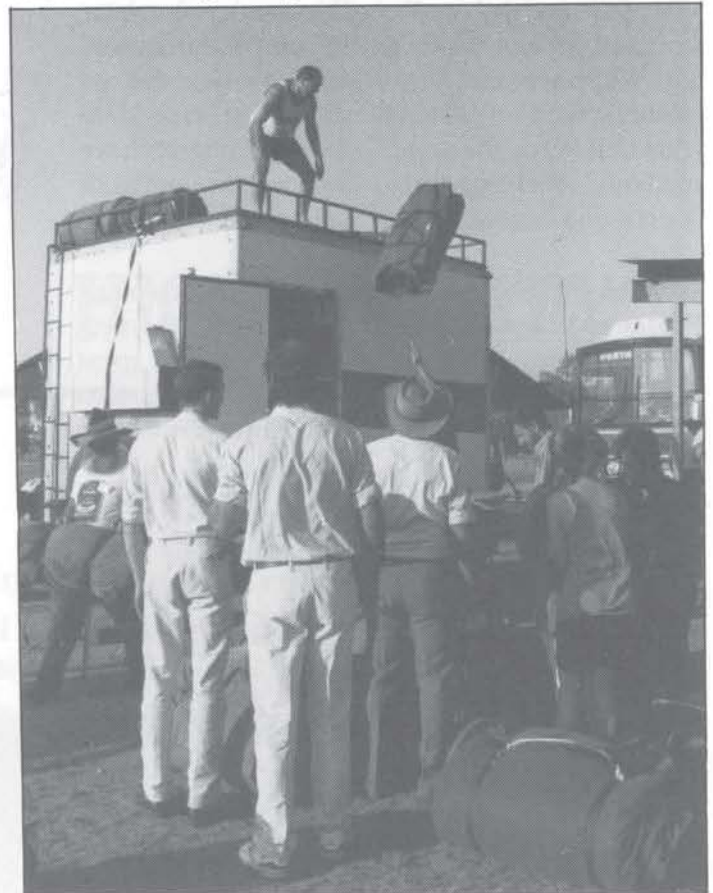


How could you forget —

- :: the heat?
- :: one of our coach captains showing the cattlemen how to use a bull whip?
- :: the downpour at Planet Downs (just as we put up the tents!)?
- :: Mrs Pyjamas from the Swagman tour?
- :: the number of kangaroos on the Bourke run?
- :: the RSL combination of pokies and chinese?
- :: the friendliness of Longreach?
- :: the photo session at the racecourse, and at the statue and yet again on the steps of the Hall?
- :: Leonard and the helicopter?
- :: Sister Coleman and her magic sprays and potions?
- :: the airconditioned sanctuary of the Hall of Fame?
- :: 'how much for half a pastie?'
- :: 'Hey Dane, the petrol pump has got a sign on it—Out of Order!'
- :: Mike Walsh taking on a herd of brahman?
- :: lunch at Theodore?
- :: the resident talking swagman at the Hall?
- :: the swollen feet?
- :: the Jericho 'one woman' pub?
- :: the vibrant colour of the Poinseta trees?
- :: Clive acting the bull at Longway?
- :: the fairy riding a camel in *The Last Frontier*?
- :: 'Can you tell me where the racecourse is? Don't point, just tell me.'
- :: Rex's rendition of 'A Bridle Hanging on the Wall.'



A new event: Swag Tossing



The campsite at Planet Downs



**Landmark
Tours**

Australia



Our competent crew: Dane, Nicky and Wayne

Clive pretending to be a bull!



*Doug Treasure and
Charlie Yeeda*



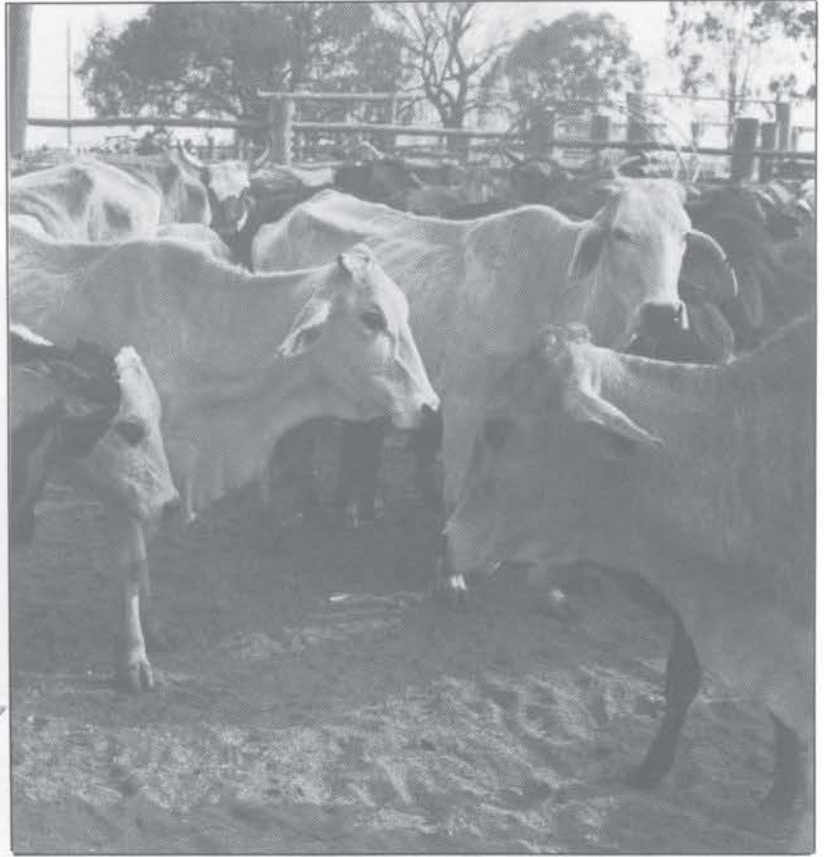
Cowby, Clive, and Termite with drivers including Bill Warren. 19



Guard Duty!



Jackie Howe at Blackall



Droughtmaster/Brahman X—with a mind of their own.



Mick and Mike Walsh, Clive Hodge, Rex Jefferies and Tige Ripper were favourably received at the Outback Performing Arts evening.



President Doug leading them out for the muster at Planet Downs.



Inside the Hall of Fame.



Tige Ripper enjoying the outback scenery!

THE BEVERIDGE BROTHERS REMEMBERED

On Sunday October 13, 1991 over 100 people traversed the Buckland Valley Road to the uppermost piece of freehold land in the Buckland Valley.

There on land originally owned by Jack and Sid Beveridge, cattlemen and friends unveiled a plaque to their memory.

Rory Lumsden, local historian and Buckland Valley resident told of some of his memories of Sid and Jack, whilst detailing the history of their land holdings in the area. A fuller history of the Beveridge Bros appears in *Voice of the Mountains* No. 10 (1986).

The inscription on the plaque reads 'In Memory of the Beveridge Brothers, Jack (1886-1968) and Sid (1892-1981), early pioneering mountain cattlemen of the north east of Victoria.'

The North East Branch of the MCAV wishes to acknowledge the donation made by Colin McCormack towards the cost of the plaque. Our thanks also to Peter and Sue Eggleston (part-owners of the land on which the plaque and rock now stands) for without their acquiescence to the project, acknowledgement of the Beveridge Bros' pioneering spirit would still be a no-go with the Department of Conservation and Environment.

Mary Goldsworthy



DREAMING

Out here on the verandah
In my old rocking chair
I dream of mates and days gone by —
The life we used to share.

My eyes stray ever upwards
To where the arching sky
Rests lightly on the soaring hills,
Up where the High Plains lie.

Were once we rode a'droving
Through meadow, lush and sweet
With new-sprung grass and Alpine blooms —
The world spread at our feet,

Where in our youth we wandered,
Made tracks for man and beast,
Where white man hadn't been before —
The scenery, a feast

To draw the eye and fill the heart
With joy and wondrous awe
And always there was something new
And always something more.

And as we sat at sundown
Around the welcome blaze
The flames and tales grew taller
With talk of other days . . .

Those days of droving legend
Not marred by greed or fear:
Men looked out for each other
And held their mateship dear.

Renowned for feats of daring
Of horsemanship and grit
They mustered cattle, tempted fate
With humour and with wit.

We dried our sodden clothing
And made the billy tea
Cooked corned beef in a kero. tin
And knew that we were free.

And while I still am living
While this old heart can beat
Those days live on, enshrined in me
Till I my Maker meet

My soul will leave my body
Still hobbled here in town
To take the trails I know of old
Until the sun goes down.

Dorothy B. Watt

Briagolong 1991



WHERE THE GIANT EUCALYPTUS GROW

I love to ride down the mountain side,
As the crimson sun sinks low.
Watch the shadows creep and little streams weep,
Where the giant eucalyptus grow.

Feel the soft tips of the wattle,
Brush gently over your face,
And the old pony knows we've turned homeward,
Even he starts to quicken his pace.

The dew drops sparkle on the bracken,
And settle down on the grass.
Fluffy-tailed rabbits pop into their holes,
And out again after you pass.

I like to hear the hobble chains,
Jingling on the pack,
For those sounds to me are music,
When I ride on the cattle track.

Yes, the bush becomes a theatre,
And the mountains become the stage.
All the birds and animals are the players,
They known every line on the page.

And lets educate the children
To see nature at it's best.
There'll be no more nee for national park rangers,
Our heritage will do the rest.

I love to ride down the mountain side,
As the crimson sun sinks low.
Watch the shadows creep and little streams weep,
Where the giant eucalyptus grow.

For I love Australian bushland,
The animals, birds and flowers,
I love the snow-capped mountains,
That rise like giant towers.

I love all the little rivers
That sparkle and gleam,
And dance and play and wind their way,
Down to join the bigger stream.

Then there comes a ray of sun,
There's blossom everywhere,
For the cold wintry months are done,
And Spring is in the air.

The jackasses laugh, the magpies sing,
And the bush becomes alive.
Little bees go out in the wind,
To bring pollen to their hive.

I often rest near the shady tree,
When the summery sun grows hot,
For the good Lord made the bush for me,
And there seems to be nothing He forgot.

I love to sit and watch the rainbow,
That follows the autumn showers.
The magnificent blending of colours
Lingers in one's mind for hours.

I've often been told there's a pot of gold
At the rainbows' end.
But I've never found where it reaches the ground,
It seems to be always just round the bend.

So I might die without a cent,
But money never worries me.
For I found beauty wherever I went
And my wealth is the giant eucalyptus tree.

Don Kneebone



Don Kneebone doing what he loved most, passing the heritage of the mountain cattlemen onto the generation of today.



Don Kneebone

Don Kneebone, the 'poet laureate' of the high plains, died at his Bobinawarra home on 20 June 1991. Well known as a raconteur, bush poet and entertainer, he produced a poem for almost any occasion. It is only in recent years that he began publishing his work.

A foundation member of the MCAV, he served as North East branch president and central council delegate for many years.

Born 25 September 1922 at Whorouly, Don was the sixth child of the ten children of Albert and Ada Kneebone. He was just 13 when the family was shattered by the death of his mother. He started working on the farm and it soon became apparent that horses, cattle and dogs were to play a big part in his life and were to become his abiding passion. He loved sport of any discipline and excelled with a natural ability. In his younger years he was a fine rough rider and won the first open bull ride at the Wangaratta Show and was number one saddler at the Myrtleford Rodeo for a number of years.

Bowmans Forest became his home and workplace and he moved from there with his bride to his property at Bobinawarra where they raised a family of two boys and two girls.

Cattle grazing leases at Dandongadale and Black Range provided Don not only with extra grass but also with the opportunity to indulge in his great love of the high country and the bush. Like a bush bred horse Don relaxed and became as one with the environment when he entered the bush, not in a passive way but as one with every sense heightened, becoming acutely aware of everything around him. To know Don was to know that he was a conservationist from his stirrups to the tip of his whip.



Don could make you mad or frustrate you or make you late time and again as you stayed to listen to his yarn, but all who knew him respected and admired him for his total honesty.

All his life Don had been aware of a burning desire to express those emotions and thoughts that were within him. Through his verse he was able to find satisfaction for himself, give untold pleasure to all who heard him and provide a treasure for generations to come. His very considerable gifts were recognized with the selection of an album of his verse as a wedding present to Prince Charles and Lady Diana.

He had devoted over 50 years of service to the Country Fire Brigade which was acknowledged just months before his death with the presentation of the Australian Service Medal.

His ongoing contribution to the heritage of the mountain cattlemen will be missed by all who knew Don Kneebone.

Don's poem, 'Where the Giant Eucalyptus Grow' epitomised his depth of feeling for the high country that he loved.



Eric Weston

Eric Adrian Weston who died 7 October 1991, was born at his parent's home in Weston's Lane, Eurobin, on 17 August 1905, the third child of George and Catherine Weston (*nee* Fitzgerald). After attending Eurobin State School to leaving age, he went to study at Bright Higher Elementary School for two years. From an early age, he showed great aptitude for riding horses and handling stock.

He made his first trip to Mt Buffalo in 1912 at the age of seven. Soon he was helping his father to drive cattle to that mountain in early summer and muster before the early snows. For several years around 1920, Eric did all the stock work for a lease held by a Weston partnership at the head of Buffalo River. In 1922 the Buffalo lease was cancelled and a vacant run was taken up on the Bogong High Plains.

Eric soon developed an uncanny sense of locality, never becoming lost, no matter how difficult the foggy conditions or snowfalls were. For over 60 years he took the Weston Circle W herd of herefords to and from the Bogong High Plains.

In 1937 he married Patricia Higgs of Bright and they raised a family of four children—Kathleen, Adrian, Brendan and Mary. From 1934 Eric worked in partnership with his father until his death in 1955, and Eric took over the working of the property. Tragedy struck in 1966 when Eric's younger son, Brendan, was killed in a car accident, and in 1977 his elder son, Adrian, was also killed. Both the lives of Eric and his wife were greatly saddened by these tragedies.

After a life of requiring great strength and stamina, Eric completed his last muster from the High Plains in the autumn of 1984. Since that time his daughter Mary and her husband Bill Goldsworthy have taken over the proud family tradition of high country grazing, which dates back to 1888.

Eric's father, George Weston, and his brother, Buffalo Bill, succeeded in 1886 in blazing a bridle track on the northern end of Mt Buffalo. In 1939, Eric, together with Fred and Tom Briggs, built Weston's Hut on the area known as Lake Spur on Bogong High Plains. This hut still stands today and is used by the family at mustering time, and as a refuge.

Eric was buried at the Bright cemetery with his wife, Pat, who predeceased him in 1989.

I'll ride along to an angel's song,
And my pony will step with pride,
Up the long high track, to where there's
no way back,
And another stockman will cross the Divide.'

Don Kneebone

Eric Weston appears on the cover of this edition of Voice.

Bruce McPherson

Members and associates of the Gippsland area were also saddened to learn of the death of Bruce McPherson on 2 May 1991, aged 45 years. Bruce was a member of the Association and particularly well known around the saleyards.

Bruce spent his early years working on a dairy farm for Don Bashford at Hillside. When he was 16 years old he was thrown from a horse while mustering cattle, badly injuring his spinal cord. He was unconscious for three months before finally opening his eyes on Christmas Eve. The years that followed were filled with Bruce learning to walk, firstly with callipers then eventually graduating to the large cane that everyone knew so well. Being unable to work but being able to get around under his own steam Bruce started his long association with the Bairnsdale saleyards. His commitment to the Association and personality is best captured in the poem by Pauline Connelly.

IN MEMORY OF BRUCE

There was a man I knew called Bruce
Some liked to call him 'Macka',
When you got to know him very well
You knew that he was no wacka.

He loved to try and help you
If there was something he could do,
And his knowledge of the saleyards
He'd soon instill on you.

So when you saw a fellow
With an Akubra on his head,
A walking cane held in his hand
You didn't walk past, you stopped instead.

Bruce liked to have a talk about the weather
And when it's going to rain,
And he loved to have a cuppa
With his friends from all terrain.



Bruce at his bridge, Main Street, Bairnsdale.

You would see him at the saleyards
You would see him in the street,
He used to go to dances
Where old friends like to meet.

Bruce was a legend of the saleyards
And at clearing sales was very keen,
I doubt if there has been a sale
Where that hat and walking cane haven't been.

He was an agent in his right
When you heard him on the phone.
He knew the prices back to front
When he called you from his home.

If someone wanted a milking cow
Or a bobby calf or two,
Or just a message down the street
He'd even do that too.

When Wednesday came he'd get the draw
Before the sale each week,
On Wednesday he also shopped at Safeway
Bought a boston bun for him and Mum to eat.

He gave support to mountain cattlemen
And the bullock team as well,
The taxi drivers knew him
He supported them as well.

He knew the farmers very well,
So they were not alone
'Cos Bruce liked to own a steer or two,
And among their herds his did roam.

I think every man around the place
At sometime has had warm hocks,
'Cos Bruce would buy the wool
While his mother knitted socks.

He helped run the sheep dog trials
Time keeper was his job,
With no favours for any dog or owner
Who would not control the mob.

There's a place he called his office,
Around in Bailey Street,
That's where you'd often find him
At Des and Di's Coffee Boaticue.

We know he liked a capuccino
But he could make a pot of tea or two,
With two or three more sugars
He had a real good home brew.

Then he liked to roll his own
And lick it up with spit,
While he listened to Macka on Sunday
King of the radio hits.

Bruce could watch the highway traffic,
From his chair in the kitchen near the fridge,
And he'd talk of the day that he felt proud
The day he walked McPherson's Bridge.

But his heart belonged to
Peter Lowe and Partners
That was very plain to see,
'Cos stamped on the back of his drizabone
The company name P.L. and P.

Bruce was his own man
He had a heart of gold,
He gave the best of his ability
To his life and friends behold.

Yes Bruce, he done us proud
He branded us with inspiration,
He showed the world how to live
With sheer guts and determination.

Pauline Connelly

LOVICK'S Mountain Trail Safaris



A scene from Lovick's mountain cattle round up where guests participate in this annual event.

We Ride The Great Divide

Throughout the summer months, 8-day tours leave Merrijig, travel up the Howqua River, beyond Mt. Buller to the mountains of the Great Divide and on to the High Plains of Mt. Howitt and Snowy to some of the most beautiful and inaccessible parts of Victoria's High Country — areas that cannot be visited except on horseback or on foot.

The Safari is serviced by four wheel drives that meet up with the riders in camp each night and are licenced to carry passengers.

All fresh food carried under refrigeration.

The Lovicks will make sure you have the holiday of your life in the mountains.

Write . . . Jack Lovick, Merrijig or Phone (057) 77 5510

Preserving and Recording Our Past

Have you got old photographs of the high country laying around in drawers at home? And even not so old photographs? If you have, **please** talk to Don Porter at this years Get Together at Dargo. Don is actively seeking out any photographs of the high country to copy for the Association. This is an important project as it will be a resource of immeasurable importance in the future. The photographs can be copied on the spot and there is no chance of damage to them in the process. Think of it as insurance because then there will always be another copy of that photograph available.

Also working in the cultural heritage field is Judith Hosier of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame.

During 1991, Judith visited Victoria for the purpose of recording the memories of mountain cattlemen. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, and the lengthy procedure involved (only two interviews a day can be conducted), very few of our members were able to be recorded. We were fortunate, however, that one of those interviewed was Don Kneebone. The tapes of these interviews are currently being transcribed for inclusion in the library of the Hall of Fame. It is hoped that we will be able to make quality recordings in the near future for submission to the Hall.



SHEEPYARD FLAT 1991

A packed program of events kept everyone entertained at Sheeppark Flat for the 1991 Get Together. Sheeppark is always a magnificent site for the Get Together with the natural arena making all races highly visible to spectators. We were also honoured to have the then leader of the Opposition, the Hon. J. Brown, present over the weekend. Another visitor for the weekend, courtesy of Mansfield Travel, was Sue Haywood from Tasmania who had won the Tasmanian equivalent of our Cup and was invited to compete.

The Mansfield Branch must be congratulated for staging the 1991 event with such competency. No doubt there was a lot of 'behind the scenes' activity by a small group of individuals to keep the day running smoothly. Thank you Mansfield.

The Cup, as usual, was a fiercely fought event, and after they got those strays calves under control the crowd was presented with a spectacular event.

Other winners for the weekend included:

10 Years and Under Whipcracking

1st Diana Hurley; 2nd James Ryder; 3rd Luke Mitchell

Over 10 and Under 15 Whipcracking

1st Justin Blair; 2nd Ben English; 3rd Shane Arbuthnot

Ladies Australian Whipcracking Championship

1st Tanith Blair; 2nd Nicole Simcox; 3rd Sam Bailey

Open Whipcracking

1st Mick Tshymibig; 2nd Greg Charleson; 3rd Stephen Ball

Cattlemens Whipcracking

1st Max Blair; 2nd Tanith Blair; 3rd Leonard Ryan

Open Whipcracking on Horseback

1st Ray Moor; 2nd Mick Tshymibig; 3rd Tanith Blair

Cattlemens Cup

1st Chris Stoney; 2nd Craig Orchard; 3rd Leigh Woodgate

Junior Cattlemens Cup

1st Trina Connelly; 2nd Wayne Lovick; 3rd Kate Stoney

Associate Dash

1st Gerald Egan; 2nd Rod Manning; 3rd Scott Evans

Stockmans Dash

1st Chris Stoney; 2nd Gerald Egan; 3rd David Blunden

Packhorse Race

1st Gerald Egan; 2nd Steve Arbuthnot; 3rd Peter Holmes

Junior Dash

1st Sally Manning; 2nd Kate Lovick; 3rd Shane Arbuthnot

Relay Race

1st C. Stoneys team; 2nd A. McArthurs team; 3rd S. Haywoods team

Rescue Relay Race

1st F. Bolton team (Sale); 2nd G. Egan team (Mansfield); 3rd J. Arbuthnot team (Merrijig)

Runamuck Cup

1st Cameron Green; 2nd Garry Griffin; 3rd Mick Verburt

Stockmens Event

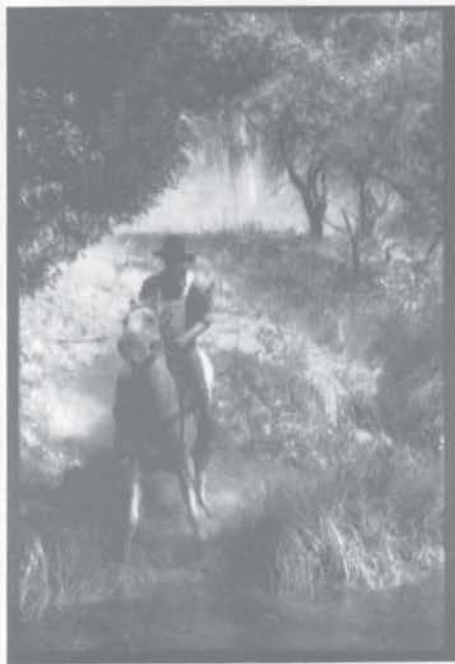
1st Gerald Egan; 2nd Ken Connelly; 3rd Graeme Hughes

Congratulations to all who competed at Sheeppark and good luck at Waterford in 1992.











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WE HAVE OUR OWN HIGH COUNTRY ACCOMMODATION ON
THE LAND OUR FAMILY HAS HELD FOR OVER 130 YEARS.

HISTORY OF ABBEY YARDS

Rie Arundel

Henry Morgan had crossed America from Montana to the goldfields of California when he followed the rush for gold to Australia. He left his home at the age of 18 and came to the Buckland Valley on 12 December 1853. He had experience in the building trade, and when gold petered out in the valley, he found work in building.

In 1877 he was approached by a party of three men, Messrs McLean, Cardwell and Rodda, who had taken up a run or station on the Buffalo River, to go in there and erect a log home and stock yards.

On 19 August 1877 he started for the Buffalo River on foot, in company with Thomas Rodda. They left the Buckland at 11 am and camped at 'Camp Creek', about 11 miles journey. Three miles further on they came to the Buffalo River, (a stream about the size of the Buckland River or a little larger). They walked down about two and a half miles and pitched there camp on 'Brandy Creek', where Rodda planned to build and fence. It was raining and they erected a bark hut. Rain continued for days while they were cutting logs to build a log hut. By the 25th they had the walls of the hut up and did the levelling and fitting of rafters and shingling the roof. One by the name of McGrath came out with them, but left after quarrelling with Rodda and Morgan. Rodda then returned to the Buckland for a short time, with a lack of provisions, they were forced to shoot kangaroos for meat and fish for blackfish in the streams.

When Rodda returned, two men by the names of Bob and Bill Stevenson came in to work with them. They fell a large tree for rails, cutting it in three lengths, and opening it, also enough shingles for the hut. By 17 October the hut, with chimney and gables finished, also had bunks. They were able to move into the hut. The weather was still wet, so they made tables and doors, up until the 27th they were morticing posts and putting up stockyards. The stockyards were finished by 30 November, the yards measuring ten panels square and each second panel being 9 and 10 feet alternately and a division fence of 13 panels. They then began the calf house, making pens, bales and shed. By 17 November they were dividing the bales (being three), getting timber for fences, making shelves for the hut and getting material for two large gates. By 1 December they were making ladders, a stand for the grindstone and four doors.

By now only Henry Morgan and William Wright were working at Buffalo River and in two days they had cut about fifty logs for the house. In the ten days to the 15th they had scored and levelled 31 logs averaging one foot in thickness and 24 to 30 feet long, dressing one side and two edges. Thus all the timber for the house was dressed, foundations laid and six logs laid by the 15th. By the 22nd the walls of the house were near ten feet high with the upper storey to be 9 feet 2½ inches high. On the 23rd they commenced the trek home for Christmas, returning to the Buffalo River on 1 January on foot.

They shot a wild bull that came in with Roddas' cattle and set about cutting more house logs. They then fixed the gable ends and roof of the house together on the ground and took it to pieces and raised it piece by piece onto the house. By 19 January the roof portion of the house was finished.

There were many bush fires and the weather was warm. The air was dark with smoke while they continued to work on the roof preparing it for the shingles. On 2 February the top part of the house was on and they started wedging between the logs in order to keep the full weight off the corners of the building. They then started dressing and laying the sleepers for the floor. By now, with the floor laid, doorways finished and partitions partly up and stairs nearly finished, Morgan is anxious to return home but he is persuaded by Rodda to remain and put up a kitchen.

The nights were starting to get cold and by now most of the work was completed. The stairs were up, the doors and windows finished. The weather was becoming very wet and the rivers so high as not to be passable. On 10 March work on the Buffalo was finished and Morgan returned home with Geo Shippen who had packed a load of goods in for Rodda.

In April 1881, Thomas Rodda moved his family from Buffalo River to the Buckland Junction.

This information comes from the journal kept by Henry Morgan, Rie's grandfather, who constructed the hut and yards. Later the hut and run were taken over by Jack and Nat Webb Snr, (Webb Bros of Dandongadale and Buffalo Creek). The hut was raised by bushfire, probably in 1918, as only part of the old stone chimney remained in 1923. The hut site is currently grazed by Bill Moore.

ABBEY YARDS

We've taken up a cattle run
Just over the other side,
The grass there is well watered
And the valley fairly wide.

It's quite a good selection
A good living to be made
So give it your inspection
The work is in your trade.

So to the run that Rodda spoke of
I left for within a week
Climbing over the hills, I walked
To the run at Brandy Creek.

Thirteen miles down the stream
Through a scrub tall and dense
I came to a clearing
Where they plan to build and fence.

Felling trees and hewing logs
The work is well begun
The logs one foot in thickness
And thirty or more foot long.

Splitting battens for the home
Cutting railings and making doors
Fitting rafters and levelling
Dressing timber for the floors.

It is a solid structure
With walls of ten feet
And another storey added
To make it all complete.

And then a kitchen added
To the lower floor
A chimney stack erected
And a solid dividing door.

With partitions up, erecting stairs
The home almost complete
Making windows, tables, chairs
I'll soon make my retreat.

Working on the stock yards
Every panel over ten feet
Building of a calf barn
The place is now complete.

The weather coming wet and cold
And then stockmen coming in
Draughting cattle to be sold
Then they will ride out again.

The house is of Canadian style
Like a picture on a card
With stock yards all in neat file
And they called it ABBEY YARDS

At times I have ridden back
To do some work anew
Riding with the packhorse
For callers there are few.

Now there's little to be found
Log fences replaced by wires
The Abbey raised to the ground
By sweeping forest fires.

But still again in that glen
Where mountains tall stand guard
Cattlemen graze their stock again
And it's still called ABBEY YARDS.

Rie Arundel

AROUND THE TRAPS

Friend of the Vale

A group has been formed to continue the fight for the rights of traditional people in the Black Bluff/Vale of Belvoir area of Tasmania.

The group, to be known as Friends of the Vale, comprises the Tasmanian Mountain Cattlemen's Association, the Tasmanian High Country Riders Association and the Tasmanian Hunting and Conservation Council and has been constituted as a sub-committee of the Tasmanian Traditional and Recreational Land User Federation.

Support for the Friends of the Vale has been received from the Mountains Huts Preservation Society, the West Coast Recreation Association the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association and the Tasmanian Lapidary and Mineral Association.

The Friends group was formed to coordinate the overwhelming community support expressed at a recent public meeting in Sheffield to protest at a draft cabinet submission prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning for a 21,000 ha conservation area.

The community was told at the meeting that the submission was to be withdrawn, grazing leases re-issued and the matter referred to the Land Use Committee of the Department of Environment and Planning. The Friends of the Vale will play an important community role in ensuring that the concerns of traditional people are incorporated in the Committee's deliberations.

The single biggest issue that is at stake is the recognition by the Department of the concept of a European cultural heritage in the area which has to be protected.

Further information regarding the Friends of the Vale Group is available from Lisa Charleston on (004) 921479.

Lodge an Unsung Hero

Looking for a something different in the way of present for a senior family member? Consider making enquiries at the Hall of Fame in Queensland (P.O. Box 1, Brisbane) and have them entered in the Unsung Heroes. The family member gets a certificate suitable for framing and a boost to their ego, while we all benefit by their story being recorded for generations in the future.

High Country Books

There are several new books available with reference to the high country.

Tim Lee, ABC rural reporter based at Sale, together with Barrie Turpin, has published an excellent collection of *Portraits* of remarkable people of South Eastern Australia. This book features 28 people from this region including several high country identities: the Lasich brothers (Dargo), Bill Toland (Omeo), and Vince Phelan (Dargo). Sensitive photographs supported by evocative text make this a beautiful book to give as a gift or for your own reading. Copies are available from Tim Lee, P.O. Box 330, Sale for \$29.95 plus postage.

Mountain of Memories tells the story of Jack Mustard as written by Martin Thomas. Jack, a dingo trapper, has spent all his life in the Bendoc, Bonang and Delegate area. It makes interesting reading describing the day to day routine of life in remote Victoria. Available most good bookshops for \$17.00.

Graeme Wheeler's book, *The Scroggin Eaters—A History of Bushwalking in Victoria* goes a small way to acknowledging the contribution by cattlemen to the development of this recreational pastime. For many years families like, the Fitzgeralds, Guys, and Lovicks have been associated with organised walking parties. Though there is little text pertaining to the cattlemen, many photographs of their huts are included. It also attempts to come to terms with the problems caused through the increased recreational use of the Alps.



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Do You Know What A Cow Is?

Following is a telephone conversation our secretary, Sue Silvers had with young Adam Ryder last year.

SUE: 'Is that you, Adam?'

ADAM: 'Yes.'

SUE: 'Its Sue Silvers speaking Adam. Is Mummy or Daddy there?'

ADAM: 'No.'

SUE: (Knowing that Sue would not leave the kids on their own). 'Where is Mummy Adam?'

ADAM: 'Well, Daddy is in Albury, and ... well ... Do you know what a cow is?'

SUE: 'Yes, I do.'

ADAM: 'Well, there is a cow and its having a calf and only the legs are sticking out'.

SUE: 'Oh, I see. Is Mummy pulling the calf.'

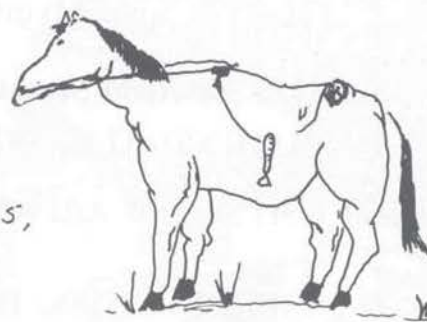
ADAM: 'Yes.'

SUE: 'OK, I'll ring back later.'

Postscript: It was a successful delivery.



Adam Ryder



BEN RYDER
illustration

CATTLE MEN OF THE BOGONG HIGH PLAINS
Cattle men of the Bogong High Plains,
Ride their horses as it rains,
They see a cow stuck in the mud,
Pull it out with a sucking thud,
They see a storm coming in,
They hope there are no holes in the tin,
They hear the cracking all about,
The rain pours down the water spout,
They hear a tree as it falls,
The wind rushes through the cracks in the walls.

AARON WOOD

From the Tawonga Primary School Newsletter as contributed by Ben Ryder, great nephew of the late Wally Ryder and his best friend Aaron Wood, aged 12 years.



That girl, Ingrid Judson, associate member from Alaska, is at it again. She may not have gone to Buckingham Palace to spread the word but she has certainly got Mickey's ear at Disneyland!


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Yet Another Hut Lost

Authorities have torn down a hut which provided shelter in the Thompson Catchment for decades because it was attracting vehicle-based campers.

Citing the need to protect the catchment, the Department of Conservation and Environment yesterday confirmed to The Express that its workers demolished the hut, which was situated east of Whitelaws Creek.

The hut, constructed of timber and galvanised iron, had a doorway, fireplace and an earthen floor. Despite its lack of facilities, hikers are disappointed to lose this hut, known to many backpackers as 'Hilton Hotel Number Two' and thought to have once been accommodation for loggers or cattlemen.

Regulations will shortly come into effect allowing only foot-based campers in the catchment and then only for three nights.

Department spokesman Don Thompson explained that campers only need three nights to pass through the catchment and the decision to only allow foot-based campers has been in the making for two or three years.

'Hopefully the regulations banning vehicle-based camping will come in within the next two or three months,' he said, adding that the decision to tear down the hut came after 'intensive studies about the benefit to the catchment'.

Mr Thompson said the Melbourne Board of Works also had an interest in the demolition of this hut, although the department had carried it out.

'Melbourne water comes from this dam, so naturally they are going to be concerned about a nearby hut which has vehicular access'.

From Latrobe Valley Express, 7 January 1992.

QUESTION: If the reason for the demolition is because it was attracting vehicle-based campers and vehicle access was to be denied within the next two or three months, thus restricting the use of the hut, **WHY DEMOLISH?** We can only hope that this policy doesn't spread into National Parks and Crown Land!

News from the Tasmanian Association

The Tasmanian Mountain Cattlemen's Association was formed in 1986 by members of three families, who each year drove cattle to summer grazing in the Upper Mersey Valley. Prior to the formation of the TMCA these mountain people had been easy prey to an ignorant bureaucracy, the lunatic fringe of the conservation movement and vote seeking governments.

In the 1970s, large areas of grazing land were lost for national parks, conservations areas and related buffer zones. This was done almost totally without consultation. Since 1986 the TMCA has unified the mountain families into a strong cohesive force. We have successfully fought for the continuation of mountain grazing in areas such as 'The Paddocks' and the 'Vale of Belvoir' and continue to seek the reversal of some of the restrictive policies denying us access to mountain areas.

Like the cattlemen of Victoria, Tasmania's cattlemen and women see themselves as 'living history', representing a uniquely Australian tradition dating back 170 years. It is one of the few links between our modern technology oriented society and our pioneering past.

There are no restrictions on stocking rate made by the Departments controlling the runs.

This has not led to overstocking, but rather the opposite. The runs would be classified as sub-alpine (by forest), and bush runs (either on watersheds or in the head waters of major valleys).

Sharing our Culture

Every year the TMCA holds a weekend Get Together providing the opportunity for city and rural folk alike to share the traditions and culture of the mountain people. It consists of a trail ride with up to 350 riders participating, an evening campfire and stockhorse races and events for all ages the following day. Each year we have invited the MCAV Cattlemen's Cup winner to our championship and last year our winner, Susan Haywood, was proud to compete in the MCAV Cattlemen's Cup.

Our next Get Together will be held at 'The Station House', near Cradle Mountain on the first weekend in February 1992. Any mainland visitors would be most welcome. In fact anyone from the MCAV contemplating a Tasmanian holiday is welcome to drop us a line or give us a call. I can be contacted at P.O. Box 0, Mole Creek, Tas. 7304 or by phone (after dark) (003) 635158.

Roger Tyshing

Roger is the Secretary of the TMCA. He farms at Liena in the Mersey Valley, and runs cows, calves and some steers on a 2,000 acre run on the Mersey/Forth watershed.



Roger Tyshing (Secretary TMCA), William Lankhorst and Doug Treasure at Dick Miles lease 'Big Plain', Tasmania.

To Tender or Not to Tender

There's a valley in the hills,
That gives the greenies all a thrill,
'Cos the Government went and bought it an threw the cattle out.
They thought it wouldn't matter,
To not stock Wonnangatta,
But growing grass is something that they know nought about.

Well the cattlemen did say,
There's a high price you will pay,
For take away the cattle and the grass will surely grow.
You'll have walkers caught in blazes,
And the days filled with smoke hazes,
Will remind you of the valley and haunt you till it snows.

This season was a smasher,
And now they need a slasher,
To keep the grass short beneath their feet.
But despite their empty prattle,
They really should use cattle,
Then they'd have a mowing team that can't be beat.

I think some help I'll render,
So I must put in a tender,
And muster up a slasher for the job.
One hundred cattle power,
And charge them by the hour,
Or else I'll rent to them as a mob.

They'd soon clean up the grass,
To let the hikers pass,
And protect the bush around for one and all.
But I somehow rather fancy,
They don't want cows and Clancy,
For those b...s in the city think they know it all.

So they'll go and get a tractor,
To take to Wonnangatta,
And pay for what has always been for free,
Then they'll put in a tollgate,
To reinforce and regulate,
Keeping out the people who might question what they see.

Now in place of lowing cattle,
You will hear the fiendish rattle,
Of a slasher and a tractor as it goes about its job.
But it will look great when finished,
The fire hazard will be diminished,
But who's got all the money? Tell me, can you spare a bob?

G.A. Knights



A Private Thought about the 1939 Fires

A.J. Treasure

Spring did not come at all in 1938. Instead of that a bush fire came about the middle to the beginning of November 1938. There was nothing to put it out, not even a patch of country that was burned up to ten years before so it soldiered on. It was on a ridge that ran south from Teatree just east of the Humphrey River and it slowly burned and burned and burned. There was no heavy wind to hurry it on because there seldom is wind in a bad drought time in the Alps.

On and on it burned, November, December, January. No burning of breaks had been allowed since the bad fires of 1919. The policy was 'Put out all small fires and there will be no big ones.' But there was nobody to put out a small fire and on 11 January 1939 a wind came and swept that fire eastward for a least fifteen miles. Thursday 12 January was calm and the fire consolidated as though getting ready for an assault on Omeo about thirty miles to the east.

This it did on Friday 13 January 1939. It burned Omeo out.

In those days everybody helped everybody else especially their neighbours and because of the drought some of the Dargo people were out of fed and cattle were getting low in condition chiefly because of the rabbit plague and dry times.

One mob of cattle were going poor fast and it was decided to take the strongest of them to the High Plains, which they did. It was a slow painstaking job, thirty miles, mainly uphill. But with experience and patience they got them there and camped them on the first paddock which was a real picnic for the cows.

They needed a spell for a day or so. Then two of the men took a ride around the cattle, most of them lying down resting after their thirty mile trip. There was nothing that needed to be done with the cattle and one thought it was a good opportunity to

for to the toilet. But it was not as easy as it may have been. If he had not had so many maiden Aunts back at Dargo, and if he had not been such a budding stockman in their eyes.

He was told 'Now, it gets cold up there. You will need three pairs of long trousers on and two jumpers, a couple of overcoats, and leather leggings. You must keep warm in that high country.' So he tied his horse up and proceeded to undress for the occasion. He had not noticed that an old cow had been eyeing him off from about fifty yards away until he had most of his trousers below his knees.

The short prickly needlewood scrub was hard enough to negotiate at anytime but with his legs hobbled and the cow getting closer it seemed a hopeless case.

The cows head got higher and higher and he was a cattleman. That cow was doing double his speed and he knew that when that cows head got high enough and close enough that head would come down and that he would go up.

This fellow was a good church man and maybe that was what saved him, either that or the prickly needlewood scrub, because just about when the cows head was to come down, she got her feet tangled in some scrub and being like all the rest of the drought stricken mob from Dargo she fell.

Then the trouble was to get the poor old thing up on her feet again. That they did and the first thing she wanted to do was to have another go at them!

Two of this mob of cattle were found alive after the fire. The others died in the fire.

To save any possible embarrassment to the parties concerned, names have been omitted. Jim Treasure has supplied Voice with several stories. Look for the next instalment in 1993!

Maid of the Mountains Honoured

On 8 December 1991 about 200 people from both sides of the Divide gathered at Spring Hill junction to witness the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to the memory of Freda Ryder *nee* Treasure.

The plaque which has been placed at the foot of a large rock is just off the Dargo road in the new Freda Treasure Tree Reserve. Freda had lobbied hard to get the reserve gazetted when Sir Albert Lind represented Gippsland. This foresight, and her contribution to the history of the area were recognised with the naming of the reserve in her honour.

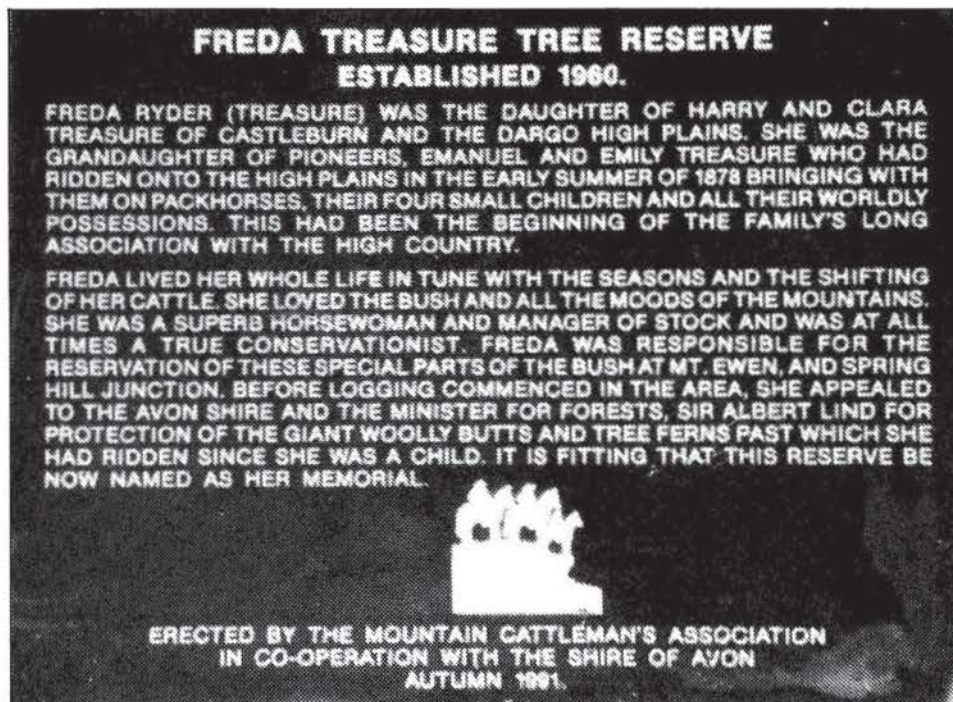
Doug Treasure, President of the MCAV, welcomed all present to the dedication and, after an opening address from Mr Bruce Evans, Heather Mitchell of the Public Land Council, proceeded with the unveiling. Mrs Mitchell expressed her admiration for the cattlemen and women of the high country, and even suggested that had she been born in the mountains that she would probably still be there and fighting to stay there.

She drew a comparison between Freda and Norah (of the *Billabong* books by Mary Grant Bruce). Both were true conservationists and environmentalists, strong, practical and artistic and they both married men named Wally.

Mrs Mitchell had been asked by the Premier of Victoria, Joan Kirner, to add her personal tribute to Freda Ryder. She said, 'Our women pioneers, heroines, and conservationists deserve special recognition. They too made our real heritage.'

After the unveiling of the plaque which had been suitably covered with an oiler, Linette Treasure gave her recollections as a child of Aunty Freda. The moments of silence were broken with the crack of a whip and the call of salt.

Freda's son, Harry and his son then placed some flowers beside the plaque. Harry was amazed at the number of people who had turned up. It was a fitting tribute to a lady of the high country.



The memorial plaque at the tree reserve.

Letters to the Editor

From David Scott, Chairman, Land Conservation Council, Melbourne

I write in response to an article in *Voice of the Mountains* (14/91) concerning the Land Conservation Council's Special Investigation of Wilderness.

1. The Council does not had 'orders from the government to find massive areas of wilderness in Victoria'. The Council is required to identify areas that have wilderness qualities of being essentially natural and remote, and to recommend how they should be protected, particularly for the benefit of future generations. There is no requirement to identify 'massive areas'.

2. The descriptive report referred to in the article identified 23 study blocks. It was made clear that these were only for description purposes, not the boundaries of any areas proposed for protection.

The proposed recommendations, published on April 26, have identified areas that meet the wilderness criteria. Submissions are invited until July 24, and the final recommendations to government will be made by the end of September.

3. The article refers to the need for 'public consultation and an economic impact statement' before any final recommendations are made concerning wilderness. Consultation is an essential part of the LCC process. The recently published proposed recommendations for wilderness areas are now available for comment. They include an independent assessment of the economic impacts.

4. The proposed recommendations would adversely affect eight graziers. A number of options of help reduce the impact on individual licensees are outlined in the recommendations. One of these is not to designate the areas used for grazing as wilderness. The Council is seeking community comment on these options through the publication of its proposed recommendation.

Copies of the proposed recommendations are available at the Department of Conservation and Environment offices. Members of you Association, or other readers, are invited to phone (008) 134-803 if they would like further information about the investigation.

From William Griffiths, 84 Cae'r Gwerlas, Tonyrefail (Rhondda), Mid Glamorganshire, South Wales, U.K.

On 11 August 1991 I watched with great interest the programme *fragile earth* on Welsh TV. It was headed *Australian cattlemen*. The area involved was in Victoria, as the *Victoria Cattlemens Association* was involved. The Blair family of the area have been ranching and driving cattle for 150 years whose highland region is very cold, and damp, and suitable for cattle grazing.

These cattlemen have worked the area for a very long time.

Now we learn that within five years, this land, will be taken over by our environmental department of Australia, they say, that cattle ruin the environment. That sounds somewhat strange to me, it has taken nearly 200 years to suddenly come to the conclusion that cattle actually ruin land.

I have never heard such a load of old rubbish in my life! In Wales, farmers for many centuries have been herding and driving cattle for markets. ... So when these scientific crackpots shout about 200 years of cattle herding and rearing then they should go back to the cities and look at the pollution in the streets. I suppose you have your problems in Australia, if the so-called 'conservationists' wanting to stop cattle herding and ranching in a healthy environment want results, my advice to them is to come to the Irish Sea off the coast of Wales and see real pollution. Myself, I am convinced that these cattle areas of Australia are wanted for national parks to attract tourists for vast profits. ... Tourists by the thousands trample the land, ruin the landscape, wreck the trees, the fences and create a great refuse problem which takes money to put right.

We are 12,000 miles apart but we share a common interest in the preservation of the land.

Australia has a pride in her land just as in Wales. I hope you win through, fight on and win.

From Sue Haywood, 'Blackwood Park', Westbury 7303

To all who made my participation in your MCAV 1991 Cattlemen's Cup possible (especially Mansfield Travel for my airfare) and as one of the most exciting, exhilarating events I will ever compete in—THANK YOU. I hope the years ahead afford me the opportunity to catch up with you all again.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INCORPORATED, HELD AT FARRER HOUSE, 24 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE ON WEDNESDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1991.

PRESENT: G. Stoney, K. Whittam, A. Whittam, W.G. Crump, J. Commins, J. Cook, C. Hodge, J. Rogers, I. Roper, H. Ryder, B. Hicks, M. Blair, K. Heywood, P. Maguire, L. Hayward, M. McNamara, R. Andrews, J. Andrews, M. Jordan, N. Stewart, F. Hill, A. Trahair, A. Hammet, R. McGregor, P. Dix, J. Marrow, P. McCormack, B. McCormack, J. Lovick, M. Allard, Doug Treasure, A. Brewer, S. Silvers, David Treasure, J. Treasure. The Chairman, Allan Brewer opened the meeting at 11.15 am.

APOLOGIES: Were received from T. Barker, D. Kneebone, B. MacGregor, G. Connley, R. and M. Brown, D. Guy, L. McCready, J. Hicks, K. Kelly.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Moved Clive Hodge, seconded John Cook: That the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting as printed in the *Voice of the Mountains* No. 14 of 1991 and circulated to all Members and Associate members be confirmed. Carried.

The Chairman introduced the President of the Association Mr Doug Treasure and thanked him for his support during the past 12 months.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: The past year has been a very quiet one from the Associate members' point of view—no rallies or major media events. For the members, however, it has been a different year to most others. The phase-out issue has been the focus of activities for the year with most of the debate centred around the Bogong High Plains. Bogong High Plains cattlemen have been to many meetings to discuss the situation. A small group—Jim, Kevin, Harry, Graeme, Sue and I, have been involved in meetings with Regional Managers and the Acting Director of National Parks, at DC&E Head office in Melbourne to try to come to a workable resolution to the problem. After all these 'talk fests' I feel we haven't really progressed. The problem is that we

have been involved in negotiations that are supposed to come to a consensus. This can't happen because we have a system that suits them, and guided by theory emanating from a secure, well fed, urban, consumer public.

On the other hand there is us! A group of people living a lifestyle more like our grandparents than anyone else in the community. A lifestyle which is close to, and in harmony with our environment. One that has gone on for a long time, and will continue to go on with little change. This is in stark contrast to our urban brothers' style of life which uses so many consumables.

One of the highlights of my year was the week I spent at the Bogong Ecology course, along with John Maddison and many others. The course summary at the end brought some interesting comments. The chap summarising grazing, who is a teacher and had beads in his hair, described himself as a 'rampant greenie'. He said he now had a different view on Alpine grazing, and felt he had a lot of unanswered questions about it, whereas previously he was against grazing one hundred percent.

An environmental student at the 'sum-up' session said she felt cattle were being used as a scapegoat in the whole Alpine debate.

Another person wished to talk about the management of the Alpine area—after the removal of the ski industry ! That discussion was short.

The course was an eye-opener to me as well as to some of our opponents. The more rational debates we can be involved in, the better. Our opposition sometimes seem more religious than rational, and they need educating.

Our Get Together, at Mansfield this year was very successful, despite numbers through the gate being down. The organisation, work and financial management displayed by the Mansfield Branch is to be applauded. It ended with a good result socially and financially.

The next Get Together, on the Wonnangatta River near Dargo, needs to be a good one. The Gippsland Branch have altered the date to January 18th and 19th 1992 to attract more holidaymakers. Organisation is well underway with added spectator events.

Our ties with Tasmania are going well. I attended their Get Together in February, courtesy of Airlines of Tasmania, and went to a public rally again in July to be their guest speaker. They have a problem in the Vale of Belvoir, south of Ulverstone, similar to our Bogong situation. The result of the public meeting was to get the Government to refer the decision to yet another committee. The Tasmanians are hoping for a change of Government at the next election, with more sympathetic treatment after that.

David Treasure and Graeme Stoney are seeking greener pastures, and I would like to thank David, our immediate past President, and present Council member for his work, and wish him very best luck.

The Association will miss Graeme Stoney. His drive and inspiration has underpinned our strategies, and we will miss his single-minded concentration. Very few of the members realise the extent of time and effort put in by Graeme.

Thank you both, and very best wishes for the future.

To Sue—thank you. You have done it again. Sue's paperwork is like inflation—it keeps compounding on last year's excesses. For the early morning and late night phone calls at home, and the trips to Melbourne or Bogong at short notice, we thank you, as well as for work in the office.

Thank you also to Harry Ryder for your efforts in the phase out issue.

There are many others who have put in a lot over the year—thanks to you also. As this is a 'grass roots' organisation, we all need to put in, and the members do—if you feel you haven't done much lately, don't worry, the opportunity will present itself.

Best wishes to the office bearers for next year. It will be an interesting one!

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT: Graeme Stoney reported that the Association's past year has been totally taken up working towards obtaining our 7 year licences, and negotiating with the Department over the phase out relocations.

We have held many meetings with the Department both at Alpine Working Group and Regional level.

TONY and LEONIE PENDERGAST

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Most of these meetings have seen little progress made, however the access to the Department via the Alpine Grazing Working Group has at least given us an official forum to voice our concerns.

We have taken a consistent and strong stand with the Department, and the various minutes of the meetings confirm this. We have regularly said that we consider:

1. That the Government promised that no cattleman would be disadvantaged by the phase outs.
2. That the Government promised that alternate runs would be found for the phased out licensees.
3. That the remaining members are eligible for 7 year licences for a licence commensurate with the area held at May 1989, when the Alpine Park legislation was passed.

Despite our stand, the Department presented us with a fait accompli on the phase out issue which is as follows:

The northern Bogong licensees take a 30% cut.
The southern Bogong takes a 15% cut.

On top of this the Department has changed, without notice, the traditional attitude to cows and calves. Calves are now, for the first time on Bogong, being regarded as 'head'. This move effectively sharply drops the total number of cattle individual licensees can take up, if they run cows and calves.

This issue and many other concerns we have are being negotiated with the Department at present. The outcome of these negotiations, which are being conducted on a without prejudice basis, will determine the next step the Association decides to take. Recourse to an independent panel is available to resolve disputes concerning terms and conditions of the licence. However, if negotiations break down on the subject of commensurate licences, the only recourse left to the Association will be to apply to a Court of appropriate jurisdiction. This will be reluctantly undertaken, but if it is the only way, taken it will be.

Scientific Findings — Roger Oxley has completed his work and has published his review of available scientific papers.

He also completed his measuring work and has released his findings which are extremely interesting and helpful. Dr Allan Wilson also gave assistance and advice this year, and reviewed some of Roger Oxley's work on a professional basis.

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We are now faced with claims being made under the flora and Fauna Guarantee, and Oxley's and Wilson's work will be valuable for this.

The battle goes on and on!

We really do need a lot more scientific information, but the National Farmers Federation finances have been used up, and it looks unlikely we can access more funding at this stage.

I have been preselected for a safe Liberal seat in the Legislative Council, and it is highly likely I will be in Parliament after the next election.

Therefore I regretfully have to tender my resignation from the Central Council at this meeting.

I am happy to continue helping the Association until the election on an unofficial basis if needed.

I wish the Association every success in its on going battle to retain Alpine grazing rights.

My thanks to President Doug Treasure, Chairman Allan Brewer, Secretary Sue Silvers, the Central Council and the members for their support and encouragement when my job got tough from time to time over the years.

MARKETING OFFICER'S REPORT: Annie Whittam reported that Marketing has again experienced another dismal year. There are a number of reasons for this poor performance, some of which are reduced numbers at the Get Together, the recession affected economy, the low profile of the MCAV over the past 12 months, and the fact that marketing was not present at any other events during the year.

I would like to thank John and Roslyn Andrews for looking after marketing at the Get Together.

Finally, I hope things pick up in the future.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT: Sue Silvers presented her sixth Annual Report as Secretary/Treasurer. She reported that full membership numbers have remained at 86, Associate membership has dropped to approximately 1600 (a proportion being families). I believe that the drop in Associate membership can only be expected in this economic climate, however I feel confident that support for the Mountain Cattlemen is still a force in the community.

Central Council has met five times this year the main topics for discussion being the terms and conditions relating to the 7 year grazing licences, and the position regarding the phase outs on the northern end of the Bogong High Plains.

The Alpine Grazing Working Group had four meetings in Melbourne this year, the agenda largely taken up with the licence issue.

The third major problem the Association faced during 1990/1991 was the question of proposed Wilderness areas and how this would affect our members.

It is now history that the Association was forced into the position of seeking legal advice regarding the licences, when it became clear that negotiations with the Department were bogged down and stalled. Briefly, the Association Solicitors wrote to the Minister demanding that the licences be issued without further delay, documentation was prepared, and with less than 48 hours to go before filing our documents in the Supreme Court, the Minister issued the licences. They are not satisfactory. Allocation numbers were altered by the inclusion of calves as an adult beast, and a range of minor, petty 'over-regulations' were imposed. However with the licences issuing as, and when they did, two significant results were achieved. One was that those of our members who were under threat from

Wilderness proposals were granted licences for their full areas, and licences were issued to the phase out cattlemen bringing them into the system. As for the minor issues, they have been resolved with the Department of Conservation and Environment, the question of the reduced allocation remains for resolution.

The Association is now faced, as was always expected, with the threat of the Flora and Fauna Conservation Guarantee. The Alpine bog community, fen (bog pool) sub-community, Dwarf Sedge, Mountain Daisy and Mountain Cress have been nominated as threatened, and are before the Flora and Fauna Scientific Advisory Committee for recommendation. The Association has put a submission to the Committee which includes the work done by Roger Oxley, and Dr Allan Wilson, and has requested a meeting with the Committee in order to put forward our wealth of experience and observation. At the time of writing this report, the Minister is considering our request to meet with the Committee.

Rangeland Consultant Roger Oxley, and Dr Wilson from the University of Melbourne, have completed the work commissioned by the Association. All of the papers are very encouraging, particularly the work relating to fire and grazing, and we are currently arranging to have these papers printed in order that they may be distributed, and used by the Association to keep the cattlemen, and the cattle, in the mountains.

In April this year, in freezing, wet and miserable weather, the Association hosted the Coalition Conservation Committee on a trip from Falls Creek to Ropers Hut, and Roger Oxley explained vegetation patterns, lack of damage by cattle etc. along the way. Many of the cattlemen had a chance to express their views and the meeting was a positive one. The Association thanks Ian and Belinda Roper for being hosts on that day, and for the warmth of their fire.

Members of the Central Council have since had a meeting with Mark Birrell, and have agreed to keep in touch with him overall the issues which are of concern to us.

It is with sadness that we record the death on 20th June 1991 of Don Kneebone. Don was a foundation member of this Association, a member of its Central Council, and a man of great knowledge. He will be sadly missed.

The Association will have to take great care with its finances over the next 12 months. Total receipts are down compared to last year, but this is explained mainly by the drop in proceeds from the Get Together, and by the fact that the Trust Account receipts were initially held in the Central Account pending completion of the Trust Deed. Associate memberships were also lower last financial year, which is not surprising in view of the general economic climate which also shows in the fall in donations received by the Association.

In respect of the Trust Account, the grant from the National Farmers Federation will be used by the time printing and distribution is made of the papers by Roger Oxley and Dr Wilson. The Association should carefully consider the depletion of the Trust Account, particularly in view of legal costs which have been incurred, and which may sharply increase in future if action is to be taken over the seven year licence issue.

Taking into account extreme difficulties in the rural sector compounded by recession, it would not be reasonable to increase subscriptions, and the Association would benefit from an increase in marketing, and a good result from the next Get Together.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Central Council members for their support over the past 12 months, and in particular Graeme Stoney who has always been ready to give his time and undivided attention to the running of the Association and the solution of its problems. Without his efforts, I doubt we would be meeting here today. I wish Graeme and David all the very best in future endeavours, and would remind them both, that we shall be following their new careers with great interest.

Moved Harry Ryder seconded Jim Commins that the reports of the Executive Officer, Marketing Officer and Secretary/Treasurer be received. Carried.



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SETTING OF FEES: Moved Doug Treasure seconded Bill Hicks that the subscription fees for full and associate membership of the MCAV remain the same for 1991/92 as the year 1990/1991. Carried.

It was noted by the meeting that particularly in view of the fact that there was to be no increase in subscription fees over the next 12 months that the Branches would have to become more involved in the marketing, and take an active interest in local shows etc.

FIXING HONORARIUMS: President and Chairman: Moved Ian Roper seconded John Rogers that the Honorarium for the President be \$3,000 plus expenses, and the Chairman \$1,000 plus expenses. Carried.

Executive Officer: Moved John Cook seconded Jim Commins that the position of Executive Officer be suspended for 12 months. Carried.

Moved Jim Commins seconded Max Blair that Graeme Stoney be co-opted to the Central Council until the next Victorian State election. Carried.

Secretary/Treasurer: Moved Clive Hodge seconded Doug Treasure that the Honorarium for the position of Secretary/Treasurer be \$12,000 plus expenses. Carried.

Special Projects Officer: Moved Graeme Stoney seconded Louise Heywood that the Honorarium for the position of Special Projects Officer be \$1,000 plus expenses. Carried.

Marketing Officer: Moved Graeme Stoney seconded Doug Treasure that the Honorarium for the position of Marketing Officer be \$1,000 plus expenses.

Assistant Secretary: Moved Graeme Stoney seconded Peter McCormack that the Secretary be authorised to spend the sum of \$1,000 on casual part-time assistance as needed. Carried.

It was suggested that work experience students might be interested in doing this.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS: The Chairman handed the Chair to Graeme Stoney for the election of Office bearers for the year 1991/1992.

Mr Stoney thanked the Chairman for his work and great effort over the past 12 months, and declared all positions to be vacant.

President: Doug Treasure nominated by John Rogers. Elected.

Chairman: It was noted that the President could always take the Chair.

Allan Brewer nominated by Jim Commins was elected. Ian Roper congratulated Allan Brewer on his work for the Association.

Motion to suspend standing orders to welcome Alex Arbuthnot as guest speaker was moved by Allan Brewer and seconded by Doug Treasure.

Mr Arbuthnot addressed the meeting on the challenges facing Australians and particularly Australian farmers in the 1990s. He observed that farmers are a conservative group of people who are quickly learning to stick together to achieve results. One of the challenges which has been identified is that of imported food and the effect this is having on Australian growers. Better products can be produced in Australia, and this will be one of the major projects in the coming years. Mr Arbuthnot

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said that farmers want change and leadership, particularly in the labour market, and one example of this is the use of contract labour being brought in to re-open abattoirs in Seymour and Camperdown. Unions see contract labour as a major threat. Another issue is that of the environment. The environmental movement want reduction in consumption, reduction in the use of fuel and reduction in farm stocking rates. This anti-productive attitude will have a very adverse effect on Australia and particularly on Australian primary producers. Farmers must stick together on issues like these. Mr Arbuthnot pledged his support for the Association, and offered support from the Victorian Farmers Federation.

On the subject of stock levies, Mr Arbuthnot observed that costs and Government charges are still the major contributor to the drop in net farm incomes, and said we must all work to step up the heat on micro economic reform.

A vote of thanks to Mr Arbuthnot was made by Jim Commins and warmly supported by the meeting.

The meeting adjourned for lunch.

The meeting resumed at 1.15 pm.

Moved Clive Hodge seconded Peter McCormack that standing orders be resumed.

Marketing Officer: Roslyn Andrews was nominated by Graeme Stoney. Elected.

Special Projects Officer: Jim Commins nominated by John Rogers. Elected.

Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Silvers nominated by Clive Hodge. Elected.

Senior Vice President: Harry Ryder nominated by Graeme Stoney. Elected. Mr Ryder stated that he accepted the position on the understanding that he would not be able to accept the position of President next year.

Second Vice President: Bruce McCormack nominated by Graeme Stoney. Elected.

Auditor: Mr W. Crump was appointed as Auditor to the Association for the coming year.

OTHER BUSINESS: Clive Hodge reported that he is on the Gippsland Central Forest Management Committee, and is concerned with the deterioration of the forest country. He nominated kangaroos as a major problem, particularly in the context of

kangaroos coming from National Parks and creating problems on private land. He said that regulations for landowners to be able to control vermin on private land needed to be strengthened, and that the Forest Management Committee was contacting the V.F.F. for support. The meeting agreed that more power needed to be given to land holders to deal with vermin on private land.

A letter from the Policy Consultants regarding their fees for the coming year was discussed, and the meeting agreed to the increase in fees in view of the value of the work done for the Association by the Policy Consultants.

The question of Shire Rates being paid by licensees of Crown Land was raised, and whether it was legal for a Shire to charge rates. Those affected were referred to the Local Government Authority in Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The Chairman invited the President, Mr Doug Treasure to take the Chair for the presentation of Certificates.

Mr Treasure spoke of the work done by Graeme Stoney for the Association. The meeting endorsed Life Membership for Mr Stoney. Jim Commins presented Mr Stoney with a Life Membership Certificate, and thanked him for his work over the years.

Graeme Stoney thanked Keith and Annie Whittam for their support for the Association over the years. The meeting endorsed an Honorary Associate Membership for Keith and Annie Whittam. Mr Stoney presented them with their Certificate.

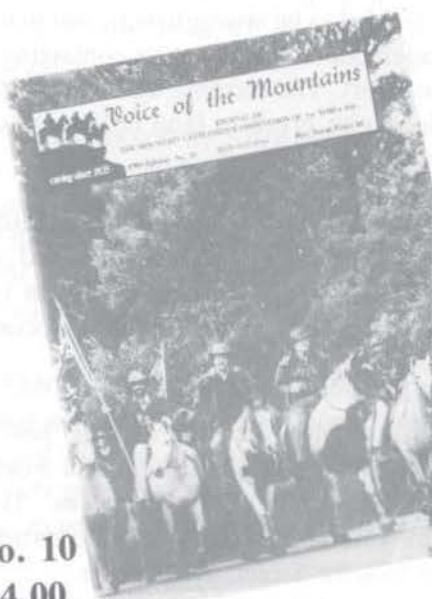
Mr Jim Commins thanked David Treasure for his work for the Association over the years and presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Mr Doug Treasure presented a Certificate of Life Membership to Mr Jim Commins. Mr Commins had been made a Life Member at a previous Annual General Meeting when he retired as President.

Mr John Rogers thanked Sue Silvers for her support for the Association. The meeting endorsed Life Membership for Sue Silvers, and Mr Rogers presented her with her Certificate.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2.20 pm.

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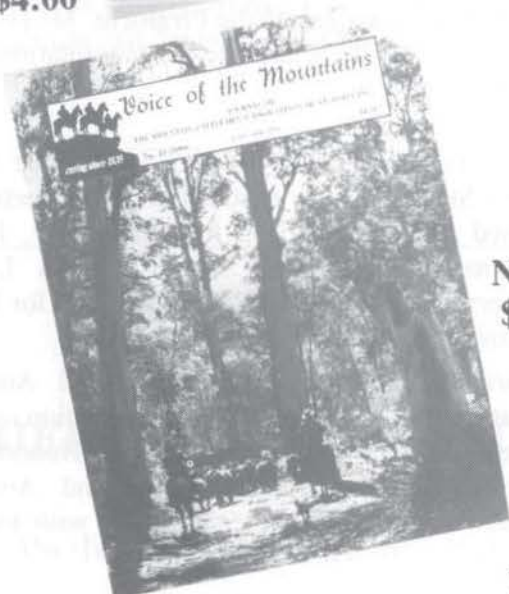
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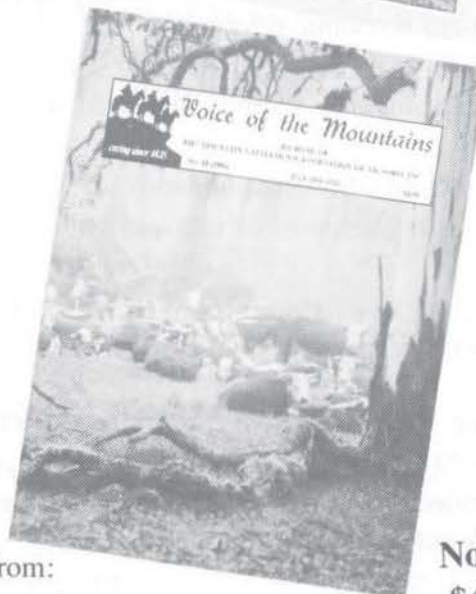
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Voice of the Mountains is grateful for the assistance of 'the Anapakers' with the collation of this, and the previous issue.

We are also grateful to the following people for their assistance with the supply of photographs and information for this issue: Mary Goldsworthy, Sue Ryder, Linette Treasure, Helen Stoney, Archdeacon Malcolm Crawley, Colleen Hurley, Leonard Ryan, L. Babidge, and Betty Fitzgerald.

As usual, E Gee Printers, have excelled themselves in getting this issue together in record time. We are sincerely thankful of their support.

