



Voice of the Mountains

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

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Editorial Committee: Debra Squires, Linda Barraclough and Sue Silvers

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**This issue of *Voice of the Mountains*
celebrates the 25th anniversary of the formation of the
Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria.**

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FRONT COVER: 'Cowby' Fry and friend at Helicopter Flat, King Billy. Photograph by Shirley Fry, winner of the colour Landscape section in the Photographic Competition.

INSERT: Horse and Rider as photographed by Beth Cole-Sinclair, overall winner of the Photographic Competition.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we move into 1994, and at the time of the 25th anniversary of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association, it seems appropriate to take stock of our achievements, accept gracefully our defeats, and take strength from our collective determination, friendship and solidarity.

"Mountain Cattlemen Care for the High Country". This slogan has become so well known. During the 1980s the cattlemen became a household name in Victoria and around Australia. The Association remains firmly committed to the retention of grazing in the alpine region of Victoria. As broader scientific studies are carried out, our caring for the high country will be confirmed.

Our determination and solidarity have also been tested over the last 25 years. If we had not stood firm, and stood firm together, there would now be no cattle on the high plains and pastures of Victoria's alpine area. This determination is entrenched in us all, and we look forward to a continuation of our heritage and tradition for many generations to come.

The continuation of our tradition of alpine grazing is part of the current government policy, and legislation will protect the mountain cattlemen in the 1990s. However we are still working very hard to educate the next generation by providing information and speakers to schools, and this has been very well received by teachers and students alike.

It is also interesting to reflect that for the first time, the position of President is filled by a woman. My family, the Westons, have been grazing cattle in the high country since 1888, firstly on Mount Buffalo, then the Bogong High Plains after 1923. The women of the family have worked beside their men, and behind the scenes, to build up family holdings and pass on the traditions and skills to the next generation. The role of women in our pioneering history is becoming more accepted and more widely known.

In this Association women have never been treated as special or vulnerable. Whilst friendliness and courtesy are always extended, there is no differing between cattlemen and cattlemen, and we have always resisted being called by the latter!

There have been some famous women involved in alpine grazing in their own right, Freda Ryder being perhaps the most well known. So it is with a mixture of inspiration and pride that I follow in her footsteps, and those of others.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow cattlemen, it is comforting to know that I will receive all the support and advice I need. Thanks also to the Association's secretary, Sue Silvers, who has made my transition to President so much easier.

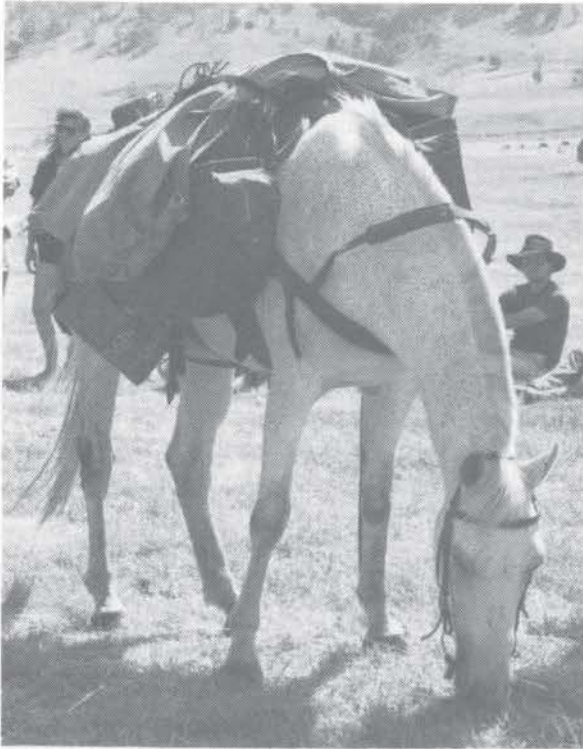
To our Associate Members, your continuing support is warmly welcomed and much appreciated.

Victorians, especially those in the North East of our state, again discovered the sense of working for the one another during the recent floods which devastated many towns and hectares of farming land. May this spirit of caring continue on towards the year 2000.

I wish everyone the very best for the New Year and 1994.

Mary Goldsworthy

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Bogong Jack

From *Personal Recollections of Early Victoria* by A.A.C. LeSouef



Bogong Jack's Hut in the 1930s.

Bogong Jack is one of the most enduring figures in the folklore of the mountains. A horse thief who spirited horses from Gippsland for sale in the North-east, and then collected others for a return sale back in Gippsland, he was revered for feats of daring horsemanship. Equally persistent was said to be a policeman on his tracks, one Constable Dungey. Dungey's Track out of Crooked River recalls a route that he pioneered in an attempt to follow his quarry.

No historian can say for sure who Bogong Jack is, or what happened to him. For many years a hut on the Fainter Spur bore his name, but it was a modern one, built on the site of the much earlier one that he may have occupied.

Bogong Jack is sometimes considered to be John Paynter of Omeo, who was known to be 28

at the time of his marriage at Omeo in 1858. The incidents described below are said to have taken place about 1851, and Le Souef then describes Bogong Jack as being 'somewhat under forty', a difference of just under twenty years in age. This account, if correct, can therefore only add to the mystery of Bogong Jack's true identity.

In 1967 Eric Harding published his book *Bogong Jack: Gentleman Bushranger*, which is now out of print and very difficult to obtain on the antiquarian book market. He subscribes to the theory that Bogong Jack was John Paynter, as does Harry Stephenson in *Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains*. Both claim Bogong Jack simply 'disappeared', which adds to the folklore surrounding him. Le Souef, however, claims it was quite well known he was drowned while being pursued by police, and the two suggestions

for his disappearance do not sit well together. This raises the question: could there have been two Bogong Jacks?

This account is from a typescript in possession of *Voice*. The exact details of its first publication continue to elude us at this time, but a manuscript copy is held at the South Australian Museum, and probably in other places. This section begins as Le Souef and companions are mustering a run at Barwidgee about 1851.

'Bogong Jack' the Horse-stealer

At about eight o'clock, on the evening of our arrival, the hut keeper came to us and told us that a noted cattle and horse stealer, known as 'Bogong Jack', had just arrived and was in the kitchen, having something to eat, and that he was anxious to see us. We had often heard of the man, but did not anticipate meeting with him here. We knew from report that he was a fine bush rider and stockman, and as we wanted help in mustering, we thought we might be able to utilise his services; we therefore told the hut-keeper to send him to us. In a few minutes we heard a tap at the door, and in response to our 'come in', the latch was lifted and the 'Bogong' stood before us, his cabbage tree hat in his left hand. He looked the very beau ideal of a stockman, as he stood there in corduroy breeches and boots, blue shirt and a scarlet sash round his waist. He was, I should judge, somewhat under forty; a thin, wiry man, about five feet ten inches high with an intelligent face and a quick eye. We wished him good evening and asked his business. He twisted his hat about and replied, 'I heard you were coming up to muster the cattle on the run, and thought you might want some one to help you who knew the country, for it will take some hard riding to get them in, for they are about as wild as kangaroos,' he added with a smile. 'Well, Bogong, and if we employ you, what wages do you want?' 'Give me £2 a week,' he said, 'and I'll do my best for you and ride my own horses, and yours can't beat them, I know, for I had a look at

your nags before I came to the station.' Ogilvie and I whispered to each other, and then told him that we agreed to his terms and to show our confidence in him, would place our horses in his charge, as he knew where the best feed was. Jack laughed and said 'Alright, I'll look after them; as you trust me I'll act on the square with you'. The business thus satisfactorily settled, we asked him to sit down and have a talk as to our plans for the muster. He told us the stockyard was in bad repair, and that it would take all hands a couple of days to repair it and put up a wing to guide the cattle in and prevent them from breaking away, 'for', he added, 'the herd has not been properly mustered for the last three years, and they are as wild as hawks'. After chatting for half an hour, we gave him a couple of figs of good tobacco and wished him good-night.

The next morning we were all up early, and after breakfast, commenced at the yard. It took us all day to make it secure, as some new rails had to be put in and the old slip panels had to be renewed. On the following day we put up a strong wing, and the day after commenced the muster. We took a mob of about fifty head of quiet cattle, milkers and their offspring, and left them on a cattle camp about three miles from the yard, in charge of Charlie Ogilvie. Jack told us the cattle would make for this camp, if we could get them out of the ranges. Jack rode a splendid bay horse named Charley, which he informed us was the best horse in the Island, and we were all well mounted, too. Jack led the way, as he knew the run, and in about half an hour we sighted a mob of about a hundred head. We at once halted and made our arrangements. Bogong said that he thought he and Ogilvie should keep behind them when the mob started, and that Gilbert and myself had better keep in front, if we could, and steady them, especially when we came to the camp where we had left the quiet mob. This arranged, we approached the cattle as quietly as we could. They no sooner saw us than they were off at a break-neck pace. We managed to turn them in the direction we wished, and that was all we could do for a time. The country was rough and rangy, but our horses, as well as ourselves, were used to the work. After running them for a mile or so, Gilbert and I tried to steady them and stop their headlong

pace, as I knew in another mile we would reach the camp where the quiet cattle were. In a little while, I heard Bogong shout out something I could not hear, and in another minute he galloped to the head of the cattle. 'You're as stupid as owls,' he yelled out as he flew past me, 'don't you see they are passing the camp?' Just at this moment I caught sight of Charlie Ogilvie and the milkers, and with an extra dig of the spurs, I followed close behind Jack and we managed to wheel the mob; by galloping round them a few times, we steadied them on the camp - the wild and tame together. As soon as the brutes were a little quiet, Jack rode up to where Ogilvie and I were sitting on our panting horses: 'Don't you mind what I say when I am a bit excited,' he said, 'I know the country better than you do, and if the cattle had not been stopped on this camp, they would have broken and we should have lost half of them.' As soon as our nags had recovered their wind, we started the cattle again towards the yard, and the brutes seemed to know they were beaten, for we kept them together and guarded them with little trouble and without the loss of a beast.

The next day we went out to another part of the run, and were again fortunate in yarding sixty or seventy head, after a long and hard gallop.

Charlie Ogilvie was of no use in mustering, but he proved very useful in tailing or herding the cattle in the neighbourhood of the yard. He and Gilbert did this necessary part of the work, while Ogilvie, Bogong and myself went out day after day until we had mustered a draft of four hundred head. This was as many as we had anticipated getting, so we made up our minds to take them to Melbourne for sale, and return some other time for the rest of the herd, supposed to be nearly as many more.

Jack accompanied us as far as the Ovens and helped us across the river. Wishing us good-bye, he told us there were several warrants for horse stealing out for him and he was afraid to cross the Ovens, as he might fall into the hands of the Police. I asked him to sell me his bay horse 'Charley'. 'No!' he said, 'I won't for two reasons; first, I want him for myself and secondly, he is not

on the square'. 'But,' he added, 'I'll sell you Tushbung (alluding to a splendid little mare he had) she's allright; you may have her for £10'. I gladly gave him the money and I had her for many a day and a splendid mare she proved.

We felt quite sorry to part with Jack, he had served us so faithfully and well. He told us his first thought, when he heard of our coming, was to steal our horses, but before doing so, he thought he would offer his services at a good price, and as we had agreed to his terms without haggling, and had trusted him with our horses, his better nature had been touched and he determined to do all he could for us, and so he did. We never met him again and a few years afterwards heard that he had been drowned while the Police were in pursuit of him. He had been called 'Bogong' from the incident that some years before the time of which I am now writing, he had lived in a cave on the Bogong Mountains for some time when warrants were out against him. One day he pointed out to me a large flat granite rock on a high range, over which he told me he had galloped his horse some months before we met him, the Police being after him, but they were afraid to follow him and he escaped. If the story was true, his horse must have been a wonderfully sure-footed beast, as the rock, although flat, was sloping down the range, but he was one of the finest horses I ever saw and Jack himself was one of the best bushriders, if not the best, I ever saw. I never knew what the man's real name was, as he always avoided the subject.

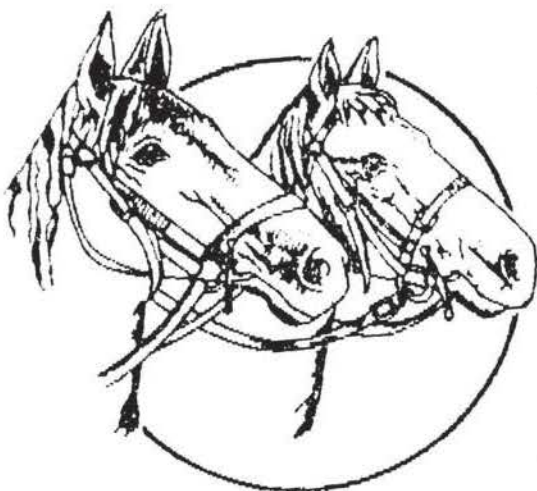
About a year after this time, I was staying one night at a squatter's house on the lower Ovens, and in the course of the evening mentioned that I had lately seen Bogong Jack and that he rode one of the finest horses I had ever seen. 'Yes!' my host said, 'the scoundrel stole that horse from me. He was a splendid and valuable colt, and soon after he was broken in he stole him one night out of the paddock, about three years ago.'

Compiled by Linda Barraclough

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The Disaster of the Trial Plot

When the first big mob of cattle were being taken to Mount Buffalo in early December 1912, I was sent home by my father when Mackays Lookout was reached as he thought the trip to the top would be too hard and long for me.

However, the muster on our home run had been poor, and I found myself some two weeks later being allowed to accompany my father in taking some 25 head to the top of the plateau.

After arriving at McKinnons Turntable, the cattle were taken over rough tracks to Crystal Brook, reaching there just below the Devil's Couch. When I asked my father how this huge pile of granite rocks got such a peculiar name, he told me that some 35 years before, as the group of doctors who were the pioneer tourists on Buffalo, were returning from the North End, they were surprised to see, as twilight was falling, what appeared to be a huge black body (like a devil) wriggling about on the big top rock. As the group approached closer they could see that the black mass on top was a large number of migrant crows busily engaged in snatching down Bogong Moths that were hovering close to the rock in their mating flight. That was my first lesson into the ecology of the mountains.

We drove along to the Five Acre Plain, where we decided to leave them and have lunch. There I received my second lesson. On either side of the small stream of cold clear water was a strip of 'Wait-a-Bit' scrub, as cattlemen called it, that followed the stream across the plain on which green grass was appearing. As we sat on a grassy bank having lunch beside the stream, I noticed that while a large number of crows were hunting around the plain for grasshoppers, none would venture close to the scrub on either side. Soon I noticed that a swarm of mountain grasshoppers of every size, shape and colour were clinging motionless to the scrub to which they had travelled for protection and hiding. As I scrambled along the banks of the creek to see if there were any trout in the pools, a fox, which had been feasting on the hoppers and was ready to pounce on any unwary crow, sped away to rocky

fringe, scattering any crows on the plain in its getaway. In many trips to Mount Buffalo over the next decade, it was always noticeable that flocks of either crows or ibis would only alight and land for insects on those areas when the grass had been grazed short by cattle. In 1923, the lease to graze cattle on Buffalo was cancelled and a run was obtained on the Bogong High Plains.

In the decades of the thirties and forties, the same bird patterns were noticeable in the Ovens Valley beside Buffalo. In those years, swarms of small brown grasshoppers would ravage pastures until flocks of migrant crows, ibis and starlings came to the rescue to make a fabulous clean-up of the insects on paddocks where grazing had kept pastures short or they had been cut for hay. But, they never ventured down into paddocks of long grass where they could be ambushed by fox or feral cat.

In the early fifties, conservationists, urban politicians and others, started a crusade to show cattlemen the error of their ways and eliminate grazing from the alpine areas. They agreed to secure an area that could be securely fenced on the Bogong High Plains. A small catchment of some 30 acres was selected on the far side of the Rocky Valley Dam and suitably fenced at some expense to prevent grazing.

Over the years, field days were held at various times and reports on the condition of the plot and its contrast with the grazed country alongside were made available to the media. It was my view that the reports or propaganda that followed only reflected the wishful thinking of its sponsors. Usually I made personal visits to see what was happening but I was also there when the field day was held in 1957. Yes, the group of some fifty persons stood beside the fence of the trial plot and they could see the contrast between the short grazed growth outside and the profusion of growth inside. Nobody made an effort to examine what was going on inside.

This is what I saw happen after a careful study over the three years and it will illustrate that

changes in the ecology take place. Although free from grazing in the first summer, there was only a thin growth of seed head of native grasses. In the second summer, the seed heads were thick and over two feet high.

While large numbers of crows could be seen roaming about on the grazed plains, never could one be seen alighting in the high cover of the plot area, where a slow ominous change was taking place. At first, some eggs of mountain grasshoppers, which had lain dormant for some years or laid by survivors that had escaped crows, were encouraged to hatch out by the moist warm cover. From year to year, they soon bred up to plaque numbers and when I entered the plot in 1957, they were in swarms in all shapes, colours and sizes as I had seen them on Buffalo. While there, I watched several small flocks of crows fly over the plot but not one dared alight in the area through fear of ambush by foxes.

In the years that followed, as the mountain grasses would attempt to make growth and seed cover, the hoppers would slowly desiccate all leaf and stems of the grasses, sucking out the sap rather than eating the growth. This dead material then formed a damp, warm mulch that encouraged the seeds of the shrubs and snow gum which remained dormant for many years, to strike. With the growth of grass restricted by hoppers, these shrubs and trees grew and flourished, and in a span of twenty to twenty five years, you have the transformation from grassy plain to wilderness area that makes travel difficult.

Had a fire started there, possibly as a result of lightning, the heat would have been so great that the plot would have been a scar enduring for years. If cattle are removed from the alpine areas, that transition to wilderness areas will become general and sooner or later there will be the greatest conflagration in our history. Even in my boyhood days, crows and ibis would visit the alpine areas to control insect life; but before that; the scientist, William Howitt, gave a great description of the exodus of thousands of those birds down the Mitta as winter storms came in 1854.

The dramatic pattern of change from clean pasture to acute fire hazard, as happened to the trial plot, has long been duplicated by events since the end of grazing on Buffalo in 1923. Since my grandfather, James Fitzgerald, began to run cattle there in 1858, I have only heard of two fires that gained access to the plateau, in the summers of 1914 and 1918. Both fires were easily controlled by two men as there was little long grass to carry fire.

My father ran cattle on Buffalo from 1888 to 1923 and his policy of management ensured easy control of fire. Sensible grazing and a burning that singed any dry grass was all that was necessary, when mustering took place in April or May as weather allowed.

Since the end of grazing on Buffalo in 1925, there has been a slower but identical change similar to that at the little patch plot. But by January 1926, there was so much long grass that



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a hot fire raged across the plateau until quenched by rain. Apart from the hideous sight of fire killed Snow Gum and Woolly Butt, even the plain areas have a bedraggled appearance.

While they present enough fox cover to frighten off the wary crows, the grasses are under dual attack from hoppers and grubs of the Bogong moth. These grubs are identical to the cutworm grubs that damage our garden plants. By day, they hide by burrowing up to an inch under the soil beside the host plant.

On a visit to the high plains, I noticed a group of crows busy on some short grazed pasture where there was not likely to be any hoppers for food. Curious of the reason, I found they were locating grubs from loose patches of soil beside tufts and relishing the grub just as much as the Aborigine enjoyed the moths which used to swarm around such formations in countless millions.

So, slowly but surely, since grazing ceased, scrubs take over the plains of Buffalo and it will take an army of rangers to safely maintain the mount as cattle did.

The trial plot clearly showed that the policy of conservationists must surely lead to the ruination of the alpine regions. In the massive report on the proposed management plan for the national parks, there is no mention of the mediums - foxes, hoppers, grubs, fungi and frosts - that now govern the ecology there.

Percy Weston

Percy Weston, recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday. He maintains an active interest in the MCAV, of which his niece Mary is the current President. His remarkable memory holds a wealth of first hand knowledge of grazing on Mount Buffalo and the Bogongs.

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Old Bill owed me money ... result of a bet,
He said he would settle when Meg's pups were born.
He offered a pup to wipe out the old debt
So, I mentally christened that pup, 'Peppercorn'.

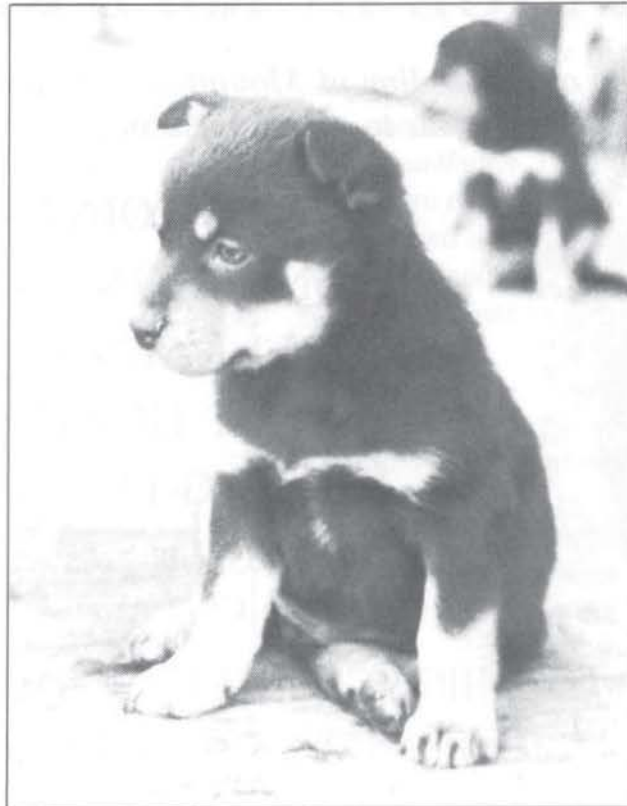
At six weeks I picked out a pup to suit to me,
His coat was a mixture of blue, black and fawn,
And even at that age a leader was he
As he fought all the others, my small 'Peppercorn'.

Together we travelled far over the years,
Saw many a sunset and many a dawn;
He knew all my problems and witnessed my tears
When loved ones were taken ... my pal, 'Peppercorn'.

And when it came time for us both to retire,
As bodies grown weary, to comfort were drawn,
We headed for home and a place by the fire
To dream of times past, me and old 'Peppercorn'.

Now gone to his final rest under a tree
He's left me alone here, his passing to mourn;
I'll try to be patient till time stops for me
Then take the same road till I find 'Peppercorn'.

*Dorothy B. Watt
Briagolong*



Searches and Rescues

Through the years mountain cattlemen have been involved in a number of rescues. Some are extremely well-documented, and others are not so well known. Given the weather patterns of the high country, and the lack of maps in early days of bushwalking, it is a wonder there were not more.

In the past years there has been much debate about the use of cattlemen's huts as refuges, and powerful argument for their retention. Huts are also considered culturally and historically significant, as well as vital for the safety of those who go into the high country.

What is not so often considered is the role of those cattlemen who built and maintained the huts. Their knowledge of their environment comes from long years of experience. Often, their very presence has prevented tragedy.

The first local case I have been able to find of a cattleman 'redirecting' a tourist is that of Richard Riggall of Glenfalloch. During Easter in 1887 he was able to assist Alfred William Howitt, who was having a singular lack of success in his attempt to locate the mountain lake, Tarli Karng. Howitt was no bunny in the bush, having led expeditions of exploration in South Australia, a successful government prospecting party along the Wonnangatta and Wongungurra Rivers, and finally made two expeditions to Central Australia: the first to locate the remains of Burke and Wills, the second to collect their remains for reburial in Melbourne. Still, he was 'a little disoriented' and Riggall explained the location of the lake to him, and he proceeded to 'discover' it. Riggall never claimed discovery in his name, explaining he had been told of its location by Johnny Snowdon, an Aboriginal stockman from Glenfalloch. Riggalls Spur is still a name on the maps of the area, although Riggalls hut has long gone.

Not long ago, Arthur Guy, veteran mountain cattleman and one of those who packed many an early group of walkers onto the high

plains, was asked how many rescues he had been involved in. Thinking about it, he replied that there had not been many, but he had lost count of how many people he had 'redirected', because he and other cattlemen spent so much time on the plains in summer. Many were miles, and even watersheds from where they thought they actually were.

Over the years there has been little study made of the searches for those who are lost in the high country, and the rescue of those found. There have also been times when people have been injured, although not lost. Often the rescue has then involved cattlemen, and these too need recording. There are few people left from the two rescues by tiger moth of injured cattlemen, Bob Goldie and Jimmy Kelly, in the Tamboritha / Benison / Wellington area, although one of them is the pilot, Neil McInnes. There are, however, newspaper clippings kept by various people, because of the nature of the event. Others remain well known as they were the rescue of bushwalkers, and those in hiking circles have published books that record them in a more permanent form.

There are two searches and rescues considerably lesser well known. Both involved miners, one so long ago that no-one remains from that time. The other is now only remembered by cattlemen of that area and era, who still speak of it as the greatest feat of horsemanship they have ever seen.

In 1910, James Culhane was a mounted constable stationed at Harrierville. He was a son of Michael and Mary Culhane, who settled at Crooked River in 1870, and part of a highly respected family of mountain cattlemen. His eldest brother, Tom, is remembered in Annie Bryce's poem 'Gippsland Riders':

*There was Will Lee from the 'Crooked',
Tom Phelan and Culhane,
They'd ride a horse until he slung his
brand.*

Tom worked for the Holm brothers, Bryces of Wonnangatta and Paddy Duane on the Bogong High Plains. Other brothers, John, Michael and Patrick were also cattlemen. James went breaking horses in South Africa, before joining the police force.

On 13 October 1910, James Culhane, then 34, and John Johnson, 32, from the Mount St Bernard Hospice, left the hospice on horseback at 8 am in search of James Webber from Mount Hotham. After going two miles through the snow they were forced to leave their horses, and went along the track on foot, sometimes in snow up to their waists. After going about four miles, they reached the summit of Mount Hotham and, about noon, reached Lawlers hut, where Webber was sheltering. He was nearly frozen. After a while they were able to get him away, and helped him back to the hospice, reaching there about 4 pm. They had several narrow escapes from being smothered by snow-drifts, with ten to fifteen feet of snow along the track.

James Culhane and John Johnson were both awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Humane Society for their efforts. Culhane remained in the police force, rising ultimately to the rank of Superintendent.

A second rescue with many similarities is that of two prospectors from Woods Point in 1933. They were packed in to Connors Plains, north of Licola, by George Gregory from Glencairn, who arranged to return for them some days later. A sharp and sudden downturn in the weather intervened, and Gregory considered it unsafe to return for them, and notified the police at Heyfield. Constable Hanrahan of Heyfield recruited Artie Rumpff of Seaton, on whose run the men were lost, and local bushman Bill Floyd. Together with Gregory they gathered at Colemans Hut in Target Creek, and set off on horseback. Artie led them onto Connors Plains in snow up to the horses' shoulders, and located the men sheltering there in a hut. They were close to death and had been living for several days on melted

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James Culhane, 1911

snow water and grass. Artie and another of the party put the men in front of them on their horses, and rode with all speed through the snow to Colemans. The men were then driven to hospital where they later recovered, although severely frostbitten.

My father, who later worked with the Rumpffs and took over that run, always believed it to have been one of the greatest feats of horsemanship known in the area. Colemans hut in Target Creek is just below the snowline, and Connors Plain is about 13 kilometres from hut. The track they took would have risen over 750 metres. The ride was up long, steep spurs, along rough tracks where snow covered considerable quantities of fallen timber. The ride downhill, with the weight of the men in front of them, would not have been easy. Other senior cattlemen also remember it with the greatest of respect, but it is little known outside those circles. The Rumpffs were quiet men, little given to display, whose first concern was always their horses and dogs. There must have been other early rescues like these, by cattlemen elsewhere, but they are

being forgotten. It should not be so, and they should be recorded before it is too late.

There can be no comparison between the knowledge of the cattleman and the tourist. Also, there is little to compare with a horse in some rescue situations. This factor is well recognised by the mounted section of the Mansfield SES, which includes a significant group of members of the MCAV. Rescues are now carried out mainly by police and SES. Within those units there are still members of those early families, such as Catherine Noble, daughter of Arthur Guy, who still helps 'redirect' those who are 'disoriented', as did her father, and probably her grandfather before her. Truth be known, probably her great-grandfather, Dennis Connolly of Dargo, began this family tradition from his hotel past Dargo well over a hundred years ago.

Linda Barraclough

(The assistance of Kerry Orton, who provided the details of James Culhane, is gratefully acknowledged. More on Search and Rescues can be found in the newspaper clippings.)

Black Friday

Fulfilling an ambition of one day going back to the Buckland and crushing the tailings from the old "Red Jacket" mine and to try and pick up the line of gold again, my father Ben Morgan went back about 1936. He hauled machinery up to the face of the mine and set up a crushing battery. On a small flat at the foot of the hill, he erected a cabin, and my mother went in there with him.

On the morning of 13 January 1939, he watched with concern the cinders floating over the hills with a dense pall of smoke. He packed the car with any valuables they had there with them and drove out along the Clear Creek road. He had gone a short distance when he met his cousin Tom Hall who was sluicing further down the creek, who told him to turn back. "We are cut off."

They drove back onto a small green patch of grass, and by 3pm they were in darkness when the flames burst over the hill. They were one hundred feet high; immediately igniting the opposite hill. They lay on the ground, with my

father shielding my mother as best he could. The car beside them burst in flames. Miraculously they survived. Their milking cow stood with them and although badly burnt, she also survived. I think she was the sole surviving cow on the Buckland, as I was told cattle lay dead in stacks.

In the early hours of the next morning, my husband and a friend, Alf Rudebeck, rode in through the smouldering forest to find them alive.

It was late afternoon before they were carried out of the area. On the way out, as they stopped to look as the sluicing cradle belonging to Tom Hall, a smouldering tree fell and my mother's head was split open. My father, then 70 years of age, carried her for the three or four miles to where Clear Creek joined the Buckland River. As they stopped to rest, a truck driven by Dave Sealy, with the two Myrtleford policemen, Bill Duncombe and Bill Miller, and Dr Beaumont saw them with their live cow and were able to render assistance. The police were on their way in to pick up the two Lorry men who had been burnt to death.

**Memories go back over fifty years
Of despairing hours and traumatic tears,
When the heat at noon reached over 104
And raging fires swept to our doors.**

**With water low and no green patch
No man would dare to strike a match.
The country then was depression bound
And people lived where gold was found.**

Some made their living from the mine
That was way back in thirty nine,
And memories go back to that day
When the little valley was swept away.

The cinders fell from out of the sky
And darkness came down as though night were nye.
They drove out upon that mountain track
But the walls of flames drove them back,

To take shelter in that valley basin
Fleeing the forces they were facing.
When over the hills the flames that night
Reached one hundred feet in height.

They lay in close upon the ground
With the flames swirling all around,
The heat and smoke they were breathing in
And praying for oblivion.

Cattle raced to each other's side
And that is where they dropped and died,
The birds in fear, flew up so high
And fell like cinders from the sky.

As though the world had burst in flames
It swept its way across the plains,
No beast or bird survived that time
That was way back in thirty nine.

And there were some, who shelter found
In some great cavity of the ground
And two went back to fight the flames
But they found their blackened, charred remains.

And men stood by to wait the dawn
They trudged through timber spilt and torn
To see what lives they could find
Out of the tragedy of thirty nine.

But it was a miracle to say,
Three people did survive that day.
And twenty years from that time
They still recalled the Hell of thirty nine.

Rie Arundel



Linda Treasure

Members of the MCAV were saddened to learn of the death on 19 June 1993 of Mrs Linda Treasure *nee* Traill, some time after being involved in a car accident. Linda was the daughter of a prominent Dargo family, and her ancestors first settled on the Wonnangatta River at Waterford about 1862. After her marriage in 1940 to Don Treasure she made her home at Castleburn. There she ran an efficient and supportive home base for her husband's grazing operations at Castleburn and on the Dargo High Plains.

Linda Treasure is survived by her husband Don, and her children Linette, David and Margaret.



Maggie Randall

It somehow seems appropriate that Maggie Randall, formerly of 'Glen Lee', Crooked River, died the day one of East Gippsland's major mountain calf sales was being held.

Maggie was born in 1902 at 'Glen Lee', the daughter of Alexander Guy and Catherine Connolly. Although she spent much of her life away from her birthplace, she returned in later years and purchased 'Glen Lee' from her brother Arthur. For many years she and her sister Nellie (Mrs Gibbs), who lived nearby, welcomed visitors. Regular callers included Arthur and Jack Guy, who often made her home their overnight break on the way on horseback in and out of Wonnangatta station.

On 10 March 1993 Maggie Randall died at Bairnsdale. She is survived by her daughter Peggy Lawton and her brother Arthur, and our sympathies go to them.



Alice, Maggie and Nellie Guy



Noel (Nugget) Schultz

Noel Erskine Schultz, popularly known as 'Nugget' was born at Wodonga on 2 May 1931. He died on 3 June 1993, aged 62 years. His childhood and early manhood was spent in the Mitta valley when for a number of years he worked for the Patton family. He met and married June Clark of Yackandandah and they had a family of three girls and two boys.

During Noel's early years in the Mitta he made what was to be a lifelong and valued friendship with Wally Ryder of Tawonga, pictured below, and rode the Mount Bogong areas, mustering and droving cattle. He was an excellent horseman and cattleman whose knowledge was respected by many. His friendship

with cattlemen and their families was something he valued very much.

As a cattleman he was a member of the MCAV. He loved the high country and was grieved in later years to witness the alpine areas being mismanaged and neglected. In recent years his son, Peter, accompanied Noel to the high plains on musters and drives, thereby learning the ropes from one of the best tutors.

Over the years, many had the pleasure of his company in the mountains and at the huts. As a spinner of yarns he was second only to Mick Walsh from Mitta who he considered the master. Those who knew Noel remember him as being a man of high principles, with a strong faith in God and exemplary in his devotion to his family.



Whipcrackers Eat Humble Pie Too

The appreciative crowd at Jugiong
Had just bought me another beer.
When up walked a craggy-faced local,
Whom I guess was a pioneer.

He said, 'I've seen ya crack them whips today,
And a mighty fine job ya done:
But can ya use them whips on horseback -
Say to turn a wild bull at full run?'

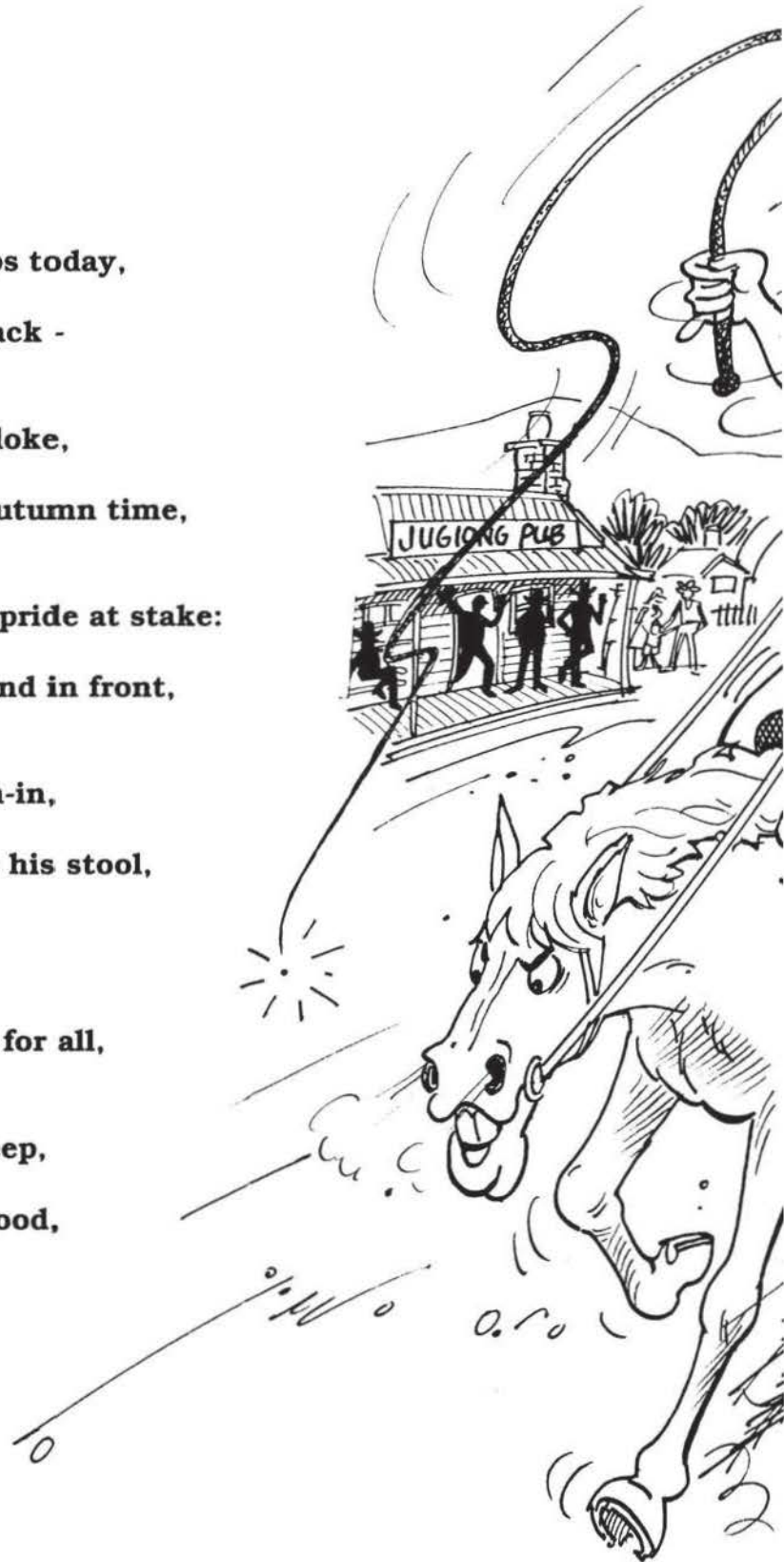
Now as it came to pass, as a lad this bloke,
Was a stockman of some renown;
Who rode the high plains in the late autumn time,
To bring the cattle down.

Well, the challenge was laid, and with pride at stake:
I tipped back my hat and said,
'Mate, I can crack whips to the side, and in front,
And even above my head.

You get me a horse that's whip-broken-in,
And I'll show you a thing or two!
With a nod of his head, he returned to his stool,
And I knew what I had to do.

A two-hand, staggered Sydney Flash,
Aboard a galloping steed,
Should show the old codger, once and for all,
I was a man of special breed.

The new day dawned after a restful sleep,
Alone in my hotel bed.
While out in the yard the old fellow stood,
With an Arab that looked pure bred.





I chose two whips, six foot in length,
Sixteen plait, 'roo hide.
And with boots, belt buckle and Akubra in place;
I strolled downstairs and outside.

Money changed hands as the town gathered round:
And I really began to think.
And I'm sure as I straddled that well muscled gelding,
He gave his owner a wink.

A cattleman's crack above the horse's head,
Just to see if the beast was alert;
Then deep in his flanks I drove my heels,
And rode off through the newly-ploughed dirt.

In a few short strides he was at full pace,
And I placed the reins in my mouth.
With a whip in each hand I let out a crack,
The folks would hear down south.

With my knees I turned him and galloped downhill,
Towards the cheering crowd.
And with one last rendition of the Sydney Flash:
I thought I'd done myself proud!

I threw back my head and reined to a halt,
And the old fellow stood there and stared.
He'd seen a bloke on horseback today,
Crack whips like he'd never dared.

He shook my hand and shouted a beer:
And gave an approving grin,
Then got off his stool, prodded his mate,
And faced me chin to chin.

'What I seen today was pretty good,
And it must take skill, courage and brains.
But before ya go, would ya step outside
'Cause ya've left ya teeth in me reins!'

Noel Cutler
Milawa

Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award

A lot of things have happened to Noel Cutler since he won the Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award at last year's Get Together at Omeo. Noel, who was there to compete in the whipcracking, had never performed his poetry in public before, and entered on the spur of the moment. His appearance in the afternoon heat was juggled with his appearance in a whipcracking event.

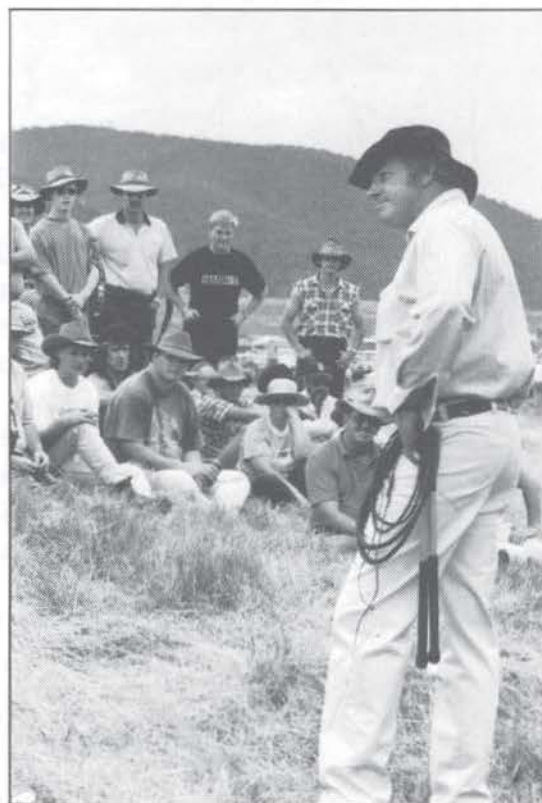
The final saw six contestants up on a tray truck, entertaining a large crowd. Yarn spinning living legend, Mick Walsh from Wodonga was on last, and kept the crowd entertained while the judges reached their decision. The stewards decided that was the best way to go because it is very difficult to stop Mick talking at any time.

Noel won the tightly fought and entertaining final, reciting his original poem, 'Whipcrackers eat humble pie too'. Dana Kneebone presented him with the perpetual award, a cowbell from the high country. It is now hanging on a very impressive strap provided by saddler Leo Meyer of Bairnsdale.

After that, things got busy for Noel Cutler, but first we should explain a bit more about the Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award. Don Kneebone, a founding member of the MCAV was widely known and respected as a writer and performer of bush verse. In particular, he delighted hundreds of school children over the years. Don died in 1991, and in 1992 the first Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award was held at the Get Together at Dargo. The winner there was Peter Ayres, a vocalist from Traralgon.

The rules covering the Award are simple, but were designed to be in keeping with Don's very own belief in bush poetry, performance and traditions. It is an award for amateur performers, and may only be won once by any individual. It is open to poets, yarn spinners and vocalists. Judges consider the originality and relevance of the material to the Mountain Cattlemen.

As Noel Cutler says, 'That night changed my life, winning that award just blew me away'. After his performance was seen by others, he was encouraged to compete several weeks later at the Tamworth Music Festival. This was his second public performance. He made the finals of the original work and the established work sections. He won the established work section performing 'Banjo' Paterson's 'Lost', and was unfortunately unplaced in the original section, when his whips got tangled up with the microphone cord! After that he was invited to the Quart Pot poetry night at Newton Park in Brisbane, and the Ringers' Muster at Longreach for the Outback Performing Arts Society Dinner and Verse night. He has recorded with the ABC, returned to Tamworth and had a piece selected for the 1993 Bronze Swagman Award.



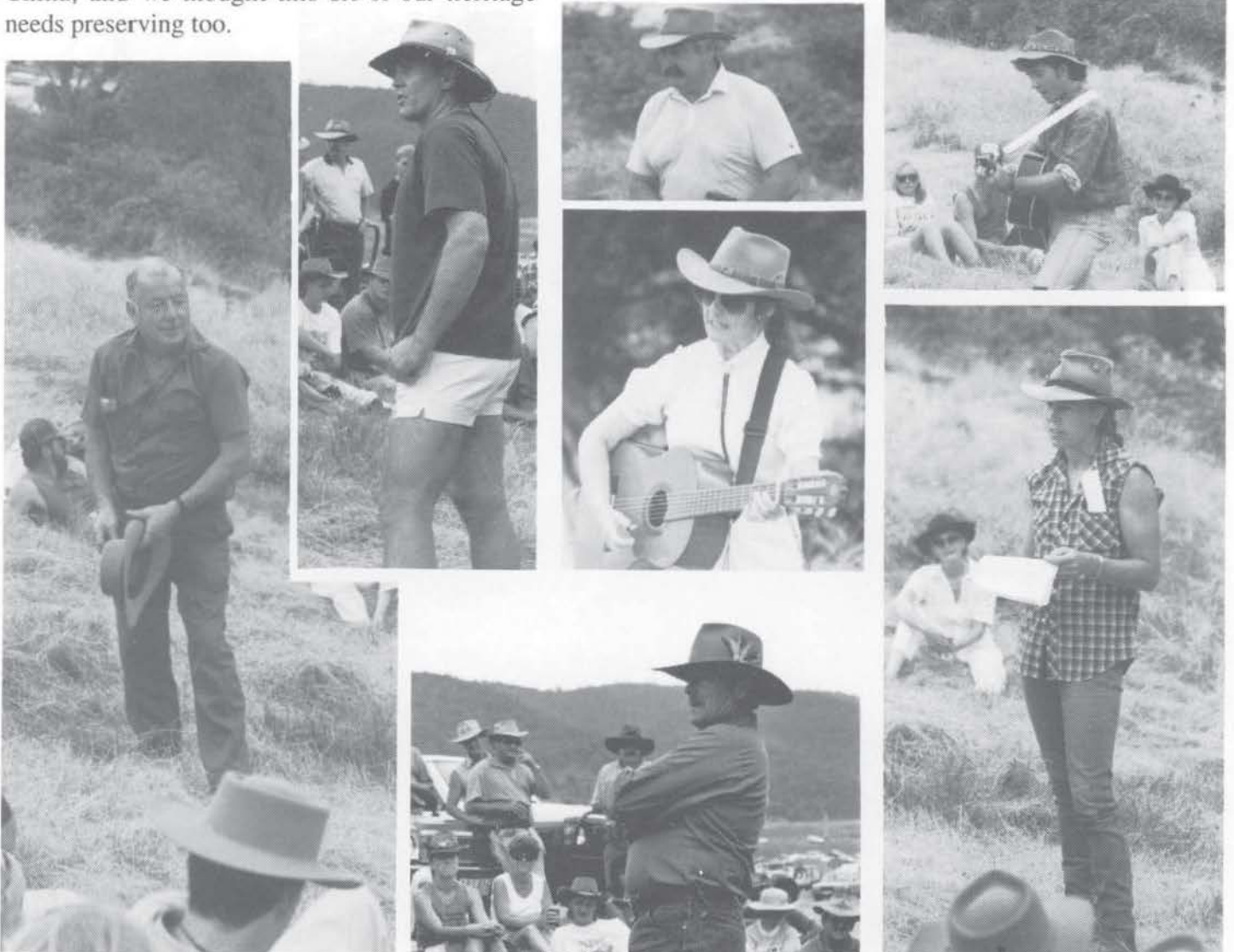
Noel Cutler performing 'Whipcrackers Eat Humble Pie Too' at the 1993 Get Together.

Bush Minstrel and Bush Laureate

This year, in 1994, there are two major additions to the Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award. Professionals and previous winners of the award will also be welcome, to compete in a special category, for the title of Bush Minstrel. This is a name that no-one has used since the death of bush poet Billy Wye. All amateur entrants, other than the winner of the Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award, will also be assessed for the title of Bush Minstrel. Entrants may compete in this section without restriction, and win as many times as they are able to. At this stage, the perpetual trophy in this section looks like being an Australian-made hurricane lamp, for several reasons. Firstly, all mountain cattlemen have battled the rabbit, and any good rabbit trapper carries one of these lamps to show the way. Secondly, it seems that only new ones that can be bought these days are made in China, and we thought this bit of our heritage needs preserving too.

The second section, is an award to a Bush Laureate. This is for written poems, songs and yarns, which are not performed by their authors. After all, there are some very good writers out there who would die rather than get up in public, such is their modesty. The title of Bush Laureate was chosen as, after all, if nations can have Poet Laureates, we can have a Bush Laureates.

Entries in the Bush Laureate Award should be forwarded to: *Voice of the Mountains*, P.O. Box 86, Bairnsdale Vic 1875, with a closing date for this year of 1 October 1994. The winner will be announced at the following Get Together, and their work, if they wish, recited by another performer. The Award will incorporate a Lyrebird motif. The Lyrebird, one of the original symbols of the Mountain Cattlemen, is the voice of the mountains. The winning entry, and possibly others, will be published in *Voice of the Mountains*.



What is Heritage?

Is it arguments on paper
Of beauracratc hype?
Is it for elitist cityites,
Of educated type?

Is it plastic from the fifties,
And other trendy rorts?
Is it the folklore of the factories,
Or government reports?

Could it be a run, and love for it,
From each generation there?
Could it be a welcome hand to all,
As that, for sure, is rare.
We know it's huts and packhorses

And tracks travelled down through time,
It's cattle bells and yards and plains,
And salt calls loud and fine.

It's friendship round a fireplace,
As yarns are passed on down.
It's respect and care and honesty,
For us, on holy ground.

We'll show you well the ways of old,
And the cattle that we breed.
For what some now call heritage
Is the life we know and lead.

G.A. Knights



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

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Nugget

I have a friend called 'Nugget',
Who lives near Jindabyne,
Who loves a nip of OP rum,
Sometimes a swig of wine.
For Nugget is a bushman,
The last of the good old breed,
And you're always welcome at his hut,
For a cuppa and a feed.

'Nugget' as a horseman
Ranks among the best,
And when breaking in a young one,
Makes them pass the test.
For every district has its horseman,
Whom they call 'The Ace',
But running brumbies in the bush,
'Nugget' sets the pace.

To see him crack his stockwhip,
It really is such fun,
And when his neighbours cross him,
'Nugget' makes them run.
Sometimes through the broken fence,
His neighbours' cattle stray,
'Nugget' mounts the old black horse,
And hunts them far away.

I wish that I could tell you more,
About my old bush friend
As we share this bottle,
Right to the very end.
But alas I haven't time
To tell you more of this friend of mine,
My old friend called 'Nugget',
From way up near Jindabyne.



Allan Brewer

Nugget was written by Alan as a tribute to William George Frederick Pendergast, better known as 'Nugget', who died in 1985.

HIGH COUNTRY SCRAPBOOK

This year *Voice of the Mountains* continues to bring you a 'High Country Scrapbook' from files our staff have compiled. We are interested in obtaining photocopies of any articles that you believe could add to the records of the Mountain Cattlemen that we hold. Photocopies should be sent to us at P.O. Bxo 86, Bairnsdale 3875, or drop by the photo archives tent at a Get Together.



On Trackless Peak

ADVENTURES WITH THE SCOUTS ON MOUNTAIN HIKE

(From *The Herald's Scout on the Hike*)

MT. WELLINGTON, Tues.
The Governor (Lord Somers), who has surprised everybody in his ability to negotiate the hardest climb, and seemingly endless

MOUNTAIN GRANDEUR

The scenery, however, was most beautiful, equal to anything that could be seen in Victoria. The grandeur of the views extending on all sides for hundreds of miles from the top of Mt. Wellington was quite equal to those from Mt. Buffalo. From the gable end of the mount there was a sheer drop of 1500 feet to the gum forest bed, while on the horizon were Mt. Erica, Mt. Howitt, Mt. Skene, Mt. Buffalo, Horn and Mt. Kosciusko and the Gippsland Lakes. Passing from the country ravished by the 1925 bush fires, on Saturday morning, the country became more interesting.

OBITUARY

MRS IVES

An old and highly respected resident of Gippsland died on Tuesday last at the Bairnsdale District hospital in the person of Mrs Emily Ives. She was aged 89 years.

Born in Berkshire, England, in July 1849, she went to South Africa when 9 years old. Her father, William Langford, being interested in railway construction work there. Six years later, they sailed for Australia, and followed up railway construction in Victoria, Queensland and later at the Blue Mountains, N.S.W. While there, she married George Treasure in 1869. They later came to Victoria, and after a few years mining at Beechworth and Wandiligong, they came to work on the old Alpine deep lead on Dargo High Plains about 1879. Later they took up grazing interests and in 1889 acquired portion of the Dargo high plains station, which at present is owned by her son Harry Treasure. In 1900, for health reasons, and to get better school facilities for their younger children, they came to Lindenow and acquired the Grass Vale Estate on the Mitchell river, but after a protracted illness, however, Mr Treasure died. Left with a large family and big responsibilities, Mrs Treasure proved quite able to face the situation, and has lived to enjoy many years there, and while rearing and providing for a large family, has given them the best education.

During the years they were on the Dargo high plains, she often had to employ private teachers, so that the children might be taught. At the same time her home became the centre around which the Dargo high plains gold rush revolved. As she managed with her sons, the general store, butchery and post office, supplying a population of up to 1,000 inhabitants, when all provisions had to be brought by pack horse from Harrierville, 32 miles distant and then packed out to customers up and down the creeks and rivers during summer and winter, often through snow, rain and floods.

In 1911, after her family had grown up, she married again becoming Mrs H. G. Browne. Her second husband also predeceased her 10 years ago. Recently, she married Walter Ives.

Mrs Ives had nine sons and two daughters, seven of whom survive her. They are George, Harry, Arthur, Charles and Walter Treasure, Ellen (Mrs W. J. Harris) and May (Mrs

T. Williams); the sons who predeceased her were, James, Albert, John and Sydney. Mrs Ives' remains were interred with those of her first husband in the Lindenow cemetery on Wednesday.

The Rev. Wesley Hobbs officiated at the graveside. The coffin was carried by Messrs. Harry, Charles, and Walter Treasure (sons) and John Percy Treasure (grandson). The pallbearers were Messrs. Walter Ives, Hector Treasure and George and George Williams (grandsons), Charles Dennis, Algar Phillips and G. W. Peart.

SNOW CATTLE PAY TOP

Angus mountain cattle made the excellent price of \$447 a head at the annual snow lease cattle sale at Heyfield on Wednesday.

The top pen was selected from a mob of 400 yarded by Mr Bob Gilder, Licola.

Stockmen drove the cattle from the high country to Heyfield, losing some in the muster, and the magnificent sight of the big mob, flanked by horsemen and dogs, arriving in Heyfield early Wednesday morning, was a spectacle which caused many to rise early to see.

SHORTAGE

Local cattlemen said that because of the unusual conditions, the shortage of livestock available, the top would normally have been about \$300 a head.

The Gilder cattle will go mainly to South Gippsland for fattening and the new owners will return them to the markets, probably just before Christmas after spring feeding.



RESCUED FROM THE SNOW in the Great Dividing Range between Woods Point and Glenmaggie, Michael Evans Mack, 36, and Thomas E. Adams, 70, prospectors, both of Woods Point, were admitted to Sale Hospital, badly frost-bitten, on Thursday. They had been snow-bound for a week without food or blankets when a search party from Glencairn located them in a hut.

Conservationists and cattlemen move to save high plains

By J. BALFOUR BROWN

High plains cattlemen and conservationists agreed to set aside past differences at a meeting at Mansfield (Vic.) last Wednesday to meet the new threat of "trail bikes, beach buggies and bulldozers."

They were told that "a few irresponsible types" on bikes or in four-wheel-drive vehicles were capable of causing more damage in the high country in a few hours than hundreds of cattle in a decade.

But there was no real clash of interest between the cattleman and the traditional hiker, fisherman or naturalist.

The meeting, described as historic, brought together for the first time members of the Mountain District Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, the Victorian National Parks Association, and speakers or observers from the Forest Commission Department of Agriculture, and several shire councils bordering the mountain grazing areas.

"The purpose of this meeting is to see if we can live together," said veteran Darzo cattleman, Mr S. J. Treasure, who is president of the Mountain District Cattlemen's Association of Victoria.

"We hear much about conservation but there is need for conservation of productivity also. No nation can survive on leisure, sport and scenery unless at someone else's expense. We need the stimulation that these things can give in good measure but if allowed to run at random only decay will result."

Mr Treasure said that about 24,000 cattle owned by members of the MDCAV grazed the high plains from four to six months of the year. About half as many again were probably grazed by non-members of the association. These cattle were mostly breeders and supplied the markets at Mansfield, Omeo, Myrtleford, Brigalona, Bairnsdale, Heffield, Stratford, Gelantipy, Ensay and Swift's Creek.

Dr Don Richardson, Coburg, a member of the Cattlemen's Association, said that practical decisions were needed in an unbiased way in the mountains. Cattlemen had changed and were changing, with the times. Many were very concerned with pollution and the environment.

Some of the claims put forward by certain conservation groups were ethereal and unproven.

"Cattle and forests and cattle and recreation have much in common," he said. "Grazing acts as a catalyst and we often feel we do a very useful, unpaid job of fire prevention and making the area accessible to others."

Mr J. Ros Garnet (Victorian National Parks Assn.) said his organisation did not want to emphasise the difference of opinion that had existed between cattlemen and conservationists. "Do not be misled by the statements of some people," he said. "As an organisation we have merely asked the Government to take adequate steps to maintain the highlands and to avoid anything that would destroy the ecological balance that exists now."

"Restraint and control may be desirable and necessary on occasions but we are not unduly critical of cattle grazing which performs several useful purposes. It would be silly to say that all cattle must be excluded. We are not opposed to grazing provided it is done with wisdom and care."

Mr Garnet said it would be in the best interests of both cattlemen and conservationists to have a viable alpine area, administered by the National Parks service, created as quickly as possible.

Trail bikes, beach buggies and four wheel drive vehicles were causing damage now that might be irreparable.

Mr Garnet said that cattle might have to be restricted to below 4000 feet and a cattleman, Mr E. Stoney, Mansfield, said that if this was the case then "we might as well give the game away."

Mr Garnet said he had only used this figure because it was the one supplied by the Soil Conservation Authority and he believed it was not inflexible.

Mr W. R. Mann (Victorian National Parks Assn.) said that traditional bushwalkers had enjoyed excellent relations with cattlemen. The suggestion for a national park went back to 1949 and even earlier and every delay was ominous.

"Acquisitive eyes are on it and we should join in common cause here," he said. "There are suggestions to erect buildings by helicopters and several others of a similar nature."

"It is no longer safe from commercial exploitation and it is vulnerable to political moves, particularly moves inspired by overseas interests. We know about resort plans but large scale mining should not be overlooked."

Mr Lyle McCready, Dandongdale cattleman, said: "We cattlemen love the country and we raise good cattle in near to natural conditions. We have been blamed for a lot of problems but people forget that it is in our interests to conserve feed and water. In areas where the cattle have been excluded the wild cats and cross-bred dingoes are on the increase and there is an impenetrable mass of blackberries and vermin-infested undergrowth."

"In keeping the country open we have done some service. We are keen on the bush and on the animals, and we realise the urban community has a right to open space provided they are educated in how to use it."

Mr Athol Hodgson (Forests Commission): "The policy of the Forests Commission is multiple use management which means water, wood, wildlife, recreation and forage. Each one of those values is entitled to be considered. If cattlemen can show that their industry is viable and compatible with other forest values then their case will be heard. You cattlemen seem to be doing a good job at present of showing responsibility."

Mrs Freda Ryder, Taewona, said the beef industry was the most viable in Australia at present and should be encouraged. Cattle and forestry were the only two industries in the alpine areas which were compatible with the wildlife which consisted almost entirely of shy creatures.

"Sheep had caused erosion in the past but had not been grazed on the high plains for about 40 years. Bulldozers had caused tremendous erosion in recent years. All damage by machinery is apparently excusable," she said.

"Up until about 1960 many walkers came by and we got on well with them. They used the cattlemen's huts and replaced the food in them. Now we have ski villages, night life in the chalets, and a tourist element that cares little for the peace of the mountains."

Mr R. Lawson (Victorian National Parks Assn.): "We should be on the same side. Time is running out for both the cattleman and the national parks movement. The government has already sold out most of the Northern Territory and this alpine area is very vulnerable to overseas interests with millions of dollars to spend."

Mr Treasure: "We have heard in conservation papers that all grazing should be gradually eased out."

Mr Lawson: "We are not prepared to fight to put cattle out. We envisage a multi-use national park and we accept that you have a right to the high country."

Dr L. H. Smith (Director National Parks Service): "Only good can come of this meeting. There is scope for further dialogue. National Parks are essential but no one here misunderstands the importance of the cattle industry. National Parks in other parts of the world permit the grazing of cattle."

In reply to a question from the floor Dr Smith explained that the National Parks Service was a government instrumentality which administered the national parks. The National Parks Association was a voluntary body composed of various groups such as bushwalkers, botanists and naturalists.

Mr Jim Commins, Ensay: "There's a lot that's not been said here. There must be sound guidelines and we must take a good look at proposed controls. Perhaps grazing and bureaucracy don't quite mix."

Professor John Turner, Melbourne University: "The big thing is that no more crown land in the mountains should be sold. I would like to leave them as they are now with one qualification. I would like to see some special areas set aside as floral reserves. This may be our last chance to have a true alpine wilderness in Australia. Trail bikes and dune buggies are the greatest menace to engulf the bush. At heart we are allies here."

Mr Eric Stuart (Victorian National Parks Association): "Basically our main objectives are the same thing. Trail bikes, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and irresponsible shooters are much more detrimental to the area than cattle."

Mr Eric Quinlan (Victorian National Parks Association): "Grazing can be a compatible use in the high country. The Australian Conservation Foundation opposes grazing in high country but this is only a broad general principle. There is room for flexibility. Cattlemen here need have no fear that we say one thing and mean another. We want to retain the area and a single authority is the answer to most of the problems."

On the motion of Mr Mann (National Parks Association) the meeting resolved to consider an exchange of delegates at future meetings of both the National Parks Association and the Cattlemen's Association, and that the opinion of members on the question of full affiliation be sought also.

Mr Treasure: "There's great merit in the suggestion but we are mountain men and we have learned to proceed with caution."



MR S. J. TREASURE: "Proceed with caution."



MR W. R. MANN: "Acquisitive eyes are on mountains."



MR BEN COOPER: "There should be room for all."



MR L. MCCREADY: "Cattlemen have done a service."

LAST OF THE OMEO PIONEERS.

10/6/24
DEATH OF MR. JAMES
PENDERGAST. 1924

The death of Mr. James Pendergast, of "Kimberley Park," at the age of 87 years, removes the last of the Omeo early pioneers of Omeo Plains. Mr. Pendergast was the son of John Pendergast, who in 1837 took up the country across the Morass Creek from the Omeo Station, having followed across the border Maclarkane, the discoverer of the Omeo Plains. In 1853 the late Mr. James Pendergast, then a young man, came to the Omeo Plains to join his father, eventually settling down at Mount Leinster in 1859 and later on at "Kimberley Park."

In 1861, Mr. Pendergast discovered marble at Limestone Creek, which experts declare to be the finest in the world, but many efforts to persuade the Government to open the quarries proved futile. The forest country in those early days was very open and well grassed, carrying quite a number of cattle. Mr. Pendergast was a breeder of cattle, and a great judge of Hereford cattle, having bred during his lifetime some very fine stock. He had always been a strong advocate for a railway to Omeo and for the opening up of the road to Corryong, so as to bring Omeo Plains in touch with other districts; but like the rest of the old pioneers, after a strenuous life in helping to settle one of the finest outposts in Eastern Gippsland, he passed away without seeing his dreams realised. Thus it is that the Government leave these grand old pioneers to go to their graves disappointed.

Mr. Pendergast could tell many interesting stories of the early digging days around Omeo and of the trouble of packing in provisions across the mountains. He was possessed of a very kindly nature and everybody was sure of a warm welcome to his hospitable homestead. He leaves a family of five sons and one daughter, his wife having predeceased him two months ago. The remains were buried in the Benambra cemetery, being followed by a large number of people who attended to pay their last respects to this fine old pioneer.—"Standard."

When James Pendergast first came to the station the bush country was fairly open, as there had been few bush fires, and no ring-barking (to cause suckers) had taken place. Places, which are now a wilderness and where it is almost impossible to ride through, were then

fine open country not too thickly covered with large trees. In the early days, a two-wheeled bullock dray was used to convey goods from one place to another.

The steep mountains were the trouble. Mr. Pender. tells me that, to get round the sides of the hills without capsizing, they used to carry a nave with all the spokes knocked out of it.

When the side of a mountain, too steep to go straight up, had to be climbed, the wheel on the top side would be taken off and replaced by the spokeless nave, and thus they would go round the sides of the hill to the top. It is easily understood that where mountains are so steep, it mattered not how strong the bullock team, only a light load could be taken; so it was soon found out that pack horses on such roads could do the work much better. He mentions that one bullock driver tried to take his dray back by a short cut used by pack horses, but it was so steep and rough that the dray remained there till the bush fires destroyed it.



JAMES PENDERGAST.

BAIRNSDALE

ANNUAL MOUNTAIN
MUSTER

1700 Hereford and 1700
Shorthorn Cattle

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A. MACARTHUR & CO. will sell at
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The Agents can strongly recommend
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Mountain Country, all being bred in
the Omeo Valley and Mount Kosciusko
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Adults	Sizes S, M, L, XL Colours - Red and Navy	\$13.00	\$ 4.00	A
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Stickers		\$ 1.00	\$ 1.50	B
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We also have **SWAGS, SADDLE CLOTHS, SADDLE BAGS** and **SADDLE COAT BAGS** available with the MCAV Logo.

For further information and orders contact:

Mountain Cattlemen's Association
c/- Ros Andrews
9 Kooyongkoot Road
Hawthorn 3122 Tel (03) 818 7833

ORDER FORM ON REVERSE OF THIS PAGE

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b - If this item is ordered with either a poster *or* a windcheater, then total postage is \$ 4.00

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If application form for Associate Membership of MCAV required please tick Box

SUPPORT THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN - BECOME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Application for Membership and Registration Form

Associate Member, Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Inc.

PLEASE PRINT

Name

Address

Phone Number

Occupation

Please list the ways you feel you can help the Cattlemen, e.g. Marketing,
 Research, Lobbying, Typing, Assisting with Promotion, Legal.

Associate Membership is \$20 per year (single), \$30 per year (family).

PLEASE RETURN TO: Mrs. Sue Silvers
 MCAV
 P.O. Box 294
 Mansfield 3722

The Hat Breaker

Now Billy the breaker
had a way with horses,
kind hands, gentle touch
patient, but firm voices.

His yard rails where a place to lean
and yarn about chestnuts, duns and greys
the bone of the leg, the carriage of the head
of fillys and colts and bays.

And always a few young blokes
would be draped about the fence
dead keen students of breaking
who listened little and learned even less.

But they knew how to wear horseman's gear
belt, puches, plaited this 'n that
boots and white moleskins
and mostly a brand new hat.

And it could be noted that Billy's hat
was a little battered and far from new,
a sweatband stain, a bushman's bash,
a few holes where the dog had a chew.

There was one who never left Billy's heel or side,
a true apprentice of the trade
a young bloke who listened wide eyed
from dawn to dust in that dusty yard.

Observation was this student's key
and one thing he knew before the rest
that the man in the battered hat
knew his horses by far the best.

So he figured to be a horseman
of skill and some renown
you'd have to have your hat
all knocked about and leaky in the crown.

So from that moment of sparkling wisdom
the dog knew his trade and job
was to catch and break those stiff new hats
of the yard-rail expert mob.

It took some skill and a well placed nip
to catch the bronco hat
first a bite on the heel and foot
of the bloke as he leant to pat.

With a yelp and curse of 'Bloody Hell'
the strapling snapped up straight
and off his head with a wild-duck fight
flew his untrained bucking hat.

It was man and hat and dog in flight
in the dusty yard and chute
and the dog was far too quick
to be caught by the flying boot.

He ducked and rolled as he eyed the hat
in its mad, and spinning flight
and with a fearless leap he sprang
to bring down its furry might.

With his paw upon the trembling brim
he tore at the dome and crown
for if he let this young hat win
his chances of breaking it were gone.

He felt his teeth sink deep and hard
into something soft and frail
just as an angry boot
fair caught him under the tail.

He was torn from the task
with a reeling spin
with bulging eyes and throbbing tongue
where his own teeth had sunken in.

He landed in a dust heap
and heard an angry yell,
from that he knew his task was lost
and it was time to take a spell.

Slinking under the peppercorn tree
he reflected on his haste
and the quiet manner of his master's ways
and he dumbly knew his mistake.

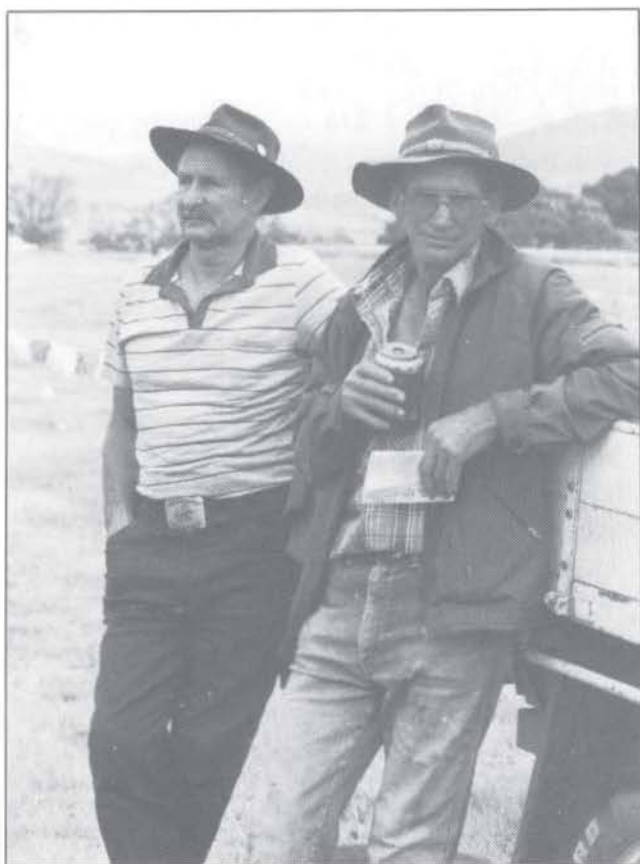
While all the while the top-rail mob
laughed at their mate's misfortune
but not a one caught the drift
of the hat breaker's excursion.

Steve Baird

1993 GET TOGETHER AT KELLY'S, OMEEO VALLEY

Every year the Get Together just seems to get bigger and better, and this year was no exception. The Omeo Branch are to be congratulated on another fine effort for the 1993 weekend. Even though many looked skyward when the storms broke on Saturday evening, it did nothing to dampen the spirits of those present and provided those in their camps with a display which rivalled many fireworks nights.

Peter and Tim Faithfull performed a very neat double act with wins in their respective Cup races. It is also pleasing to see new events being enjoyed by all, and the crowd has taken them to their heart. The Tug-of-War raised plenty of dust with many enthusiastic teams, while the winner of the Dog High Jump would have made it on the encouragement of the crowd let alone on his ability! The Don Kneebone Heritage Award has continued to develop and is unearthing previously hidden talent.



Pat and Kevin Kelly

A huge 'Thank You' is extended to the Kelly family and to the Omeo branch for their work preparing the site. A thank you also to that band of workers on the gate. A job undertaken with competence and, just as importantly, friendliness, towards all who attended. Extracting money at the gate isn't always an easy job!

The results from the weekend were:

Juvenile (Under 10 years) Whipcracking

- 1st Simone Kelly
- 2nd Ashley Cook
- 3rd Aleisha Thorburn

Junior (15 and under) Whipcracking

- 1st Jack Cross
- 2nd Danny Young
- 3rd Cameron Bowden

Ladies Whipcracking

- 1st Tanith Blair
- 2nd Rosemary Hurley
- 3rd Diana Hurley

Open Whipcracking

- 1st Jim Lawton
- 2nd Sam Sellwood
- 3rd Noel Cutler

Dog High Jump

- 1st 'Arnold' (owned by Gerald Carroll)
- 2nd 'Blue' (owned by Jenny Bird)
- 3rd 'Rock' (owned by Geoff Stirling)

Local Race (Shire of Omeo)

- 1st Joanne Hill
- 2nd Brendon Sam
- 3rd Robin Cook

Relay Race

- 1st Stoney's Bluff and Beyond team
- 2nd Gerald Egan's Mansfield team
- 3rd John Allan's Brotherhood team



Peter Faithfull crossing the Mitta River.

Mountain Cattlemen's Cup

- 1st Peter Faithfull
- 2nd Rick Hodge
- 3rd Leigh Woodgate

Junior Cattlemen's Cup

- 1st Tim Faithfull
- 2nd Derek Faithfull
- 3rd Whelan Connley

Australian Packhorse Championship

- 1st Ron Connley
- 2nd Gerald Egan (also neatest pack)
- 3rd Peter Neal

Open Race

- 1st Neil Waite
- 2nd Paula Morgan
- 3rd Dean Pendergast

Open Sprint

- 1st Sharon Pendergast
- 2nd Neil Waite
- 3rd Melinda Johnson

Heavyweight Race

- 1st John Leek
- 2nd Ian Webb
- 3rd Neil Dickinson

Associate Dash

- 1st Sharon Pendergast
- 2nd Bronwyn Kemp
- 3rd Andy Fallaw

Tug of War

Omeo Rangers were the conquering team.

Runamuck Cup

We regret we are unable to provide results.

Ladies Saucepan Throwing

- 1st Tracy Lowry

Don Kneebone Heritage Award

- 1st Noel Cutler from Milawa reciting his original poem 'Whipcrackers Eat Humble Pie Too'

Gate Prize

Mike Potter from Paynesville

Whip Raffle

Brendon Sam from Omeo

Lovick Safari

for a new Associate Member
Tom Reid of Heyfield







One of *Voice's* contributors, George Knights, reports from the bar at the Omeo Get Together.

Alan Brewer and Bruce McCormack were having a spirited discussion after a long day, and the talk ranged far and wide, until the subject of dogs was raised.

'Intelligent', says Alan, 'I had one that was so intelligent when I was a young bloke, and packing gear in for the surveyors, that I could just send him out in the morning and he'd round 'em up and bring 'em in. Trouble was, one got stolen by Bogong Jack, and I had to buy one off Mick Walsh to replace it. No way the dog would round him up, no matter what I did. Then it dawned on me. I got the receipt Mick gave me, showed the dog, and he realised it was my horse. Never had any trouble after that.'

'Know what you mean, I do,' Bruce replied. 'I had a really good little red kelpie bitch. You could put her out after a beast, and she wouldn't let it out of her sight until she brought it back. I put her out after one old cow one day up top, and never saw her again.'

'Never?' asked Alan.

'Well, not for two years. I was up top for the muster, and saw her coming up a spur. She headed straight for me, and I sort of notice she had something in her mouth. Was a boot. Would you believe it? She dropped it at my feet, and when I picked it up it had the old cow's brand on the leather. All that time, and she hadn't let it out of her sight, and she brought it all the way back.'

Alan bought Bruce another beer, and the editors deny any responsibility.





Calling Me Home

Through the hush of my mountains in the quiet of dreaming,
comes the bush voice that set my heart free;
For the sunlight is streaming across the deep gorges
and the voice of the mountains is calling to me.

They are calling to me, with a haunting insistence,
and my thoughts wander off down a well known track.
When I hear the dawn chorus of birds in the distance,
with the song of the morning that's calling me back.

It is calling me back, for the dew's on the high plains,
and the colours are muted on mountain and tree.
Night has moved on, the greys have all mellowed
and the bush in the sunshine is calling to me.

They are calling to me, these mountains unfolding,
this new day beginning clear, fresh and clean.
As the landscape takes on a clear definition
the bush weaves her magic, beckoning me.

G.A. Knights

MCAV Photographic Competition



We are delighted to announce the results of the first MCAV Photographic Competition, organised by Don Porter. Don maintains the MCAV photo archives. A healthy number of entries were received and from them we choose two for the cover of this year's issue of *Voice of the Mountains*.

Due to space constraints we are unable to reproduce all of the entries.

The overall winner was the spectacular 'Horse and Rider into the Sunset' by Ros Goody. Part of this photo appears on the back cover in colour. The main cover photograph was taken by Shirley Fry at Helicopter Flat, King Billy and won the Landscape Section. 'Omeo Winner', showing Peter Faithfull crossing the Mitta River taken by Marion Hill won the Action Section. This appears on page 35 of this issue. Faith Lynch's 'Hut' won the History of the High Country Section and appears below.





'A Vet and Her Horse'

Winner of the Black and White Open section taken by Jacqueline Cook.

Around the Traps

Life Membership for Jack Treasure

The MCAV has awarded Life Membership to Jack Treasure of Dargo. Jack was a founding member of the MCAV, and Inaugural President. He named and established *Voice of the Mountains*, and his interest in writing and performing bush poetry gave *Voice* its original bias in that direction. Jack has long spoken with the authority that can only come from a lifetime experience of living and observing the high country, of the dangers to the environment from a lack of control burning.

Art Exhibition at Mansfield

During the Great Mountain Festival in 1993, Mansfield was the venue for an exhibition of the work of Ros Goody. Ros's sketches and paintings feature mountain people, and she has a particular fascination with their hats! The exhibition was opened by the Hon. Graeme Stoney MLC, who himself has a nodding acquaintance with the Mountain Cattlemen.

Postcard Series Issued

Walter Sholl, a photographer of Maffra who is well known to Gippslanders for his work with the *Gippsland Times*, has issued a colour postcard series of mountain cattlemen's huts in the Shire of Maffra. The photographs have also been issued in a series of excellent posters.

Harry Smith's Grave marked

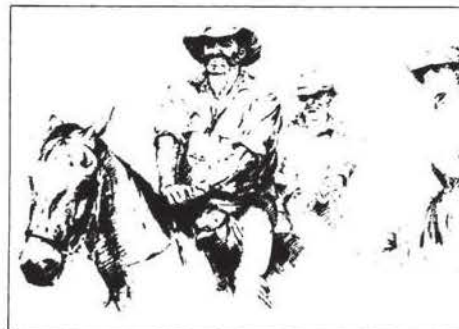
Past readers of *Voice* will remember that a group, calling themselves 'The Friends of Harry Smith' have restored his former home at Eaglevale. Harry was one of the last links with the Bryce family of Wonnangatta Station, and a highly respected bushman. Harry's 'Friends' have now taken a boulder from Eaglevale, and used it to mark his grave in the Sale cemetery, with a plaque attached.

Wonnangatta Exhibition

The Friends of the Wonnangatta have put together an exhibition of photographs and artifacts relating mainly to the Bryce family and the Wonnangatta murders. It has been exhibited in a number of locations, the last being Bairnsdale, and is expected at the Get Together at Bowmans Forest.

Bushfires and Burning

As *Voice of the Mountains* again goes to press, bushfires of an incredible magnitude are totally out of control in New South Wales, many of them in national parks. Even at this early stage, questions are being asked there about the adequacy and the value of control burning. This is a matter that has been of great concern to Victorian mountain cattlemen for many years.



THE COURIER GALLERY

PRESENTS
ROS GOODY

EXHIBITION AND SALE OF WORKS -
OCTOBER 28 - NOVEMBER 7 1993
PREVIEW -
THURSDAY OCTOBER 28 10 am - 5 pm

Tor Holth's Gift

Like all those who have come to the high country as outsiders to the 'families', and maybe even those in the know, Tor Holth's books and booklets have been required reading.

Until March of 1993 I only knew him as the name on the spine of the book, *Cattlemen of the High Country*, which I have referred to a great deal over the years, both for information and as an artist for visual reference.

In March I was asked by Sue Silvers whether the cattlemen would be interested in a gift of the collected materials of Tor. This included photographs, interview tapes and drawings.

This gift was a real find.

The collection of photographs alone is a treasure. There are hundred of Tor's own photographs (both black and white and colour) which show an artists eye and desire to own an image, but there is also those photographs copied from family collections for publication, all of which are invaluable to the Cattlemen's Photographic Collection.

There are a number of taped interviews with various personalities of the high country Tor has met in his travels in the preparation of his writings. Many of the people interviewed are no longer with us. This resource alone is invaluable.

After viewing the extent of these works it was agreed that everything should be copied for the cattlemen and all of the original materials should be lodged at La Trobe Library, a section of the State Library of Victoria, as an important collection of social history of the cattlemen and the high country. I'm still copying.

This has been the gift to the cattlemen, it is invaluable and a private statement of thanks to and confidence in the cattlemen for their assistance over the years and ability to secure the material for the future.

My gift has been a new friendship and many hours of chin wagging as I work away with Tor at the other end of the table. The time goes by very quickly around Tor's kitchen table. That Central Victorian afternoon sunlight not only warms us up, but also lights up the things I am copying.

There will be more written about the collection and Tor.

Many thanks Tor for your contribution to the cattlemen's history.

Don Porter

Connley's Alpine Adventure

Country horse riding with a difference.

Your big chance to ride with a legend.

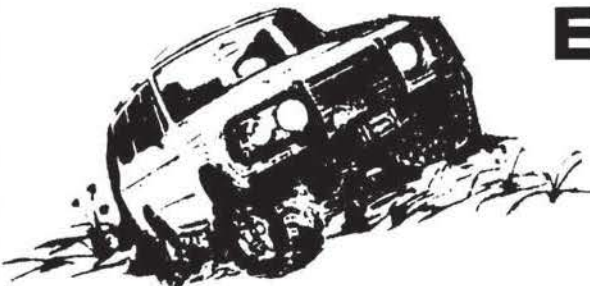
The man who has won the Cattlemen's Cup six years in succession, run down and roped over 1,000 wild brumbies, done stuntwork in The Man from Snowy River films, The Lighthorsemen and doubled for Tom Selleck.

But most important, Ken Connley, loves nothing better than to ride about the High Country and he is only too willing to share his knowledge and experience with those wishing to explore the area.

Contact—

Ken Connley,

c/- P.O., Benambra 3900 or phone (051) 59 9284 or 59 9387.



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Important Mountain Book Launched

There is no need to introduce Ian Balmer and Frank Johnson to our readers, but as there may be some who do not know these two legendary people, we will.

Ian Balmer, although many may not realise, is a descendant of the Guy family of Crooked River. He was born at Bairnsdale in 1923, and in 1939 joined the staff of auctioneers A.McLean and Co. After service in the Second World War he returned there, and was present at the first Special Mountain Calf Sale at Benambra in 1946. He sold at every sale after that time until his retirement in 1976 as Senior Auctioneer at Newmarket for AML&F. In the thirty years between he sold cattle and other stock all over the country, but the calf sales at Benambra, Omeo, Ensay and later Buchan remained his first love.

Frank Johnson was born in 1908, and after managing family properties in outback Queensland and work during the Second World War, he joined *Stock and Land*. He travelled all over Australia taking photographs of rural people and scenes, and still carries his camera. Because he knew the people, and they knew and trusted him, they relaxed with him, so his photographs are unlike those of others before or after him.

Ian Balmer has written a personal history of the mountain calf sales, *Selling the Mountain Calves*. It is illustrated almost exclusively by Frank Johnson's photographs, and many of them are brilliant. Without his work we would not have the wonderful images of Arthur Taylor, who drove the large mobs down the Omeo highway, and the auctioneers and crowds in the yards.

The book is divided into chapters covering the establishment of the sales, A.M.Pearson (who established them), calves, breeders and vendors, women in the yards, station properties, Pendergasts of Benambra, agents, the sales, buyers, drovers and droving, transport, prices, the MCAV, auctioneers and agents and respect. There are full records of all price summaries, year by year, and a timeline of stock agencies. Vendor



Ian Balmer photo by Frank Johnson.

listings from over the years are included, as are those for Omeo, Benambra and Ensay in 1993.

That is the story of the book. The story of the launch is equally interesting. Where do you launch a book about calf sales? It had to be at the calf sales, so on 10 March 1993 the sale at Omeo was opened by the sale of a specially bound copy of the book, signed by the author, photographer and all auctioneers selling at that sale. Bidding was opened by the Shire of Omeo at \$200, but quickly rose to \$1000. Don Richardson of Cobungra Station, one of the cattlemen involved in the formation of the MCAV, was the winning bidder, with all proceeds of the auction going to the Omeo Hospital. Lou Pendergast of Benambra was the losing bidder.



Launching Ian Balmer's book at the Omeo Sales.

Ian Balmer dedicated his book to the people who inspired him to write it, the 'Cattlemen and Cattlewomen of East Gippsland'. We are very glad that he has taken the time to research and record all aspects of these sales.

Selling the Mountain Calves: A Personal History of the East Gippsland Calf Sales by Ian Balmer with photographs by Frank Johnson, is available from Kapana Press, P.O. Box 86, Bairnsdale Vic 3875. It is 74 pages, and costs \$15 plus \$1.50 postage.

Another book that includes material of interest to historians of the mountains is *No End to Walking: One Hundred Years of Walking* by the Melbourne Walking Club. This was written by veteran walker Alan Budge, before his death in 1992. It has been published by his friends, unedited, as a mark of respect.

Alan Budge was one of a group that walked the mountains with Harry Stephenson, and others. He knew the cattlemen as friends, and many are mentioned throughout the book. When a younger generation decided that cattlemen may not be people that they wished to be associated with, Alan was not afraid to speak out. For many years he was editor of *The Melbourne Walker*, and one article that he wrote on that subject in 1991, is reproduced in full. He concluded by saying:

In these times of confrontation, it is acceptable for some walkers to be totally opposed to mountain cattlemen and timber interests. Whatever are the attitudes now, no one should attempt to expurgate, or even sanitise, history. The early walkers did develop friendships with the cattlemen and the timber getter, and that is something that may not be obliterated.

Vale, Alan Budge.

No End to Walking is available only from Alan Budge Book, P.O. Box 114, Mentone, 3194. Cost is \$15. Package and post is \$5 no matter how many copies ordered.

Coming Home

We saddled up our horses
In the piccaninny dawn,
And sleepy dogs from 'neath the hut arose
With a stretch and yawn.

For we are on our long drove home
With our hungry cattle.
To find feed and water on the way,
I think will be a battle.

The first day was both long and hard
With cattle breaking in the bush,
And dogs at our command
Would speak up, block and push.

Working wide on the wing
Or race to turn the lead,
Our job without our canine friends
Would be difficult indeed.

And all along the way,
The tourists would remark,
'Sure is great to see cattle
Back in the National Park.'

We camped that night on Geehi Flats,
The grass stood knee deep high.
To see this once productive land just wasted,
Makes you wonder why.

But the decision it was made
'Midst all the bureaucrats,
I know I'd feed a lot of folks
On beef from Geehi Flats.

As we climbed the Geehi wall
And gazed out o'er the park,
Our thoughts were with the pioneers
Who slaved from dawn till dark.

In the taming of this rugged land
They worked hard and showed no fear.
For the mountains they were conquered
With these folks's determination,
And for them I shed a silent tear.

We camped one night in Gibson's yard
On that long drive home.
The owners then came down
And made themselves both known.

For the cattle folks you meet all along the way
Help to see you through.
They know what it's like out on the road,
For they've been droving too.

And as we made our long drive home,
Along that old stock route,
Little did we know we'd have
Twelve months of stinking drought.

Oh, the drovers' days are long and hard,
You work from dawn till dusk,
And I breathed a sigh of great relief
To see the leaders through the homestead yards.

Allan Brewer



David Treasure's Maiden Speech

On 10 March 1993, newly elected parliamentarian and former President of the MCAV, David Treasure, made his debut speech at Parliament House. The Hon. Graeme Stoney speech was published in the last issue of Voice of the Mountains. Here, to give him equal rights is an edited version of the speech made by the Hon. David Treasure.

Mr TREASURE (Gippsland East) -

Mr Speaker, I rise to speak for the first time in the Parliament, fully aware of the responsibility involved and proud to represent my constituents in Gippsland East. ... My predecessor, Mr Bruce Evans, capably served the electorate of Gippsland East for 31 years. His predecessor, Sir Albert Lind, served for 41 years. I am only the fourth member to represent the electorate since Federation. I have no ambitions to break any records!

Gippsland East is one of the largest Legislative Assembly electorates in this State, with the greatest portion - about 75% - being native forest. The production of timber is a major industry, with places like Orbost, Heyfield, Cann River, Swifts Creek, Club Terrace and Bendoc largely dependent on the timber industry for their economic survival. There are many other mills scattered around the area. To survive in today's competitive world, sawmills and contractors need to invest considerable amounts of money in plant and equipment. For individuals and companies to have the confidence to invest, they need long-term resource security. They need a guarantee from the government of the day on how much timber resource is available, and for how long.

Parallel to this is forest management. There is a vital responsibility to ensure that when a coupe is logged all available material is utilised and valuable wood is not left to rot on the ground. Proper care must be taken to ensure that a new forest is established and that satisfactory regeneration occurs. I believe Victoria has world-class expertise in this area, but we must let our foresters manage our forests and not have them shackled by political decisions emanating from extremist minorities. ...

Some of the best quality beef cattle available come from the high country of Gippsland East and are eagerly sought by fatteners and restockers from all over south-eastern Australia.

Fine wool production, for which the area is noted, occurs in the mild climate of the coastal plains through into the high country where lambs are sometimes born in the snow. Unfortunately, the wool

industry is facing great difficulty at present because of record low prices, which in turn affect everybody. ...

My great grandfather George Treasure was an unsuccessful miner on the Dargo River diggings. After some years he began to accumulate a small herd of cattle, and that is how the family began its long association with grazing in the high country.

The threat to abolish high country grazing was a contributing factor to my involvement in politics and was the primary reason for the creation of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association. For years this small, beleaguered group has been fighting for its survival with its membership being constantly depleted by a process of attrition.

These families are not just statistics, they are real people - families who represent generations of commitment to this country. It is the cattlemen who are the true conservationists of the high country.

My time in local government helped me to appreciate the problems of municipalities in Gippsland East. The shires of Maffra, Avon, Bairnsdale, Tambo, Orbost and Omeo all have huge areas of unrateable Crown land through which they must maintain roads to service their isolated communities. Added to this commitment is the extra wear and tear on roads caused by heavy timber traffic. Timber royalties paid to the government are not returned directly to local road funding, and that issue needs to be addressed by government.

I have worked as a truck driver, timber cutter, farmer and grazier, as well as having international and local business experience. I believe people with a diversity of experience are better equipped to appreciate the lot of others and to understand their problems. I hope my contribution to Parliament will be positive and that all here can work towards creating a better Victoria, not just for our sake but for the sake of generations to come. This State has resources in the form of good land and climate, abundant water and established industry and technology, but its greatest asset is its people. I have great faith that the people of this State, led by a vital reforming government, will be the catalyst to lift us out of the recession and to take us forward into the 21st century.

(Hansard, Legislative Assembly, 10 March 1993)

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MOUNTAIN
CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INCORPORATED HELD AT
FARRER HOUSE, 24 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE ON
FRIDAY 8TH OCTOBER, 1993.**

PRESENT: A. Brewer, S. Silvers, Doug Treasure, K. Whittam, A. Whittam, W. Crump, J. Commins, D. Porter, J. Lovick, M. Allard, M. Goldsworthy, S. Hicks, H. Ryder, K. Heywood, J. Rogers, G. Connley, K. Kelly, J. Marrow, W. Symmons, P. McCormack, C. Lovick, C. Stoney, R. Andrews, Mark Coleman.

APOLOGIES were received from R. & M. Brown, L. Lieberman, R. Hollis, J. Buist, H. Mitchell, M. Blair, John Lovick, T. Murphy, Ian Roper, M. Jordan and Clive Hodge.

Chairman Alan Brewer welcomed all members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Mr Brewer then opened the meeting at 10 minutes to 11 am.

MINUTES of the previous Annual General Meeting of the Association as printed in *Voice of the Mountains* No. 16 of 1993 and circulated to all Members and Associate Members be confirmed. Moved Mary Goldsworthy, seconded Harry Ryder.

The President being temporarily absent from the meeting the Chairman asked the Secretary to present her report as Secretary/Treasurer.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you my eighth report.

Membership of the Association, both full and associate membership remains static as it has been for the past two years, with a small increase for the year 1992/93. New associate membership applications are received at approximately the same rate that old associate memberships fall back. The reasons for discontinuing associate membership can perhaps be attributed to the general economic climate, and the movement of population - notice of change of address is often forgotten. It is very pleasing to get so many encouraging and congratulatory notes with the associates' renewal of subscriptions. It seems obvious that in 1992/93 the associate base is steady - otherwise in the current circumstances, membership would not be retained.

On 3 October 1992, Victorians went to the polls, and elected by an overwhelming majority the Coalition Government. Two former members of the Association, Mr Graeme Stoney, and Mr David Treasure stood as candidates and were duly elected, Mr Stoney as the member for Central Highlands in the Legislative Council, and Mr Treasure as the member for Gippsland East in the House of Representatives. Cattlemen along with all Victorians expected, and looked forward to, a strong blast of fresh wind through Government departments and bureaucracies, and with it, a bold new start and a more sympathetic approach. As far as the Cattlemen are concerned, that wind has now dwindled to more of a gentle breeze, as an early promise of change has given way to bureaucratic apathy.

There have been four Central Council meetings this year where the smooth running of the Association has been assured.

On Thursday 15th October, a group of Cattlemen met with our new Members of Parliament, as well as Rosemary Varty, David Evans and Steve McArthur, to discuss a submission to Government requesting a new Alpine and Bush Grazing Agreement. The need for a new Agreement was soon to be illustrated by a number of problems, including confusion about cattle numbers on the Bogong High Plains, the flow-on effect of counting cattle as adult equivalents, dissatisfaction with new licence boundaries and accounts being sent to cattlemen for the licence allocation number, rather than the actual number of cattle sent to the Plains. The Association believes that the old Agreement, conceived on the run whilst the Alpine Park legislation was being debated in the House needed to be examined and revised. It was considered that a new Agreement would permanently set the status of Alpine grazing for the future. Despite letters designed to jog the memories of Members of Parliament that we needed some acknowledgment of this submission, silence was the only result, and I have recently written to the Minister requesting that a committee be set up to prepare a draft document for his perusal, and requesting that the matter be resolved during the current term of Government.

On 18 November 1992 we met with Minister for Conservation Mark Birrell and Minister for Natural Resources Geoff Coleman and others to flag the submission and to request clarification of cattle numbers on Bogong and to revert to the system of counting cattle on a per head basis rather than as adult equivalents. Despite the fact that the adult equivalent system was devised for the Bogong High Plains only, the Department had applied this method of counting cattle across all grazing areas, thereby causing a reduction in cattle numbers across the board. Attempts to resolve the issues before the 1992 grazing season were undertaken, with David Evans assuming the burden of negotiation with the Department. Despite his best efforts, confusion remained. The exact role of some Department staff in dealing with this matter is suspect, we are still working to get the matter resolved. In June of this year, at a meeting with Mark Birrell, Harry Ryder presented a solution to the Bogong High Plains cattle numbers based on the vacancy left by Cobungra cattle being moved from the area north of the Cobungra River. He proposed that the cattlemen absorb this vacant allocation, and for stock allocations to then revert to the original proposal of the 15/30% reductions in adult stock only. The Minister expressed great interest in this proposal, and despite our pleas for a decision, no resolution has yet been advised. We live in hope that this situation will not carry over into the start of the 1993 grazing season as has happened for the past two seasons. The fact that the problems we have raised are relatively small, and would appear to be easy of resolution, and yet more and more misunderstanding and confusion are the only results, must lead us to wonder whether some Department staff have something to gain by keeping the grazing situation in a state of flux. It is unfortunately all too possible that there are still some Department staff who hold a grudge against grazing within the Alpine Park, despite strong Government policy and support to the contrary. The Minister has made it clear to us on two occasions that he will not listen to arguments to reduce the level of grazing in the Alpine Park, or to remove it altogether, which case is apparently still being lobbied for by sections of the green movement.

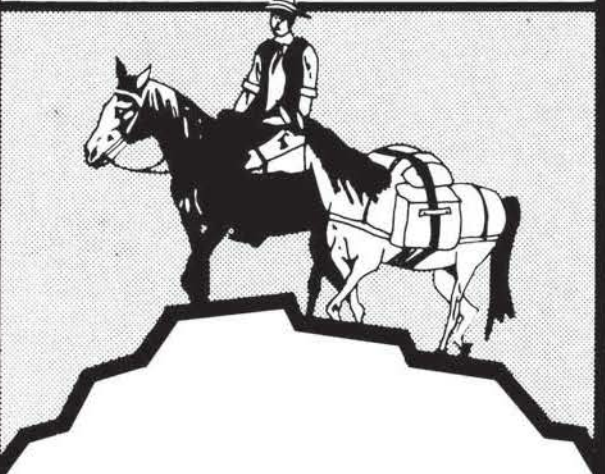
In mid December 1992 a group of families, friends and guests joined the Ryder family at Pretty Valley on the Bogong High Plains for a short, informal ceremony to dedicate a plaque to the memory of Walter Ryder. This plaque is to be added to Ben Cooper's cairn at some convenient time in the

future. It was a beautiful sunny and happy day spent with good mates and filled with friendship and laughter. It was also the last time many of us had a chance to enjoy the company of Bill Hicks, who died only two weeks later. Few of us, knowing that Bill's time might be short, failed to be moved at the loving way he spoke of his old friend, and the catch in his voice as he concluded his speech by saying that he saw a man 'coming towards me, with a mob of cattle, and dogs, heading straight and true ...' across the Bogong High Plains.

Omeo Branch had the responsibility for running the Get Together in 1993, and rose to the occasion magnificently. Thank you very much to the Kelly family who provided the venue for the Get Together on the banks of the Mitta River, and congratulations to Jim Commins, and the Omeo Branch for their organisational skills and hard work. A special thank you to John Cook and his family who undertook the difficult and wearying task of manning the gate for several days. The Junior Cattlemen's Cup was won by Tim Faithfull, and the Senior Cup by Peter Faithfull. Nothing like keeping it in the family!

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Jack Lovick kindly offered a free trail riding weekend as a raffle prize to a person joining the Association at the Get Together as an associate member for the first time. This inducement encouraged some fifty new associate members to join, and we thank Jack very much for his generosity.

In March 1993 the University of Grenoble, France, published their book *The Australian Alps* to which the Association had contributed a chapter. The book, published in both French and English is distributed to a readership of subscribers, academics, scientists and resource managers as well as university and research institute libraries in fifty countries. The Association collaborated closely with Dr Phillippe Grenier on the project. Dr Grenier visited Australia from the University of Grenoble, on behalf of the French Ministry of Environment. His co-editor from the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service showed a distinct lack of enthusiasm at the inclusion of the Mountain Cattlemen, so various ploys were resorted to, and Dr Grenier finally had quite a battle to get the chapter written by the Association into the book unedited. We received a triumphant card from Dr Grenier advising that he had won. I would like to thank Linda Barraclough and Debra Squires for their assistance with writing this material, and for their research and editing.

In March 1993 the Association was represented at a Mini Expo display at Parliament House organised by the Public Land Council of Victoria. The Association concentrated its display on the history and heritage of the Mountain Cattlemen, since it was considered a perilous housekeeping problem getting a cow and calf into the House. We handed out our Education booklet and stickers, and members from both sides of politics seemed to be interested in our photographs and display.

This year the Central Council lost one of its founding members, Clive Hodge, to the green pastures of Tumbarumba. His presence on the Council will be greatly missed. There was no 'mucking around' with Clive, he instantly understood the ramifications of an issue, and was never afraid to speak bluntly if he had to. Clive had been a foundation member of the Association, a senior vice president for many years and a leading organiser of the Parliament House ride in 1984. Fortunately Clive will remain as an active member of the Association and made the observation in his

farewell speech that it would be impossible to get rid of him, and that he would be hanging around like a hungry dog. We sincerely hope that he will honour this threat.

'Culture' and 'heritage' are the new concepts being embraced by management groups in the Australian Alps today, and it is vitally important that the Mountain Cattlemen make their voices heard in debates on these issues. Cattlemen have a long and proud heritage in the Victorian Alps, and cherish their living link with their pioneering heritage, and the challenge of addressing, and indeed maintaining heritage aspects along with environmental issues must be undertaken when considering management of the Alpine area. It would be hypocritical not to acknowledge the Cattlemen's heritage and the proper conservation of their way of life, and maintenance of their grazing rights along with the conservation and maintenance of Alpine flora and fauna. The Association is determined to have its voice heard in debates on these concepts, and some progress has already been made in this area.

Increasing interest is being shown by teachers and students on the subject of Alpine grazing, and Cattlemen have spoken to many groups of students over the past year. We believe that this is a most important educational and public relations exercise, and as many Cattlemen as possible should be prepared to undertake these engagements. In one amazing week some months ago Mansfield Cattlemen spoke to four separate groups of students, and I would like to thank the Purcell and McCormack families for their involvement and their patience.

The Association attempted to organise a trip to Tasmania earlier this year for members and friends to travel together and join the Tasmanian Mountain Cattlemen at their Get Together. Unfortunately, despite early enthusiasm, the trip had to be abandoned due to lack of numbers. It just goes to prove that you can't always repeat a success like Longreach. Not now, anyway.

During the year, whilst Doug Treasure was away, I stood in for him as the Association's representative on the Public Land Council of Victoria, and was able to witness first hand how it works. I have to report it works extremely well. At the first meeting I attended a potential disaster was averted when the literature proposed to be distributed

by one PLCV member was, unintentionally, damaging to this Association. PLC Secretary and guide Tim Barker stepped into the breach and suggested a solution agreeable to both organisations. Had this mediation not taken place, serious damage could have been done to the Association and bad feelings generated between the MCAV and another public land user.

The Association ended the financial year in better shape for 1993 than it did in 1992, with an increase in net assets, and despite payment of a large sum in legal fees. I believe that the funds are consolidating, and provided there are no unpleasant surprises ahead, the financial position of the Association will, I believe, be strong in the coming year.

Finally I would like to thank all members of the Central Council for their support over the year. I must also say a special thank you to Allan Brewer who has gone out of his way to support and assist the Association and I am sure that the members are very grateful for his thoughtful contribution to meetings throughout the year, to say nothing of his willingness to travel long distances in support of both members and associate members in their flag waving endeavours. Thanks also to Ros Andrews for her friendly support and great work in the marketing department.

And finally, to Doug Treasure, President and friend, thank you for your dedication, friendship and constant support over the past three years. We will miss you at the helm, but will all look forward to continuing to work with you below decks, so to speak.

MARKETING REPORT - Ros Andrews

The 1992/93 year for marketing has been a profitable one. Turnover for the year was \$35,784.71 with net profit for the year being \$12,800.80.

The Get Together at Omeo was extremely successful for marketing with an increase in turnover and net profit yet again. I am sure that having a wider variety of goods for sale helps. Many thanks to Tess and Pat Coleman, Mary O'Brien, Paul and Judy Dix, Kelvin and Rosie Parker, Chris Hammond, Bruce Insley, Sue Beeton, 'Daffy', Jacinta English, Annie and Keith Whittam, Barry Masters, Mary Goldsworthy, Cath Noble and Frank Hill for their assistance. It was really appreciated.

Good sales were also made at the Bush Dance. Thanks again to Tess Coleman and Geraldine, Mary O'Brien and Carley Andrews for running the shop.

One of the other events that we attended during the year was the Lilydale Agricultural Show. It rained heavily on the Saturday but still proved to be a worthwhile exercise financially.

I would like to say a special thank you to Jacinta English, Peter Koop, Nigel Hogan and John for attending the Victorian Horse Carnival at Terang on the very hot Australia Day weekend. Unfortunately we did not make any money but we did fly the flag (so to speak).

We set up a stand at the 4X4 Recreational Vehicle Show at the Exhibition Buildings in February. This was very successful financially and also from a public relations point of view. We were able to convince many people that all the cattlemen have not gone. Thanks to Galia Hardy, Carmen Stebnycky, Paul and Judy Dix, Sue Beeton, Frank Hill, Bruce Insley and Frank Sedgman for helping out during the four days.

Thanks to the Colemans and Magda and Ross Brown for setting up shop at some Gippsland events.

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Wholesale sales were generally down on last year with the most consistent sales still being made through a few country stores. Printing the mail-order form in *Voice of the Mountains* resulted in quite a number of orders coming in, while the royalties arrangement with Thomas Cook continues to work well.

We have two new products, a plastic mug with a logo, and a tea towel which we anticipate will appeal to a different section of the market and should sell well.

My special thanks to Don Porter for his support and creativity in providing the artwork required during the year. Whether it be the picture on the port bottle or a t-shirt, a logo on a mug or hat etc., Don is responsible. I am very grateful for his assistance.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - Doug Treasure

Many of you are aware that I have just returned from an extended trip around this great country of ours. Whilst away, I came into contact with many land management issues.

It seems to me that in the north of Australia, land management programmes are more advanced than in our area - largely due to the lesser population, which means a greater percentage of people who understand land issues, and less bureaucratic distance from the top of the management system to its implementation level.

When I look at the social and political environment here in southern Australia, where we, as an Association live, I realise the effect the MCAV has. Sometimes one needs to stand back a bit to see where you have come from, and where you are headed. Our past we know and appreciate, but the future of the MCAV has concerned a lot of people of late. I have heard comments like, 'There is nothing happening', 'We need another ride on Parliament House'. Well there is a lot happening, but quietly, and if there was a need, we would ride wherever was appropriate.

Our role now is one of input to land management issues, whilst still maintaining our position as guardian of our heritage and cultural links with the past. We must keep this second aspect in front of the community through the media. I

congratulate the North-East branch of the Association for the 1994 Get Together programme which will do just this.

Our continuing involvement in the Public Land Council, I believe, is very important. The help we can get from liaison with other public land user groups through the PLC is worth more than most of us realise. A large part of our input to management issues can be done through this body.

The re-opening of Wonnangatta Station to grazing has not advanced. This is due to a combination of my recent absence, and bureaucratic blockage, however I believe this issue should be pursued with vigor.

Some three years ago we received a grant from the National Farmers' Fighting Fund of \$25,000 to fund research into Alpine grazing. This was done by Mr Roger Oxley, and I feel that his work should be worked up into a presentable form and a copy sent to the NFF asking for their analysis and assistance with publication.

The Omeo Branch did a great job running the Get Together this year. It seems to get bigger and better every year. Thank you Omeo for doing such a great job - it is a lot of work.

My thanks on behalf of the Association are due to many quiet achievers. Their efforts keep us running like a well-oiled machine and I wish to name a few - Debbie Squires and Linda Barraclough for their work putting together *Voice of the Mountains* - and please members let them have some material for the next issue, the deadline is in about three weeks. Do it now! Thank you to Don Porter whose photographic work is so important to our history. Don will be at the Get Together in 1994 so bring along your old photos for an on-the-spot copy! Thanks also to Ros Andrews for her work with the marketing and by keeping us in front of the community, and to Chairman Allan Brewer - thanks for all your time over the last three years. To Sue our Secretary, who toils away in our office at the back of Shirley's dress shop, or bolts across the country to wherever she is needed, a heartfelt thank you.

I have decided to let the job of President go around. I have had a very enjoyable, interesting and busy time during the past three years, and have had experiences you couldn't buy. I hope to be involved

in specific projects with the MCAV from here on.
Thank you.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Moved Jack Lovick, seconded Buff Rogers that the financial statements for the year 1992/93 be accepted. Carried.

SETTING OF SUBSCRIPTION FEES

It was agreed that there be no increase in subscription fees for full or associate membership for the coming year.

FIXING OF HONORARIUMS

The Association agreed the following Honorariums for the year 1993/94.

President: Moved Doug Treasure, seconded Ken Heywood that the Honorarium for the President be \$3,000 plus expenses.

Chairman: Moved Jack Lovick, seconded Buff Rogers that the Honorarium for the Chairman be \$1,000 plus expenses.

Secretary/Treasurer: Moved Doug Treasure, seconded Harry Ryder that the Honorarium for the Secretary/Treasurer be \$12,000 plus expenses.

Special Projects Officers: Moved Mary Goldsworthy, seconded Peter McCormack, and moved Mary Goldsworthy, seconded Allan Brewer that the Projects Officers' Honorariums be \$1,000 each plus expenses.

Marketing Officer: Moved Doug Treasure, seconded Buff Rogers that the Honorarium be \$1,000 plus expenses.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Chairman Allan Brewer declared all positions vacant and handed the Chair to Doug Treasure for the election of Office Bearers.

President: Mary Goldsworthy was nominated by Jack Lovick and accepted.

Allan Brewer was nominated by Jim Commins but declined as he had been advised to do so because he was not a full member of the Association. Jim Commins doubted that this was an impediment.

Mary Goldsworthy was elected.



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Senior Vice President: Harry Ryder was nominated by Allan Brewer and was elected.

Second Vice President: Allan Brewer was nominated by Peter McCormack and was elected.

Special Projects Officer: Jim Commins was nominated by Allan Brewer and was elected.

Doug Treasure was nominated by Mary Goldsworthy and was elected.

Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Silvers was nominated by Annie Whittam and was elected.

Marketing Officer: Ros Andrews was nominated by Peter McCormack. Ros accepted the position for a further 12 months only, and was elected.

Appointment of Chairman Mr Allan Brewer was commended for his work with the Association over the past years, and was nominated by Buff Rogers and was elected unopposed.

Appointment of Auditor Mr W. Crump accepted the position of Auditor to the Association for the coming year.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. Don Porter addressed the meeting on the subject of the photographic collection, and stressed the need for families to come forward with their photographs for copying. He assured the Association that by copying the photographs on the spot there was no danger of them becoming lost. Photographs were essential for putting together historical material.

Don discussed the photographic competition, the winning entries to be displayed at the 1994 Get Together. He had received support from Mazda in providing a tent for the exhibition. He expresses the hope that the Associates would regard this opportunity as one of being able to give something back to the Cattlemen.

Don also informed the members that Tor Holth had offered all his tapes, slides, photographs and research materials to the Association. Don felt that this extremely important material should be available to the general community, and so the originals will all be forwarded to the La Trobe Library. Meanwhile Don will copy all the material first for MCAV archives.

It was agreed that Tor Holth's generous gesture in allowing the MCAV access to his work was a compliment to the Association, and an important addition to the MCAV collection.

2. Jim Commins spoke about his efforts to obtain funding for economic research from AMLC, but that the organisation had declined on the basis, Jim considered incorrectly, that the subject was too political.

Jim commins also reported that Oliver Moriarty had presented his work to the Academy of Science and further to David Evans, Peter Corcoran, and the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales.

He also reported on a conference on History and Environment, and considered worth following up the support of some local Aboriginal groups to assist with putting forward the views of MCAV on land management issues.

There being no further business the chairman closed the meeting at 12.10 pm.

WONNANGATTA CARAVAN PARK

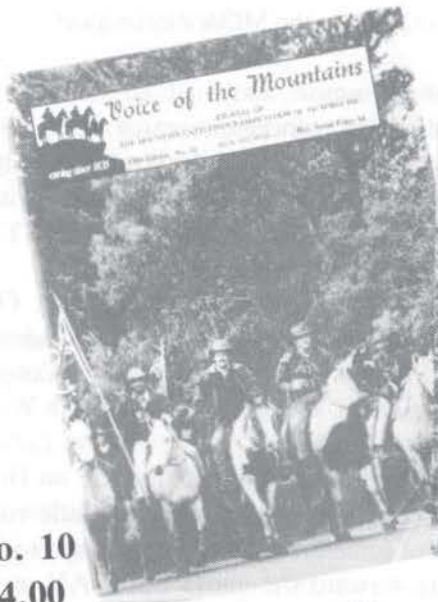
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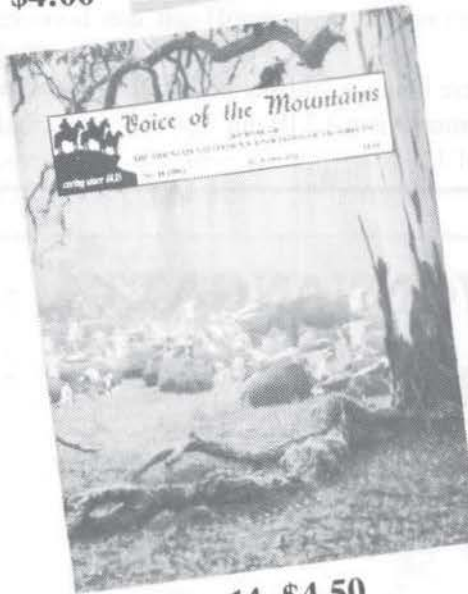
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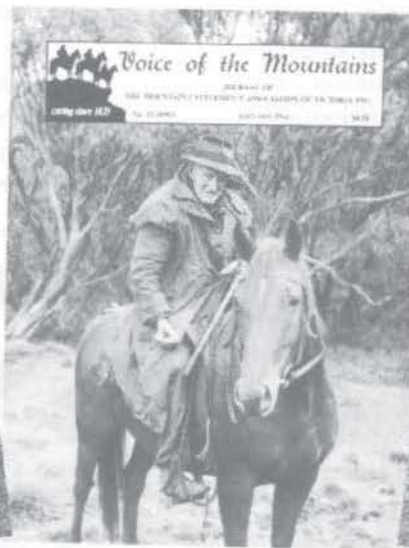
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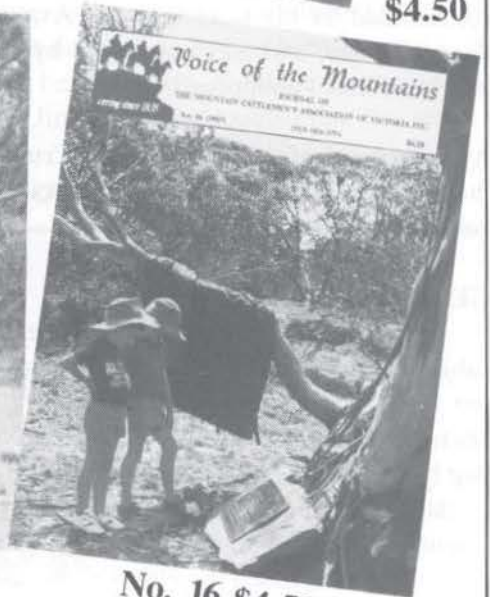
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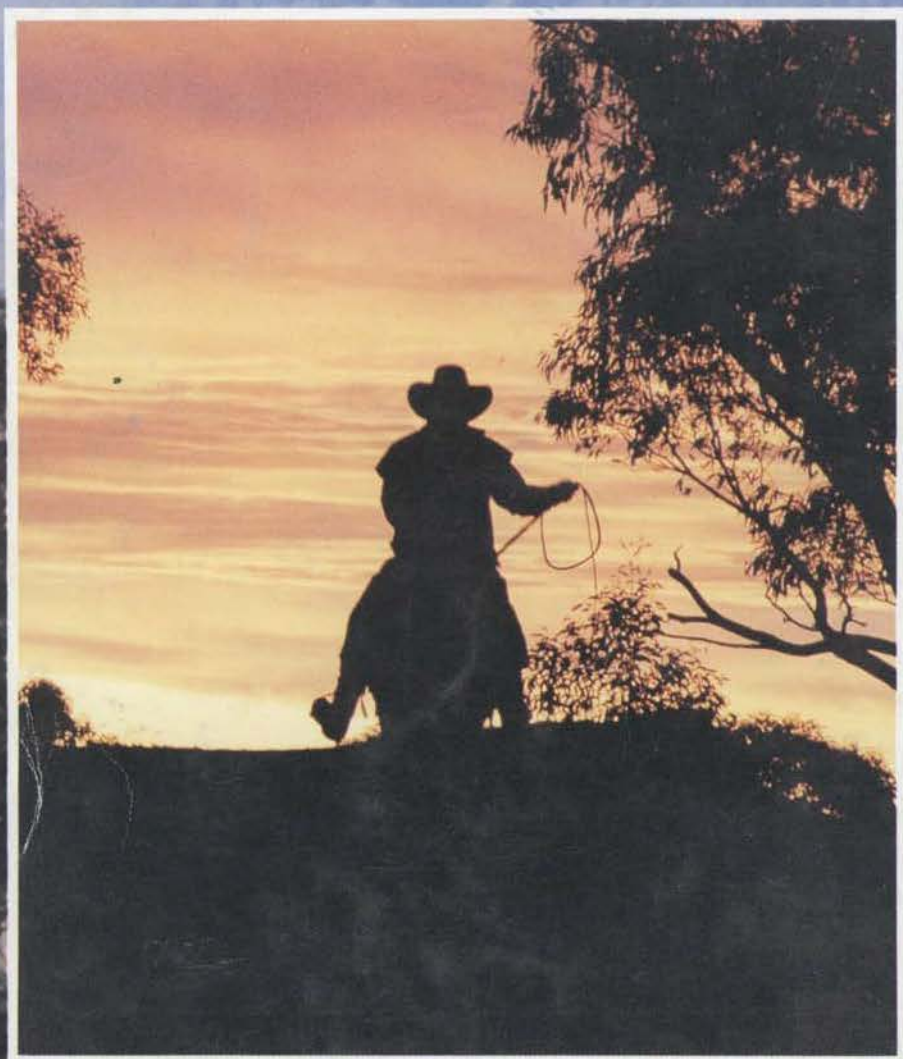
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