



# Voice of the Mountains

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Editorial Committee: Linda Barraclough, Debra Squires and Sue Silvers

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### COVER

Front: 'Mustering in the Snow, Bogong High Plains, 1995' by Phil Graham from Grafton showing Johnny Lorimer from Bright mustering some Weston/Goldsworthy stock.

Back: 'Weston's Hut under Snow', was also taken by Phil Graham on the same mustering trip.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The year 1995 marked the centenary of the publication of Banjo Paterson's *The Man from Snowy River and other Verses*, a milestone celebrated in great bush style by the small community of Corryong. This celebration attracted horsemen and women from across Australia, and the crowds who cheered them on to victory. It is easy to see why Corryong is still in love with the horse. Isolation and the rugged nature of the country made horsemanship essential to agricultural and social life. A century after publication 'The Man from Snowy River' ballad is indisputably Australia's favourite poem. The poem itself predicts that 'The Man' and 'The Ride' would become household words. The prediction has become reality - not only just down Kosciusko's side and around the Overflow, but in classrooms, kitchens and even city boardrooms. Banjo created a romantic hero out of a stockman who, until he performed his spectacular ride, had been considered by his peers to be quite ordinary. Paterson's idealisation of the Australian high country horseman gave the young nation a new hero. In true Clancy style, our Mountain Cattlemen keep Banjo's dream alive, a tradition set to remain for another century or more.

A major undertaking of the Association over the past year has been negotiating with the Victorian Farmers' Federation and other bodies for the formulation of regulations governing livestock travelling on Victorian roads. For the first time in the history of this state there will be uniformity of signage, stringent driver education and clarity of responsibilities of farmers and motorists regarding travelling livestock. It is anticipated that the regulations will become law. During the lengthy negotiations, MCAV stuck firmly to the central issues - the right to move stock from home properties to high country runs without hindrance, uniformity of signage, and the rights and duties of farmers and motorists. MCAV is delighted that the issues it fought for have been recognised and granted.

We all remain firmly committed to the retention of grazing in the alpine regions of Victoria. To this end, I urge all Alpine/Bush runholders to fill their allocations and apply for vacant runs.

I thank the Central Council for their encouragement and guidance during the year, and our numerous associate members for their continuing support and loyalty.

I would specially like to mention my gratitude to the Guy family for coming to the rescue of the Association and allowing the Get Together to be held at 'Kilbride', at such short notice and with such grace. My faith in human nature has been strengthened!

Barry Humphries, when being interviewed recently, said 'We, in this land, are more preoccupied with what it hasn't, rather than what it has'. Ours is a great country - let's keep it that way!

Health and happiness to you all for 1996.

*Mary Goldsworthy*





The rescue party and stockmen at the RAAF Tiger Moth before it took off for the Gippsland Base Hospital with Bob Goldie aboard. (*Barney Higgins*)



The site of the accident involving Bob Goldie. The men are (L-R across back) Bill Gillio, Rex Miller, Billy Jones, the RAAF doctor and Constable Draper. Constable Kennedy from Briagolong is in front. (*Isabelle Estoppey*)

# Tiger Moths Rescue Injured Cattlemen

In the 1940s, two rescues took place in the high country. Both involved Tiger Moth aeroplanes, which has probably led to some of the confusion that still occurs today when they are discussed. The first was of Bob Goldie in 1944, and the second was of Jack Kelly in 1947. Both pilots, Squadron Leader Alan Hepburn and then-civilian pilot Neil McInnes had seen wartime service, and in at least the second rescue that was a major factor.

The Tiger Moth was a biplane that had been used for wartime pilot training, and was probably the only aircraft that could have carried them out, being very light, with a relatively short take-off and landing distance.

## The Rescue of Bob Goldie

The first rescue took place in January 1944, when Bob Goldie, 64 years and from Boisdale was working stock near Mount Wellington with Rex Miller and Billy Jones, and was injured when his horse rolled on him. In a ride that local cattlemen later described as 'epic', young Billy Jones, originally from Glenmaggie, rode through the night to Rex Miller's at Upper Maffra to seek help. As word spread, horsemen began to make their way to the scene, as initially the only way it was thought possible to get him out was to carry him on foot by stretcher for several days. This would have been a treacherous operation and one that needed a large number of men.

Jack Horstman, a neighbour of the Millers, remembers leaving about 5am with five others, to ride through Huggetts and up Miller's track, as the word spread quickly. The party included his uncle Jack Horstman, Jack Higgins from Mewburn Park, and Barney Higgins. The route they chose was a difficult, single-file track, but the shortest and quickest way for them. They arrived at the scene, near the Gable End, about 3pm.

Another party went from Briagolong, up through the Moroka, and another went from Heyfield, probably by vehicle to Licola, and then rode up. Fifty years later, trying to remember who was there, Jack Horstman thought it probably was:

a few Higginses, there'd be Dunsmuirs,  
there'd be Estoppeys, Chesters, possibly the  
Rumpffs, and maybe some Kellys.

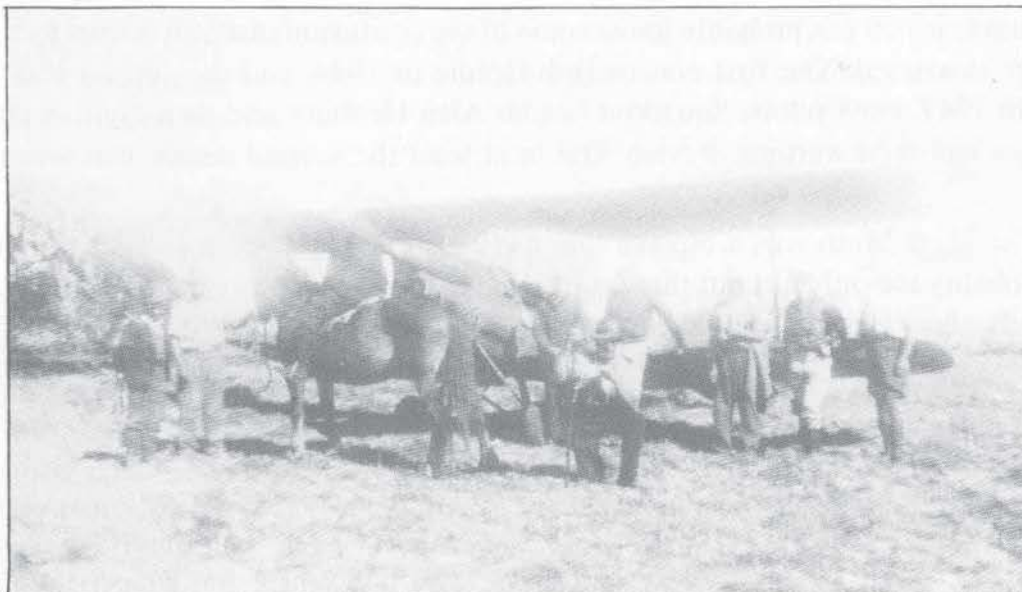
Photographs taken at the scene also show Hugh Bourke, George Gray, Wattie Killeen, Bill Gillio, Andy Estoppey (who may well have been the one to take the only surviving photographs), and two policemen, Jim Draper from Heyfield and Constable Kennedy from Briagolong.

In the meantime, Dr Brent from Maffra contacted the RAAF, and requested an airborne evacuation. He advised them there was an airstrip a mile long available on the plain. Squadron Leader Alan Hepburn, a chief flying instructor, flew over the area in a Dakota, but was unable to land, as the strip was a mere 150 yards long! He returned to the base and accompanied by a RAAF doctor, flew to the area in a Tiger Moth, A17-215. He made four unsuccessful attempts to land on the short strip, and was only successful when a ground party managed to slow the plane at the end of the strip by dragging on the wings. The cattlemen then set to work to lengthen the strip, which ended up about 270 yards in length.

Jack Horstman continues the story:

The plane landed about four, four-thirty that afternoon, landed uphill. When Bob was put in the plane, he was a big man and it was a little cockpit, the cockpit had a full load. To get speed up the little plane had to take off downhill into a gorge, more or less. When it lifted off the ground the plane was still going downhill, and we wondered if he'd ever get out of it, there was a downdraft in this gully, quite big, it was. He eventually got over the mountain, and got him back safe to Sale. The pilot that time was an instructor pilot, and he





The rescue party, with Bob Goldie on the horse, at the Tiger Moth before takeoff. The pilot, Squadron Leader Alan Hepburn, is second from the right, on the wing. (*Barney Higgins*)



The RAAF Tiger Moth used in the Goldie rescue. (*Barney Higgins*)

said he'd never, ever do that again. He thought he'd never get out of it, thought he'd never climb over the mountains.

That night, in Millers hut there were 28 men and 36 horses in camp, and it was some party.

In 1965 the incident formed the basis of a children's book by Paddy Hooper, called *Muster Up*.

### **The Rescue of Jack Kelly**

In March 1947 the second rescue took place, that of Jack Kelly by Neil McInnes. Jack was head stockman for the Gilder family at Glenfalloch and was one of a large party mustering around the Holmes Plain area when his horse fell on him. He received head injuries, with a suspected fractured skull, and it was obvious that he had to be removed to hospital as quickly as possible. With access to the area only by horseback, and the knowledge that there had already been one successful Tiger Moth rescue in the area, that was probably the only option considered.

Bob Gilder rode about seven miles to a nearby Forest Commission camp and radio contact was made with their base in Erica. They immediately contacted the RAAF at Point Cook and Jim Draper, who was still stationed at Heyfield. Arrangements were made for a Tiger Moth to be despatched from Point Cook, possibly because there was none at Sale. As the pilot would have been totally unfamiliar with the area, the Forest Commission near Point Cook rushed a map to the base before the plane took off. It landed at Holmes Plain about 4.55pm, with Wing Commander Charles Lelue, senior medical officer at Point Cook, aboard. A Dakota accompanied it to the area and remained overhead to maintain radio contact.

In the meantime, Jim Draper contacted Norman McInnes whose sons, Neil, Don and Bruce McInnes, had another Tiger Moth, VH-AID, at Tinamba, operating from an airstrip in Arthur Jessup's paddock. It was the only civilian plane in the area, and the brothers were familiar with the area around Holmes Plain. About two o'clock, Neil McInnes took off with Jim Kelly, Jack's brother, aboard and flew low over Holmes Plain to ensure he had the right location and to reconnoitre the area

for his proposed landing. He returned to Tinamba, and after a time waiting for the doctor to arrive, Jim Kelly was replaced by Dr Atkinson from Maffra. In the meantime, they removed the front passenger seat so that the returning patient would be able to be laid down. About 4.45pm the aircraft took off again for Holmes Plain, with the doctor strapped in the seatless front cockpit. Neil McInnes landed safely, uphill towards the yard, avoiding the RAAF Tiger Moth which was already on the strip.

Neil McInnes remembered the occasion almost fifty years later:

It was getting later in the afternoon and dusk was encroaching, and as happened in the mountains, the night comes very suddenly, once the sun slips below the mountains. At that stage the doctors had examined Mr Kelly and given what immediate on-the-spot medical attention could be given, but the request was that he be got to the Sale Base Hospital as soon as possible. He had severe head injuries, as a matter of fact he was unconscious for five or six weeks after the event. We had arranged for the RAAF Tiger Moth to take Mr Kelly, and he was loaded aboard, and strapped in and then came the starting of the aircraft. Tiger Moths have a notorious habit of not starting off that well due to magneto problems, and unfortunately I suppose this was one of those occasions. We had to wind and wind and wind the propeller, for probably an hour to get it started, but we failed in the attempt. It was then decided that we would transfer Mr Kelly to my aircraft, which was also a Tiger Moth, sitting him in the front seat, and that I would take him then, hopefully before dark, down.

This takeoff would have been hard enough during the day, when the high altitude meant that the plane could be expected to considerably lose power. At 7pm, when he took off in the dark, it was even more difficult.

I didn't really have enough time to inspect the strip thoroughly, the takeoff path, which was unfortunate. It was getting dark enough so, to even remain in line with the takeoff path, I decided I would station some of our local people in along the strip about fifty yards apart, to form a line of sight as it were, along to the proposed take-off point.



My own plane started without any fuss and I taxied out preparing to depart. I could not see the furthest man, so I just took off along parallel to them, which was the way we did it in the air force. I opened the throttle and took off past the line of markers, and unfortunately the aeroplane struck an obstruction of some sort, I'm not sure, I think it might have been a hole, it could have been a small stump, but I think it was a hole, and it inadvertently swung, fairly abruptly to port, left, and straight through the line of human markers. They wisely scurried very quickly out of the way and unfortunately by this time I had been thrown off the track and thrown off the takeoff path and was now diverging towards the left, towards the creek that surrounds Holmes Plain, with an unknown surface problem. However at this stage we were committed and with no alternative but to press on regardless, I endeavoured to get the aeroplane off the ground at the earliest possible time. It responded, only to find myself steering straight at a very large leafy tree, on the creek edge. I had built up enough speed to be able to jump it as it were, and continued down the other slope.

Once off the ground, the most dangerous part of the rescue mission took place, often overlooked by those who appreciated Neil McInnes' skill in the landing and subsequent takeoff in the dark. The Tiger Moth was not equipped for flying in the conditions in which he then found himself.

The Dakota that had been circling for two hours over Holmes Plain, watching what action was being taken on the ground, then

headed off towards Sale, and I followed. The pilot turned on his landing lights for me to keep track of him, but being of a superior speed and size he soon lost me, after three or four minutes. We were in absolute darkness and crossing the lower southern edge of the ranges, heading for Sale. My problem was

compounded unfortunately, because my aeroplane, as an ex-wartime Tiger Moth had luminosity on its dials, gauges, and the only blind flying instrument I had was the Turn and Bank indicator, but these were not generally considered sufficient for blind flying, particularly if you entered a cloud, where there was a danger of finishing up in a spin. It was dark and black as pitch, and the worst thing of this was I had my face down in the cockpit, about three inches from the instruments. That was probably the most difficult part, to be quite honest, because I had to

try and blind fly, without any horizon. Without that and with my head down below the cowling, it was just a bit hard to try and maintain altitude. I was worrying about the altitude, because I knew the height of everything, Mount Wellington, about five thousand, three hundred and something like that, I'd flown over it so many times. It was essential not to drift down, if you're flying you can inadvertently drift down, of course if you get too close ... Once we were clear of the ranges, I let down slowly.

Meanwhile, the details of the rescue were relayed by the Dakota to the RAAF base at East Sale, and from there to the local radio station 3TR. The station's owner/manager, Archibald Gilchrist,



*Don (left) and Neil McInnes.*

had been monitoring the RAAF radio communications, and patched them live to air. At Tinamba, Kevin Shingles, a neighbour, heard it come up on air, and ran five hundred yards across the paddocks to tell the McInnes family. He found Neil's father, who must have had some understanding of the difficulties of the flight his son was undertaking. They turned on the radio, and the family sat around the dining room table, knowing that they had taken all lights out of the plane some time before, and that Neil had not even taken a torch with him to read the gauges. They heard the Dakota land, saying that it had lost Neil's plane, and they believed for a time that he may have crashed.

As the plane approached Sale, it began to rain. Jack Kelly was in the front cockpit, unconscious, with his face roughly bandaged, but with no other protection from the elements. Neither cockpit had a canopy, and the only thing above Jack Kelly, about nine inches above, was the petrol tank with about nineteen gallons of fuel. Through a break in the clouds Neil saw a light below, which he later realised was a farm at Boisdale, and judged that it was safe to decrease his altitude. He came out of the clouds at Stratford, and recognised where he was.

I was very pleased to see the flare path, the RAAF as usual were on the ball, on top of the job, and they had their flare path out at East Sale. I could see the control tower, but not of course make any contact with them, because there were no radio facilities in my aircraft. As soon as they heard my aeroplane they fired up a succession of green lights, which is the indication that the airfield is clear to land. I landed without incident, but with some concern that the Dakota that had been flying ahead of me might well be landing on the same runway. However that did not occur.

At Tinamba, the first the family knew of his whereabouts, was to hear a member of the RAAF ground crew, live over 3TR, exclaiming in surprise as sparks came up from the rear skidder of the Moth. Designed for grass landings, it had a rear skidder that kept it straight on grass, but was an added hazard with its tendency to cause sway on the bitumen strip.

By the time we had parked the RAAF had an ambulance standing by and in the lights of the ambulance and in the rain we unloaded Mr Kelly. We took him out of the cockpit, it was a tight squeeze, and he was delivered

safely to the Gippsland Base Hospital, where he remained several weeks recovering.

The next day Neil's brother Donald flew the Tiger Moth from the East Sale Base to Holmes Plain, and landed successfully to collect Doctor Atkinson. The RAAF Tiger Moth was made operational, and flew back to Point Cook.

Neil McInnes was awarded the Royal Humane Society Silver Medal for his action, and later had a successful career as the Member for Gippsland South in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. He also had a long and successful career in the aviation industry.

Squadron Leader Alan Hepburn received the Air Force Cross for his rescue of Bob Goldie. Neil McInnes regrets that they never met.

*This article was compiled by Linda Barraclough, from taped interviews with Neil McInnes (1995) and Jack Horstman (1994). The assistance of Bruce McInnes and David Tulloch is also greatly appreciated. Linda would appreciate hearing of eye witness accounts from any other people present at either of the rescues.*

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## Incident at Cattleman's Hut

### \$1000 fine for incident at cattleman's hut

A MAN who allegedly assaulted a mountain cattleman at Moroka Hut, north of Briagolong, has been fined \$1000 for recklessly causing injury.

Kim Russell Walters, 42, of Ure Rd., Yellingbo, pleaded not guilty in Sale Magistrate's Court to intentionally causing injury, unlawful assault, criminal damage, threatening to kill, threatening to inflict injury, recklessly causing injury and assault in company.

The case was heard over two days.

The court was told that on April 1, Gordon Clive Hodge, 66, of Valencia Creek had gone to Moroka Hut after dark with the intention of mustering cattle the following day with others.

When he arrived at the hut he found it occupied by two deerhunters, one of which was Walters.

The men allegedly had a dispute with Hodge over

having dogs in a National Park and he was allegedly assaulted by Walters, suffering a cut under the jaw which needed stitches and dental work.

The magistrate found the charge of recklessly causing injury proven and fined Walters \$1000.

Unlawful assault was struck out and the other charges were dismissed.

*The Maffra Spectator, 15 December 1995*

The incident which led to this conviction was very frightening. The MCAV hopes it was an isolated incident and one which will never occur again.

It appears the major problem in this case was that the two deerhunters had no understanding of the traditions of mountain cattlemen or their rights to enter the Alpine National Park with dogs, or their right to use their huts whilst engaged in their grazing operations.

The Agreement on Provision for Grazing Licences in the Alpine National Park, which is the basis of the laws governing this issue, states:

4. If an application under this Part -

(a) has used, or built or maintained, an existing hut in the Alpine and Bush Grazing Licence Areas in connection with the applicant's exercise of grazing rights; and

(b) applies to the Director in writing either in the application under Clause 2 or in a separate application made before a licence is granted under that clause, for the right to use the hut when engaged in grazing activities -

the Minister may include in the licence the grant of a first call for the holder to use the hut, when engaged in grazing activities, whether or not the hut is in the part of the Alpine and Bush Grazing Licence Areas to which the licence applies.

5. If a licence includes the right to use a hut, the terms and conditions of the licence include -

(a) a duty of the holder to maintain the hut in good repair, and provide adequate traditional shelter and refuge for the public;



(b) If the hut is destroyed by fire or otherwise, a right for the holder of the licence to re-build the hut in accordance with plans approved by the Director after consultation with the Alpine Advisory Committee;

(c) A right to modify the hut only with permission of the Director after consultation with the Alpine Advisory Committee;

(d) A right to maintain a small locked space for storage of equipment in the hut, the size of this locked space to be set out in the licence.'

In reference to dogs Clause 8 of the Agreement states, in part:

'.... the Director will set aside the licensed land together with other land in the Park necessary for the working of the licensee's stock as areas for the permission for working dogs to be within the Park. The Regional Manager may determine the maximum number of dogs permitted within the park for the working of the stock which are the subject of this licence.'

Cattlemen should be aware that their dogs should be registered with their local authority, and that the tags should be carried by the licensee whilst within the Park.

The Alpine National Park is receiving substantial advertising as a destination easily accessible to all. Increasing leisure time and availability of sophisticated 4WD vehicles means that a great many people lacking any knowledge of mountain cattlemen traditions will be travelling in the Park and the remote bush. It seems clear to us that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will need to upgrade its advertising brochures and information systems. A short history of alpine grazing and the traditions of the mountain cattlemen is urgently needed.

Furthermore MCAV will need to pursue its request to DCNR for cattlemen's huts to carry a sign notifying the public that cattlemen have rights, and may turn up at their huts at any time of the day or night, and at any time of the year to carry out their grazing operations.

Clive Hodge was supported throughout the two day hearing by members of his family and members of the MCAV.

*Sue Silvers*



Clive Hodge outside the Moroka Hut. (*Linette Treasure*)

# High Country Women

Carolyn Gilpin

Sometimes it is interesting to see ourselves through the eyes of an 'outsider'. This is an edited version of an article Carolyn Gilpin wrote for publication in a national women's magazine.

Up in the mountains of Victoria, where changes in tradition appear to move infinitely more slowly than the weather, there is a group of people doing far more for gender equality than any seventies bra-burning exercise. They are members of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV), people whose claim to fame are breeding some of the best beef cattle in Australia, helping to make the 'Man from Snowy River' movies, and fighting to protect their high country pasture leases in the Victorian Alps. They are a group who believe in preserving their 150 plus years of traditions (they do this so well that they won the R.M. Williams Heritage Award in 1988) but who manage to move with the times and accept change wherever necessary.

However, one thing which has never changed (rather it has grown stronger over the years) is their belief in equality between the sexes. Sue Silvers, (secretary of the Association for 11 years), says the role of women in the MCAV is very strong, with their opinions being listened to with great respect by hardened cattlemen - even children are allowed a say, and every idea is mulled over for its possibilities. While the outside world was (and still is) involved in a gender 'tug-of-war', this group of country people were showing respect for every member of the community, from the days of the pioneers through to today, when they have just re-elected their first female president for her third year of office.

Tradition plays a strong and integral part in the MCAV's solidarity, and women are an important part of this, with the early pioneering women of the 1850s being remembered with love and admiration. The late Don Kneebone of Milawa, a MCAV member, wrote this at the end of his poem 'The Pioneer Woman'

So let's shout her praise with glee,  
Hang her photo high on the wall,  
And mark her name on the family tree,  
The greatest pioneer of them all.

In the early 1900s, some of these women became well-known around the districts for their abilities with both horses and cattle (the ability to 'pick a beast', or choose the best cattle, is an admired skill in those places). One of these women was Freda Ryder (1922-1988), who was born a Treasure from the Dargo High Plains, and had her own land and cattle. After marrying Wally Ryder from Tawonga (another famous mountain cattleman) in 1957, she kept her own interests, despite having a son, Harry, in 1959. As her daughter-in-law, Sue Ryder, says 'she was known as Freda Ryder on one side of the mountains and as Freda Treasure on the other', so great was her independence even after marriage and childbirth.

Today, the women of the MCAV are following in Freda's footsteps, and achieving even more. Some are respected for their skills with cattle and horses, while the recent hard economic times coupled with climatic problems such as drought, plus a reduction in 1989 of the numbers of cattle allowed on the mountain leases, have required many to work off-farm to help support the family. Women in the past, although still respected, were mainly relegated to the kitchen and farmyard, and didn't have a large say in planning or budgeting, apart from women such as Freda. Over the past thirty or so years, as women's roles became stronger elsewhere, the women of the MCAV followed suit. However, the wrangling between the sexes that happened elsewhere didn't ever really occur among the Association's members. Long-standing tradition has held that women be respected and listened to, so as women decided to do more and more, on or off the farm, they were not much restricted, and were accepted for what they could do.

A surprising fact about the MCAV, given its strength and unity, is that its eighty members (mainly family groups) are spread across Victoria's alps, with the four branches (Mansfield, Gippsland, Omeo and North-Eastern) separated by high mountain ranges and distances of hundreds of kilometres. Despite this isolation, the attitude towards women is the same in each branch. Talking to various women from the four branches shows they have diverse roles in the running of the family farm, some working on it, some



off, and some running the whole show themselves. They are also a modest lot. The common refrain amongst these hard-working women was 'why do you want to talk to me? I don't do anything special.'

Mary Goldsworthy is a prime example of this type of woman. Small in stature but strong in every other way, she is literate, self-assured, but modest, and a person of many talents. She came to be elected president of the MCAV by what she terms 'twists of fate'. One of four children of Eric Weston, who helped organise the Association in the 1960s, she grew up soaked in the tradition of her family's involvement in alpine grazing since 1888, but became a school teacher. Her two older brothers worked the farm and were set to be the next generation of Weston mountain cattlemen, but both were tragically killed in car accidents.

Mary and her husband Bill, an ANZ accountant and a country lad himself, came back to the family farm at Eurobin (north-east Victoria) in 1981 to look after her parents who had both become ill. Mary couldn't find local teaching work, so she worked the farm beside Bill, while nursing her parents. She became secretary of the MCAV North-Eastern branch, and Association second vice-president in 1992-93. She was elected president in 1993, nominated by Jack Lovick, one of the MCAV 'older generation'. She was chosen as being the 'right person for the job at the right time', and as one old-timer put it, she had the 'right breeding' as well. Jack Lovick says of Mary that she is intelligent and has the ability to speak and, even better, has developed the skill of getting people to listen. Eric, who died in 1991, aged 86, would have been extremely proud of his 'cattleman' daughter.

Asked whether the MCAV's name should be changed to 'cattleperson' after the election of a female president, Mary said 'no'. The tradition of the name is strong, and as she said in her first president's message (in the MCAV journal *Voice of Mountains* No. 17, 1994)

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!

To the Association, 'cattlemen' is a term bestowed on someone in respect for the work they do - it is not a gender issue.

Sue Ryder is one such 'cattleman'. When I first met her, the first reaction was 'Oh, I don't really do anything around the farm, no tractor driving or cattle work or anything'. As I later found out, this was very misleading - she drives tractors, musters cattle by horseback, and looks after the livestock daily. Sue and her husband Harry (the only son of Freda and Wally Ryder) run Hereford cattle on 'Mountain Creek', their 324 hectare property near Tawonga in the Kiewa Valley. They have two boys - Adam, 8 years old, and Philip, 6 years. Adam went on his first cattle muster in the mountains at three - on a leading rein!

Sue, a small, friendly, very energetic woman, is also the secretary of the local primary school council, part of the school's Parents Club, and secretary of the local cemetery trust. She helps with the MCAV, especially when the North-East branch holds the annual Cattlemen's Get Together, and helps Harry, who is Captain of the Tawonga District Fire Brigade. All this for a woman who was raised in Shepparton, not on a farm, and was a shire secretary before her marriage in 1986!

Another example of a MCAV woman doing her own thing is Kate Stoney, who has just completed an Agricultural Economics degree at La Trobe University in Melbourne. From Mansfield and daughter of Graeme Stoney who was a prime mover behind the MCAV's battle to keep mountain grazing rights (Melbournians would not have forgotten the 1986 Ride to Parliament protest, with horses and cattle on the steps of Parliament House) - Kate is a country girl through and through. She has done what so many young rural people are forced to do today - go to the city for an education and to save money to return to the land armed with knowledge and little financial support. She grew up riding horses and working cattle, and still returns to help her brother Chris. Kate 'knows there's no money in farming, but it's a part of my life.' She and her boyfriend Alex, also a cattleman, want to return to the land as soon as possible - 'tomorrow, if I could get a job there!'

Kate believes women in the MCAV have always been appreciated by the men for their hard work, no matter what the form in which it comes. Her father Graeme, now Member of Parliament for the Central Highlands in Victoria, thinks the same - 'the MCAV is one of the first groups to show equality between the sexes'. He says that even the 'farmer's wives' of yesterday were proving their worth, as

they had to look after the properties while the men went up mustering in the mountains for a month at a time - his own mother had to do this. He believes that the equality comes from the dangerous and tough conditions the mountain cattleman have to face. As he says, 'It's man against the elements - everyone needs to muck in together.'

Betty Fitzgerald, from Omeo, is an original 'cattleman's wife'. She had no farming background, born in London and growing up in various Australian mining towns where her father was a mine manager, before she met her husband Brennie. They met when, on holiday in the country, she was asked to knit a jumper for him, as he'd just got out of the army and needed civilian clothes. Her initial reaction to the country was 'I can't stand this!'. But she adapted, and became the typical wife of a cattleman in those days, cooking meat and fruitcake for them to take away on musters, and keeping the home-fires burning. She wasn't interested in learning to ride a horse - she had children to raise. She did (and still does) the books, and was secretary of the Omeo branch of the MCAV. In her day Freda Ryder was a very individual woman; nowadays Betty's granddaughters ride out on musters, and she says there are more choices - 'you can be what you want to be'.

Pat Coleman from Heyfield in Gippsland is another of the older generation. She and her husband Kevin were partners in their property north of Licola up until his death in 1984. Now Pat helps her son Mark (one of five children) and his wife Tania in the same partnership, and she is also partners with another son, Des, in a local panel-beating shop. She says the Colemans have always worked together as a family - she helped to bring in an income in the old days by teaching, and she and the kids helped with the farmwork and mustering. Pat also never learned to ride, but she drove a jeep to feed out hay to the cattle, and kept two houses going - one at Heyfield and the other up on their property, 'Primrose Gap'. She believes there is more respect and equality in the rural areas, where everybody has a role to play. Pat spoke of four other women from the Heyfield area, all in their eighties, who had run their own properties for over fifty years.

Small, dark and humourous, Christa Treasure is a modern-day version of those women, and of her aunt Freda. She was born one of the Treasures from Gippsland, and inherited a small herd of cattle and a

piece of land, just as Freda did, and as will happen for her own children. She is running 250 Hereford breeders and bulls on her own, with the help of daughter Lyric (15) and son Luke (13). She also breeds, breaks in and sells Australian Stockhorses. She works her stock in the MCAV tradition, pulling calves during difficult births, taking cattle to the Dargo High Plains in early summer, bringing them down again in autumn before the first snowfall.

She says there is 'always a male/female role - it's hard to break out of it, but in the country, a woman can be more accepted if they can do the job well' - their peers accept and respect it regardless of age, sex or origins. This seems to have been a prevalent part of the MCAV's tradition - Sue Silvers says the MCAV Council is just the same; hardened old cattlemen will listen to women and youngsters for new ideas and perspectives.

Even the old job of 'farmer's wife' now involves a great deal more than just cooking, cleaning and raising the kids. It's a full-time support job, and usually involves working on the farm for long, unpaid hours. Women like Mary Treasure (married to Doug, who is Christa's brother) have to know what's going on around the farm in case of emergencies - like the time Doug and his older sons were away on another property, and the house and yard water-supply pipe was severed by a worker ploughing a neighbouring property at 8.30 pm - if Mary hadn't known where to find and dig down to turn off a connection, precious water would have drained away.

It's little things like that which prove what Mary says - that flexibility is an enormously important part of living on a farm, with problems such as feeding a shifting farm population, budgeting around a once-yearly cheque from cattle sales (as most of the MCAV families have to do), finding child-care in rural areas (you usually have to depend on a family member or friend), and re-arranging social engagements which 'go out the window if you're still out pulling calves!' Mary juggles raising her two young ones (9 and 11 years) with helping on the farm, bookwork (such as tax and Workcare), and Landcare and Rural Woman gatherings.

Leanne Blair and her husband Max have two farms at Bowmans Forest, north-eastern Victoria. Leanne grew up in Melbourne, moving to Beechworth when she was 11, where she learned to ride. This early riding experience helped greatly when she married Max in 1976, and went on her first cattle



muster in the mountains shortly after. She had no experience with cattle, didn't know how to use a whip or work the cattle dogs, and says it was 'freezing but a great experience!' Now she does the farm bookwork, helps with the general farm-work, including mustering, calf-marking, raises her four children (who range from 18 to 9 years), and does school voluntary work. She is also doing up their old Federation style farmhouse, and spends some amount of time on the lawns - what used to take a day with a manual mower is now 'only' two hours on the ride-on mower!

The usual jobs such as running the kids to school or doing the shopping, which are so routine in more populated areas, become matters that take hours in the country, with a run into town often being saved up until there are enough errands to run to make the trip worthwhile - especially with fuel prices often being as much as ten cents higher per litre in the rural areas. It is something that Leanne and the others learn to put up with, along with the added difficulties of working with livestock. Often the annual MCAV Get Together (usually held in January) is the only holiday the cattlemen get - several days of races, tests of cattlemen skills (such as cracking a whip, or packing a pack-horse in the old ways still

used today), and general partying - a chance to see old friends, discuss the coming muster and just relax for a while. Otherwise life goes on as usual - a seven-day-a-week job. Sue Ryder believes the women in the MCAV do the job because it's there to be done - they don't see anything special in it.

Sue Silvers, who as secretary works as hard as anyone on the land, says the MCAV is the most equal bunch of people she has ever seen or worked with. 'It's hard and dangerous work being a cattleman - you have to prove you can do it, you're expected to continue, and you won't be sent to the kitchen afterwards - probably invited to the bar for a drink instead!' The only restriction placed on women is the natural one - their build and strength. Although their roles in the MCAV have changed from the early view of 'farmer's wives' to that of equal partners, there has always been that innate respect for women in the Association, no matter what they do. Mary Goldsworthy was accepted as president with no fuss or bother, and applauded for the job she is doing. The MCAV, although its unity is based solidly on keeping old traditions, is moving into the future, with its views of equality based on merit, not what sex or age you might be, or where you came from.

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# MUSTERING IN THE SNOW

They were preparing for the muster, stockmen gathered round,  
With their hardy horses, to bring the cattle down.  
Suddenly the grey sky burst open, the wind began to blow.  
Rain came down in torrents, then a fall of snow.

There was snow like they'd never seen before,  
Three thousand head could perish, or perhaps even more.  
So they selected the best stock horses, the ones that knew the run.  
The goin'd be mighty tough and there'd be no time for fun.  
They headed up the mountains to where the blizzards blow,  
The horses scrambled belly deep in freshly fallen snow.

There was Fletcher fighting for the ridge, Wally Ryder too,  
Eric Weston on the top, Ben Cooper nearly through.  
When suddenly a voice rang out across the mountain air:  
'Two horses down to perish, they're owned by Rossy Blair.'  
At last they reach the top of the plain,  
And what a sight to see!  
Cobungra river completely covered, there was snow on every tree.

The cattle quickly came to the call, calves right by their side.  
Dogs worked as they'd never worked before, to force them off the Divide.  
And down the slopes the stock horses slip and slide,  
Hear the pack horse scramble, as he fights to save his hide.

The going was better on the way back,  
The cattle in front had hardened the track,  
And at last there came a ray of light,  
The stockmen turned the mob and headed down to Bright.

But round the camps in years to come  
They'll tell tales of where the cattle go,  
And the one that'll never be forgotten,  
Is that muster in the snow.

*Don Kneebone*



# CRITTER

It was there he rode  
Amongst the Woollibut and Gums  
Over rocks, creeks and wombat holes  
With the Brumbies on the run  
Across bogholes and undergrowth  
Out onto the plains  
Up and down the rough terrain  
In the Great Dividing Range  
T'was there he caught the wild ones  
For the big Rodeo Show  
That they hold every Easter  
In the Alps at Omeo  
And Bill could hold his own  
With the strong and the bitter  
That's how he got his nickname  
Just called the old Critter.

He'd never, ever give in  
If pelted from a horse  
Straight back into the crush  
He'd ride it in due course  
And the scars that he wore  
Had a story of their own  
He'd been gored by Bulls and Scrubbers  
Whilst working all alone.

The word passed round the district  
That mid October day  
It was just around breakfast time  
Bill Faithfull passed away  
T'was the Boss from up above  
Said, Billy you must go  
But you'll always be remembered  
As the Man from Omeo.

There'll be talk around for ages  
Of things Old Critter done  
Around the Rodeos and Stockyard  
Also the shearing runs  
But the locals won't forget him  
As the setting sun goes down  
He was part of the heritage  
In that Alpine town.

Yes, there was Harry Dale the Drover,  
And tales of Saltbush Bill  
The Man from Snowy River  
Which is just across the hill  
Lance Skuthorpe the Showman  
Of the famed rodeo  
And now Bill Faithfull  
The Man from Omeo.



*Bill (Critter) Faithfull worked for Cobungra Station then Delatite Station and Howquadale before returning to Omeo. This poem was recorded as a song by Frank Sargent and won the first Heritage Award in the Tasmanian Country Awards.*

*Johnny Faithfull*

## From the Archives

This year *Voice of the Mountains* continues to bring you articles from the Archives, clippings from old magazines and newspapers that have been cared for by various MCAV members.

We are interested in obtaining photocopies of any articles that families have stashed away in boxes or between books at home. Copies should be sent to us at P.O. Box 86, Bairnsdale, 3875.

*The Sun*

WEEK-END MAGAZINE

# THE MAN FROM OMEO

-The Sun, Saturday, May 31, 1969



CHARACTER and animation in the four faces of Bill Faithfull, the brumby hunter from Omeo.

THEY call him the Old Critter and as he sways along on his piebald pony you know he is a man of the bush.

His face is long and lean, and the battered felt hat that rests on his head is like an awning that has sagged at the edges under the weather's ravages.

Blue eyes, ringed by lines, are deeply set atop whiskered cheeks, a curl of snowy hair falls on to furrowed brow.

He wears an Essendon football jumper — "I don't care what team it is so long as it keeps me warm" — under an old grey jacket, and he has denim pants and leather boots that bear the marks of hard riding.

He rolls cigarettes with gnarled hands and you might find him drinking beer by a log fire at an Omeo pub, his two black dogs always close at hand.

And his name is Bill Faithfull, a man with a special skill — catching wild bush horses.

"Some folks play tennis, some play bowls, other cricket and there's some that play football. I catch brumbies," he casually explains.

And once again he will soon be riding out of Omeo, where he was born and where he lives, to round up the horses that have been driven down from the mountain tops by the snow.

He may get as little as \$20 for a brumby.

But he's been doing it most of his life — and it's not easy work.

Charging through the Bowen Mountains, across the creeks that form the head of the Murray, along the border trails in

north-eastern Victoria, through scrub and gums and undergrowth, over logs and wombat holes and rocks . . . he can ride the lot without a fall.

The sight of a mob of brumbies — they usually live in groups of four or five — is the signal to give chase.

It's all hard going, trying to stick close to the tails of the wild ones, twisting and turning with their evasive dash, watching them career away down the slopes, overhauling them on the climbs.

When he's not chasing, he's trapping, in timber pens built on the bush horse trails.

The bait is salt because the mountain horses cannot get enough of it, and once in the pens they trip the ropes that close the gates.

"But you still have to walk in to them pens and rope 'em," says Bill.

"You put the rope over the first and the others start circling. They get closer and closer and Heaven help the man who makes a sudden movement, 'They'll trample him.'"

The horses that roam the hills came from the stock that strayed or were turned out by the goldminers a hundred years ago.

There are not great numbers of them — and people like Bill are loathsome of those who round them up to slaughter for pet food.

"Too many people today are out to destroy it, to kill off the critter that has always done all man ever asked of it, that opened up this country before we had vehicles," he says.

"I love horses."

It's not hard to see that he does, and one guesses that it is not only love but respect, deep and real.

And as for the wild horses themselves, the feeling is probably mutual.





By AXEL OLSEN

High in the Victorian Alps, along the Bogong High Plain, hundreds of beef cattle graze all through summer. On this fertile plateau, 6,000ft above sea-level, there is rich grass-land, watered by hundreds of springs from the winter snow.

Cattle are driven from the Kiewa and Ovens valleys at the beginning of spring, and for the next six months roam the plain and the valleys around it.

But with approach of winter, when the country is covered with snow, the cattle have to be taken to the lowlands.

It is a tricky and arduous job to muster 2,000 head of cattle that might have wandered anywhere over 200 square miles of wild, thickly timbered country. It calls for expert horsemanship, good knowledge of the country, and plenty of hard work.

6 The Australasian POST, April 22, 1948.

## 'SALT' — CALL THE CATTLEMEN



BILLY HICKS, SYD RYDER, AND BEN COOPER SET OUT TO MUSTER CATTLE IN MOUNTAINS.

**T**HE COUNTRY around Hogong High Plain is a series of precipitous valleys, covered with gnarled snow gums and thick scrub and huge boulders.

Riding a horse over such rugged country, where a slip could mean serious injury, or even death, is extremely hazardous, but cattlemen, who are more at home in the saddle than on the ground, take it all as part of the day's work.

The plateau itself is a wide expanse of rolling grassland, patterned with winding streams.

The annual muster usually takes place in April, before the first snow can make a difficult job even more difficult. Cattlemen, who come from places as far apart as Omeo, Bright, Tomago, or Harrierville, arrange the date of the muster several weeks in advance.

Three or four days before the muster they set out from their stations, travelling up the rugged valleys on horseback, carrying their gear and food on packhorses. The night before the muster they camp in huts dotted around the plain.

On the day of the muster the cattleman, riding along ridges above steep, boulder-strewn valleys, yells "Salt, salt." His strong voice carries for miles over quiet valleys. The call works like magic.

There is a deficiency of salt in the snow country, and during the summer cattlemen visit

the plain every two or three weeks and give the cattle salt. The cattle soon learn to recognise the call of "Salt, salt," and as soon as they hear it dash wildly up the valleys bellowing for the salt for which they are starving.

They are rounded up into a herd and moved towards the plain, with the cattedogs keeping the mob together.

By midday the first herds begin to move across the plain, and within an hour hundreds of cattle are milling in a restless, bellowing herd, seeking salt.

The cattlemen then have to "cut out" — sort all the cattle into their correct herds.

"Cutting out" calls for magnificent horsemanship. It is a spectacular business, with a horseman selecting one beast among a constantly moving herd, heading him off, quickly moving him through the herd, and taking him off to the correct herd.

Dogs show amazing skill in rounding up the cattle, and work tirelessly hour after hour rounding up strays and keeping the herds together. Occasionally a steer shows fight, but the dogs are fearless, and seem to delight in a brief brush with a fractious beast.

"Cutting out" is finished with surprising speed, and in an hour or so all herds have been sorted, and move off on the first stage of a three-day trek.

## PLATEAU



HERDED INTO PRETTY VALLEY, CATTLE ARE THEN DRIVEN TOWARDS MUSTERING POINT.

The Australasian POST, April 22, 1948. 7





AN EXPERT CATTLEMAN, CARL FLETCHER, IS A COLOURFUL FIGURE IN "TEN-GALLON" HAT, CHAPS, AND SCARLET SHIRT.

to the lowlands. By sunset the plain, which a few hours before was noisy with the lowing of hundreds of cattle, is silent and deserted.

Any stray cattle that have not been rounded up are usually collected about a week later. Some, when they feel winter approaching, make their own way home, but others, less fortunate, are trapped in the snow, and, if they do not move down to the lowlands, wander in circles in the snow until they die.

On the night of the muster cattle are driven to the cattlemen's huts, which are near the

plain, but usually far enough off it to be sheltered from the intense cold.

The huts have been on the plain for many years. Wallace's hut is about 60 years old. It is never locked, and is often used by Scouts or hikers. A visitor's book in the hut contains the names of hundreds of people who have sheltered there.

On the morning after the muster the cattlemen set out soon after sunrise on the first stage of their long trek homewards. The trip usually takes three days, and covers rugged country, where constant care is

**SALT — CALL THE CATTLEMEN**

**HORSEMANSHIP**



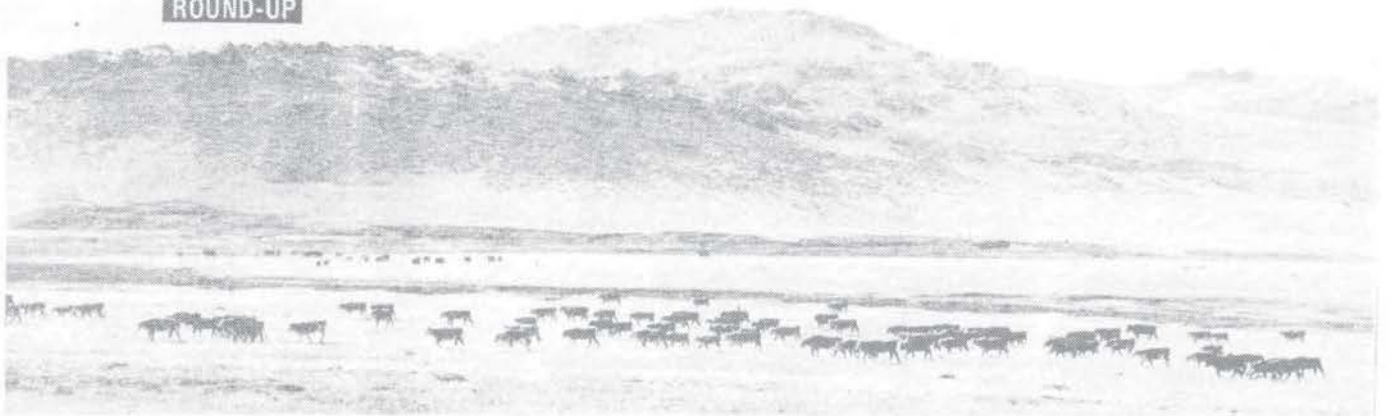
ROUNDING UP CATTLE IS TRICKY, NEEDS SKILL AND SPEED.



**ANGER**

SALT HUNGRY HEREFORD MENACINGLY PAWS THE GROUND.

**ROUND-UP**



8 The Australasian POST, April 22, 1948.



**BEDTIME**

**SLEEPING OUT IN THE COLD NIGHT AFTER A HARD DAY.**

needed to keep the cattle together.

At night they camp wherever they are at sunset, but usually try to make for a spot where they know there will be water and a clearing in which to put the cattle.

Some of the cattlemen have been mustering on the plateau for 30 or 40 years.

Frank Blair, of Bright and Whiroady, has been grazing his cattle on Bogong High Plain for 30 years.

Ben Cooper, of Tomago, is another man with long experience of the country.

George Faithfull, of Omeo, has been mustering for 20 years,

and his nephew, Frank Faithfull, aged 20, is now a veteran cattleman, with six years' experience.

Two other Omeo cattlemen are Jack Greenwood, 18, and his brother Hoy, 21.

Size of herds on the plain is gradually being restricted. The State Electricity Commission controls most of the area, and intends to build a dam across one end of the plain, when the whole area will be turned into a vast lake for a hydro-electric scheme.

Cattlemen see the not far distant day when there will be no more mustering on the roof of Victoria. ★



**SALT — CALL THE CATTLEMEN**

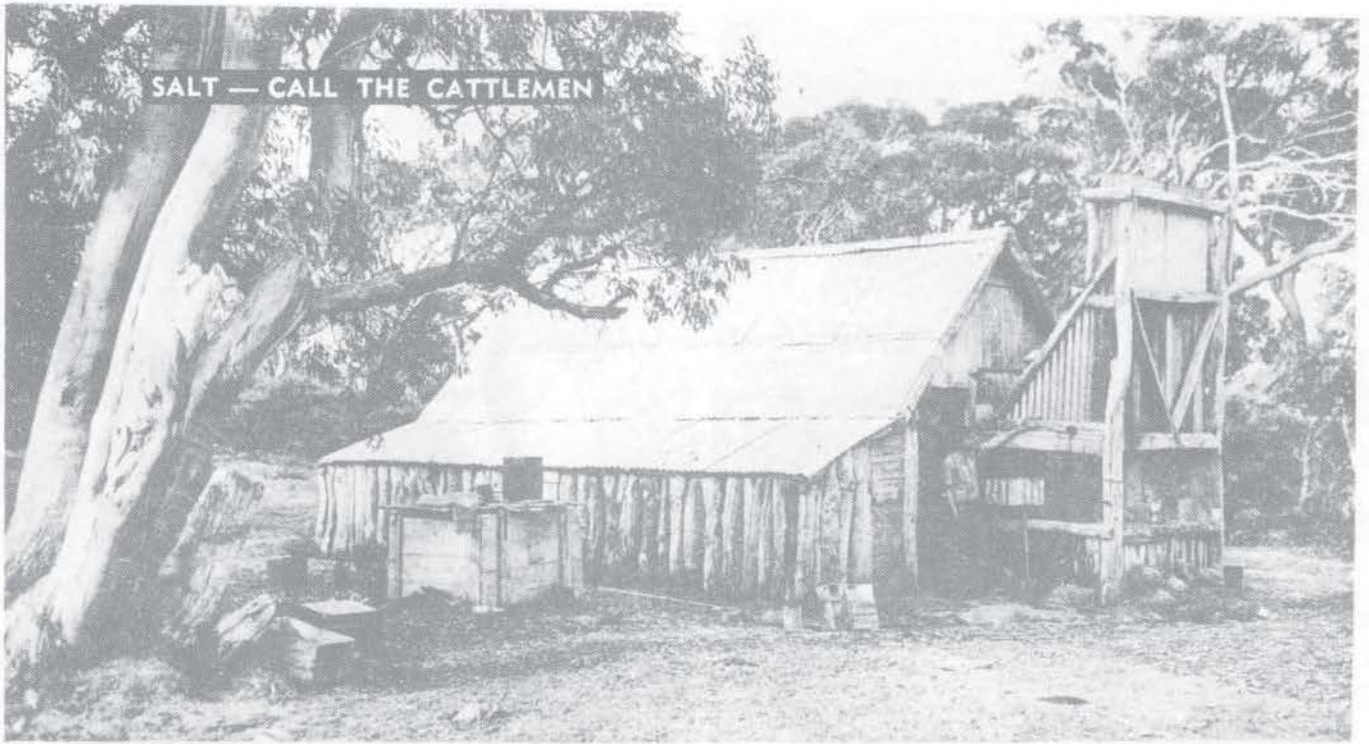
**ROSS BLAIR, SON OF FRANK BLAIR, OF BRIGHT, WHO HAS BEEN GRAZING CATTLE ON THE PLATEAU FOR 30 YEARS.**

**CATTLE, AFTER COMING DOWN FROM THE HILLS, MOVE IN LONG, SLOW PROCESSION ACROSS THE BROAD PLATEAU.**



The Australasian POST, April 22, 1945 9





SALT — CALL THE CATTLEMEN

WALLACE'S HUT, REFUGE FOR CATTLEMEN AND SKIERS, IS OLDEST ON PLAIN.



DAY'S END

TIRED CATTLEMEN WASHING UP AFTER THE EVENING MEAL IN WALLACE'S HUT.

10 The Australasian POST, April 22, 1948



FORGOTTEN

LOST COW AND CALF LEFT ON PLATEAU MUST FIND THEIR OWN WAY HOME OR DIE. ★



Ten years ago, on 19 January 1986 a group of cattlemen travelled to Mount Hotham to unveil a memorial plaque to Bernie Lawler who had died three years earlier. Testimony to the respect in which Bernie Lawler was held was evidenced by the number of senior cattlemen in attendance on the day.

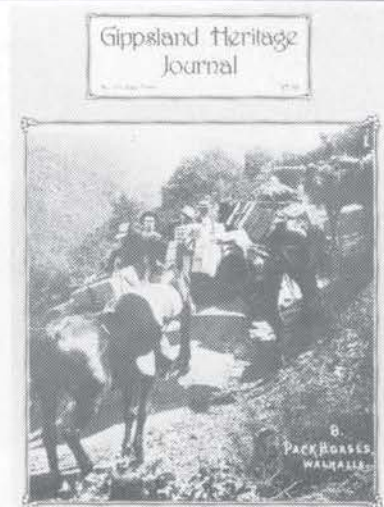
This group photograph is now a valuable part of our archives.



Left to right: Bill Hicks, Wally Ryder, Kelvin Bush, Don Kneebone, John Hall, Jack Keating, Eric Weston, Lyle McCready, Max Blair (back), Jim Commins (front), Harry Hocking, Harry Ryder (back), Ross Blair (front), and John Caloutas.

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# The Golden Valley

The billy can jingles as we round the mountain bend,  
Tired after hours of dirt tracks with no end.  
The clearing of the welcome valley floor  
Whets the appetite in anticipation of something more.

The yellow St John's Wort sways in the breeze,  
In most places higher than one's knees.  
The briskly flowing river tumbles over rounded stones.  
The small cemetery home to the pioneers' bones.

The hut near the homestead ruins, scattered with time;  
Sparsely furnished, covered in dirt and grime,  
Shows evidence of modern adventurers, women and men  
Lost in a place where time stands still, now and then.

Thoughts of lonely women, waiting by the creek;  
Waiting for their men to ride over the mountain peak  
Come to mind when watching the birds, trees and sky,  
Involuntarily I sigh, as they must have in years gone by.

Loneliness and isolation were a way of life,  
One that was accepted by many a wife.  
Marriage involved more than taking a husband's hand,  
It meant learning to live and love in an uninhabited land.

Grief was common as children were laid to rest,  
The same fate even befell an old and welcome guest.  
Some died young, some died old, frail and bent,  
Still, the family accepted the trials that they were sent.

Life was not all sad, hard and low.  
Children had clear mountain air in which to grow.  
The open valley was ideal to hold a race,  
Laughter lines were common on many a rosy face.

Cattle in sheltered paddocks grew fat.  
Faithful work dogs asleep on a worn door-mat.  
In summer, everyone swimming in the lagoon,  
Oblivious to the heat of the late afternoon.

Today we use four-wheel-drives in which to roam,  
Over the mountains, blue in the distance from home.  
It still takes hours of driving under clear mountain skies  
Down many a gully, up many a rise.

A strong stomach is still needed for the ride,  
A clear map is a welcome friend by your side,  
The view from the summit of each hill,  
Although much the same, still gives me a thrill.

Along the bush track, on each side covered by fern,  
Are many wonders of nature, so much to learn.  
Sitting at the campsite, thoughts made crystal clear,  
I wonder how one could not be happy up here.

The setting sun ends another day of peace and glory,  
Unfolding more of the Wonnangatta story,  
A story of lives and days that are olden,  
But where the valley still remains golden.

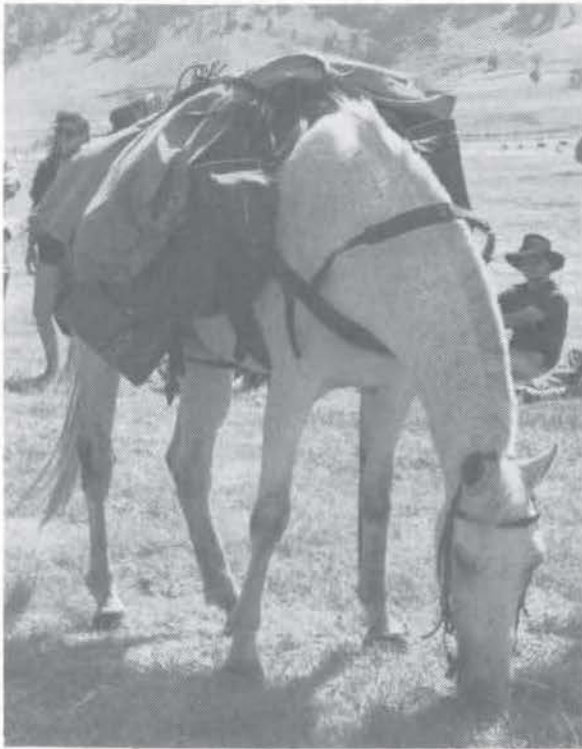


The stockmen at Wonnangatta Station

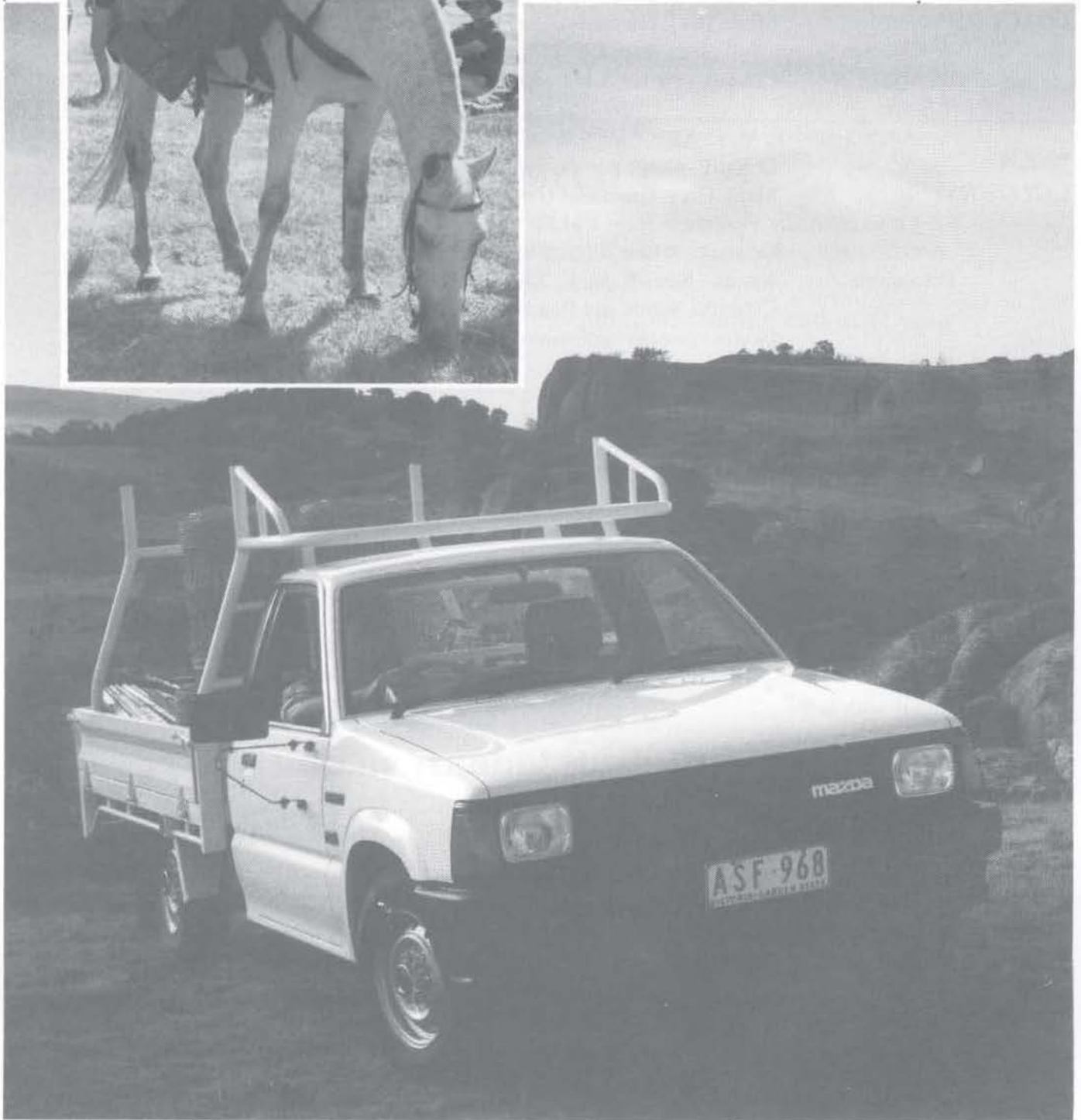
*Lisa Bennett*



**THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
SINCERELY THANKS MAZDA AUSTRALIA FOR ITS SUPPORT  
AND FOR THE SUPPLY OF VEHICLES AT THE GET TOGETHERS.**



*When it's not the  
Packhorse, Mountain  
Cattlemen use the  
Mazda Workhorse!*





**EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BUYING YOUR YEARLY  
PRESENTS FROM THE MCAV SHOP?  
WHY NOT USE THE MAIL ORDER FORM DURING THE YEAR.**

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<b>*NEW*</b> Rulers with Logo	\$ 1.50	\$1.50	( )
Fridge Magnets	\$ 1.00	\$1.50	( )
<b>*NEW*</b> Lighters	\$ 1.75	\$1.50	( )
Key Rings	\$ 2.50	\$1.50	( )
Hat Badges			
(a) 'I Support the Mountain Cattlemen'	\$ 5.00	\$1.50	( )
(b) High Country - Australia	\$ 5.00	\$1.50	( )
<b>*NEW*</b> (c) 'Alpine Grazing Reduces Blazing'	\$ 5.00	\$1.50	( )
Stickers	\$ 1.00	\$1.50	( )
		<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

**PLEASE SEND ORDER TO:**

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Address: .....

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**TO PLACE YOUR ORDER SIMPLY:**

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Add relevant post charge, and fill in appropriate amount in sub-total column.

Add up sub-total column to arrive at total charge.

Fill in where marked at the bottom of the sub-total column and mail your order to:

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**The Annual Bush Dance**

Centenary Hall  
 Royal Melbourne Showgrounds  
 23 March 1996  
 B.Y.O.G., meal supplied  
 \$20 Adults  
 \$10 Under 16  
 Under 5 Free



# LOVICK'S Mountain Trail Safaris



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

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

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

All fresh food carried under refrigeration.

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

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

## Tribute to Alan Bennie

He was my favourite bushman,  
He lived there all alone,  
And he made you feel so welcome  
Any time you wandered in.  
You would not even dare to leave,  
Until you'd had your fill  
Of boiling gum leaf billy tea  
And open fired baked scones.

But brumby running was our game,  
The mob Alan Bennie knew so well  
He could lead you right out to them  
As though he knew just where they'd be.  
And then he'd set us on them  
And say 'You boys ride hard now  
Get as many as you can  
'Cause I'll be waiting at the clearing  
To lead those brumbies in.'

Now Alan left his much-loved bush,  
And ventured down the King  
To spend his last few years alive  
In Wangaratta town.  
He lived it up, he ate the best,  
Steak, turkey, lamb, to mention a few,  
For out where he was from  
It was bunny or kangaroo.

The *Weekly Times* heard of this bushman  
Who'd come to Wangaratta town,  
And thought it worth a story  
So they hunted Alan down.  
He'd had a rum or two that day,  
Before the reporter came  
And so he told his stories,  
Which stretched longer, as they say.

He told him many stories,  
Of the bunnies that he'd skun,  
And the cattle that he'd sold,  
And the brumbies that he'd run,  
And the millions that he'd made,  
Up on the Cobbler Run.

And so his stories went to print,  
These tales that he had told,  
And a taxman read of this man  
Who'd made his fortune bold,  
Along the jagged ridges  
Up on the Cobbler Run.  
But when he checked the files,  
Taxes there were none.

And so they set the hounds upon him,  
They frightened him to death  
For he had no need of taxes  
Out where he belonged.  
He'd lived a simple bushman's life  
No bridge, no tar, no paint,  
No need for all the mod cons,  
To spoil his bridle track.

So Mister Alan Bennie,  
This poem is for you,  
You made your mark upon me,  
With your billy tea and view.  
And I know right where you're waiting,  
At the clearing on the hill,  
And I think I hear the hoofbeats,  
As you lead the brumbies still.

*Bernie Evans  
Finley*

*Bernie wrote this poem, and performed it in the 1995 Don  
Kneebone Heritage Awards, in memory of Alan Bennie of Rose  
River.*



## The Early Years

To a stranger in a remote country town  
The bar (or even the lounge) at the corner pub  
Is the perfect place to throw a few down  
And get a feel for the local rub.

Seated on a stool in the dark, cool bar  
Relaxing from the road's hard lines  
Much can be learnt about places near and far  
By anyone who's so inclined.

Such a yarn we had one hot day  
With Ivan Elliot, an old-time cattleman and trapper  
Now living down Briagolong way,  
Who was one of the last to live at Wonnangatta.

'It was in the 20s when jobs were few and going down  
The Great Depression put me out of work that mattered,  
So in early '29 I left behind old Melbourne town  
To join Dad and Keith in far flung Wonnangatta.

But I had to earn money for myself  
As the family's wage couldn't keep me paid.  
There was cash to be had for good rabbit pelts -  
Each Akubra hat took about sixty to be made.

Six hundred a week was what I got,  
Though they bred too fast to put a dint in their side  
But they'd eat us out so I gave it my best shot,  
And soon had enough to buy a saddle to ride.

With steady packhorse, traps and gun  
Twenty miles a day through the flats I pushed  
And whilst you city folk might not call it fun,  
I used to love roaming through the Bush.

The winters were fairly cold and quiet -  
The snow out on top kept us well apart.  
But even the summer visitors were a delight -  
We even had a hiker come in for a start.

He camped with us for a bit,  
And after he hiked out as planned  
He sent us a crystal radio set  
That picked up news from across the land.

Before those days the only news we saw  
Came with our summer visitors overland  
Or when we trekked to the Talbotville Store  
And brought back every paper Albert had on hand!



Regular visitors were the cattlemen of Bennison -  
Mick and Jack Higgins, and Jack and Jim Kelly  
Who'd come down after the big muster was on  
And swap a few yarns and rums on a full belly.

Jack Bryce also came for a few months each summer.  
He talked long of the old times out on the track.  
He came here last century as a baby with his mother -  
He always used to love to come back.

But the remoteness we loved did not always yield -  
An outbreak of blackleg sent our stock down  
Before Keith could make the eighty miles to Mansfield  
And return with the injections from the town.

But we sure didn't fault him for being late -  
He did the whole trip in two days straight.

Twelve years ago I went back for a visit -  
Fences lay flat and four by fours bogged the tracks.  
It's plain stupid to say horses and cattle did it -  
Seems to me the new owners ought to be sacked.

But despite the changes to what we used to know  
The true heart of the land will not fade away;  
The area is still a magnet that will never let go  
Drawing you back to the High Country, Mountains  
and Valley.'

That's how Ivan told us of the early years of his life,  
But there's a final chapter of which he didn't speak -  
He and Keith returned to the valley again in '93,  
And now at the old Homestead, in the river and creek  
Is where they'll for ever more be.

I'll now finish Ivan's story in the best way I know how -  
I raise my glass to the folks of Wonnangatta -  
then and now

*Sue Beeton*

*Based on Ivan's writings, as held by  
his daughter, Val Makepeace.*







### *Alan James 'Jim' Treasure*

A south westerly blustered its hint of rain as the horses and riders crossed the Wuk Wuk bridge and started their climb towards Lindenow South. The line strung out behind an elegant dray, walking slow, at an old drover's pace. Dargo's hills glowed blue in the background and, each side of the road, the paddocks were dotted with Hereford cattle. It was a sight Jim Treasure would have loved, all who knew him agreed.

'He never was much impressed by the motor car', said a mate, Vince Phelan, at the graveside. 'Reckoned cars made it hard for people to get to know one and other on the road.' The large crowd that had gathered to bid him farewell attested to a long and friendly trail in his 85 years.

Born 19 March 1910 at Bright, Jim was the third of four brothers and a sister to one of the first grazier families on the Dargo High Plains. His grandfather, George Emanuel had arrived from England in 1878, and his father Harry Lewis and mother Clare were already established in the high country.

On horseback since the age of three, Jim had been raised to a life of 'pack horses and 12 hour rides', said his younger brother, Jack. 'Catching, packing and then running a team of a dozen horses for a 30 mile trip to the homestead was a normal occurrence for us children'. After a year at Wesley College in Melbourne, Jim returned to work the family properties in the high country and around Glenaladale.

In 1939 he married Nancy Morison, raising five children (Alan, Doug, Bruce, Christa and Rhonda) at their home overlooking the Mitchell River, 'Fairfield'.

A practical cattleman, Jim was an active member of many agricultural clubs and societies, including the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Board. His voice was one of the



strongest when lobbying for Myxomatosis to be released in the 1950s. He was a founding member of the MCAV and the Gippsland Hereford Breeders' Group and won the Victorian Commercial Beef Herd of the year for his work.

But it was the peace and beauty of the high country which was always Jim's main inspiration. 'Droving cattle, he got to know every bend in the road between Bairnsdale and Bright', said Doug. He was 'never happier than taking a mob up the road above Dargo.'

On 20 March 1995 he died peacefully at his home. Jim's travels finally came to an end on 24 March when his coffin, made of woolybutt, topped with a garland of everlasting daisies, was drawn to the Coongulmerang cemetery at Lindenow South. There he was buried next to his wife Nancy. 'It's not the end of an era,' said Doug, 'he knows we'll carry on the job.'

*Iain Henderson*

## **CJ. 'Creamy' Pendergast**

Charles John (Creamy) Pendergast of Benambra passed away on his 80th birthday on 10 January 1995. Very much a local legend, he was held in high esteem as a cattleman and one of the Omeo/Benambra district's leading breeders. Known to most by his nickname 'Creamy', he was a descendant of the Pendergast family who settled in the Monaro district, and a third generation descendant of one of the three pioneer Pendergast brothers who settled at Omeo Plains in 1835. Creamy lived all his life on the family property known as 'Kimberley Park', in the original home built by his grandfather, James Pendergast. Matilda, his grandmother and the wife of James, was the first white woman to settle at Omeo Plains.

During Creamy's early life, while involved in the family farming business, one of the jobs they undertook was to provide meat to road workers on the Spotted Bull - Limestone Road and to mine workers at the tin mine. One beast and thirty sheep were slaughtered weekly on the family farm and delivered by horse and buggy to the workers.

Creamy was a legendary cattleman, well known for his knowledge of Hereford cattle and for the breeding and quality of his own stock. Buyers paid top prices for his calves at the local autumn weaner sales, where for many years he drafted calves. He received top price for his heifers and steers on many occasions and his Hereford heifers still hold the record price for Benambra. Auctioneers and agents often sought his advice on the sales before giving their market report, and many farmers would ask Creamy to pick their bulls at sales.

Creamy loved the mountains and camping in the bush while looking after his cattle on his property. Sheep were also an important part of his life, and he was known for the quality of his wool, which drew top prices. As a young fellow he went to Melbourne to learn wool classing, and carried out this task on the family farm for several years until he took up shearing, which he did for many years in local sheds.

Creamy gave 15 years' service to Omeo Shire as a councillor, and active support to most local committees and clubs in the Benambra district. He was a life member of the Omeo and District Racing Club. At their 1995 picnic race meeting on Labour Day weekend, the main race was run as the 'C.J. Pendergast Memorial Cup' in his honour. In his



Photo courtesy of 'Stock and Land'

younger days Creamy enjoyed playing football for Benambra and liked a game of tennis, and dancing.

In 1942 Creamy married Noel Hollands, and they raised a family of three sons, Ray, Max and Kelvin, and two daughters, Pauline (Mrs Connley) and Noeleen (Mrs Smith).

Creamy Pendergast was buried at Benambra while the 1995 MCAV Get Together was taking place. As a mark of respect there, and at the VPC/PL&P weaner calf sale, those present observed two minutes' silence. He took with him his bluey coat, his hat and his stockwhip, which were always a part of him. His knowledge and expertise will be sadly missed by many.

## **Michael 'Doc' Connley**

Michael James 'Doc' Connley (1971-1995), a son of Graham ('Rusty') and Pauline Connley, and grandson of Creamy Pendergast, died on 3 July 1995 as a result of an accident when he was flying an ultralight plane. Doc loved planes and growing plants, and his memory will live on, not only in the hearts of those who knew him, but also in the many native trees that he planted on the Connley family farm. Our sympathy goes to Rusty, Pauline and Wayne.



## Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award

The third annual Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award saw a new category in 1995, the Bush Laureate Award, for a work written, but not performed. The inaugural MCAV Bush Laureate was Mrs Vera Fitzgerald of Omeo, with her poem 'John and Barry Ride Again'. The Bush Laureate award is judged by a panel of ten independent judges representative of the Association. Mrs Fitzgerald's work was the most popular of those submitted for judging.

The Don Kneebone Heritage Award was instituted in memory of bush poet Don Kneebone, to encourage amateur performance of yarns and verse, and takes place each year at the Get Together. In 1995 a preliminary round took place 'somewhere down the hill under the shade of a couple of trees'. The usual, and much appreciated regulars took part, as well as a promising crop of new poets and yarn spinners. Finalists were Jan Hobbs, Bob (Beware of the Ladder Snake) Healey, Sue Beeton, Rohan Chamberlain (who very much wanted it to rain) and Bernie Evans (who paid tribute to Alan Bennie). Mick Walsh, veteran yarn spinner, also progressed to the final performance. Alan Brewer and Noel Cutler, as previous winners of the Don Kneebone Award, and therefore ineligible, competed in the Bush Minstrel Award.

For the first time this year Alan Brewer donated an Encouragement Award.

The finals took place, in the Don Kneebone and MCAV way, on the back of a truck, and before a large and appreciative crowd. Final results, announced by Mary Goldsworthy, were:

***Don Kneebone Mountain Heritage Award***

Sue Beeton

***MCAV Bush Minstrel***

Noel Cutler

***Alan Brewer's Encouragement Award***

Paul Treasure

***MCAV Bush Laureate***

Mrs Vera Fitzgerald

Entries in the 1997 Bush Laureate Award, for written work, are now being accepted. They should be forwarded direct to *Voice of the Mountains*.

Footnote: In the report on the 1994 Get Together, Mrs Margaret Goldsworthy, who competed in the Don Kneebone Award, was incorrectly referred to as Mary Goldsworthy. We apologise most sincerely to Mrs Margaret Goldsworthy for this error. Staff of *Voice* are at a loss to explain how they allowed this to happen, as they have a very clear recollection of her excellent contribution to the Award.



# John and Barry Ride Again

*Vera Fitzgerald*

'We'll saddle up and ride, to where cool breezes call,  
Where mountain streams are flowing, and to the valley's fall  
With pasture lush and good, as o'er the spurs we gaze  
Where cattle have their freedom, and like to roam and graze.

Bristling at early dawn, as mist clears from the homestead,  
Barking dogs stir the cattle; there's about a hundred head,  
But linger not - there's miles to go before the end of day  
So with a 'Push 'em on' to the dogs, we move them on their way.

Over 'Wattle Top' we go, then towards the Blue Duck ride  
Splashing through the Cobungra River, then along a track the other side -  
To a welcome stay at 'The Joker', where cattle have hay to graze  
While we light a fire before sundown, and eat around its blaze.

Mounting our horses at daybreak, we move along the trail  
That heads to the Six Mile Track, above the 'Shannon Vale'  
With a crack from our whips, they make their uphill way  
Beneath the shade of trees, in the coolest part of the day.

So eager are they to go, and with the plains almost in view  
They'd left behind paddocks, where feed was scarce, they knew,  
With the breath of the mountain air reaching them in the cooling breeze  
They know their climb is at an end, at the sight of the snow gum trees.

Crossing the park behind the hut, they really make a stir  
To reach the cultivation below the 'Hollands Spur',  
And here they graze until mustered once again  
Before winter brings snow, and harshness to the plain.

As we ride across the spurs, towards our lease now in view,  
So loved by Harry, Darcy, father Jack and Brenny too,  
We could almost imagine them riding across there again -  
As our cracking whips echoed, in the wind across the plain.

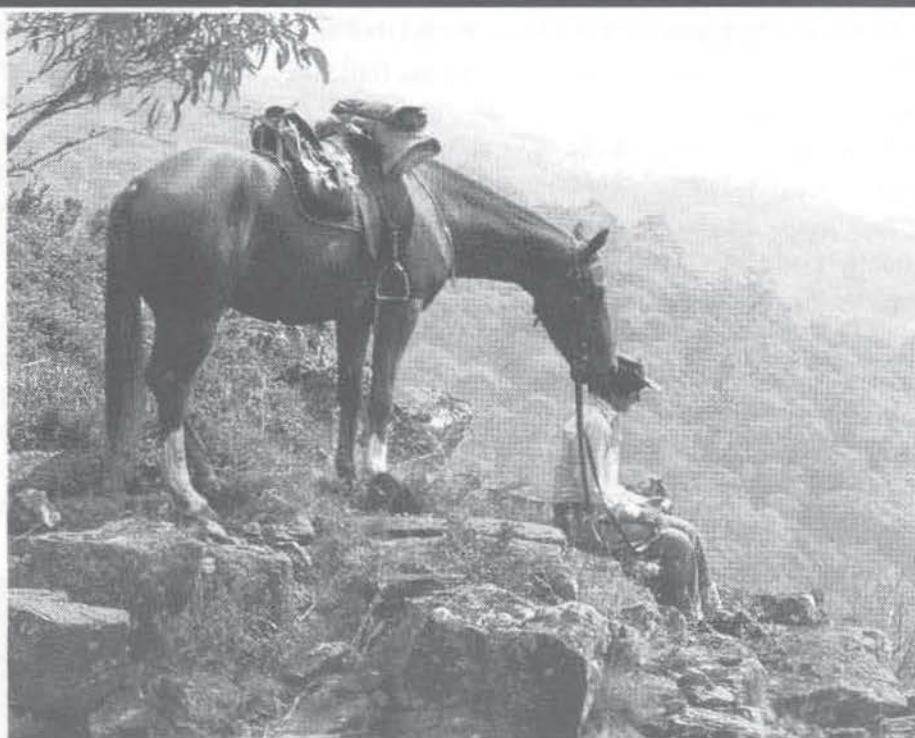




# DISCOVER THE TREASURES OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

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Each summer, their Hereford cattle start a 150 kilometre trek, the longest cattle drive in Victoria, following the old stock routes, to the high plains. You can be part of this annual trek to the high country and recapture the spirit that has remained a traditional way of life over generations of mountain cattlemen to the present day.

For a brochure and full details contact Ben and John Treasure,  
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Phone (051) 456 055

# 1995 Get Together Mountain Bay, Eildon

If there is one thing a bushman (and a bushwoman and a bush kid, and even a bush dog) appreciates, it is shady trees in January. The 1995 Get Together at Mountain Bay, organised by the small but very dedicated group from the Mansfield Branch had shady trees aplenty, especially in the main activity area, plus wonderful views, good campsites, congenial company and cold beer. It was great to have so much water at the site, even if the rather low level of the weir made it a sometimes squelchy sensation. (And if anyone has found the Secretary's soap floating by, she would appreciate its return as it has sentimental value.) Overall, however, it was a Wonderful Weekend!

Activities, apart from those of a competitive nature, included an excellent Saturday night's entertainment from Noel Watson, a substantial auction organised by Nufarm, and displays from individuals and organisations including John Duncan-Firth and the Friends of Wonnangatta.

The Mansfield Branch of the MCAV, being small in number, would not have been able to hold the Get Together without the assistance of a great number of people. Included in that list (and with apologies to any inadvertently overlooked), are: Brian Johnston (who made the Mountain Bay property available) and his manager Alan Gerrens, John Ash, Bill Sansom and Noel Hutchinson (for the auction and assistance in general).

Results for the weekend were:

## *Juvenile (Under 10 years) Whipcracking*

- 1st* Wayne Campbell
- 2nd* Simone Kelly
- 3rd* Ric Quilford

## *Junior (15 and under) Whipcracking*

- 1st* Jack Cross
- 2nd* Diana Hurley
- 3rd* Katie McCormack

## *Ladies Whipcracking*

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

## *Open Whipcracking*

- 1st* Jack Cross
- 2nd* Noel Cutler

## *Mountain Cattlemen's Cup*

- 1st* Tim Faithfull
- 2nd* Anthony Connley
- 3rd* Craig Orchard

## *Junior Mountain Cattlemen's Cup*

- 1st* Derek Faithfull
- 2nd* Tania Connley
- 3rd* Clancy Burrowes

## *Australian Packhorse Championship*

- 1st* Ron Connley
- 2nd* Chris Egan
- 3rd* Neville Wright

*Neatest Pack* was awarded to Noel Graham

## *Junior Dash*

- 1st* Ben Belcher on 'Molly'
- 2nd* Danielle Murphy on 'Creative Belle'
- 3rd* Kylie Wilson on 'Medera'

## *Associate Dash*

- 1st* Sharon Pendergast
- 2nd* Barbara Cooper-Babidge
- 3rd* Nick Cook

## *Open Dash*

- 1st* Sharon Pendergast on 'Zoe'
- 2nd* Leigh Bourke on 'Scud'
- 3rd* Kris Humphries on 'Black Jack'

## *Open Race*

- 1st* Kris Humphries on 'Live Opal'
- 2nd* Neil Waite on 'Bobby'
- 3rd* Lindsay Campbell on 'Loose Mover'

## *Wally Ryder Horsewalk*

- 1st* Clancy Burrows on 'Malto'
- 2nd* Liam Wade on 'Apache'
- 3rd* Danielle Clemson on 'Red Beau'











# MCAV Australian Cattlemen & High Country Photographic Competition

Capably organised by the unstoppable Don Porter, the MCAV Photographic Competition was again held this year. As the results for 1994 were not available when we went to press last year, we are including both 1994 and 1995 in this issue.

The competition is now being sponsored by Anndon Photographic Studio, Wantirna (alias associate members Ann and Don Porter), who also arrange the actual display and framing of all the photographs at the Get Togethers.

## 2nd MCAV Photographic Competition 1994 Sponsored by Kodak Section Winners

### History of the High Country

'Dawn on Bogong' by Sue Beeton

### Action in the High Country

'Into the Water' by Karen Mitchell

### Open

'Hereford enclosed by Trees'  
by Jacqui Cook

### Landscape

'Dargo River' by Julie Marland

### Horse and Rider

'Afternoon Light, Dibbins Track'  
by John Duncan Firth

Don is continually amazed at the photographs that are being entered - it just goes to show that all those cameras being carried around at the Get Together are being operated by some very creative people.

If you haven't entered in the past, how about giving this year's competition a try - you never know, it may be your photograph that is in the next edition of *Voice*. Keep your eyes open for entry forms.

## 3rd MCAV Photographic Competition 1995 Section Winners

### History of the High Country

'Brim to Brim Consultation - Don  
Kneebone and Nug Whyllie' by Jan Hobbs

### Action in the High Country

'Ready to Go' by Karen Mitchell

### Open

'The Whipmaker Demonstrates his Craft'  
by Jan Hobbs

### Landscape

'Trekking Up' by Ms A.L. Maher

### Horse and Rider

'At Full Gallop' by Karen Mitchell

### Portrait

'Spinning a Yarn' by Ms A.L. Maher



'Brim to Brim - Don Kneebone and Nug Whyllie'

Photographer: Jan Hobbs





'Trekking Up'

*Photographer: Ms A.L. Maher*



'Dargo River'

*Photographer: Julie Marland*



'At Full Gallop'

*Photographer: Karen Mitchell*



'The Yarn Spinner'

*Photographer: Ms A.L. Maher*



# 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 29TH SEPTEMBER 1995.

**PRESENT:** Allan Brewer, Sue Silvers, Mary Goldsworthy, Jean Marrow, Wendy Symons, Peter McCormack, B.D. McGregor, M. Jordan, John Marshall, Norma Marshall, Natasha Mansfield, Keith Rule, Roger Hollis, Rhonda Treasure, Ben Treasure, Ross Brown, Craig Brown, Mark Coleman, Stuart Hicks, Harry Ryder, Frank Ryan, Marian Dowling, Ros Andrews, John Andrews, Bill Crump, Doug Treasure, Rusty Connley, Kevin Kelly, Pat Oliver, Larry Oliver, Danny Cook, John Cook, Frank Hill, Bernie Sheather, Chris Stoney, Tim Barker and Jim Commins.

The Chairman, Mr Doug Treasure welcomed all members and associate members to the Annual Meeting. He expressed his pleasure to see so many associate members, and introduced members of the Central Council to all present. He opened the meeting at 11.10 am and called for apologies.

**APOLOGIES** were received from: Clive Hodge, Dana Kneebone, Sue Beeton, Peter Monds, Jack Lovick, Heather Mitchell, Max Blair, the Hon David Evans, the Hon Lou Lieberman, Mr David Perrin MLA, Carolyn Gilpin and Pat and Keith Woolmer.

**MINUTES** of the previous Annual General Meeting of the Association as printed in *Voice of the Mountains* No. 18 of 1995 and circulated to all members and associate members be confirmed. Moved Jim Commins seconded Peter McCormack.

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

As our Association moves towards the year 2000 we need to define and formulate our strategies for the future. If we want high country grazing to be strong and effective and with relevance to the Australian cattle industry over the next decade and beyond, policy and planning must now be formulated, and strong commitment given by each and every member of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria.

We must harness the support of our young Mountain Cattlemen. Our future will be in their hands. So today I appeal to them. Stand tall and proud in the reflection of your parents and your grandparents. Take the time to listen to the older members of the Association, but don't be afraid to put your thoughts and ideas forward when it comes to making decisions on new management practices. Join in discussions and let us all hear your views.

Our Association can only be as effective and efficient as our members are prepared to make it. Our strength can only come from lively debate at our grass roots level and this means Branch meetings. These are the forum for all members, and importantly our younger members, to put forward ideas and suggestions for discussion. Elected Branch delegates are then responsible for putting these ideas to our Central Council. Central Council meetings are held on a regular basis some five or six times during the year. We need proper co-operation and commitment from all members, or our Association will fail.

We should all try to give our best in the coming year.

We congratulate Mansfield Branch which hosted the 1995 Get Together at the picturesque site of Mountain Bay on the weekend of the 14th and 15th January. The small but energetic band of Mansfield members did an amazing job. Your efforts on behalf of the Association were greatly appreciated. The innovative idea of a 'farmers' auction' masterminded by Philip Sansom of Nufarm Limited was a real winner, and contributed both to the financial and entertainment success of the Get Together.

The pilot scientific study has been completed, and decision time is at hand. Certain recommendations have been made, and the Association must move forward with them.

Members of our Association have been concerned in the past, with the lack of uniformity in regulations governing the droving of livestock on Victorian roads. Earlier this year we provided a

Discussion Paper for the VicRoads Advisory Board, and had an opportunity to place our concerns directly to that Board. We had a good hearing and believe that the matters raised gave the Board a clear insight into the problems we encounter when droving our livestock to the High Plains. Board members expressed their appreciation and gave their encouragement. We have also provided a copy of the Discussion Paper to the Local Government Department, and had further discussions with the Municipal Association of Victoria. We discussed with them a proposed draft model local law. There are difficulties in forming one set of local laws to cover all situations, however we feel that with good will and determination, we can contribute to a satisfactory outcome. I would like to thank Allan Brewer and Sue Silvers who have supported me throughout these meetings. This has been a major undertaking for the Association during the year.

My thanks to Jim Commins, who in spite of indifferent health these past few months has contributed magnificently to our many projects. Your work on the Eastern Forest Region is moving closer to final resolution.

To Allan Brewer, our Executive Officer, thank you for your tireless work for the Association, and the amount of time and travelling you put into it. Your help and support have been much valued by me.

To Linda Barraclough, Debbie Squires and Don Porter for your very professional help in the compilation and publishing of the *Voice of the Mountains*. The magazine is one all members are proud to share with the community.

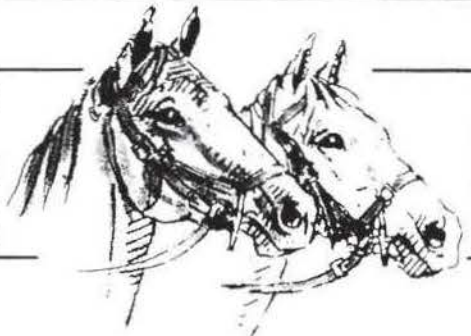
Thanks also to the Central Council delegates and our Chairman Doug Treasure who gives our meetings wise direction, my gratitude for your on-going commitment.

To all members and associate members whose continuing support and enthusiasm breathes life into the Association, my sincere thanks.

To our Secretary Sue Silvers, who has now completed ten years of dedication and service to the Association, my personal thanks accompanies those expressed by all MCAV members.

I know you would wish me to especially mention the Connley and Kelly families whose lives

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BLUFF & BEYOND  
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have been touched with sorrow for the loss of sons this year. I offer the Association's condolences.

In conclusion I would like to thank all present for their attendance here today. Our country has presented a constant and exciting challenge since the earliest days of settlement. Let us all go forward to meet this challenge with hope and enthusiasm. Thank you.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The past year has certainly flown, and has been a busy and successful year for the Association.

After much hard work and perseverance, the seven year licences for Bush Runs are to be issued shortly. This is good news for members.

Although the Association has not had the front page headlines, or television coverage, there has been an enormous amount of behind-the-scenes work done.

We are now proudly sponsored for the next three Get Togethers by Nufarm Limited.

MCAV together with the VFF have played a major role in the travelling stock legislation. This will see a marked improvement in the recognition of livestock producers' rights to move stock on roads in Victoria.

Mansfield Branch is to be congratulated on conducting an enjoyable and successful Get Together.

To all full members - now is the time to get in and support the Association. It concerns me that the same members seem to be doing the bulk of the work and too many sitting back and enjoying the benefits.

If younger members are not prepared to accept responsibility and take over some of the workload, then I fear for the future of this Association.


As to the support from our associate members, again it was fantastic and thanks to you all. The running of our Get Togethers would be impossible without your help.

Our President and Secretary are to be commended for their continuing work and dedication to the Association. Thank you Mary and Sue.

I wish all members and associates all the best for the year ahead.

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Allan Brewer took the opportunity to speak of the work the President does behind the scenes, and the amount of time she puts in in the interests of the members of the Association.

### SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

I now present to you my 10th annual report. Next month will mark the eleventh anniversary of my involvement with the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria. By any standard this is a long time - over a decade, and I will firmly resist the temptation to look back nostalgically over those years because I believe a more positive approach is to look forward to the future, and to work for the future.

In 1997, two years from now, the 7 year alpine grazing licences will come up for renewal. I cannot stress too heavily how important it is for each licensee to adhere to the licence conditions. Licence fees must be paid on time, allocation numbers must not be exceeded. MCAV strongly recommends that allocations should be filled, and licensees must take all reasonable steps to contain stock within the boundaries of the licence area. Furthermore, stock



on the run must belong to the licensee. There is no clause in the licence requiring the Department to warn licensees in regard to proper performance. If a licence is cancelled, it may very well be impossible to have it reinstated.

The Association has been notified that seven year bush grazing licences will be issued on the 1st October 1995. This is the fulfilment of an obligation given by the previous Government in 1989, and only acknowledged by the present Government in 1993. Indeed some members of the Department of Conservation bureaucracy denied the obligation, and we are pleased that this issue has now been resolved. The bush grazing licences will retain their current status for the next two years, during which time the MCAV will be working with the Department to fine tune some of the details. Is it coincidence that these two years of negotiation will end in 1997 at the time the alpine licences come up for renewal? Perhaps it is, maybe not. MCAV will certainly be seeking to protect the rights and interests of its members.

In October 1994 MCAV took part in the 'Talk to the Animals' Expo. This event took place at the Caulfield Racecourse over four days, and each Branch agreed to attend for one day to demonstrate the art of packing. Mansfield Branch chose to bring a special 'Snowy River' horse, and this created great interest. Unfortunately not all the branches rose to the occasion and Clive Hodge's son Chris, came to the rescue on at least one day. The public showed great interest in the MCAV display despite the fact that the site was not ideal. However with a total crowd in excess of 80,000 there was quite enough to keep Sue Beeton and her helpers busy, and MCAV must thank the associate members who gave up their time, and those of the Branches which made the special effort they agreed was well worthwhile.

Members expressed enthusiasm for joining the 1995 'Talk to the Animals' Expo, however as it is to be held this year in late November, the timing will not be convenient for members who will be getting ready for the annual trip to their high country leases.



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Mansfield Branch organised a marvellous Get Together in January, not an easy task for such a small branch, and I know that they appreciated the assistance they received from other members and associate members. For the first time all the financial and accounting side of the Get Together was run through the Central Account which not only assisted the branch, but pleased our Auditor who has recommended that this system be carried on in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank our new sponsor Nufarm Limited which has generously agreed to assist with sponsorship for the next three years.

Our President has commented today on the need for uniformity in local laws regarding travelling stock on Victorian roads. This has been a particularly difficult and tough issue to tackle. Mary Goldsworthy has been the prime mover, and has stuck to it tenaciously with strong backup from Allan Brewer and the Central Council. The problem of formulating a model local law regarding travelling livestock is a minefield of conflicting interests. The desire of

Mountain Cattlemen to travel from 'A' to 'B' with the single purpose of taking cattle from home properties to high country runs could very easily have been overlooked, but not with Mrs Goldsworthy in the driving seat! The Association looks forward to a satisfactory outcome.

MCAV through the work of Jim Commins had brought forward for discussion with the Department the concept of an Eastern Forest Region. This concept, which has been mentioned on and off for many years, finally got off the ground in April/May with a detailed submission being presented to the Department of Conservation. The submission proposed that cattle be counted on the old per head basis, that the licence fee should be calculated by multiplying the number of cattle that represents the unimproved carrying capacity by the recommended fee, the recommended fee to be derived by direct negotiation based on previously acceptable charges, the term of the licence to be 99 years, and various other details. The submission received a very lukewarm reception. At a later meeting DCNR

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discussed their desire to move to uniformity across the state rather than the present system of regions. Finally the Department agreed to a further meeting prior to which the MCAV will provide its reasons for requesting an Eastern Forest Region, and provide DCNR with agenda items for consideration. There will need to be a good deal of consideration given to this issue if it is to be progressed further.

We are still working with the Department on the Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land, and provided a detailed submission on the Draft Code in June. Of 11 recommendations for change made by the MCAV in the Draft, only one was accepted. The remaining ten recommendations will be reviewed by a panel of one, Professor Ian Ferguson. The MCAV has not accepted an invitation to attend a panel hearing owing to time and distance, but has supported its original submission on the Draft Code with a letter to the panel.

During mustering this year, one of the MCAV members encountered difficulties when he arrived at his hut late one evening. MCAV has raised this matter with the Chief Ranger, Alpine, Mr Bob Jones, who in turn took the matter to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee which is preparing a Code of Etiquette for the use of high country huts by the general public. It has been pointed out by MCAV that its members have a legal right to the use of their huts in respect of their grazing operations, and that Cattlemen might very well arrive at their hut at any time during the day or night, and at any time of the year. We are asking that this information be included in the Code, and also in the huts, perhaps by way of a sign. This problem was also raised through the Public Land Council of Victoria, and members of that body were asked to highlight the Cattlemen's rights in their newsletters and publications.

MCAV is still supplying kits to schools for students undertaking their VCE. I have mentioned this item each year for several years, as the burden of printing and postage is considerable. Nevertheless it has been a very important vehicle for getting information regarding alpine grazing into schools. At present our school kit information is with Linda Barraclough for editing before being put onto disc and sent off to VicNet, which is part of the Internet. When this is done all MCAV information for schools will be accessible through individual and school computers, and will make a great difference in our

printing and postage bills. I would like to thank Linda for taking on this extra work.

The new Alpine Advisory Committee met for the first time in March, and there have been two further meetings. The Committee is not carrying out a wholesale review of the Alpine Park Management Plans, but is addressing single issues raised from time to time by various interests. It has recommended a number of transfers of grazing licences, and has considered issues such as horse riding in specific areas, dog sledding for people with disabilities as a means of experiencing winter in the Park, and Howqua huts. Issues can be put forward to the Alpine Advisory Committee either directly to it, or through any of the Committee members.

The Public Land Council has met regularly throughout the year, and I have attended the meetings as the MCAV representative. The PLCV has addressed a number of issues, and had some excellent successes, one of which was to have a PLCV nominee selected to the Land Conservation Council. A copy of the PLCV 1994/1995 Review is available here today.

The 1994 MCAV Annual Meeting decided to trial a new system of payment of subscriptions by full members. This was to add \$1.25 per head over the first 100 head in order to calculate the individual subscriptions. This system has had mixed success. It is easy to see which households own a calculator! I recommend that members reconsider this system. A more simple method might be that the subscription be based on the licence allocation, while still keeping the minimum fee.

I present to the members the 1994/1995 accounts and financial statements. MCAV is in a very good position financially, and members should be very pleased in this regard. I would like to mention that Bill Crump is also marking his tenth anniversary this year as the Association Auditor. Bill has had the task of training me, as Treasurer, in the correct and best way to keep the financial records of the Association. I thank him for his marvellous professional care and attention over the past decade.

In conclusion I would like to thank members and associate members for making the last ten years very happy ones, and in particular thanks to all Central Council delegates and our President, Mary Goldsworthy, for the support they have given me over the past year.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for her report.

Moved Ross Brown, seconded Mary Goldsworthy, that the financial statements for the year 1994/1995 be accepted. Carried.

## MARKETING REPORT

Sue Beeton being absent, the Chairman read her report to the meeting.

Continuing the trend of recent years, the past year has seen a slowing down of marketing turnover, from \$28,811 in 1993/1994 to \$24,138, the difference being reflected by the fact that a Bush Dance was not held this year. However the dance itself has not been a great earner, with an increase in nett profit in 1994/95 to \$7,124.65 from \$6,626.89 in 1993/1994.

Much of this profit was due to the fact that stock levels were still relatively high for many goods, requiring limited purchasing in the past year, apart from t-shirts and windcheaters. Numerous lines have been run out in order to introduce some new specialty items in the future, thus altering the range

of items available to members. The need for some new, low-priced items has been recognised through many requests, particularly from the younger members of the Association.

Event sales increased by \$925, with wholesale business dropping by \$1600. However, miscellaneous sales which incorporates mainly mail orders was up approximately \$500.

Events attended this year were the 'Talk to the Animals' Expo, the four Wheel Drive Show and the Get Together. The 'Talk to the Animals' Expo proved to be popular with families and children, and as reported in the newsletter, was a good opportunity for the Cattlemen to educate and demonstrate their skills. Marketing income was over \$1500, an average amount for this kind of event. The Four Wheel Drive Show was relatively quiet this year, but this was most likely due to the exceptionally hot weather experienced throughout the time it was on - attendance figures were significantly lower with all exhibitors complaining of reduced business. A special thank you must go to the stalwarts who came to our assistance for that particular show - it was not an easy one!

# STOP PRESS

As we go to print, *Voice of the Mountains* has seen copies of Ian Stapleton's newly published books:

## **Into the Mountains**

(Stories of Timbertop & Mittagundi)

## **Amongst Our Mountains**

(The story of Mittagundi)

## **Towards Tomorrow's Mountains**

(The story of Wollangarra)

There are many references to cattlemen, huts and personalities. They are set primarily near Mansfield, Omeo and Licola, and as such are important works on the High Country.

They are available from Ian Stapleton, P.O. 227, Heyfield, Victoria, 3858 - please send \$20 for each copy of any of the three books. Cheques payable to Ian Stapleton, and add \$7 (P&P) for a parcel containing anything between 1 and 6 books within Victoria, and a bit more for interstate.

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Sales at the Get Together were consistent with previous years, with the Get Together Port and t-shirts proving to be their usual success. Both seem to have reached the status of collectors items.

The arrangement with Thomas Cook to manufacture our windcheaters has come to an end, with Cooks claiming that their stock holdings are too great in comparison to the amount of sales generated. This is a little confusing as those wholesalers who have tried to obtain stocks from Thomas Cook will attest to the small amount of stock they carried. We are currently negotiating to produce the windcheaters direct with the manufacturers, which should give us more control over the quality, which has been a little erratic.

The wholesale network has grown this year, with a number of the tourist information centres around the state stocking MCAV goods. These centres are particularly interested in seeing an increase in the range of the smaller value items, as mentioned above.

As always the Marketing Department cannot operate without the enthusiastic support of the team of helpers. Thanks to everyone who helped over the past year, including Tess and Pat Coleman, Geraldine Morgan, Roger Hollis, Wendy Symons, David Shelton, Norma and John Marshall, Frank Sedgman, Paul and Judy Dix, and many others. A special thank

you to Shirley Smith and Frank Hill for their fantastic support and assistance at the Get Together - we'd not have made it without them, especially on the Sunday when they had to be my voice.

It is with great sadness that I must tell you I am unable to continue in the marketing role, however commitments which have grown over the past 12 months threaten to overtake me, and I find that I have not been able to give as much to the task as I feel it required. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Association in a practical way. I look forward to continuing to assist at the Get Togethers whenever possible.

The Chairman thanked Sue Beeton in her absence and asked the Secretary to write to thank her for her contribution to the Association.

### **SETTING OF SUBSCRIPTION FEES**

Moved John Cook seconded Ross Brown that there be no alteration to associate membership fees for the coming year. Carried.

Discussion took place regarding the full members' fees, with some suggestions to abandon the minimum fee, and some to abandon the maximum fee. It was agreed that the Association worked very hard for the members, and that the current minimum fee was reasonable.

Moved Jim Commins seconded Kevin Kelly that the minimum fee of \$100 be retained for the first 100 head. Over 100 head a fee of \$1.25 should apply to each head to a maximum of \$600. Carried.

### **FIXING HONORARIUMS**

Moved Peter McCormack seconded Rusty Connley that the honorarium for the President should be \$3,000 plus expenses. Carried.

There was discussion regarding honorariums for the Vice President positions in order to encourage younger members. The concept received some support, as it was then possible to pay another person to do the work for the member whilst he was away at meetings. It was agreed that the Central Council could authorise payments to Council delegates if the Council considered it was necessary.

Moved Mark Coleman seconded Jim Commins that the Vice President receive an honorarium of \$1,000. Carried.

Moved Allan Brewer seconded Ross Brown that the Chairman receive an honorarium of \$1,000

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unless he also holds another position with an honorarium. Carried.

Moved Chris Stoney seconded Ross Brown that the Executive Officer receive an honorarium of \$1,000. Carried.

There was discussion regarding the honorarium for the Secretary/Treasurer. Secretary stated that, owing to the development of the Association and the amount and nature of the work involved, that it was possible in the future that a Secretary would have to be employed by the Association at proper commercial rates. Secretary absented herself from the meeting for the discussion.

Moved Mary Goldsworthy seconded Jim Commins that the Secretary receive an honorarium of \$20,000 plus expenses for a three day working week. Carried.

Moved Ross Brown seconded Allan Brewer that the Marketing Officer receive an honorarium of \$1,000 plus expenses. Carried.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

The Chairman declared all positions vacant, and handed the Chair to Tim Barker for the election of office bearers.

President: Mary Goldsworthy, nominated by Ross Brown, was elected.

Senior Vice-President: Harry Ryder, nominated by Jim Commins, was elected.

2nd Vice President: Mark Coleman, nominated by Mary Goldsworthy, was elected.

Executive Officer: Allan Brewer, nominated by Jim Commins, was elected. Allan Brewer accepted the nomination for a period of 12 months only.

Special Projects Officers: Jim Commins, nominated by Doug Treasure, was elected.

Doug Treasure, nominated by Rusty Connley, was elected.

Mark Coleman, nominated by Mary Goldsworthy. Mark Coleman declined the nomination.

Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Silvers, nominated by Mary Goldsworthy, was elected.

Marketing Officer: Frank Hill, nominated by Sue Silvers, was elected.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:**

Mr Bill Crump was appointed Auditor of the Association.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN:**

Mr Doug Treasure was appointed Chairman of the Association.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. John Cook raised the subject of two Associate members being invited to attend Central Council meetings as had been the practice in the past. It was suggested that the Associates appointed could act as a liaison with other Associate members, and contribute a paragraph in the Newsletters.

Moved Peter McCormack seconded Harry Ryder that the two positions for Associate members be reinstated, and advertised in the next Newsletter. Nominations to be received prior to the next Council meeting when Central Council will elect two Associate members. Carried.

2. Frank Hill raised the subject of a Bush Dance. It was agreed that a Committee consisting of Ben Treasure, Chris Stoney, Wendy Symons, Frank Hill and Danny Cook should look into putting on a Bush Dance possibly at some time after the next Get Together.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 1.15 pm

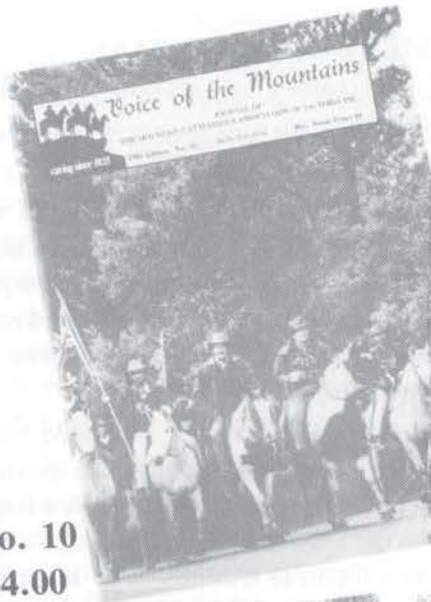


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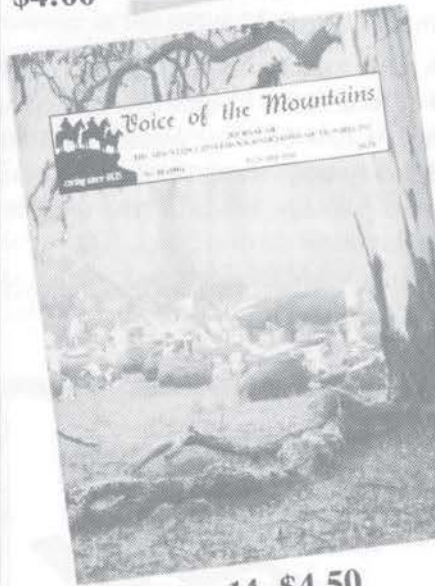
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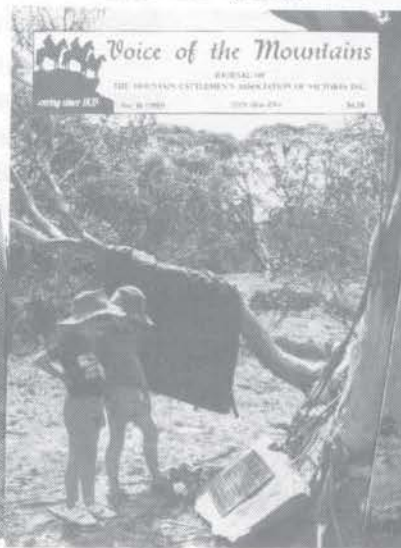
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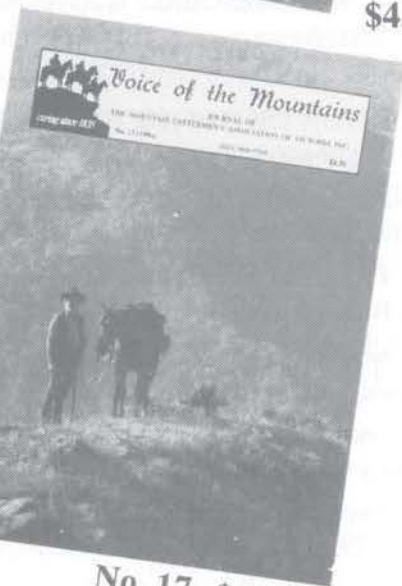


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The Committee for *Voice of the Mountains* would like to thank everyone for the wonderful support received this year. Poems, stories and photographs of activities in the high country are always welcome.

*Voice of the Mountains* is grateful for the assistance of the 'Anapaks' without whom this issue would not have made it to the Get Together. We are also grateful to Roma Sinclair, Harold Coverdale, Buff and Shirley Baggs, David Tulloch, Bruce McInnes, Mr and Mrs Neil McInnes, Neil Cox, Tim Gibson and Johnny Faithfull for their assistance.

E-Gee Printers have yet again coped with our absolutely impossible deadlines and we thank them for their seemingly unending patience.

*Voice of the Mountains* can be contacted by writing to: P.O. Box 86, Bairnsdale, Vic. 3875  
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