



# Voice of the Mountains

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

*caring since 1835*

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**Journal of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Inc.**

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Editorial Committee: Debra Squires, Linda Barraclough and Sue Reynolds

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### **COVER**

Fitzgerald stock making their way home north of Omeo.

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## *President's Message 2002*

Every nation on every continent is fundamentally built upon the blocks of history that created the style and character of the present day, and will go on to influence the future that lies ahead.

Mountain Cattleman are an integral part of the European history of the Australian continent.

Immortalized in verse by Banjo Patterson, on the silver screen in films like *The Man from Snowy River* and in public celebration such as the Centenary of Federation parade in Melbourne only go to highlight the relevance of the oilskin clad, Akubra topped horseman and women from the Victorian High Country.

Our history - our past - is our future. The ways and traditions of the Mountain Graziers of today are a direct living link with the very beginning of our European involvement on this continent.

The passion, culture, tradition, heritage and need for identity is all part of who we are, young and old alike. The public support for the image of the Mountain Cattleman is awesome. The impressive display of support whenever we ride in public can be a very humbling experience, and not lost on those determined to see our demise for their own agendas.

Mountain Cattleman have been continually observing the Alpine environment for more than 160 years. These observations have been passed down through the generations creating a record like no other, an unbroken link of observation unsurpassed.

We have seen theories developed and agendas pushed. We have also watched the continual expansion of bureaucracy to create empires - empires of agendas.

The greatest threat to 'Our Public Lands' is this personal agenderism. Crucial scientific evaluation and expression can be, and is, compromised to create a desired outcome.

We as observers of the High Country are greatly perturbed by this single significant threat to the Alps. Our passion for sustainable management runs deep, so deep that our minute resources (when compared to the public purse of the bureaucracy) struggle to deal with all the on ground issues we are presented with. The M.C.A.V. is not alone in this. We will continue to forge links with similar organisations to present a strong voice.

I'm continually inspired by the achievements both past and present of the 'Mountain Cattleman's Association of Victoria' - the dedication, persistence and abilities in adversity to achieve a successful outcome. Our sheer persistence and credibility helps to overcome some of our financial limitations. However, this being said, we always need to be mindful of our financial base and the continued strong support of members and the associate membership, for which we are extremely grateful.

My thanks this year go to Sue Reynolds for her continued dedication and support as Secretary, to the editorial team for this publication, to the members of central council for their time and effort even at short notice, and most importantly to those out side of the immediate membership who support our association.

Thank you, and all the best for 2002.

*Simon Turner*



*Last year, 2001, saw the passing of several icons of the high country. The names Jim Commins, Don Treasure and Jack Lovick have long been associated with the MCAV. They were well loved representatives of the cattlemen and it is only fitting the following tributes are made.*

*It is also appropriate that we reprint the first of the published articles written by Jim Commins for the MCAV. The association will sorely miss his important and ever reliable input of reports and submissions that he continually produced arguing the position, relevance and importance of the Mountain Cattlemen.*

# *James Arthur 'Jim' Commins*

*17 Dec 1922 - 28 May 2001*

Jim Commins was Victoria's Voice of the Mountains for the latter part of the 20th century. He was president of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria for ten years and led the mounted march on Parliament House in 1984. He also led the mounted demonstration in Nunawading in August 1985, which influenced the balance of power in the Victorian Legislative Council and thus contributed to the continued tradition of summer grazing in the Victorian high country.

He had an enduring love for the high country and the surrounding mountains and was passionate in his belief about how they should be managed.

Jim Commins was born at Ensay on 17 December 1922 and attended school first at Ensay and then at the Bairnsdale School of Mines until 1936. He rode a bicycle from Ensay to and from Bairnsdale regularly, a distance of about 80 kilometres, and cheerfully announced that it was uphill both ways. His fixed-wheel bike had no brakes and to slow down he had to reduce the speed of the madly churning pedals.

He enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces in 1941 and saw active service in Darwin and New Guinea with the 2/11 Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers.

Jim received the Omeo Shire Australia Day Citizen of the Year award in 1989 for his active involvement in many community organisations, including the Ensay Tennis Club, Recreation Reserve Committee, Ensay Fire Brigade, school committee, Ensay/Swifts Creek sub-branch of the RSL, and the Bush Nursing Centre. He played football for Ensay from 1946 to 1976, including several seasons as captain-coach and was also a playing club president and president of the Omeo District Football League for three years.



# Greenies beware! Jim's in town

By IAN MACKAY

Jim Commins is as big and tough as a mountain cattleman should be.

He is uncomfortable in his "city" suit, and great bushman's hands log at an unfamiliar tie.

He is in town only for a day or two, because there's plenty of man's work to do back on the Great Divide.

But greenies beware. Jim Commins is in no mood to be pushed around by idealists in claims may drive him from their land.

"We aren't wrecking the environment," says Jim Commins, who runs cattle and sheep on his property "Albany" up in the mountains near Coon.

"Claims that cattle cause erosion and that stockmen have ruined the country with their campfires are a myth."

## Summer grazing

Access to the high plains has been an historic fact of life for graziers of the Great Dividing Range in East Gippsland.

Each year, as the snow melts, they drive their cattle up to graze on summer pastures.

The romance of the situation is lost on conservationists, however, and the State Government is under increasing pressure to ban grazing on crown land in the mountains and to proclaim the high plains as national parks.

The mountain cattlemen are fighting back and the 100-strong Mountain District Cattleman's Association is presenting a submission to the Land Conservation Council of Victoria.

"The council is under considerable pressure from those best equipped to stick it up to them," says Jim Commins.

## 'Wrong course'

"Grazers feel disadvantaged in that we have conservation groups, some of them subsidised by government funds, producing propaganda which is damaging to the cattleman's cause.

"They are putting people on the wrong course."

"Many conservationists have the utopian idea that if you could keep fire out of the high plains then everything would be all right.

"They say the best way to do that would be to declare them national parks.

"What they don't realise is that lightning causes the vast majority of fires, not man.



EVEN in city clothes, Jim Commins adopts that country lean. — Picture TREVOR PINDER



Jim was overall winner of the Best Gadget competition at the Royal Melbourne Show in 1975 with his Pony Pack. He won the engineering award for Farm Invention of the Year at the Henty Machinery Field Days in 1997 for the Fodder Feeder and was placed second in the national competition for Farm Invention of the Year in 1997, again for the Fodder Feeder.

He was a founding member of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, was vice-president for several years, served as president from 1977 to 1987 and continued as a committee member until his death.

On his retirement from the presidency, the then minister for conservation, forests and lands, Joan Kirner, said at a celebration dinner:

*I want to thank you for your willingness to talk through an issue, to stay firm on your principles, but most of all to deliver, or not to deliver, with an utter sense of integrity. And you don't get that too often in politics, and when you do get it, it is really appreciated.*

Mrs Kirner recognised the strong characteristics in Jim's personality - firm principles, integrity and honesty.

Jim knew everything there was to know about early settlement, the practices of 'squatting', and 'selecting'. He knew the Lands Act, and he knew Crown Land management. He spoke on these subjects at any opportunity and at any appropriate length. Jim brought his special talents of courtesy and vast knowledge of his subject to the negotiating table.

Jim was an excellent bushman, and cared deeply for the environment in which he lived and worked. He loved all creatures great and small - with two exceptions: rabbits and feral dogs.

Jim wrote often about the need for fuel reduction burning, and warned that without it, a raging inferno was a very real possibility. He was a member of the first Alpine Advisory Committee, and an active member of the Victorian Farmers Federation.

Little happened in the alpine area without his hearing about it and commenting on it. He was often



Little happened in the alpine area without his hearing about it and commenting on it. He was often exasperated with his perceived lack of impact on his opponents and time and again turned to writing to patiently re-explain his views. Those who came after him knew he had a much greater impact that he realised. His many papers on land management in the alpine area would make an excellent text on the subject.

Jim was highly regarded by all sides of the debate on land management in the alpine area because of his honesty, calm manner, easy smile and jocular aside. He was gracious in a debate that was sometimes fierce and spiteful. The debt we owe Jim will only be repaid by careful and thoughtful management of the alpine area.

Jim's funeral was held at the tiny Union Church at Ensay on Friday 1 June. Four hundred people attended and most stood outside in weak winter sunshine surrounded by Jim's mountains. The mountains, which now have him full-time, will never want for a better custodian.

*This obituary for Jim was written by Sue Reynolds, secretary of the MCAV and Tim Barker, a fellow public land management lobbyist. It originally appeared in The Age on 26 July.*



# Donald Lewis 'Don' Treasure

13 May 1906 - 25 Sept 2001

On 25 September 2001 Don Treasure died at Lakes Entrance. Later, at his funeral, Ken Treasure presented the following eulogy.

I'm honoured to be asked by Don's family to present these few comments on the way I knew Don as a young man. Even though we are of the same generation there is almost thirty years between our ages. We are both the grandchildren of George and Emily Treasure who came to the Dargo High Plains in 1878. Don, who was 95 years of ages, was the second son of Harry and Clare. He was married to Linda for over 50 years before Linda's death and they had three children - Linette, David and Margaret.

Don was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. For this he was respected by his peers, family and friends. At the time that he grew up education was not easy to come by especially when you lived in isolation as on the Dargo High Plains. Don, along with the others in his family spent much of their formal education away from home but his learning continued for most of his life. He was alert to the things around him, especially on his beloved High Plains, and to the wider world affairs. His knowledge of these things created interest to those who cared to listen especially in the camp when mustering or on the road. He often spoke of the days spent as a boy growing up on the Dargo High Plains and the home at Mayford on the Dargo river. Linette recalls how her father used to speak fondly of the time spent as a family, especially of his older brother Fred who died in his early teens. In his later years he enjoyed reminiscing of the days gone by. He was gifted in prose and poetry and had a good singing voice. He was a good entertainer and enjoyed the company of his fellow man. His love of goldmining often took him away into the mountains in the quest to find riches but I believe that he enjoyed the solitude of the high country as much or more than the challenge of finding gold. He did work the Normanby mine for many years



but I believe, that like so many goldminers before him, only he knew the gains from this effort.

Don stayed at our home at Wuk Wuk on numerous occasions and I recall my father saying of Don that he did not say much but what he did say was worth listening to. I believe this summed up Don's character as he was a deep thinker and analysed things before he spoke. He was well read and I believe had a sound understanding of many writings of noted authors as well as his Bible. As a bushman he was unsurpassed.

His knowledge of the High Plains was sought by many and in years gone by when I spent time with his brother Jim, I heard Jim ask of Don where to catch a fish, look for gold, direct him to distant bush locations and ask of him his opinion on many things. Jim along with Jack and Freda respected their brother and sought his advice.

Don helped in assisting and rescuing quite a few people who lost their way in the high country and through his skill of assessing the situation they



*Claude Watt, Jenny Treasure and Don at The Normanby Mine Hut*

could well owe their salvation to him. One such event I recall was when I was on the High Plains with Jim when a young fellow became lost while out rabbit shooting one evening. His companions came to the house after dark and asked for help to find their mate. We went down to their camp on the Half Way Plain and spent some time riding through the bush calling and cracking whips to attract attention. All to no avail so we returned to the house and while having a cuppa about midnight Don arrived on horseback from Dargo. This was not unusual as he often would work all day at Castleburn and in the cool of the evening ride the forty odd miles to the High Plains to begin work there the next day. When seeing the light on at Jim's house he came in and asked that the trouble was. On being told of the situation he thought for a while and then suggested we get a start before daybreak and further look for the lost fellow. We left the house about 4 am, rode to the Half Way Plain and then rode down an old track that once led to the Royal mine. After about twenty minutes or so, Don remarked that, 'We had better wake him up'. He cracked his whip and called 'Do you want to be found?' A head appeared over a large log that was fallen across the old track and a very relieved young fellow greeted us. I asked Don how he knew where he this lost fellow was and said he just worked it out because he knew the area so well. This had been Don's home backyard for many years, his entertainment area and his playground. How fortunate for that lost fellow that

Don came along that night. Years later I asked Don, did he remember the event and he said he could not recall it clearly. This prompted me to think it was 'just another day at the office' for Don.

The demise of the older cattlemen like Don, Wally Ryder, Bill Hicks, Jim Commins, Jim and Jack Treasure and others leaves a gap that cannot be filled as the change of lifestyle has severed the kind of relationship that they had with the high country.

Jim said of Don once that he was perhaps the best cattleman of all the family. In questioning that statement he said it was because he cared for his stock. Should the hour be late or the weather inclement, Don still saw that his cattle, horse and dogs were fed and sheltered before he settled himself. A story told to me by Clarrie Edwards gives insight into this comment.

When Don and family lived at Lindenow South, he rode a young uneducated horse down to the local store to get some goods. He tied the horse to the fence in the carpark of the hotel and went over the road to the store. On returning to his horse he mounted just as the train came over the crossing and sounded the horn. The horse took fright and gave Don a heck of a ride. Don was an excellent rider and never shifted in the saddle until the horse settled down and then he dismounted. Clarrie said he patted the horse's nose and calmed it and then said 'Okay young fellow, let's go home as you've

had enough upset for the day' and then proceeded to lead the horse home. The boys at the bar had cheered the ride but Clarrie said they quietly applauded Don's concern for the horse.

Don was gentleman and will be respected by family, friends and neighbours. To his immediate family may I say, remember the happy times you spent with your Dad or Grandad as they will support you now and in the future. I thank you for this opportunity to reflect on the memories of Don and may we all gain from the experience of knowing him.

Don's granddaughter, Heidi, then added to the eulogy for her grandfather.

Pa was born in 1906. By the time my mother was born he was 42 years old. I was born in 1981,

so by the time I was old enough to stay at his place, Pa was in his late 70s, early 80s. When Mum and Dad would go to the high plains mustering, Aaron and I were not allowed to go because we were too little. I am a nurse and look after people of the same age that Pa was however he was still looking after us! Pa was such a gentle and very patient person. I can never remember a bad time or being in trouble. I can remember Pa had a little banjo which Aaron and I would always fight over, yet we never got into trouble. He really was a kind person. I know now where I get my sweet tooth from. Pa always had some chocolate hidden away. When he would go out into the garden Nana used to always get us a piece each! Up until the age of 92, Pa lived at Castleburn. He was so good for so long, I hope that I am able to be as good as he was.



*Jack, Don, Geoff, Pam, Margaret, Christa, David and Jim Treasure on Dargo High Plains, Autumn 1964*

# Jack Leo George Lovick

4 Mar 1918 - 5 Nov 2001

Jack Lovick, the mountain cattlemean who opened up the high country and lived the legend of the Man from Snowy River, died last week aged 83.

But while his passing was felt in the Mansfield community and around Victoria - for the many people touched by one of the last true bushman, Jack will never die.

'Jack Lovick dead? It just doesn't seem possible,' son-in-law and *Snowy* filmmaker Geoff Burrowes told a huge congregation at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church on Friday.

'On horse, with cattle or with people in the bush he was the best there was. He played hard, lived hard and I can say without doubt that he didn't die wondering,' said Jack's son, Charlie.

Jack's cortege was led down Highett Street by three of his grandchildren on horseback.

Music from the *Snowy* films set the scene for tributes to a man Mr Burrowes described as one of the most inspirational people he ever met.

'He had qualities not seen in many others. Hardness and toughness; he never tired of inspiring and educating - and he did more to open up the bush than any other living man.'

Mr Burrowes, married to Jack's daughter Kerri, said Jack had that certain spark which separated great men from the rest.

'His contribution to this town was

inestimable, but absolutely profound. He never sought to become a celebrity or a legend, it just happened.'

Jack was born in Mansfield and raised on the family property at Merrijig. His family were pioneers of the high plains, grazing cattle on the peaks each summer for more than 150 years.

In 1967, Jack began Lovick's Mountain Safaris in a response to the growing demand for people wanting to go on his cattle drives.

It was the start of an industry that eventually re-shaped the district's economy and proved an inspiration for the *Snowy* movies that put Mansfield on the map.

Mr Burrowes said Jack would live on in the hearts and

minds of the 10,000 people he took on trail rides through the high plains over the years.

'They will all carry something of him in their hearts,' he said.

Jack leaves four children, fifteen grandchildren and, said Mr Burrowes, 'four and a half' great grandchildren.

Jack's son John also spoke at the funeral of a man who was by his own admission hard - but had plenty of time for people who 'had a go'.

*This tribute to Jack Lovick was compiled by Paul Dunlop of the Mansfield Courier where it appeared on 14 November 2001.*



It was in *The Age* obituary by Tom Carey that Jack's infamous ride across Cross cut Saw was recorded.

.... In 1942, when Lovick was 23, he rode from Mount Howitt to Mount Speculation across the ridge known as Crosscut Saw.

It was a feat never done before, nor ever repeated by anyone.

Crosscut Saw is a razoredged ridge, so narrow and precipitous on both sides, only a horse with the delicate balance of a mountain goat, faultless hooves, and courage might traverse it. Such a horse could be ridden only by a rider of exceptional skill and daring, a person so poised the horse could proceed as confidently as if alone.

After performing the feat, Lovick said he would never try it again, and he wouldn't recommend anyone attempt to traverse it.

'It'd be suicidal,' he said. 'I knew what I was

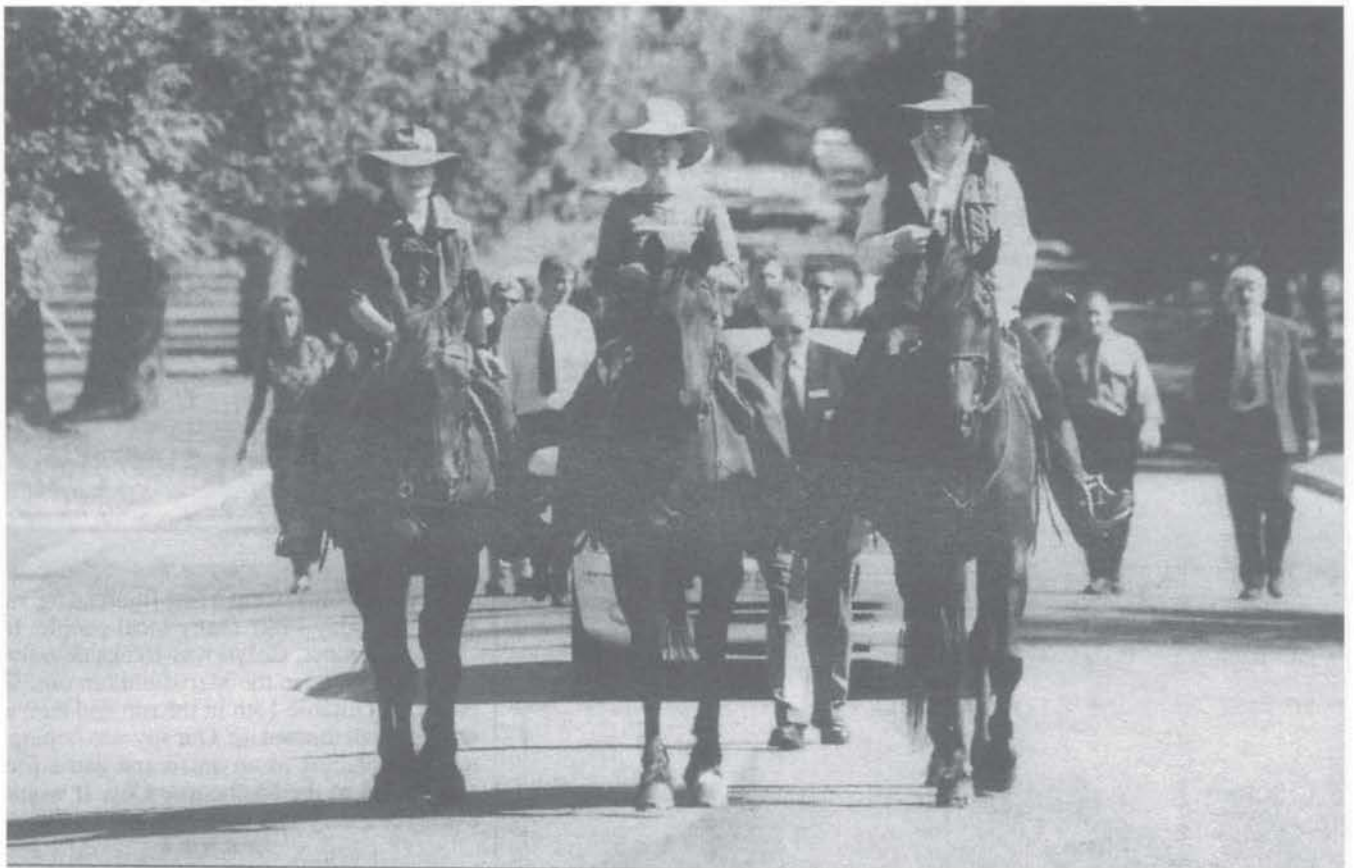
doing and I had a mighty horse, but never again!'

The horse was The Reverend Mister Black, sometimes called 'Reverend', or most often 'Bloody Old Jack', perhaps the favourite of all the superb mounts that partnered Jack Lovick throughout a long life. Many times the horses saved it.

..... Jack Lovick had some detractors, often younger rivals to his claim to be the real-life heir to the title of the Man from Snowy River. He accepted they had some grounds - he was a self-promoter - but he pointed out that the fame of the last quarter-century of his life brought more national and international attention to the High Country than it ever had before, and to the mountain cattle industry and the horsemen of the region.

They cannot deny that 'The Man from Crosscut Saw' is a household word today, and the horsemen tell the story of his ride.

*Tom Carey is a freelance journalist from Shepparton*



The funeral cortege led by Jack's grandchildren, from left, Bob Burrowes, Kellie Lovick and Clancy Burrowes

## *Mick (Kevin) Culhane*

It was great sadness that we learned of the death of Mick Culhane on 27 February, 2001. Mick was born in Myrtleford on 22 April 1936 and attended school there until he left at an early age to help on the farm due to his father's ill health. The school teacher thought this was the best choice for Mick as his heart was with working on the land and not with the books.

Mick's affiliation with the high country began when he was working for Eric Weston in the early 1970s. He had many memorable tales about the time he spent with Eric and would imitate Eric's voice and sayings as he was told. After a few years he then began to help Ron Briggs and did so until his death. From the outside, Mick was no oil painting (John Duncan Firth may beg to differ) but on the inside he had a big heart and many words of encouragement.

The high country became Mick's greatest love. He would enjoy every minute out there and he will be sadly missed around the campfire with

his laughter and stories of past trips. His next love was his girls - his cows. He always had them in top condition before they went to the plains and knew every beast in my father's herd. He also loved his horses and had well mannered horses. You could borrow his horse anytime and they would always be shod and in good condition. And there was no Mick Culhane without his dogs.

Mick loved a good time and attended every Cattlemen's Get-Together since they began and could be seen as the anchor man in the Tug-of-War competition for many years.

Mick was farewelled by many cattlemen and it was a moving sight to watch Tony Kirk lead the funeral procession riding Mick's favourite horse, and listening to the echoes of a cracking whip. He is sadly missed by his partner Edna Curren and children Merryn, Michael, Daniel and David (dec).

*This obituary for Mick was supplied by Sue Briggs*



# Voice of the Mountains

While the morning light streaks upon fast moving creeks,  
That flow from the land of the snow.  
Down the ridges we ride, with long swinging stride,  
Down the ridges and gullies we go;

And the cattle we hunt, they are moving in front,  
With a sound like the wind on the waves,  
As the beat and the beat of so many feet,  
Starts the echoes away from their caves.

As we look down the tracks past the cattlemen's shacks,  
The dogs sniff around on the ground;  
Some stragglers they got, after barking alot,  
Till the echoes have joined in the fray.

And the mountains around, those echoes rebound,  
The sound of the mob on its way.  
As we ride down the track, we sometimes look back  
To the land of the echoes around.

The mountain sides steep and the ranges so high,  
Ring an echoing song as the herd moves along,  
And from rockface and cavern, the echoes respond,  
As they did in the times long gone by.

Down the dim gorges I hear the streams falling,  
High up from the rivers that roam,  
And down the blu valleys they're crawling.  
Over rocks and over rapids you see the white foam.

From Nature's clear fountains, the voice of the mountains,  
Calls again to the mountain domain.  
There is natural song as the herd moves along,  
To the voice of the mountains, to an age-old refrain.

Voice of the mountains, in memory nigh,  
The voice of the mountains, it sounds in the fountains,  
It welcomes the stockmen, as the riders come by,  
From the highlands around, come the sounds of the mountains,  
Voices echoing, ringing, and calling us home.

*Don Treasure*



In tribute to the written contribution made  
by past president Jim Cummins we  
reproduce one of the very first reports  
he wrote for the MCAV as it was presented in *Voice of the Mountains* No. 2 (1973)

## HIGH PLAINS CATTLEMEN MISUNDERSTOOD IN THE PAST



By—  
JIM  
CUMMINS

Generally speaking, the stockmen of the mountains and their methods of management have, in past years, been misunderstood to a very large extent, not only by the urban dweller but also by some government department officers whose experience may have been in country where cattle graze, but whose primary interest was taken up by other matters. The unfortunate thing is that the viewpoint of almost everyone other than the cattlemen is commonly publicised without any question or refutation. Undoubtedly, most of the comment made over many years concerning grazing is open to question and I believe the reason for many of these comments going unquestioned is twofold -

Firstly, the average bush grazier of the past has had little formal schooling and does not feel equipped to take to task his more educated city cousin; and

Secondly, he is too busy minding his own business of trying to make a living to go on a crusading campaign.

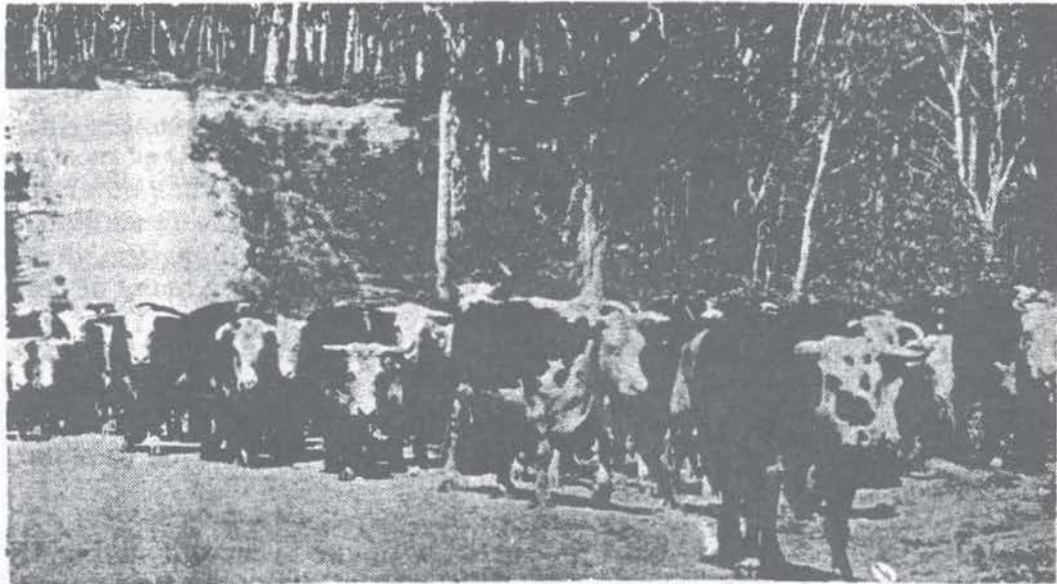
We all make mistakes, but I'm a great believer in the old saying "He who never made a mistake never made anything". Over the long years -

more than a century - of grazing practice, undoubtedly mistakes have been made. They have been made, on the one hand, by individuals and, in more recent years, by groups and perhaps large groups. Individuals have, more often than not, paid for their mistakes while those around them have gained from their experience. However, when a group makes a mistake the effect is magnified, and the larger the group the larger the cost.

I am convinced that any subject as close to nature as grazing needs many years of study and research before fair conclusions can be drawn, but all too often we hear of strong recommendations being made after four or five years - or less - of study have been made. An example of this may be seen around this State where our usually conservative Department of Agriculture conducted trials on improved grazing land over a few years to test the sheep carrying capacity. The result was to recommend stocking rates in excess of what was hitherto the considered optimum, and though I am sure the much drier years since then would cause officers of that department to amend or at least qualify their findings, unfortunately many people, encouraged by falling wool prices, eagerly adopted these rates to their own properties and dramatically increased the size of their flocks. With years of very low rainfall since this heavy stocking system has been introduced, the result has been that many farmers are now probably on the verge of bankruptcy. Had those departmental experiments been continuing today instead of concluding after a few years, we would be gaining the benefit of very much more worthwhile experiments.

There is this tendency right through the other fields also. It has been the experience of graziers in the high country - the leasehold country - that the findings of people who have done some research over a limited number of years have been adopted and their work taken as a reference of high standing, with the result that rather unfortunate conclusions have been drawn.

Mountain graziers are relatively few in number and their methods and



management problems are not fully understood even by their fellow graziers who depasture their livestock on improved or semi-improved and fenced land. It is one thing to round up your cattle in a paddock and quite another to muster your cattle which may have disappeared into the bush like so many needles in a haystack.

Probably many people when they hear the size of many of the areas under grazing licence - which could run into a good many thousands of acres sometimes - think these blocks are too large, but they probably don't realise that the average stocking is usually somewhere between six and ten beasts to the square mile. In the past few days we've gone over country which has some of the heaviest stocking rates in the whole alpine regions.

Visitors to the mountains on this occasion are viewing those areas with the heaviest concentration of grazing in all the alpine regions and under the driest conditions for 34 years at this time of the year, and perhaps the driest in living memory. I'm sure these visitors will be impressed by the persistence of wildflowers, herbage and pasture. It is very dry, but all those plants are still there - not nearly as showy as they were this time last year, but nevertheless they are there and have been there for years and years in spite of everything. These species are surviving where trees - which are certainly not affected by grazing - are dying. We didn't see so many trees dying in the areas we travelled yesterday, but when you go further east you can find plenty of places where it has been drier this year; the pasture conditions are rather similar but you find places where trees are dying out because there has not been enough water to sustain them.

On the places less favoured for grazing there are vast areas which do not carry even one beast to the square mile where all the primitive wilderness can be observed as it was centuries ago. We saw quite a bit of that in the last couple of days. As far as grazing and other commercial activities are concerned, most of these areas are likely to remain that way for ever. I agree that grazing can cause some changes in pasture composition but would not agree that this is detrimental. The profusion of white clover usually to be seen in the cattle country in the highlands, while an exotic species, is surely an attractive and welcome legume to assist the natural fertility build-up brought about by grazing. This has been mentioned by several speakers during the last couple of days and is a fact that can't be denied. This produces by the most natural means a more satisfactory land to live in, and all the while a pleasing balance with native flora is seen to be maintained.

One often hears a lament about the changes in environment, and I would agree that changes are likely to create problems that must be overcome, but big changes in the environment have been necessary to maintain a population of three million now living in Victoria compared with mere thousands this section of the continent was able to sustain 150 years ago.

Primary industry has had to cope with great change and enormous problems. I believe it has, and thanks to the perseverance of the individual it has coped marvellously well, and ways have been devised to deal with the great problems of the past.

With all this change and regular grazing of the bushland since the very first settlement of the white man, there still remains literally millions of acres of land on which cattle grazing is practically non-existent. Not even rabbits have invaded these areas in any significant numbers, yet all imaginable wild life - birds and animals and native plants continue to live there as they have in the past. When such areas exist I often wonder why there is so much clamour for areas to be gazetted as National Parks. They are undoubtedly there without any need for parliamentary decree. They've been that way for ever and ever: they'll never be any different.

Some people may suggest that timber interests will desecrate these places, but on a very great area of this type of land probably will never take place. Where it does - and I agree that a freshly logged area is a scene of almost unbelievable devastation - inevitably regeneration takes place, and in a few years, the inexperienced eye would not know timber had been cut out of the area. We passed a few places like that in the last few days, but if you go back there in five or six years' time, unless you really knew and were pretty observant, you'd pass by and wouldn't recognise they had been logged out.



Many opinions have been expressed on the question of burning, but we must face up to the practical realities of this dry land. Fires in the countryside are as much a part of the natural scene as are the marsupials and the eucalyptus trees. The earliest explorers of this country reported seeing smoke when they first sighted our coast line - you can check this by reading Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Bank's journals which are very interesting reading. They reported seeing smoke arising on the horizon and these fires must have been started by aborigines or by lightning. In either event, it is reasonable to assume that no attempts of any significance were made to extinguish them. This type of burning must have been going on for untold ages and plant life has adapted itself very well to this aspect of the natural environment, though the forested areas in higher al-

titudes having been developed in cooler atmosphere with generally higher rainfall and cloud conditions - factors that are normally less conducive to the spread of fire - are much more easily destroyed if a hot fire does eventuate.

Regeneration following a damaging fire is invariably rapid. An interesting point that botanists have made is that much of the seed of indigenous plants will lie on the ground for many years and will not germinate until a fire has passed over it. That is a simple observation that every bushman knows is true. In the alpine ash country, especially, it is very quickly regenerated. Last night we had a most interesting slide session with Athol Hodgson who made these points in a much more able manner than I can.

The cattlemen's part in this natural phenomenon has generally been misunderstood. During much of the past fifty years there has been a conflict of opinion between the run holders and officialdom who, during that time, began to take a more active interest in the mountains. The lighting of fires was outlawed. Very little official credence was given to the fact that a fire could start from a lightning strike. Virtually all fires were blamed on the cattlemen. Graziers were forced to discontinue their long held practice of burning, and in the course of this time very severe lessons were learnt. Departmental people - the Forests Commission in particular - are alive to this; they have learned a lot in the last forty years.

A great deal of damage was done in early 1939 when we had those disastrous fires. Only the week before last a lot of you may have read in *The Age* "The Year Victoria Caught Fire" which listed quite a lot of the disasters and tragedies that occurred. It quoted the Royal Commission and Judge Stretton's report following the Commission over which he presided. I didn't have the opportunity to get Judge Stretton's report and study it or get a copy of his findings; I have just taken it from *The Age*, but I remember at the time that journalists and arm-chair critics made a lot out of his report and all of them put the cattlemen in a very poor light. A lot of people who write leading articles on the environment in the metropolitan dailies should take a bit of time and follow an expedition such as this; they would learn a little more and be a bit better versed in what they are trying to put across. Unfortunately, they don't seem to do that but take the Stretton Report and the works of people who have done a year or two of study and write something up from that.

The Stretton report listed three things as the cause of fire and in this order -

- 1 Settlers burning off to clear land or, ironically, for their own protection.
- 2 Graziers burning off to promote grass growth.
- 3 Miners and prospectors clearing bush.

These were the worst offenders the Commission found, for they lit fires deliberately and did not supervise them properly; but sportsmen, campers, tourists, forest workers and road workers all added their own contribution.

It was a very searching enquiry, yet if there was any reference to lightning it was very little - it certainly didn't rate a mention in the

Age article - and I know, at the time, it was not considered a reasonable factor. The graziers, as I said before, were put in a very poor light. Reporters wrote all sorts of things about them; even the radio script writers wrote plays where the graziers were the big bad beasts of the piece and so on. All this has not helped our cause one bit and it still lives on to this day.

Lightning, as we who live amongst the bush in the country areas know, is a very real cause of these fires and in the last month (over in the eastern area anyway) I think the officers of the Country Fire Authority and the Forests Commission would agree with me, that a major proportion of the fires - perhaps 90% in our area anyway - have been lightning strikes and there have been quite a lot of them. There's a very big difference today from the situation thirty odd years ago, with the communications, access roads and equipment that is available to deal with these outbreaks.



There's another factor - the wind. Recently, when quite a few fire were going in the east and they were a big worry to all concerned, Nature treated the situation rather more kindly than it could have done, in that the wind kept changing. It would be a north wind in the day then it would turn around to a good stiff southerly in the evening. But with all the technology and equipment that was available, if the wind had kept blowing solidly from the north and kept hot day and night we might well have had another situation similar to 1939 this year. We are not out of the wood yet, with all the technology and know-how that is available today.

I feel that all means of fire control, not only mechanical ones, must be closely looked at. That is where we come into it, not that grazing is the answer to everything but it is a significant help. Today there is more understanding, in official circles, of the graziers' viewpoint.

As many years of dry litter build up, there are large areas of land that have not been devastated by fire or successfully fuel reduced. The only practical way to safeguard the commercially valuable forests and grazing interests, and also to preserve the bushland as it once was, is to burn as much litter as possible in the more temper-



ate and milder months of the year. If a deep accumulation of dry grass, sticks and bark catches fire in adverse conditions during the hot summer, the heat generated will ignite the eucalypts in the leaves above and very great damage is caused. When a conflagration like this takes place, the updraft of heated air takes with it smouldering bark and leaves which commonly light fires, often miles away, downwind from the original fire, thus multiplying the devastation.

The run holder suffers very severely from this sort of fire as much of the best land available to him is ruined for grazing for many years by the almost impenetrable regrowth of scrub and young trees. A light fire causes pasture and regrowth to be temporarily more palatable to livestock, but its greatest benefit lies in the prevention of an excessively hot and damaging fire. Graziers are as fire conscientious as anyone, not only because they value their livestock and don't want them incinerated but because they don't want their good grazing land ruined, which it is if the fire is too hot.

I am not very familiar with the high plains country, like the Bogong High Plains. It was very interesting to travel through there yesterday and observe the scrub growth and the grass balance. But it does appear to me that, there again, low intensity burning would be more helpful than harmful, because I am sure that scrubby growth is much more of a fire hazard. When the scrub burns there are only a few root systems in every square yard and it takes a long time for that to recover and regenerate, whereas if there is a greater grass content in the area - and I don't see why a reasonable balance could not be maintained - in the event of it burning (and some day it must surely do that because lightning is a far greater force in the whole question of burning than people seem to take notice of) - it has a multitude of root systems in every square yard which will shoot up perhaps even before it rains and you have cover immediately, whereas the regeneration of scrub takes much longer and there's much more bare ground to erode if sudden heavy rain follows.

In areas of land lightly timbered with snowgum, sallee wood trees

and small forest growth, grass usually grows prolifically between the trees and forms some of the best grazing. The trimming of pasture by livestock and the development of white clover, not only makes a very attractive park-like scene but practically removes the need for preventative burning in those places. Without the grazing, vast areas of over-grown dry grass, tussocks and bracken, would present an unlovely and formidable fire hazard. A reasonable analogy may be drawn between the alternatives of this situation and the many unkempt cemetery allotments one sees around the countryside with their ungrazed natural vegetation compared with the well-kept farms and gardens nearby.

For those interested in the original unchanged wilderness, there will always be, as I have pointed out, interspersed with this grazing land, great tracts of land which will remain a wonderful reserve of unchanged wildlife at its primitive best. Those of you who travelled through the mountains in the last couple of days could see - especially in the high spots - a vast area of steep and rugged country where cattle don't graze. It's just too difficult to manage them there and it's too sour and unpalatable. They don't particularly like it. But it is the home of endless wildlife. Many species commonly thought to be extinct are undoubtedly still living there and there is a vast area of that type of land. It is just the same as it has always been. We can have the best of both worlds without the need for a change in the administration of land use. I don't see why there should be a public outcry for any great change.

Although the terms of reference do not include the subject, I feel this paper would not be complete without some reference to water catchments. Again, the practice of grazing has been the subject of much malignment by people who have not studied the subject sufficiently. There is plenty of land erosion to be seen when one travels around Victoria but it is mostly on the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, where a number of factors are responsible for its development. The major one is the almost uncontrollable rabbit population became very bare especially in dry times. Gullies started and erosion started and that is where the dams are being filled from, not from the high country.

One sees nothing like this occurring on the Victorian mountain grazing runs. The water flows as clearly after a storm as it has ever done, in all the places I know. Any contribution by cattle to the erosion is infinitesimal compared with the engineering efforts of man and his machines. It is so small, I maintain, that from a practical standpoint it does not exist, at least in the places with which I am familiar.

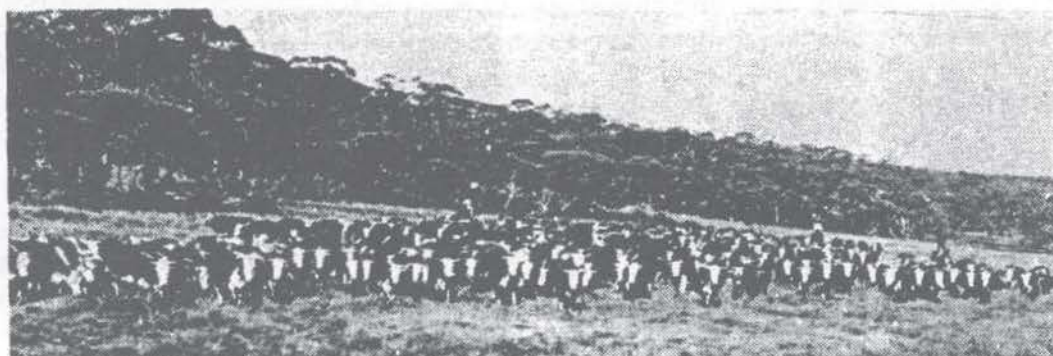
Much has been made of the damage to moss beds. There are endless numbers of them to be seen flourishing no less than they ever about 25-odd years ago before myxomycosis. Many of the people here can remember what it was like. Rabbits were beyond control in most places and added very much to the erosion problem because people still had to live and they were trying to carry stock along with rabbits. Much of the land was overstocked as a result of this and the land



did, in spite of heavy concentrations of cattle in some places. They are unpalatable to livestock and cattle don't like them because of their boggy nature. In a very dry summer, if a fire starts in dehydrated branches of this plant, a considerable amount can be burnt. Fortunately this is a combination of circumstances which does not arise frequently though the climate is right for it at the moment and if a fire got going under some of these high tops and got out of control, the moss is dry enough to burn. But in 19 years out of 20 it is very hard to burn because of its greater moisture content.

When cattle make tracks to water they invariably do so on the best grade available and would not even contemplate going straight up or down hill if there is any possible alternative - which is more than can be said for many of the road builders who, in ten years, have probably caused infinitely more erosion than almost one and a half centuries of grazing. The wheels of man's motor vehicles leave a continuous ready made water course, while the tracks of animals are like miniature dams and tend to conserve the water.

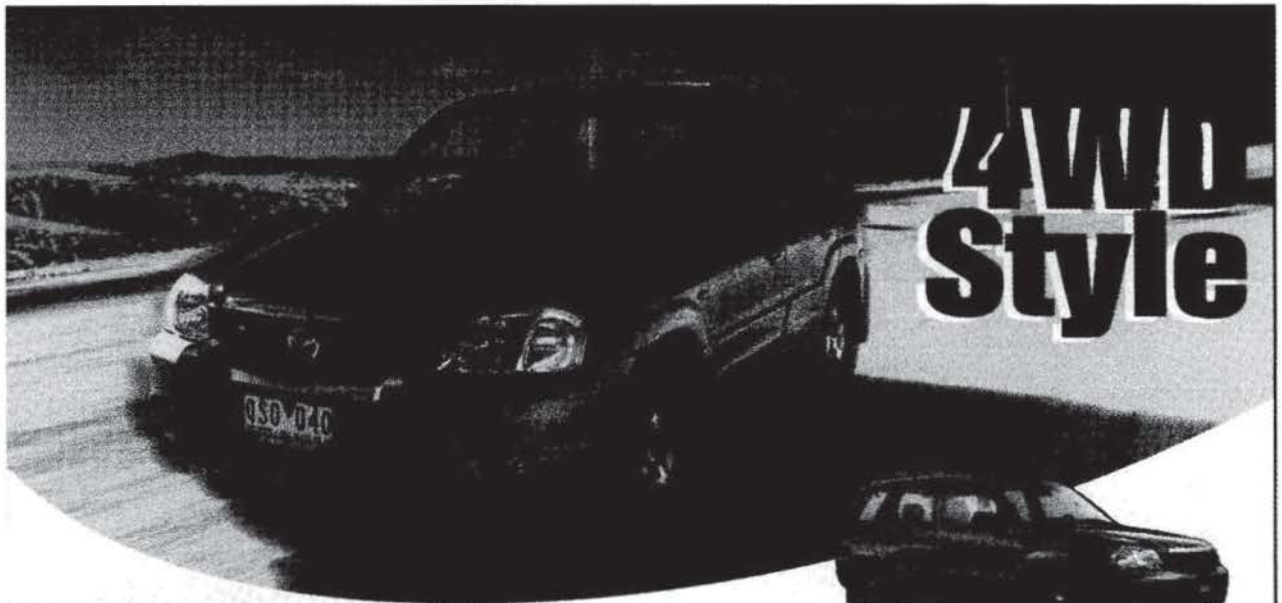
To conclude this paper, I would urge two things. One, that any changes should be made slowly and that they should be long and thoroughly examined before they are made. All too often they are made in undue haste resulting in wrong decisions. The second is that, as far as livestock management is concerned, it should remain in the hands of those who are best equipped and capable of managing it. The vast majority of run holders have not made great fortunes from bush grazing; they are very responsible people with long background of experience. From a national point of view they are by far



the most qualified to manage the varying complexities of each grazing allotment.

I believe it has been very satisfactorily demonstrated during this tour that cattle grazing is a worthwhile aid to fire control. In the broad view it is an aid to the ecology and no detriment to the native flora and fauna. Their presence makes the way easier for any person to enjoy the existence of the latter two especially if he is prepared to get close enough to nature to travel on foot or on horseback.

Lastly, but not least, cattle grazing on the Crown Lands of Victoria has in the past been a valuable contribution to the nation's food store and the export industry. With a rising population, by the end of this century it will be much more valuable. Let us hope it is then still being managed by people who, persevering for generations through difficulties and discomfort, have made it their way of life.



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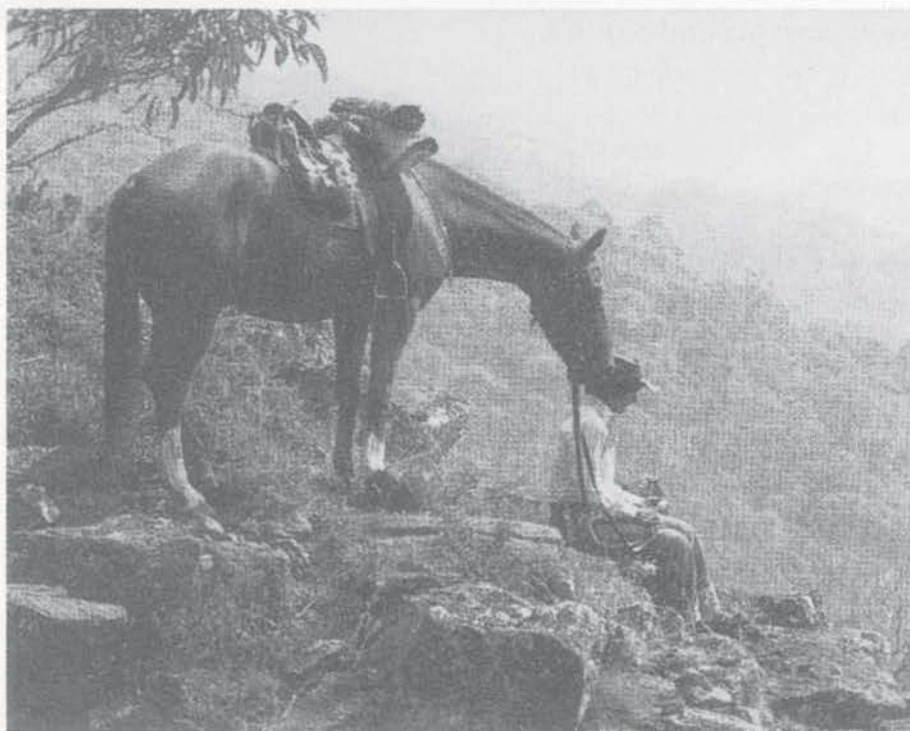
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# Rose Valley and Legg's Flat

*Barbara Ryan*

In 1903 Margaret Jane Harris married Joseph Lorenzo Nella, a young Italian immigrant who had worked his way across Australia's goldfields from Kalgoorlie to Rutherglen.

The newlyweds settled as pioneers on the property at Rose River now known as Rose Valley, but that was not the name by which early settlers knew the farm. Joe's memories of his former homeland lingered and he named his property 'Mount Vesuvio'.

The young couple faced the hardships with optimism and together began clearing the scrub from their land. A small dwelling was constructed, water was carted from the creek in a barrel and cooking was done in a camp oven over an open fire.

Joseph leased grazing land along the Dandongadale River, on Mount Cobbler and as far afield as Pineapple Flat on the King River. They fought a constant battle with wild dogs which sometimes killed as many as twenty sheep in a night.

The railway which ended at Whitfield, thirteen

miles from the farm, was their lifeline. Homemade butter, stamped with the family name, was taken by horse and gig over the rough road and sent by rail to the Rutherglen goldfields. Cattle were walked in and loaded onto the train for transport to market. When wool was taken by wagon to the railway, essential provisions were carried in on the return journey.

Three sons and two daughters were born, and the house extended to accommodate them. Additions to the family did not prevent Margaret from working along side her husband. The baby was made comfortable in a kerosene box which was placed in the shade, while the couple worked. When the children grew up they rode out, sometimes through flooded creeks, to attend functions in the King Valley, carrying their 'best' clothes, and dressed at the home of friends.

The total acreage of the property increased as Jack's block, Todd's block and Margaret's block were added to the original holding. Later one hundred acres were purchased at King Valley for use as a holding and fattening property for cattle.



Doing it the hard way - Joseph and Margaret Nella branding a calf.

Sadly, two sons, little Joe and Richard (Todd), died while the family lived at Mount Vesuvio, and the two daughters married and moved away. When Jack married he bought his wife Myrtle to live on the farm in a newly constructed house, built of timber milled from their land.

Within a few years an accident at the local garage claimed the life of Jack, and after battling for 37 years to create their beloved Mount Verusvio, his elderly parents sold the property and retired to King Valley.

During their sixteen years of occupation, Mr Arch McKinnon and family constructed a new dairy and continued with milking and grazing.

The owner for the next five years was Mr Alan Dyason who employed managers to oversee his building and farming operations. A small manager's house and a woolshed were constructed while the main house was extensively renovated.

By this time the name of the property had been changed to 'Rose Valley.'

Because of the political climate in 1964, the Hoskins family decided that there was no future for

them in Rhodesia. The British family had moved to Rhodesia twenty years previously and farmed on very fertile soil one hundred miles north of Salisbury. Their produce included tobacco, maize, cattle, sheep and pigs. Thirty to forty native Africans worked on the farm, and as they lived in extended family groups, the property supported up to five hundred people living on site.

The three sons were the first to leave. Paul went to New Zealand and in early 1967 Rick and Hugh arrived in Australia. During their first months in Australia the brothers worked at Echuca and then in Queensland where the climate was similar to that of Rhodesia. Later that year Mr and Mrs Hoskins arrived in Australia and in December the family was reunited on their newly purchased property, 'Rose Valley'.

It was not possible to sell the Rhodesian farm and have the capital transferred to Australia, so the only alternative was taken - lease the farm and transfer the rent until the decreasing value of the Rhodesian dollar eventually ended this source of income.

Undaunted, the family began life in their new country by dairying, raising pigs and grazing cattle and sheep.

During their 34 years of ownership, the Hoskins have cleared approximately six hundred acres of undulating country along the Rose River and added an adjoining block of five hundred acres to the farm. It now comprises an area of three thousand acres with almost half still in its original timbered state. However, progress has had little effect on the wild dog population which is still a problem in the district.

Rick, Hugh and his wife Betty, together with their children when they come home, are now the family at 'Rose Valley', while Paul and his mother live at Oxley, near Wangaratta. Mr Richard Hoskins died in 1986.

Many years ago, a store keeper selected a plot along the Rose River and planted a crop of tobacco, but frosts in the area are severe, and the crop is not mature. The area has since been incorporated into 'Rose Valley', but still bears his name - Legg.

It is Legg's Flat where the 1998 and 2002 Mountain Cattlemen's Get Togethers have been held.

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# Water

*If city folk keep using water  
to wash down the path and the car,  
to argue that country folk oughter  
use less, is a thought quite bizarre.*

*'Cos if those folk still want their ration  
of vegies and fruit, meat and wine,  
they'll just have to start a new fashion —  
at water abuse draw the line!*

*How can they pour gold down the gutter?  
Because gold it is to the land,  
and if they still want milk and butter,  
they'd better some things understand.*

*The sheep and the hens and the pasture  
must all drink if they're to survive.  
so, just stop - consider the future  
and those who will still be alive.*

*Sure, it's nice to have green lawns and flowers  
and pools, that need much water too  
and a hose that spouts water for hours,  
whenever it's wanted by you.*

*But consider wide, brown barren landscapes,  
no animal, vegie or vine,  
no fruit trees, no bushes and no grapes  
and no dinner without any wine!*

*So, every time you're using water,  
just ask yourself if it's a "must",  
and cut down your use by a quarter,  
lest all farmland turns to dust.*

Dorothy B. Watt

# Hut Photograph Folio

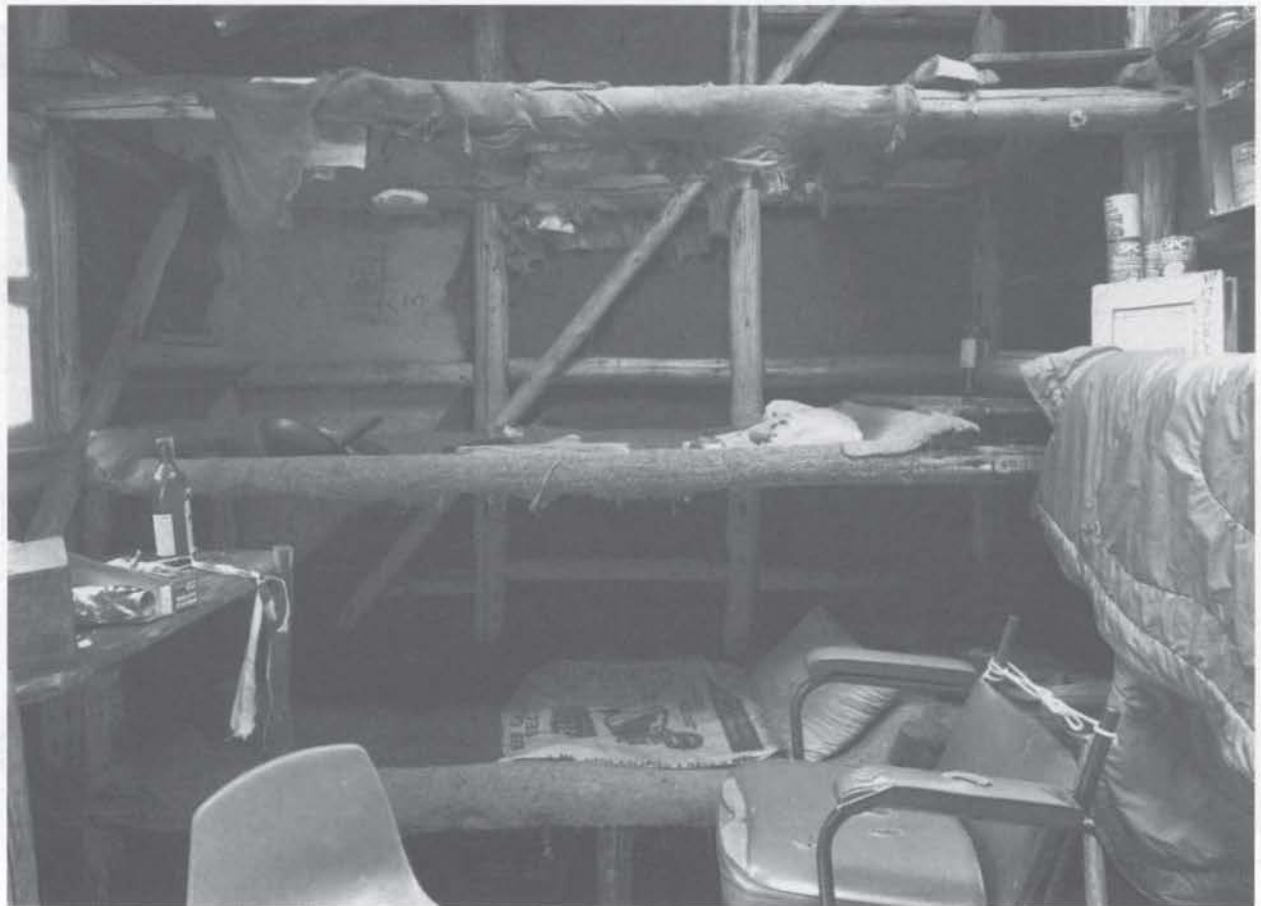
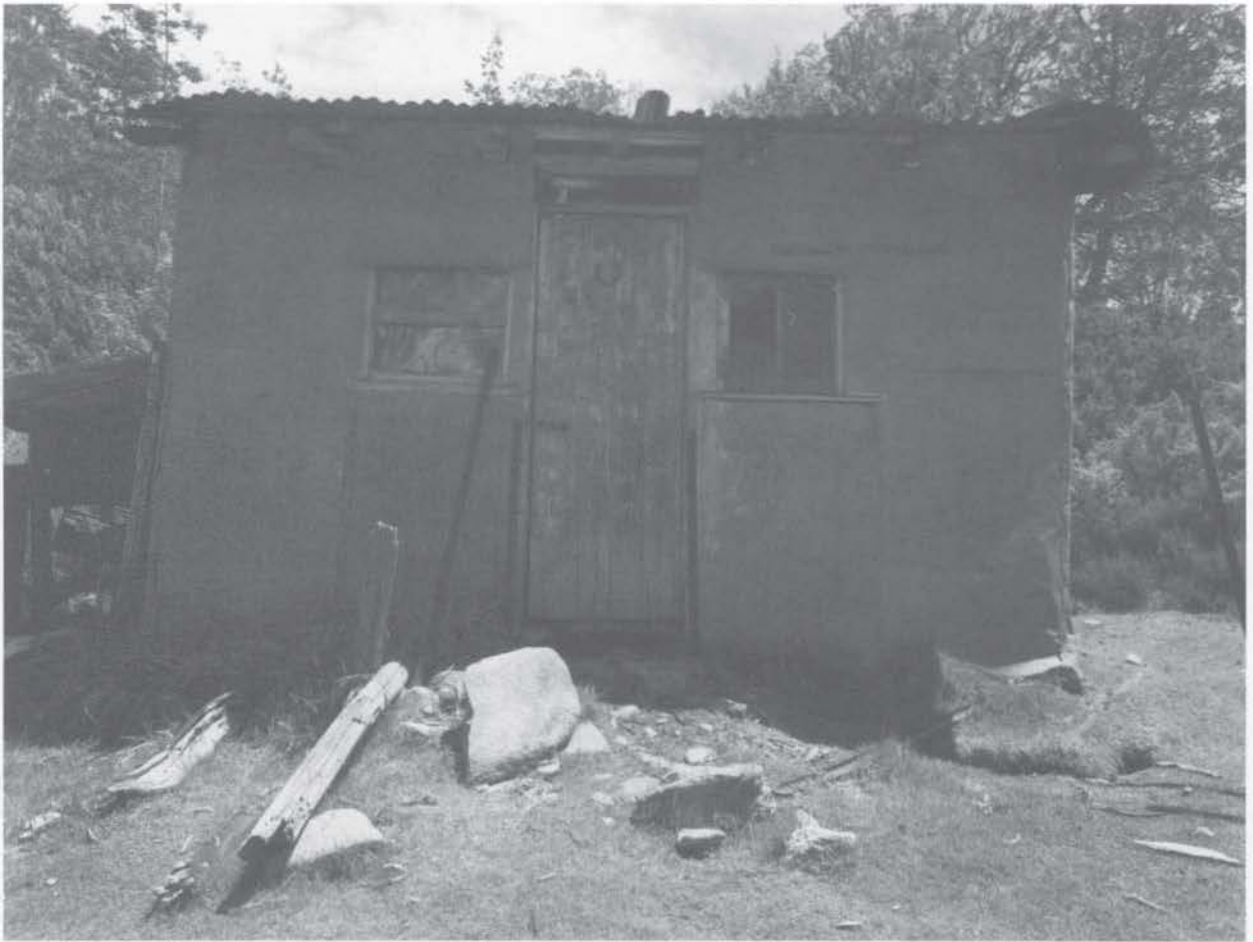
David Oldfield continues his challenge to photograph all the huts of the high country and has again provided us with another batch of excellent photographs for publication in *Voice* and we thank him once again.

This year he have NBW Hut on the Baw Baw Plateau.

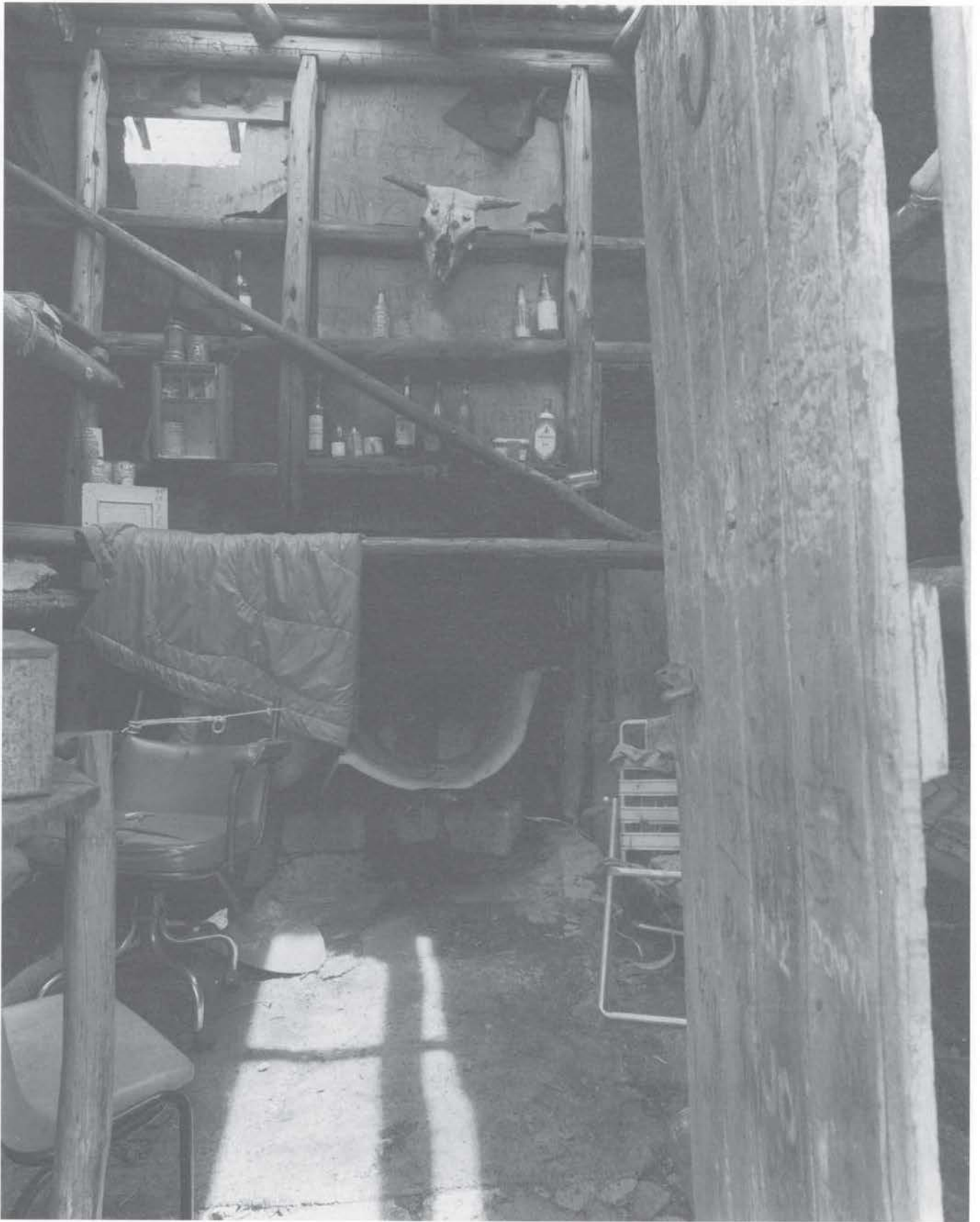
To quote David ... *This year's hut in NBW, alleged to stand for No Bloody Woman, which probably tells you something about the people who built the hut. It's on the side of Mount Erica and although the square dot marking it's position is still on the map (if you know where to look) the name has gone AWOL on the latest maps.*

*It really is as small as the photographs make it look to be, in fact it's probably smaller, the distance between the front and back walls is all taken up with the log pole bunks which have seen better days.....*



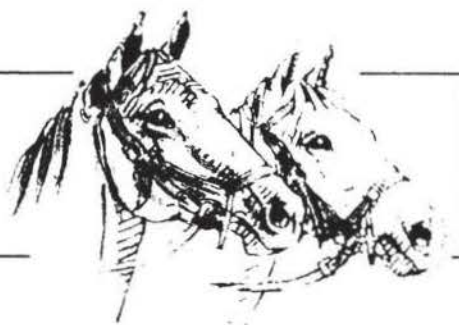








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# Current Issues and Arguments

MCAV fears that Parks Victoria will try to prevent three licensees returning cattle to the Caledonia area during the 2001/2002 grazing season. Parks Victoria is continuing to make an issue of what it refers to as "possible damage by cattle" in the Caledonia area which was burned by fire in 1998, although cattle have not grazed the area since that time. We believe the vegetation in the area has now recovered sufficiently to allow cattle to return to the licensed areas. However, Parks Victoria is now turning the emphasis onto "risk of damage" to bogs burned in the fire. Cattlemen say that there is now no greater risk to the bogs than before the 1998 fire and there is a total lack of evidence to suggest otherwise. There is no research to back Parks Victoria's concern. The only research into bogs after fire has been near Mt Buffalo, an area withdrawn from grazing for over 20 years.

Cattlemen say that there are greater risks to bogs from causes other than cattle. Nevertheless Parks Victoria have engaged the services of a researcher to report on the bogs. This man has no qualifications in the field, and is researching by observation only. Already he has concluded that there is danger to the bogs by 'trampling by cattle'.

Of the seven licensees affected by the 1998 fire, four have taken a financial assistance package from Parks Victoria which means that they will not graze cattle on their licence areas until after 2005 which is the end of the current licence period. Three licensees did not accept the package and will wish to graze their cattle on their licence areas this summer. Parks Victoria wrote to each of these licensees on 8th December 1999 stating amongst other conditions, that for grazing to return there would have to be "agreement to adequate fencing of significant bog and wetland areas". In its submission to the Independent Panel in February 2000, Parks Victoria stated:

"18. Parks Victoria recognises the licence entitlements of the licensees to graze in the Park. This is demonstrated by the fact that since the fire Parks Victoria has invested \$90,000 in fencing of the alpine bog communities in consultation with licensees.....The investment in fencing confirms that Parks Victoria did not make the direction on the basis of an intention to exclude grazing for the remainder of the licence period, but rather with a view to allowing grazing to return once the condition

of the vegetation has recovered to an acceptable level".

Much of the fencing already done is in areas where licensees have accepted the assistance package and so will not be grazed until after 2005. MCAV believes that some of this existing fencing could be moved to areas on the remaining licence areas at no cost to Parks Victoria. This will avoid increasing the amount of fencing in the Park and will protect areas which Parks Victoria claims are at risk of damage by cattle, although MCAV says that this claim has never been proved.

The Independent Panel noted that:

"In one sense the parties missed the opportunity in late 1999 to put some stock in the National Park so that grazing behaviour and consequences could be observed".

The licensees have repeatedly offered to return 70% licence allocation to fulfil this suggestion of the panel but Parks Victoria remain intransigent.

Mountain cattlemen have growing concerns as they observe the bad management practices of Parks Victoria in respect to the National Park. Before Easter 2001 Parks Victoria bulldozed the Dingo Hill Track, a favorite 4WD track for recreationists. The resulting erosion and siltation of streams will need to be carefully managed. This one single act of gross mismanagement has modified the environment significantly.

Another example of lack of management is the sealing off of the Caledonia Track to prevent access to the headwaters of the Caledonia River. This track was in excellent condition. The 1998 fire has caused serious erosion in the Caledonia River headwaters, which it may not be possible to repair.

The potential threat is further problems downstream. Rather than sealing the area off, Parks Victoria should have undertaken works to minimise erosion, and replanting of native vegetation should also have been done here.

Despite provision for fuel reduction burning in some areas of the Alpine Park set out in the Management Plans, it is doubtful that Parks Victoria has ever carried out any this work satisfactorily.

There needs to be a complete re-evaluation of fuel reduction burning, and strong guidelines for carrying out the procedure. Proper and careful fuel reduction cool burning, coupled with well managed

grazing, are the only solutions to the prevention of wildfire in the Alpine National Park.

There are growing concerns by landholders adjoining land administered by Parks Victoria in regard to the spread of weeds, and more particularly the attacks on livestock from wild dogs. A Corryong farmer recently won a case in the Supreme Court of Victoria where he sued the Department for compensation over the wild dog issue. It is the absolute responsibility of Parks Victoria to deal with pest animals and plants. However Parks are content to let the weeds and feral animals take over while they spend their energy harrasing the cattlemen who have a legal right to graze their cattle on the traditional high country runs.

Mountain cattlemen have undertaken weed spraying exercises each summer on tracks and roads leading to the Alpine Park. Some of the chemical is obtained from the local DNRE, and the actual spraying has been done by cattlemen in their own time. This community effort has never been recognised or even commented on by Parks Victoria. Cattlemen are making an effort to keep weeds out of the Alpine Park while at the same time Parks Victoria is failing to correctly manage it.

The Minister for Environment and Conservation convened a meeting of the Alpine Advisory Committee (A.A.C.) on 30 November 2000, to consider and recommend on five grazing licence transfers, and to discuss National Competition Policy. One of the grazing licence transfers was from G. Spaul to The Friends of Wongungarra Trust. The A.A.C. recommended to the Minister that the grazing licence be transferred. The Minister did not act on this recommendation, nor did she transfer the other four traditional family transfers. Enquiries made to the Minister's Department are met with comments such as:

- “Parks Victoria needs to see how the licence will work on the ground”
- “There are only seven head of cattle involved.”
- “Parks Victoria needs to make a report to the Minister”
- “The licensee is not a member of a traditional mountain cattleman family”

MCAV believes that the Minister was looking for a way to enable her to withhold transfer of these licences. The Government has already knocked out four licences by offering financial incentives to remove grazing from licensed areas affected by the Caledonia

fire for the remainder of the licence period (2005). The legislation allows for persons other than mountain cattlemen families to operate grazing licences. Indeed it would seem to be against National Competition Policy to withhold a licence because a person is not a member of a mountain cattleman family. It is these underhanded methods of stalling and avoiding issues which are starting to worry country Victorians. Rural communities which were promised a caring and listening Government are finding out that those promises were hollow indeed.

Finally the Minister did transfer the final licence recommended for transfer by the A.A.C. in November 2000, but only after a strenuous campaign by MCAV with the assistance of the press and several politicians asking questions in the Parliament, and making personal representations to the Minister.

Parks Victoria is still conducting vegetation surveys in the area burned by the Caledonia fire. These surveys touted as 'scientific methods' are extremely doubtful and dangerous. For example the method of survey tends to change and alter each year. None of the studies has been repeated, since different sites are surveyed each year. Can we trust the people who are carrying out the measurements of the survey? Why, for example following this years survey was the percentage of bare ground significantly higher than the previous year? No cattle have been allowed on these areas since the fire in 1998. The Parks Victoria scientist agreed that rabbits could have made a contribution in one area. Parks Victoria's responsibility is to get rid of vermin like rabbits, so not only is Parks failing in its management responsibilities, but the flow-on effect on its vegetation surveys are significant, and not related to cattle grazing.

It is ALP policy to remove cattle grazing from the Alpine National Park. We believe that this Policy is outdated and fails to recognise the heritage and pioneering traditions of the Mountain cattlemen.

We would like to have an opportunity to discuss this matter with the Minister and other members of the Government. Mountain cattlemen's heritage is treasured by a great many Australians and has been recently celebrated at the opening of the Olympic Games in Sydney, and the Our Nation on Parade celebrations of centenary of Federation in Melbourne. It might also be noted that recently, ex-President Mr Bill Clinton was presented with a Dryzabone coat, a distinctive and recognisable part of the image of mountain cattlemen.

# An Old Dog's Advice

Just wag your tail, it always prevails,  
And when he goes crook, act like a sook.  
And when he points the finger, head down  
And give him a worried frown.

And when he's messing about  
Start barking, he may take you out.  
And when you're in strife,  
Run to the wife.

And give out a yowl so everybody can hear,  
And act in fear.  
Don't push your luck, you may come unstuck.

And when the mad bull's around  
Make sure he's safe and sound.  
And give the alarm around the farm.  
And let everybody know that somebody's about,

And don't stop till he lets out a shout to cut it out.  
And remember a lick does the trick.

Treat the stock horses with respect,  
Otherwise you'll end up on the deck.  
When working cattle work in pairs,  
Saves a lot of trouble  
When you work as a double.

I am an old dog now and you're a young pup  
And think you're pretty smart.  
Listen to what I have to say,  
And hopefully you'll get a good start.  
So have a good day and I'll be on my way.



So Dad sauntered away  
And I've followed his advice since that day.  
And so Boomer, my boy, just follow behind  
And heed this advice and it will keep you out of  
Trouble and strife,  
Now give us a break, for goodness sake, tonight.

*Greg Hocking*

# Delivering the Goods

## Grinters Transport

*Simon Turner*

In past years the MCAV has been blessed with strong 'promotional partnerships' amongst the business community. Mazda and QBE Insurance to name just two and this year we are pleased that Grinters Transport with their tautliner are running around the countryside spreading the profile of the mountain cattlemen. Grinters have been associated with the Omeo district for many years and it is only appropriate that we look at the development of this company.

William (Bill) Grinter was a grocer by trade and arrived at Swifts Creek in November 1929 with his wife and five children. He had previously been employed at Craig's Grocers in Nathalia when he heard that a position with Sandy's Store's would soon be available. While waiting to start with Sandy's Stores, Bill worked for Arthur Boucher, a road contractor, on Fosters Hill, that stretch of the Benambra Road between the Omeo Highway and

McMillans Lookout. He got the job if he could work with Arthur in 100 degree heat, Arthur fainted. In 1930 he started with Sandy's Stores, delivering goods between their stores at Swifts Creek, Omeo, Glen Wills and their customers in between. His vehicle was a cut down Chev ute with the main cargo being kerosene, chaff and groceries for the sustenance gangs working in the area.

William Grinter married Daisy Black of Yalca, north of Nathalia on 15 April 1931.

While on one of these many trips Bill was lucky to escape with his life. In 1934 when crossing Black Camp Creek between Omeo and the Tongio Gap, the bridge collapsed, sending Bill and the truck into the water upside down. Although the bridge was severely damaged the truck was soon repaired and Bill was under way again.

In 1936 Sandy's Stores, with Bill now as their general manager, had a contract to supply the timber



for McKillops bridge over the Snowy River. Bill collected the long timber lengths from Collins saw mill on Mt Elizabeth (between Tambo Crossing and Buchan). Because of the nature of the road from Wulgulmerang to the bridge site (narrow and winding), the longer lengths were loaded forward past the cabin doors leaving entry restricted to the windows. When the load was safely delivered then began the arduous task of reversing the truck six miles back to an area where he could turn around.

During the war years the trucks were fitted with gas producers making the four hour trip to the rail head, a six hour journey. On a return trip three miles out of Bairnsdale and relying on the gas producer, Bill, driving his D40 International semi with eight ton onboard, was passed by Dinny MacNamara driving a horse and dray. The gas producers saved on petrol but they were difficult to operate and were extremely dangerous to use, especially on hot summer days when the chances of starting a fire were very real.

In 1946 Bill saw the demand for a transport company and started Grinters Transport with a KS7 International truck that he had purchased for £1200.

It was fitted with the latest 28 foot McGrath semi trailer complete with stock crate, bringing the total purchase price to £1,778.

After the death of Doc Sandy the following year, Bill purchased Sandy's Transport and additional vehicles - an International KS5 fitted with a 16 foot tray and a D40 International fitted with a 15 foot tray were added to the fleet.

While travelling up and down the Omeo/Tambo Valley road Bill and his drivers had regular contact with the contract drovers shifting stock down to the rail head after the Mountain Sales. When these drovers were returning for the next mob, Grinters Transport would freight their entire outfit including horses, dogs and jinker back up the Valley "freight free". Subsequently there were no delays getting through the mobs.

Bill was highly respected by every one who made his acquaintance. He always made a point of being on time, and given the distances and the road conditions of the time, this in itself is a remarkable achievement.

Bill's eldest son, Ronald, joined his father in 1949 followed by his second son, Thomas, in 1953.







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From this point the business grew to meet the demands of farmers and the local saw mills. General supplies were bought in and the local produce (timber, wool and livestock) were transported out of the district. Grinters Transport were also required locally to shift stock from one property to another. This service increased as the roads improved saving farmers time. A two day driving trip between properties could now be completed in a matter of hours.

Ron recalls the magnificent sight of Faithfull's cows and calves being mustered at Buckety Plain, drafted, and the calves being loaded for him to take down to the Omeo Calf Sale. He also remembers that Faithfulls only drank 'large' cans of beer.

Sadly William snr. passed away on 13 September 1990 and Daisy passed away on the 22 January 1991.

Doolans Transport Omeo was purchased in 1973 and then A. Taylor and Co. of Ensay, operated by G. Miles, was purchased in 1976.

Of the many drivers employed over the years, Alan Somerville, George Sykes and Ken Hayward were in a class of their own on the narrow winding roads. At the peak of operation (before the rural recession) 15 trucks were in operation.

Grinters Transport is now operating with the third generation of the family with Ron's son William and Tom's son Craig, both actively involved in the business.



# To Messmate

It's an unforgiving rawboned land of slab, deep cut and rough,  
Where granite spike and lichen and gnarrly snowgum blend  
And shrivel 'gainst the winter winds that ice the Bluff and cleanse  
The last remains of Messmate, my old friend.

The gamest grey and he gave his all in the mountain race or brumby run;  
He'd a long gaunt stance, but the kindest eye;  
He'd stay to the last or the work was done.

Pushing cattle about or pressing a mob  
Up the Howqua's course to the summer grass  
He was quick to the touch of his master's spur  
And flat out he'd block the beast that would pass.

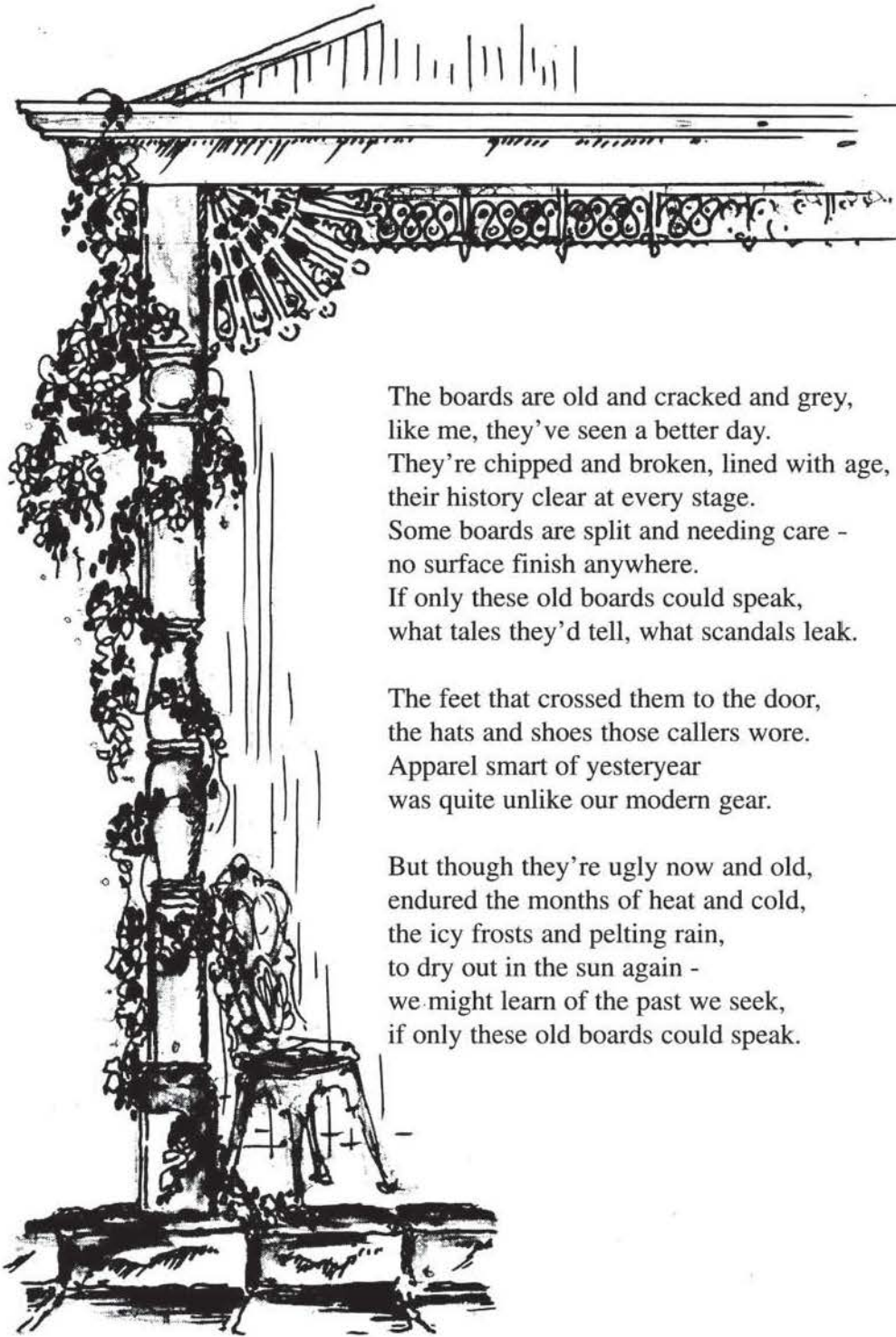
It was a game that he played in the life that he loved;  
He'd rather be ridden than free;  
Round the campfires at night he'd come for a rub  
To share the bush life of the High Country.

Here's a glass to you friend, may your spirit return  
To Howitt, the Bluff and High Plains  
Your paddock the wind that sighs in the trees  
And the messmate holds sacred your name.

*Stephanie Speakman*

Chris Stoney bred Messmate out of his famous bushracing mare, Philly, by Valdero (I believe). The pair won the Great Mountain Race, and, as a young horse, Messmate, sired a few good horses including Dean Bachman's brumby runner, Ernie (Candelbark). Although Messmate died young in 1998, his full sister, Snowgum, belongs to Chris and hopefully will continue the successful bloodline.

# My Old Verandah



The boards are old and cracked and grey,  
like me, they've seen a better day.  
They're chipped and broken, lined with age,  
their history clear at every stage.  
Some boards are split and needing care -  
no surface finish anywhere.  
If only these old boards could speak,  
what tales they'd tell, what scandals leak.

The feet that crossed them to the door,  
the hats and shoes those callers wore.  
Apparel smart of yesteryear  
was quite unlike our modern gear.

But though they're ugly now and old,  
endured the months of heat and cold,  
the icy frosts and pelting rain,  
to dry out in the sun again -  
we might learn of the past we seek,  
if only these old boards could speak.

*Dorothy B. Watt*

# Mountain Cattlemen on Parade

The Mountain Cattlemen made a nostalgic return to the streets of Melbourne on Sunday 6 May 2001 and took part in the Centenary of Federation celebration - Our Nation on Parade.

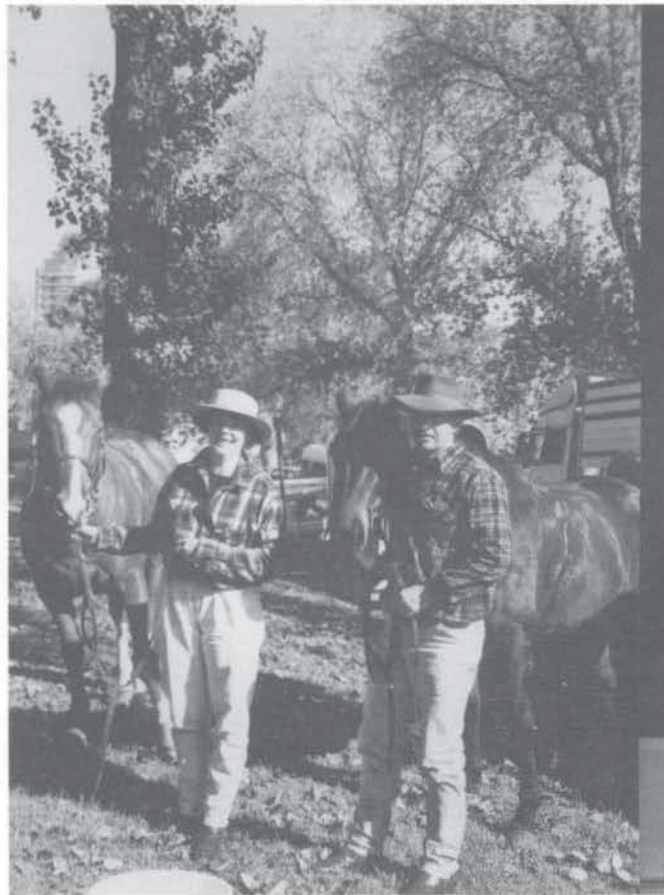
Not since the cattlemen's celebrated protest ride in Melbourne in 1984 had the streets of the city echoed to the beat of horses hooves, the jingle of spurs and the ring of stockwhips. Stockmen of the high country were invited to Melbourne to recreate an historic moment in 1901, when 205 stockmen cantered up Spring Street in the parade preceding the opening of the first Parliament of Federation.

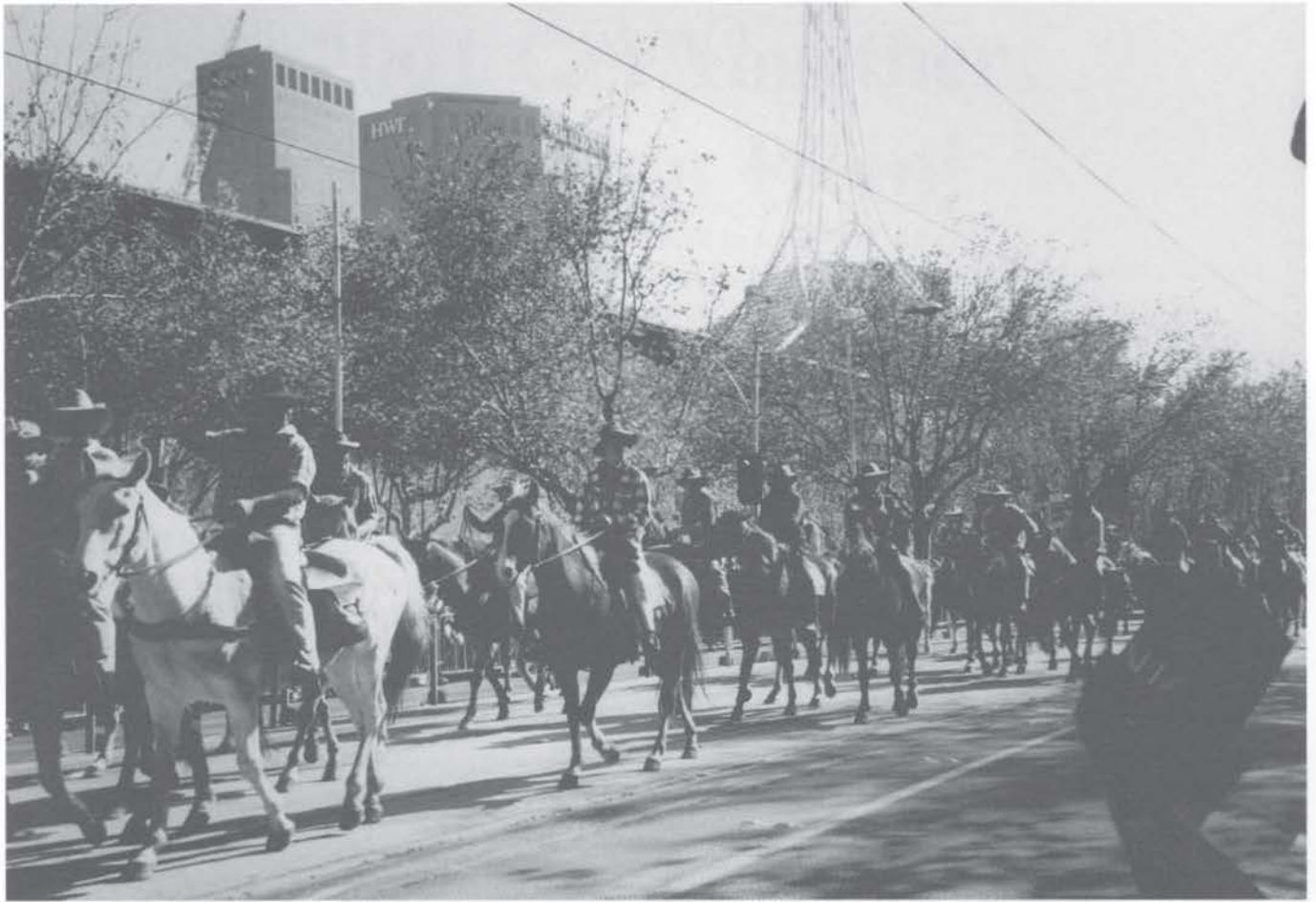
Mountain Cattlemen who became an Australian icon in the 1980s with the release of the film *The Man from Snowy River* and our battle to retain our high country grazing traditions in the face of moves by the radical conservation movement to remove us, were delighted to return to the streets of Melbourne to show our city cousins that we are still a force to be reckoned with.

'It was fitting that Mountain Cattlemen were involved in the Centenary of Federation celebrations', said President Simon Turner. 'Not only were stockmen a significant part of the Parade in 1901, but our pioneering traditions go back over 160 years to the early 1900s. In fact our heritage began in 1835, the year before Melbourne was settled. We are very proud of our pioneering traditions and heritage, and are always delighted to share it with all Australians.'

'We were proud that the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games featured mounted stockmen's riding skills, and an exhibition of whip cracking,' Simon said. However it would be a mistake to think that mountain cattlemen were only involved in ceremonial occasions as most who participated in the parade had only finished mustering in the weeks before the parade.

The practice of mountain grazing is a living link with the past - something that all Victorians can share and be proud of.





# Omeo

I'd like to be back  
Where the white faced cattle roam  
In the North East of Victoria  
There's a place I call my home  
Where the Livingstone and Mitta  
Roll down and swiftly flow  
Around the Great Diving Range  
At a place called Omeo.

Take me back to the mountains  
Take me back to the snow  
And let me linger freely  
Amongst my pals in Omeo

I love it in the Springtime  
When the golden wattles bloom  
Working in the shearing sheds  
With a cockies worn down broom  
Then to hang around the pubs at night  
Where the wild bush stories flow  
About the good and bad times  
At a place called Omeo

When Easter comes around each year  
The townsfolk really go  
They all have a drink on the Saturday  
At the Omeo Rodeo  
But when the day is over  
All the prizes have been won  
They give a cheer, drink down their beer  
Dance on and have more fun.

So if you like to travel around  
You have no place to go  
Take a trip into the Victorian Alps  
Forget your cares and woe  
For the camping and the scenery  
White frost and the snow  
There's a little city in the alps  
A place called Omeo.

*Johnny Faithfull*

Johnny Faithfull is about to hit the road again as he has been selected to perform in the Royal Flying Doctors entertainment programme between Warwick, Qld and Darwin N.T. in 2002. He has just released a new CD of his original music which is available by mail order from him at P.O. Box 159, Omeo 3898 for \$22.50 (including postage) or on tape for \$17.50

# 2001 Get Together 'Junction Plain'

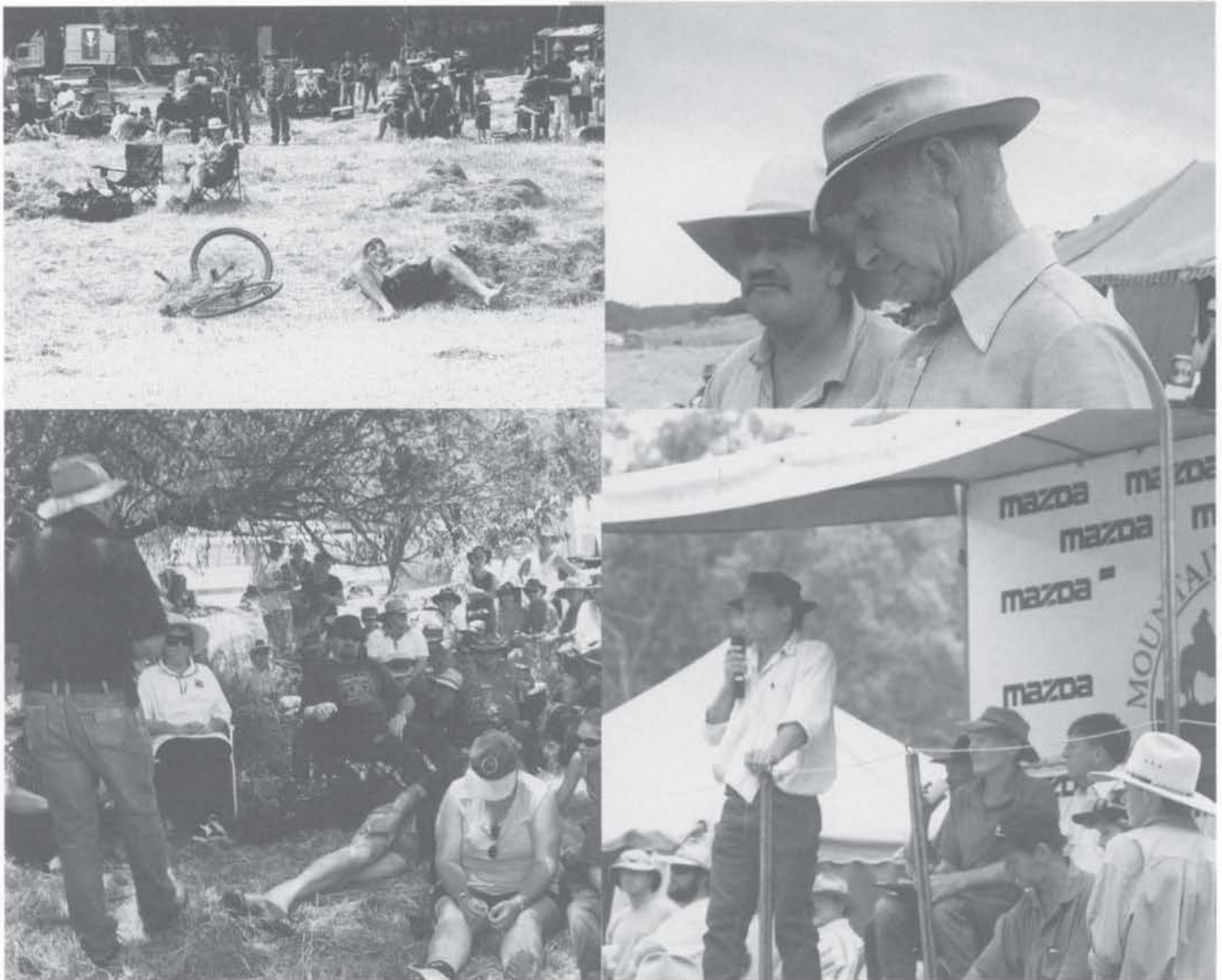
The 2001 Get Together was held at Junction Plain, part of Cobungra Station, on the Victoria River north of Omeo.

The Omeo Branch excelled themselves with an superb Get Together. Facilities were terrific and the temperatures soared but all immersed themselves either in the river or the activities!

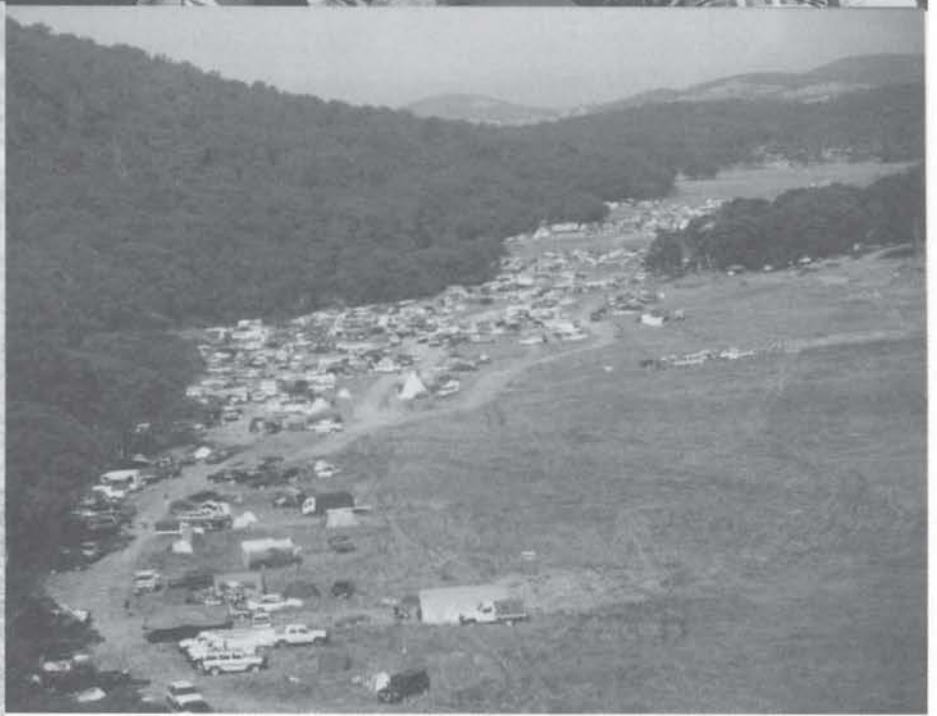
Apart from the horse events some of the new fun activities held this year were great crowd pleasers - Mulga Bill's Bicycle race and the Shetland Pony Race - along with regular dog high jumps, haystacking and tug of war drew enthusiastic crowds and cheers for the victors.

We would like to say 'Thank You' to all of our sponsors for their continued support of the Association. Particular thanks go to Mazda (Vic), who are exceedingly generous to the Association with the provision of vehicles and the winners rostrum and QBE for the Association secretary facilities.

Congratulations to all winners, placegetters and competitors - it made a great weekend.











**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA INCORPORATED HELD AT FARRER HOUSE, 24 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE IN THE VICTORIAN FARMERS' FEDERATION BOARDROOM 6TH FLOOR AT 10.30am ON THURSDAY 4th OCTOBER 2001**

**PRESENT:**

Harry Ryder, Pauline Venn, Stuart Hicks, Bill Cumming, Ron Briggs, Frank Ryan, Brian Higgins, Peter McCormack, Graham Connley, John Cook, Tim Faithfull, Rosemary Hurley, Sue Reynolds, Simon Turner, Bill Crump, Ross Brown, Janine Cooper, Chris Cooper and Wendy Symons.

The Chairman, Simon Turner welcomed everybody and opened the meeting at 10.35 am. The Chairman called for apologies.

**APOLOGIES** were received from Barry Fitzgerald, Chris Stoney, Steve Ware, Bruce McCormack and Buff Rogers.

**MINUTES** of the previous Annual General Meeting of the Association as printed in the *Voice of the Mountains* Edition No. 24 of 2001 and circulated to all members and associate members were confirmed on the motion of Harry Ryder and seconded by Frank Ryan. Carried.

**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

The Chairman noted the death of one of the founding members Mr James Commins.

This has been quite a varied year with plenty happening.

The past years has not seen the development of a satisfactory outcome for the remaining three licensees in the Caledonia fire effected are. Four of the original seven licensees accepted financial compensation not to graze their licences for the remaining four grazing seasons left in the current licence term. Three meetings with Parks Victoria, including one on site, gave us ample opportunity for fulfilment of Parks Victoria's commitment to consultation with MCAV, however nothing was

gained on our behalf in this process. Our input fell on deaf ears. At the December meeting in Bairnsdale will all licensees present, we once again offered to place 70% licence allocation onto the runs so as to create the opportunity for monitoring and observation of post fire grazing. In February 2000 the Independent Panel noted: 'In one sense the parties missed the opportunity in late 1999 to put some stock in the National Park so that grazing behaviour and consequences could be observed.' The licensees have repeatedly offered to return 70% licence allocation to fulfil this suggestion of the Panel, but Parks Victoria remains intransigent.

I fear that Parks Victoria will try to prevent licensees returning cattle to the Caledonia area during the 2001/2001 grazing season. Parks Victoria is continuing to make an issue of what it refers to as 'possible damage by cattle'. We believe the vegetation, when compared to pre-fire levels in the area has now recovered sufficiently to allow cattle to return to the licensed areas. However Parks Victoria is now turning the emphasis onto 'possible risk of damage' to bogs burned in the fire. We believe that there is now no greater risk to the bogs than before the 1998 fire and there is a lack of evidence to suggest otherwise.

Parks Victoria wrote to each of the licensees on 8 December 1999 stating amongst other conditions, that for grazing to return there would have to be 'agreement to adequate fencing of significant bog and wetland areas.' In its submission to the Independent Panel in February 2000 Parks Victoria stated:

*Parks Victoria recognises the licence entitlements of the licensees to graze in the Park. This is demonstrated by the fact that since the fire Parks Victoria has invested \$90,000 in fencing of the alpine bog communities in consultation with the licensees .... The investment in fencing*

*confirms that Parks Victoria did not make the direction on the basis of an intention to exclude grazing for the remainder of the licence period, but rather with a view to allowing grazing to return once the condition of the vegetation has recovered to an adequate level.'*

Much of the fencing already done is in areas which licensees have accepted the compensation package and so will not be grazed until after 2005. MCAV believes that some of this existing fencing could be moved to areas on the remaining licence areas. This will avoid increasing the amount of fencing in the Park and will protect areas which Parks Victoria claims are at risk of damage by cattle, although MCAV says that this claim has never been proven.

Mountain cattlemen have growing concerns as they observe the mismanagement practices of Parks Victoria in respect to the National Park. Before Easter 2001 Parks Victoria bulldozed the Dingo Hill Track, a favourite 4WD track for recreationists. The resulting erosion and siltation of streams will need to be carefully managed. This one single act of gross mismanagement has modified the environment significantly.

It is Australian Labor Party Policy to remove cattle grazing from the Alpine National Park. We believe that this Policy is outdated and fails to recognise the heritage and pioneering traditions of the mountain cattlement. We would like to have an opportunity to discuss this matter with the Minister and other members of the Government. Mountain cattlemen's heritage is treasured by a great many Australians and has been recently celebrated at the opening of the Olympic Games in Sydney, and the Our Nation on Parade celebrations of Centenary of Federation in Melbourne. It might also be noted that ex-American President Mr Bill Clinton was presented with a Dryabone coat, a distinctive and recognisable part of the image of the mountain cattlemen.

The Omeo Branch held an outstanding Get Together at Junction Plain last January. Not only was the weekend a much needed financial success for our ongoing commitment to 'caring for the high country', but also facilitated in providing us with the opportunity to communicate to the general public through the various forms of media.

The highlight for the year was undoubtedly in May when we participated in the Federation Parade in Melbourne. To be part of this celebration and to experience the obvious delight of the 300,000 spectators was truly an uplifting experience. The response of the crowds that lined the entire route must weigh heavily on the minds of those who would like to see our demise. I feel that we must thank Delatite Shire for its commitment to the idea and its ongoing support of the Association. I feel that the support and commitment offered by local Government agencies such as Delatite, Wellington and East Gippsland Shires indicates the level of support for the practice of Alpine grazing in the Victorian high country by rural Victorians.

In July, the MCAV in conjunction with Grinters Transport of Bairnsdale, launched our logo *Mountain Cattlemen Care for the High Country* displayed on the entire length of a 13 metre x 2.4 metre tautliner. The purpose of this highly visual and mobile project is to lift our public profile as well as providing a focal point where needed. To date we have had success with the truck taking our message to Melbourne twice weekly, touring most inner suburbs. The truck also supplied the centre focus for our protest on the steps of Parliament on 18 September 2001. The aim of the Parliament protest was to encourage the Bracks Government to communicate with us on a range of issues of concern.

Throughout the past twelve months members have conducted various weed control and eradication activities in and around the Alpine Park. Our continual and regular observation of the Alpine environment places us in a position where it is our opportunity and moral obligation to deal with new and emerging weeds as they present. Over the following twelve months the Association will be building upon the past success of the 'Weed Initiative' programme.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members for their support over the past twelve months, the members of Central Council for their time and commitment and also to Brian Higgins, Harry Ryder and Sue Reynolds for their commitment, time and effort.

## SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

The past twelve months have been a mixed year for the Association. Late in May we mourned the death of Jim Commins, a man whose influence over the Association has been profound, and whose understanding of the requirements of Crown Land management and alpine grazing was second to none. The next issue of *Voice of the Mountains* will acknowledge Jim and his achievements. In the meantime we miss his presence at meetings, and his input and understanding of the issues which continue to concern all members.

On the other hand the heritage of Mountain Cattlemen has been acknowledged and enhanced firstly by the opening ceremony at the Sydney Olympic Games, and then by the parade of 201 horsemen and women in the Our Nation on Parade celebrations in Melbourne in May. It can be truly said that Victoria's mountain cattlemen are an Australian icon. The challenge for those who oppose the tradition of alpine grazing is to recognise and understand this heritage and these traditions, and to come to accept them as a valid part of the alpine landscape.

The signage *Mountain Cattlemen Care for the High Country* on the tautliner cost the Association \$3076. We have been told the this sign will last for five years. The Association believes that this is a very reasonable advertising cost. Its effectiveness is total, as the photographs of it parked on the forecourt of Parliament House show. Being mobile it can travel anywhere, and we are considering some possible parking places for it over the next few months or so. We have also been able to invest in a large number of bumper stickers as a way of advertising and keeping our logo and slogan in front of the public. There are still a number of stickers to hand out, and I have noticed an increase in cars 'wearing' them.

The Central Council has met three times this year, twice in Melbourne and once in Ovens. Issues of most concern to the Council have been dealing with Parks Victoria over the Caledonia fire area, building the Association's financial base, keeping the Association in the eye of the community, the issue of weeds, and the organisation of the Get Together. The Council should feel that it has achieved its aims this year, the only possibility of further frustration might come from dealing with

## McCORMACK'S MOUNTAIN VALLEY TRAIL RIDES

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the bureaucrats. We have no trouble dealing with our Minister. Despite repeated attempts we have never been able to have a meeting with her. She makes repeated claims in the Parliament that she 'consults.' We have seen not one scrap of evidence to show that this claim is true.

At the end of the last financial year the Association's finances were depleted and caused some anxiety. I am pleased that there has been an improvement this year, and those members who have contributed donations of the price of a chopper cow have gone a long way to making a difference. All full members were written to asking for a donation. To date there are still a number of these outstanding. Members and associate members subscriptions also increased by a small amount last year. Marketing was also up, members should thank Pauline Venn for her efforts there. At the same time it has been possible to contain expenses with the exception of our insurances which have risen

typically as premiums have increased throughout the State. The effect of the increase on members and associate members fees will not be evident until the end of the current financial year.

Thank you to Simon Turner, Brian Higgins and Harry Ryder and the members of the Central Council for their support and encouragement over the past twelve months.

## **MARKETING OFFICER'S REPORT**

After absorbing the excellent sales results for the 1999/2000 financial year the next three months were spent sourcing suppliers and replenishing stock levels. Designs for port crocks were decided upon with the assistance of John Cook and a trickle of mail orders came in leading up to the Get Together.

The 2001 Get Together at Junction Plain earned its place as being the most successful Get Together during my time as marketing officer, with net sales for the weekend exceeding the \$18,000 mark. Many people paid compliment to the merchandise range we had on offer which is always encouraging.

The big top marquee arrangement worked well despite my earlier concerns with partitions separating us from Nick Shearer and John Duncan Firth. This set up gave consumers a one stop shopping option as well as keeping hiring costs down.

My 'dial-a-crowd' sales team consisting of friends and family was kept busy throughout the weekend assisting people with clothing sizes and purchase choices. Souvenir Port crocks and stubby holders were the first items to sell out, thus giving me a clear indication that an increase in quantities, especially concerning the port, is warranted. Thanks must go to Jeannine, Kim, Jo, Pat, Tess and Gloria for their sales assistance over the course of the weekend.

The raffle we ran within the marketing tent raised over \$250 and was won by Nathan McBain from the Wangaratta area with blue ticket G12.

Stoney's High Country retail store officially opened in late January and managed to purchase what little stock we had left over from the Get Together, and then continued to place significant orders throughout the summer months.

Rowena Turner is acknowledged for her networking skills resulting in a large order of clothing items from Pendergast's Omeo Hardware store. The revamped Omeo newsagency/gallery selected and purchased some MCAV novelty items to complement a display within the store dedicated to Mountain Cattlemen.

The Federation Parade in May brought the Mountain Cattlemen back into the minds of people and mail order sales increased. I appreciate the efforts of Simon Turner who dropped off the green and gold *Mountain Cattlemen Care for the High Country* stickers at many roadhouses along the Princes Highway.

June saw me in Omeo for the Back to Back wool shearing, spinning, knitting championships where John Cook and I operated a MCAV stand. A lot of interest was shown in our merchandise and we managed to take \$650 for the day. Sales could have been a lot higher if the ever popular local brew of Elderberry wine was part of our range. John can attest to just how good a drop it is.

**David and Dianna Guy  
invite you to stay at the**

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The merchandise range for 2002 has not been expanded, though childrens' showbags consisting of colouring pages and pencils, ruler, badge, fridge magnet and poster will be offered for \$5 in an attempt to clear some of the novelty items I inherited when I first took over the marketing role in 1996. As mentioned earlier the purchase of the ceramic port crocks will increase from eight to ten dozen.

My sales team headed by Jeannine Pascale looks forward to serving you at the Rose River Get Together in what will be our sixth consecutive year of service to the Association.

Pauline Venn also noted that Brown Bros Milawa Vineyards Pty Ltd, which had been supplying the port crocks for 17 years had ceased this practice but failed to notify the Association. However at the last minute Brown Brothers had been able to refer the Association to All Saints Winery at Rutherglen.

Moved John Cook seconded Peter McCormack that the financial statements as presented by the Treasurer be accepted. Carried.

#### **SETTING OF MEMBERSHIP AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FEES FOR YEAR 2002/2003**

It was agreed that all subscription fees remain at the same level as the previous year. Moved Brian Higgins seconded Bill Cumming that fees remain the same viz. Members subscriptions be \$220 (including GST) for the first 100 head and then \$3.30 per head thereafter. That Association fees should remain the same viz. Family membership be \$38.50 and single membership be \$27.50 (both amounts including GST).

Carried.

#### **SETTING OF HONORARIUMS**

It was agreed that all honorariums remain at the same level as the previous year.

Moved Harry Ryder seconded Brian Higgins that the Honorarium for the President remain at \$3,000, the Vice President \$1,000, the Special Projects Officer \$1,000, the Secretary/Treasurer at \$2,000 and Marketing Officer at \$1,000. Carried.

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

Mr Bill Crump took the chair for the election of office bearers and declared all positions to be vacant.

The following officers were elected:

**President** - Simon Turner proposed by Ross Brown seconded by Peter McCormack was elected. Mr Turner said that this would be his last term as President.

**Vice President** - Brian Higgins proposed by Ross Brown seconded by Rosemary Hurley was elected. Mr Higgins said that this would be his last term as Vice President.

**Special Projects Officer** - Harry Ryder proposed by Rusty Connley seconded by Brian Higgins was elected.

**Secretary/Treasurer** - Mrs Sue Reynolds proposed by Simon Turner seconded by Ross Brown was elected.

**Marketing Officer** - Pauline Venn proposed by Brian Higgins seconded by John Cook was elected.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

Mr Bill Crump was appointed Auditor of the Association.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted that the Victorian Farmers Federation had indicated that it would be prepared to accept a member of the MCAV onto its Crown Land Rental Committee. Ross Brown was appointed on the proposal of Mr Brian Higgins seconded by Simon Turner.

It was noted that a foundation member of the Association, Mr Don Treasure, had died recently. It was agreed that the Secretary should send a letter of condolence to Mr David Treasure at Castleburn, Dargo. Mr David Treasure is the son of Mr Don Treasure.

There being no further business the chairman closed the meeting at 11:15 a.m.



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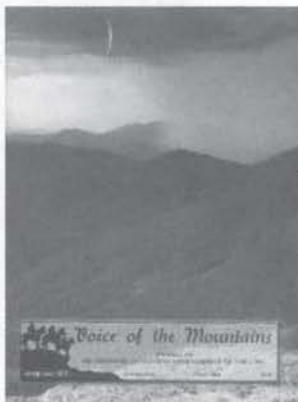
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The Committee of *Voice of the Mountains* would like to thank everyone for the support it has received during the year particularly Julie Marland, David Treasure, Simon and Rowena Turner, Sue Ryder, Barbara Ryan and the unknown individuals who 'picked up' and 'dropped off' various documents, articles and photographs.

**Poems, stories and photos suitable for *Voice* are always welcome, but please give us time to assess it by sending it in by the end of the October before the Get Together.**

*Voice* is yet again thankful for the support of the 'Anapaks' who give their time freely every year to ensure that *Voice* is completed for the Association. We are also very thankful that the staff at E-Gee Printers come back from their Christmas break enthused about the idea of producing a 56 page publication in three days!

