

# Voice of the Mountains

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

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No.34 (2011)

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

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CONTENTS

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Office Bearers 2010/11 .....	2
President's Message 2011	
A word from Mark "Nook" Coleman .....	3
Mountain Cattlemen, Alpine Grazing and Politics <i>Graeme Stoney</i> .....	6
In the Springtime <i>Lauire Webb</i> .....	11
Grazing on the Baw Baw Plateau <i>Mack Stagg</i> .....	12
Cattlemen need to get with the times <i>L. Ralph Barraclough</i> .....	19
Alpine Marsh Marigold ... Tough or Tender? .....	21
A brief, but emphatic response to Who killed Jim Barclay? <i>Glenn Chalwell</i>	22
On the Book Shelf:	
Of Pioneers and Perseverance <i>Ian Stapleton</i> .....	23
Gold in the Walhalla Region, West Gippsland, Victoria <i>Brian Lloyd</i> ....	23
Hinnomunjie Racecourse Reserve <i>Anne Faithfull</i> .....	24
The Brands on the Hinnomunjie Bar 2011 .....	25
The Porter behind the Port: The MCAV Port Collection <i>Don Porter</i> .....	27
Cattlemen promoted at the 4WD Show <i>Scott Jennison</i> .....	30
Weston's Hut Rebuild <i>Barry Hazeldine and Mary Goldsworthy</i> .....	31
Childhood Sweethearts <i>Molly Coleman</i> .....	32
Wonnangatta Fire Risk .... as relevant now as then .	33
The Brands on the Presidents' Bar .....	35
Tributes:	
Graham "Rusty" Connley .....	36
Gus Mercurio .....	40
Dick Condon .....	40
My Beloka Mate <i>Allan Brewer</i> .....	39
Mountain Cattleman Bernie Lawler remembered <i>Mary Goldsworthy</i> .....	41
36th Annual Get-Together Wombat Crossing 2010 .....	42
Buff Rogers inducted to the Stockman's Hall of Fame .....	51
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting .....	52
Our Sponsors .....	55
Back Issues .....	56
Acknowledgments .....	56

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### COVER ILLUSTRATIONS

The front cover shows a detail of veteran packer Ron Connley taken by Frances Westbury at Wombat Crossing 2010 and the reverse image of Ron with "Surprise" and "Crikey" after placing second in the Frank Ryan Memorial Australian Packhorse Championships was taken by James Vereker.

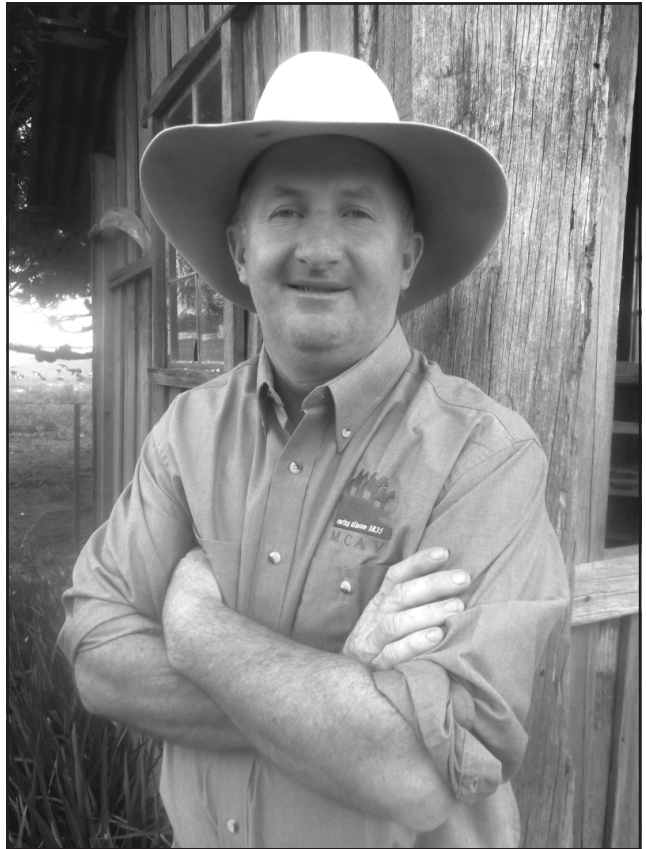
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# President's Message 2011

MARK "NOOK" COLEMAN



*MCAV President Mark "Nook" Coleman*

Looking back over the last few weeks, there has been a whirlwind of events. I have only been President since late October and I would like to thank those who supported my nomination for the position at our last AGM. It was not without careful consideration that I accepted because I am aware of the tremendous amount of work done by those who went before me and by the support team of the Executive and Central Council. Having said that, I am proud to take it on and represent the Association as I have a strong belief in its values and goals.

Thank you also to those who have spent time mentoring me whilst I held the Vice-President's position. Their help and guidance have been invaluable, making my transition to President as smooth as possible. I also pay tribute to my late father, Kevin Coleman, for teaching me the value of high country grazing and introducing me to the Association many years ago.

The big news of my short presidency has been the Victorian State Election. After much lobbying the Victorian Liberals/Nationals offered the Mountain Cattlemen a promise to re-instate grazing to the Alpine National Parks as a fire

mitigation tool if they were elected. This announcement was met with much applause and enthusiasm at the last Get-Together at 'Wombat Crossing' in January 2010. So it was with anticipation that we all watched the November election results come in. As each seat fell we felt one step closer to achieving our biggest goal. With the announcement and swearing in of the new coalition government our outlook is more positive than it has been for many years. Whilst there is a long way to go as far as structuring agreements we are certainly on the right road.

The mismanagement of our high country in recent times defies logic. Cattlemen have been painted by the 'Green' movement as the destroyers of all that is pristine yet the truth is the exact opposite. Why would we destroy something that future generations depend on? It is in our best interests and the interests of our descendants that we protect the future of grazing by monitoring grazing levels, weed control, fuel loads, feral pests and water quality. How can they not see the irony in declaring areas that have been grazed for over 150 years pristine National Heritage Sites, then in the next breath say that grazing destroys the wilderness. It is my hope that with this change of government we can instigate a change of attitude across the board.

We need to educate people starting with our children who are indoctrinated at a young age to the 'Green' movement. My own children came home from school where they were told they were heading out on a tree planting excursion because the cattle had trampled all the old ones! Needless to say that teacher was set straight on

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the facts and we were able to present another side of the story to the classroom. It is up to all cattlemen and their supporters to reverse this level of misinformation. I have always invited any politician, reporter or member of the public to come for a drive with me and I will show you the true facts. Don't believe everything you read, go and see it for yourself. The High Country has always been and remains pristine, except of course the areas that have been burnt to destruction in the past 10 years by fires that were too hot and too fast due in part to the lack of good management.

I have a number of goals for my term as President. Firstly, I want to talk to all our grazing members individually, to learn from them as much as I can about their particular areas available for grazing. I need their input and ideas to be able to represent them properly. This is even more pertinent as we look at the reintroduction of Alpine Grazing, their experience and knowledge will help to guide us towards an agreement that will hopefully be long lasting and beneficial to all involved. We must ensure that any agreement is not only for one or two seasons but for many years to come. I would also like to meet as many Associate Members as possible. I am only too aware that their enthusiasm for our cause has invigorated our organisation. Their work in promoting the MCAV and their help in running the Get-Together is invaluable. I would also like to continue building positive relationships with our members of parliament, the DSE and Parks Victoria. Considerable inroads have been made to open up the lines of communication resulting in improved understanding from both sides. Some compromise will be inevitable however we remain focused at all times on the goals of the MCAV and its members.

Congratulations to the team who have organized the 2011 Get-Together. There is certainly something for everyone in the program of events. As we come together to celebrate our history and heritage let's all look to the future and consider what you can do to be part of the story. We appreciate the support given to us by everyone involved, so become a member and be part of the team.

Finally I would like to congratulate all those who have put time and effort into the battle to return cattle grazing to the High Plains where it rightfully belongs. As our children and grandchildren muster their cattle in future years and move them to their high country pastures, they will appreciate the battles fought by previous generations to save our traditions and remember our heritage.

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Mark (Nook) Coleman  
President  
Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria  
December 2010

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# Mountain Cattlemen, Alpine Grazing and Politics ... the story so far

GRAEME STONEY

It is recorded that the first graziers of the Victorian High Country came in from the Monaro NSW about 1834. Hardy mountain families gradually discovered and grazed their cattle across the Victorian High Plains each summer. Over the years these families became known as “Mountain Cattlemen.”



*The first Cattlemen's Cup - Sheepyard Flat 1983*

In 2005, 177 years later, the Labor Government removed the Mountain Cattlemen from the Alpine National Park.

To recap the history culminating in this decision, one has to go back to the tumultuous 1980s and even earlier to the 1960s.

Over the years, higher exposed peaks had been gradually closed to grazing which was more or less accepted. However, the emerging environmental movement was demanding full closure of the High Country to grazing. The Mountain Cattlemen regularly came together from all over the High Country to meet the challenge.

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) was formed.

By the time the Cain Labor Government was elected in 1982 the threat to the Mountain Cattlemen had become very real as the new Government was promising to create an Alpine National Park. It wasn't the Park the Cattlemen feared; it was the associated promise to remove grazing in order to attract the “environmental” vote. It didn't make sense as National Parks all over the world were (and still are) grazed for management.

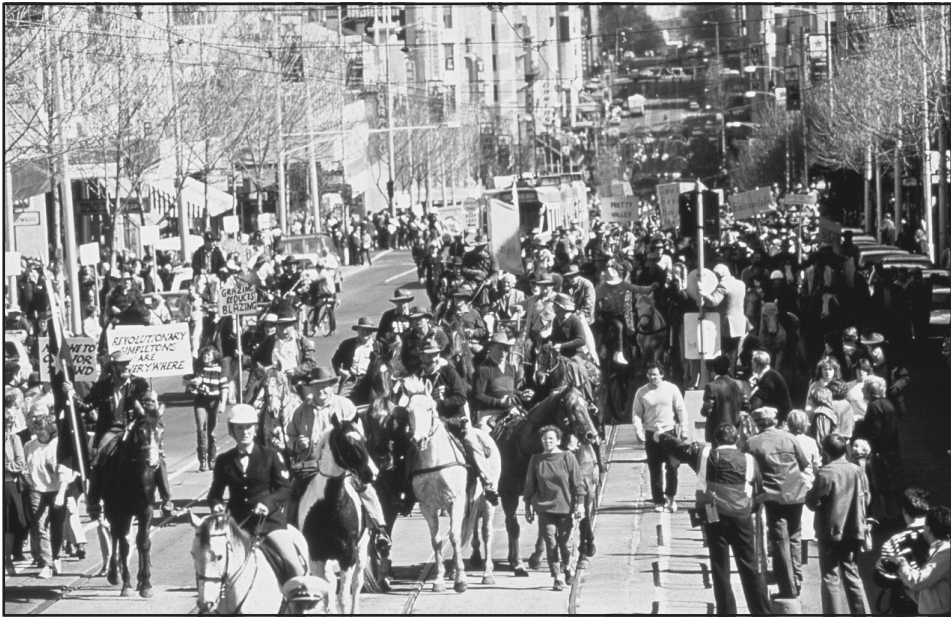
On the advice of Geoff Burrowes of “Snowy River” film fame, the Mountain Cattlemen decided to lift its public profile. The Cattlemen's Cup, which was first run in 1983, was the lynch pin of the new strategy.

Geoff advised the MCAV executive to pick the most articulate cattlemen to speak on its behalf. He insisted that those picked must have the ability to present the best images of the culture, heritage and riding ability of a special and historic group of families. They must be able to explain the benefits of grazing the High Country. He emphasized that everyone had to close ranks behind the ones putting themselves publicly on the line.

The new direction did cause some unease among the naturally reserved mountain families until it became clear the strategy was working.

Under the leadership of MCAV President Jim Commins and Executive officer Graeme Stoney the MCAV developed close contacts in politics and the media and made plans.

In 1984 MCAV Central Council heard through sources that the Alpine Park Legislation was coming, so it “got its ducks in a line”.



*Jim Commins leads the first MCAV protest in Melbourne 1984*

The same day the Government announced the introduction of the Legislation, the Cattlemen announced they would demonstrate in Melbourne. This dramatic move completely overshadowed the Government announcement. The Cattlemen had secretly been ready for months, so within days they arrived at Parliament House with 304 horses, two wagons and four dogs!

The rally was so successful and popular that the Liberal and Country Party (Nationals) Opposition announced they would oppose the Park and support the Cattlemen.

The Mountain Cattlemen became a household word. The legislation was delayed.

The Labor Government went to the 1985 election with the same policy to create the Park. The Opposition parties opposed the Park on the grounds of support for Alpine grazing. The election fallout saw a hung Upper House and a disputed seat requiring a by-election. At that Nunawading by election, the Cattlemen went political for the first time and successfully assisted the Liberal candidate Rosemary Varty. They campaigned down the streets of Ringwood with horses and letterboxed on horseback.

Going political was a very difficult decision for the families as individually they supported all the political parties.

The by election again caused significant political fallout with alleged Labor party bogus how to vote cards, fights at booths and Graeme Stoney being summoned to the Bar of the Legislative Council to explain the conduct of the MCAV. The MCAV had nothing to hide but unfortunately we were left standing at the door of the House due to the Opposition's lack of numbers on the day to invite him to speak at the Bar. The publicity for the Cattlemen was priceless.

After the by-election and until 1989 the MCAV kept the pressure on by organizing events, stunts and news articles to keep its profile before the public, knowing the issue wasn't settled. Sure enough in 1989, once again the Government introduced the Park Legislation.

After months of negotiation a deal was done on the floor of Parliament.

The Opposition, working with the MCAV, forced the Government to include in the Alpine National Park legislation seven year grazing licences (which were renewable) to accommodate Alpine grazing. As a trade off it was agreed that some higher areas on the Bogong High Plains and the Bluff were to be closed to grazing. On that basis the legislation was passed.

Never before had a similar guarantee for any group with an interest in public land been included



in Legislation. It is instructive for political history buffs that the Alpine Park would have not been created without that agreement.

In 2005 the Labor Government broke the fifteen year old agreement, amended the Legislation and cancelled the licences.

This caused uproar from supporters of the MCAV. A major rally was organized at Parliament House with more than 500 horses and thousands of supporters. Many emotional speeches were given both inside and outside the Parliament

The Liberals and Nationals were very angry at the Government's back flip and pledged to reverse the decision when next elected.

During the 2006 election, the MCAV struck back by organizing another major rally at Parliament House in conjunction with other rural groups as well, it targeted Ian Maxfield, Labor member for Narracan.

Mr Maxfield was the chair of the backbench Government task force that enquired into Alpine Grazing before the decision was announced. This enquiry was widely regarded as a token and a 'Kangaroo Court'.

The MCAV was confident that its campaign and rally outside Maxwell's office in Warragul significantly assisted in him being defeated by the Liberals' Gary Blackwood.

### ***The years 2006 to early 2011***

When the legislation was passed in 2005, the Mountain Cattlemen were devastated.

Government recognition was never given to the contribution of the Mountain Cattlemen to the development of Victoria since 1834. No comment



*Bob Richardson hands Ted Baillieu the microphone at the Melbourne Country Election Rally - November 2006.*

was officially made about the valuable history and knowledge the families had accumulated about the High Country. The Government refused to accept the fact that this special culture, developed over many years, was now in danger of being lost forever.

Many Cattlemen became seriously depressed due to the way they were treated. The Government adjustment package assisted financially but there was no emotional support offered for the loss of their connection to the land they loved. This connection, in some individual families going back over one hundred years, was never acknowledged and instead they were widely described as "a greedy privileged few" by Government and Green groups' spin-doctors. This blackening of the various families' reputations continues even as this article goes to print. That is the point that hurts our people the most.

The MCAV organization was on the ropes. By necessity many members had to move on and only a few with State Forest runs were left to continue the fight.

To his credit Doug Treasure became President of the MCAV in its darkest hour and started rebuilding the morale of the members. It was significant that the MCAV adopted a seemingly impossible policy of returning cattle grazing to the Park. Later Doug was awarded a Life Membership for these efforts and for being MCAV President on three different occasions.





*President Christa Treasure speaks to MPs Philip Davis, Andrew McIntosh and Bill Tilley at the Get-Together 2008.*

During this time the MCAV quietly lobbied the Coalition about the benefits of Alpine Grazing, proven up by the patterns of the 2003 and 2006/7 bushfires. (Black Saturday 2009 did not affect the Alpine areas.) Many supportive members of Parliament including Philip Davis and Peter Hall assisted them. The MCAV also began negotiating with the Government about the injustice dealt to those Cattlemen with State Forest licenses who were unable to use them because of Park Boundaries.

At the 2010 Get Together, held at Wombat Crossing, an unusually large number of Parliamentarians attended, almost all from the Coalition. These included Peter Ryan and Peter Walsh, together with Philip Davis, Mary Wooldridge and a clutch of other MPs including Independent Craig Ingram.

Something was afoot...but what?

Doug Treasure was back as President and made the official speech of welcome.

**Peter Ryan took the microphone and announced the Coalition would reintroduce grazing as a management tool in the Alpine National Park if elected at the forthcoming State election.**

This came like a bolt from the blue to the MCAV, which despite the lobbying had no inkling of what was to come. Peter Ryan explained later that the Liberal and Nationals had consistently supported the principle of Alpine grazing since 1985 and this was simply a confirmation of that long

standing support. He also explained that the bushfires in recent years had demonstrated that grazing is an important management tool. He acknowledged that Mountain Cattlemen had been making that point for more than fifty years.

### *The campaign*

Given the exciting announcement, it was obvious that once again the MCAV would have to go political.

It was clear that it was in the interests of its members that the Coalition win the forthcoming election. The Coalition needed thirteen seats to win Government, a seemingly impossible task.

Central Council developed a hard-nosed political strategy under the leadership of Chris Commins. Part of the plan was to find out what Craig Ingram, (the independent for Gippsland East) would do for the MCAV if he happened to hold the balance of power in the new Parliament. The basic question asked of Craig was: "If he held the balance of power would he use Alpine Grazing as a bargaining chip to put whatever party he supported into Government."

His answer was unsatisfactory to Central Council. As the election approached, the MCAV issued a written strategy advising how its many supporters could assist the Coalition in twenty marginal seats, including Gippsland East.

The five page document sent to the supporters of the MCAV only, was released to the Media, and created significant publicity for the MCAV. The release of the document created wide media interest.

A blog site was established and is still in operation - [www.cowpad.info](http://www.cowpad.info)

The rest is history.

This is the third and hopefully the last time, the MCAV has "gone political" since 1985. Each time it has had a successful outcome.

*The MCAV congratulates the Coalition on its election to Government, and under the leadership of Mark Coleman, we await the implementation of the announced policy of putting the cattle back. We understand that firstly there are significant issues for the Government to address, including new Federal Government environmental requirements.*



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## *In the Springtime*



Can you smell the mountain heather where the fleet wild horses go,  
can you taste the tang of springtime from the crisp, white melting snow?  
Can you feel excitement stirring when a wild mob comes in sight,  
will you share your days adventures round the campfire that same night?

Are you happy without houses, just a swag to call your home,  
can you feel the bush around you, so you're never on your own?  
Remember riding 'cross the high plains without comfort, fear or care,  
did the freedom sit upon you, can you see yourself still there?

I have missed the mighty musters where they split the big mixed mobs,  
I have wasted years in cities with a plodding office job,  
but I haven't lost my wonder and the skill to ride a horse,  
and the high plains are still waiting, and they draw me back, of course.

There's that lee beside Mount Howitt where we made the cattle yards,  
the Herefords grazed content with twisted snowgums as their guards.  
We'll cook from that same campfire as the sun sinks low and round,  
and we'll stare at freezing, blazing stars 'till dew is on the ground.

For the love of bush is in me and I'll never let it go,  
and my love for you grows deeper than the deepest drifts of snow.  
So think of me this winter while the hot coals slowly glow,  
we've a track to take together, at the melting of the snow.

*Laurie Webb, 2011*

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# Grazing on the Baw Baw Plateau

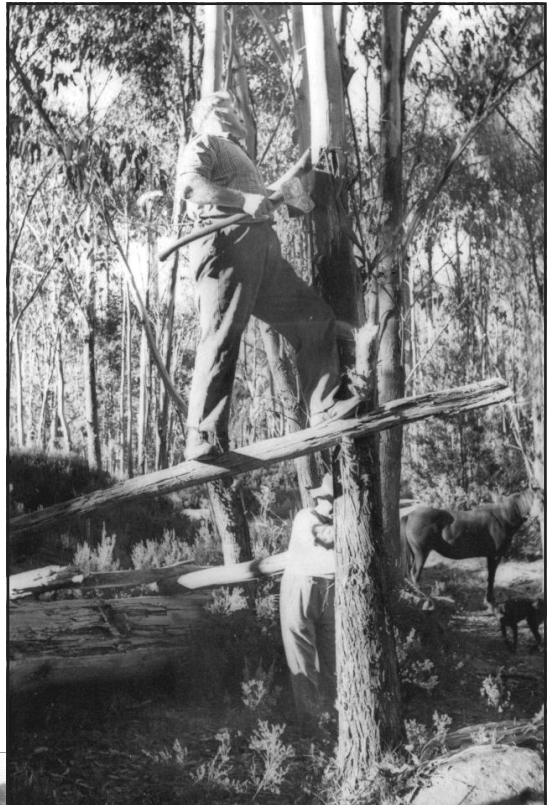
MACK STAGG

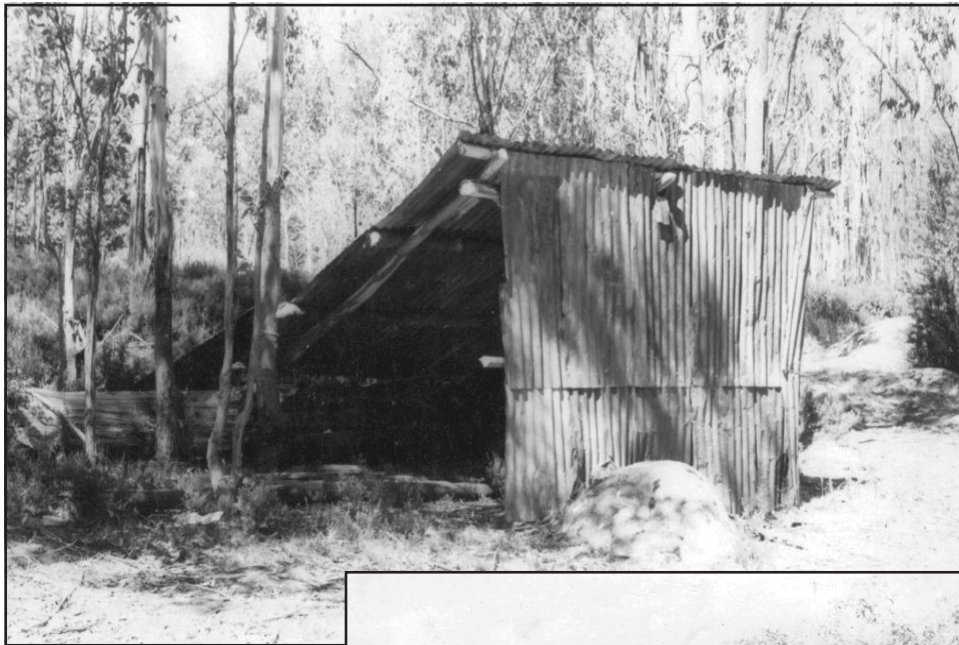
The Baw Baw Plateau is different to other high plains. It consists of a high plateau, intermixed with morasses, thick scrubby divides with grassy plains between them here and there. One would not have to ever walk more than one hundred yards to find water. Three major rivers head off the Baw Baw Plateau, the Thomson to the north and east like a giant fish hook; the Tanjil; and the Tyers River to the south west.

Cattle have been run on the Plateau since the 1880s and history is vague on who owned the early runs. From early in the 20th century the runs were held by Fred "Curly" Jans from the Traralgon area.

Fred Jans' runs which included the Baw Baw Plateau, extended over to the head of the Yarra River (Board of Works country), back to the Jordan and Aberfeldy runs. Managing these runs would have

*Norm Jans cutting timber to build the chaff shed and below, Hec Stagg and Norm Jans shifting cattle on the Whitelaw Fall.*





*The finished chaff shed  
above, and Norm packing  
in the new bed.*



necessitated being away at times for many months, due to the large distances travelled by horse. Around 1935 Fred Jans was joined by his nephew Norm “Bluey” Jans who was fourteen years old at the time. Under the guidance of his uncle he became an excellent bushman.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 Norm enlisted and was away for three years in the Middle East. While he was away, his uncle Fred Jans died. This left the runs unattended. Norm came back from the war and attempted to resurrect the enterprise. Many runs in the Yarra head waters had been closed and he carried on until approximately 1956 when the Baw Baw run became vacant.

My earliest recollections of Baw Baw are going up there when I was about fourteen to have a look with Dad (Hec Stagg). The Thomson Valley road was rough as they had pushed it up the tram line; it ended at Sharps Number 1 Timber Mill. The enormous wooden trestle bridges were still in existence and from Sharps No. 1 onwards the railway track was the only route. Looking out over the country the bush was white from the dead snow gums killed in the 1939 fires and the new growth was barely over your head as you rode through on a horse. The snow gums on the 1931 burn had evolved into large trunked trees. By 1960 you could clearly see the difference in the age of the burns.



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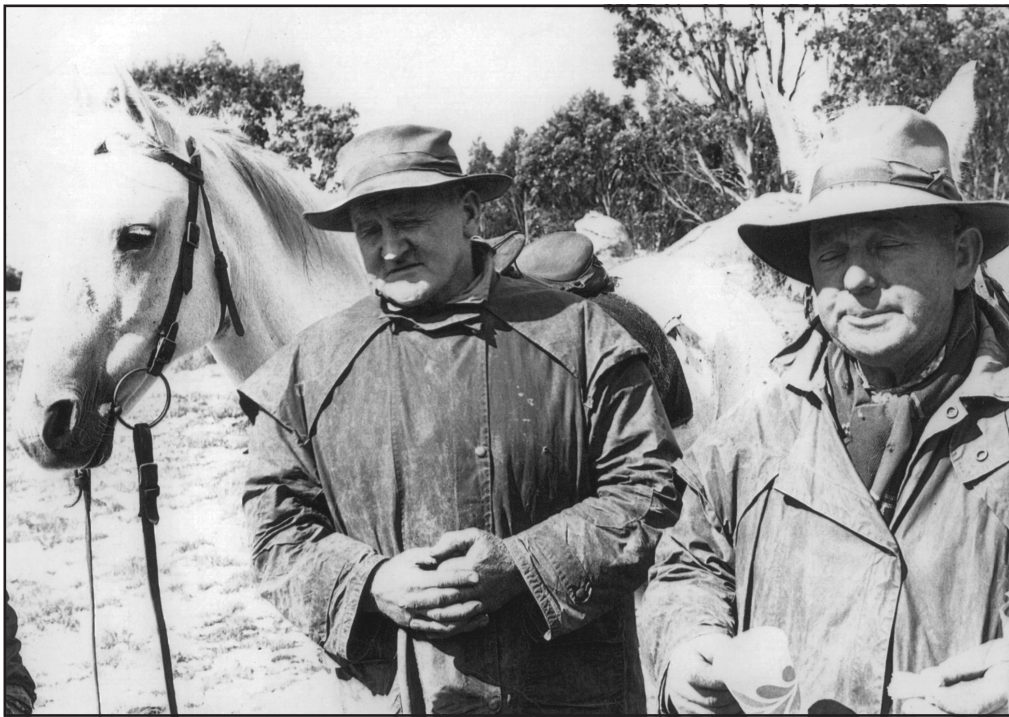


*Norm Jans and Hec Stagg*

H. J. Stagg and Sons officially took over the run in 1958 as it was vacant at the time. It consisted of two runs totalling 63,000 acres. Dad had always had cattle runs at Combienbar and loved running cattle in the bush. This brought about a meeting of the Jans and the Stagg families and a great friendship was established that lasts through to this day. In our early time steers purchased in the annual mountain calf sales were pushed on horseback from Tinamba through Cowwarr, onto Erica, and up the

Thompson Valley road to Rocky Knob and then turned up through the bush and onto the Plateau. This would take three good days. Numbers were built up from a start of 80 steers, until we eventually ran around 150 cows and calves. The stock was run on the Plateau in the summer and by Easter we had drafted the calves off and brought them home to Tinamba to be sold. The cows were wintered, below the snow line, on the Thomson River flats (where the Thomson Dam is now). In the spring the cows would be mustered off the river, the calves marked in two log yards built for the purpose, and then driven up onto the Plateau for the summer.

Norm Jans continued his involvement with the mountains and ran cattle of his own at times with us on the Mount. Early on he carried a .303 on his horse to shoot feral cattle that were in existence when we started at the run. These cattle would head for the scrub taking the quiet cattle with them, with dogs in hot pursuit. Norm said he once shot one animal and it fell on one of his good dogs and killed it. The terrain necessitated good heading dogs with lots of stopping power. Some of the dogs were legendary - they would stay and guard cattle while we went looking for more and they could find cattle up to half a mile away.



*Norm Jans and Hec Stagg photographed when involved in a search on on Baw Bam.*



*Mack Stagg unloading "Raddish" from the truck at the Long Spur.*



*Cattle being pushed across the Thomson River. This spot is now under water due to the construction of the Thomson Dam.*

The original hut on Baw Baw was located under Mustering Flat and nothing remains of it today. Baw Baw was savagely burnt in the 1939 Black Friday fires although parts of Mount Erica had been burnt in 1931. Norm told us that on Black Friday there were 600 head of cattle dead on Mustering Flat that had not been burnt but had suffocated.

Norm Jans decided to build a new hut further down below the snow line in the wooly butt. It was well sheltered, well hidden and surrounded by grassy areas for the horses. The hut originally included a stable but this unfortunately succumbed

to heavy snow. Just above the timberline, they erected a large mustering paddock made from logs mortised on top of logs. It was very impressive to see the work that was done there and showed great bush craftsmanship.

The hut was not easy for others to find. It was not discovered by the outside world until work started on the Thompson Dam and aerial photos revealed its location. Being well away from any road or tourist tracks it enabled us to safely leave provisions, horse gear, guns and cooking equipment unlocked. The first trip in after the winter necessitated cleaning out the rats nests, as



*With "Peter" and "Grey" watching over their shoulder, Hec Stagg and Norm Jans enjoy a warming cuppa with one of the police during the search for a lost biker on Baw Baw in 1977.*

provisions were not safe from large bush rats which could easily get into tin cans. It was a one room hut with two wooden bunks, a wood and stone fireplace which often required maintenance, a table, and two seats set into the ground with gelignite boxes for cupboards. It was lined with slab timber and had an iron roof.

The hut was a palace after a cold wet foggy day's mustering. Many a story and yarn from yester year were told as Dad and Norm would yarn well into the night. A good fire was going and if it was winter a bottle of rum would be on the table to warm us up. The horses would need to be fed, nosebags put on and taken off, and finding the horses in the dark was sometimes a problem. Dogs also had to be fed before we turned in. At times we could hear the wind up top which generally meant a bad day tomorrow. There would be talk of having not found a certain cow and where that mob might be; or if a bell was found hanging on a tree. It always amazed me how the bells eventually turned up with or without their hosts. In really bad weather we could hear the snow slide off the roof of the hut. The weather could turn sour at a moment's notice.

When the cattle were mustered we drove them across the turnoff spur, onto Mt Erica where Mrs

Jans has photos of large mobs of cattle on the long morass as cattle were spelled during a lunch break. The cattle were then driven, through the Mushroom Rocks which had a tendency to split cattle off in every direction, and down to the new Thompson Valley Road. This operation could be a nightmare, and with pack horse in tow, it's a wonder that we kept the cattle together. As it was some would catch us up later. It was a long day from the mustering paddock to Parker's Corner and we were generally a good hour or more in the dark. Mustering involved Norm, Dad and me, and anyone else we could round up. It would take us four to five days to muster the top of Baw Baw and find most of the cattle. We went back to look for fresh tracks a month or so later and pick up any stragglers.

One late Autumn, Dad and Norm had gone ahead with cattle and I was given the job of going back to the hut to pack out what would be needed to get us home. The day came out sunny and I found myself riding and leading a pack horse across vast flat areas of snow. I succumbed to my one and only experience of snow blindness and was lucky that the horses knew the way out as I couldn't see anything. I was very glad to get down below the snowline and start to make out shadows and shapes.



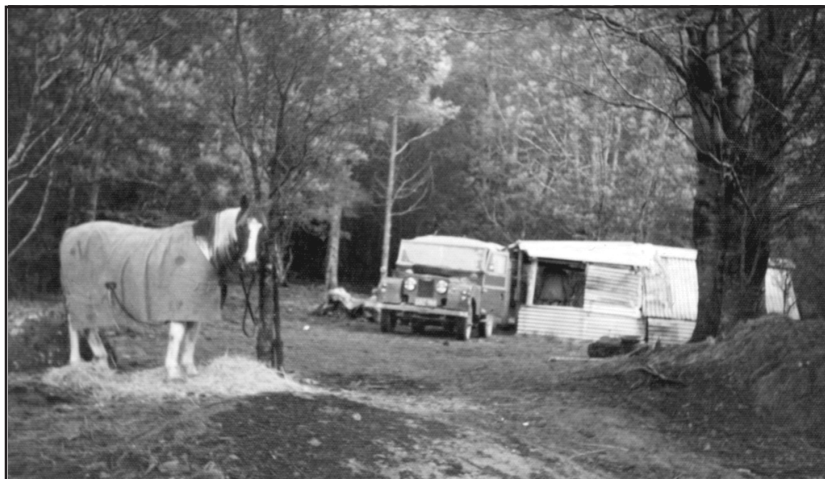
*The hut on Baw Baw, and below, the shelter on the Big Spur with "Bronco Jac" in the foreground who had been purchased from the Guys when Wonnangatta Station was sold.*

Norm Jans had a grey horse which he would let go wherever he needed to. This horse homed to Rawson's property at Parker's Corner and would lead any other horses that were let loose with him to there. Once Norm released this horse as far away as Aberfeldy and it brought back the rest over a couple of days. We would let the truck drivers know and Clary Rawson would leave the gate open. He said many times that he had heard the shod hooves of the horse come up the drive at three in the morning. There was only once that all the horses failed to return and on investigation we found that kids in Walhalla had caught one on the way past and were riding it around.

Mt Saint Gwinear was known to us as the Big Spur. Marshall's Spur was known as the Long Spur. The Turnoff Spur was off St Phillack as you turned

the walking track to go to Mustering Flat. In later years, with the advent of Land Rovers we gradually shifted our centre of activity onto the Big Spur, building a mustering paddock and a shelter on the edge of the Plateau. We didn't use the old hut as much unless we had to.

The Baw Baw Plateau was declared a national park in the late 1970s and the Thompson Dam was built in 1980. The run licence was cancelled and we removed the cattle as we could through to 1980, although some stragglers remained. Dad and Norm have both since passed away. On losing the runs on Baw Baw my wife Robyn and I found a property in Tambo Crossing and still run cattle bred from the remnants of the Baw Baw herd. The Jans / Stag hut has now been heritage listed and will hopefully be preserved into the future.



---

# Mountain Cattlemen need to get with the times ....

L. RALPH BARRACLOUGH (with his tongue firmly planted in his cheek)



For far too long the Mountain Cattlemen have been stooped in tradition and too set in their ways to have appreciated the modern environmental approach. Cattlemen must learn to give credit where credit is due especially on alpine environmental management and be prepared to change with the times as well as displaying some lateral thinking.

The cattlemen have failed almost completely to acknowledge some of the benefits to the community and environmental achievements from the green management in the Alpine National Park. They have focused too heavily on intense fires and subsequent erosion, loss of wildlife and biodiversity without seeing the benefits.

Before humans came to Australia, plants and animals evolved over millions of years in equilibrium for a stable environment. With fires, floods and mud slides along with massive erosion now denuding the landscape, there are large areas that may never recover. It would be hard to destroy the place much more and it's unlikely to come good, we have once again reached equilibrium. Credit must be given where credit is due.

The Alpine National Park is migrating south with every flood, as sediment fills up the bottom of Lake Glenmaggie. Cattlemen like Simon Turner have failed to see how much easier it is now becoming to have the

lake filled to overflowing with water. With the overall pattern of declining rainfall, we will have people like Ingamells, Williams, Wahren and Brown to thank for the lake being full far more often. More than this, with the denuded landscape the environment has been tailor made to shed more water. World record run-off 4.57 times higher than anything ever recorded anywhere in the world has been measured around Licola by Monash University.

Over 60,000 years ago, there were huge land animals, giant kangaroos, koalas and wombats, up to two tonnes in weight. This is far heavier than any cow. The environment evolved to accommodate this mega fauna, that if we listen to the environmentalists, walked on tip toes, never went near sphagnum bogs and definitely did not bog anywhere. Mountain cattlemen need to learn to fit in with the environment by producing heavier cattle that are more natural.

In a VNPA newsletter of October 2003 Phil Ingamells stated: "The very pretty, very tough Alpine Marsh Marigold survives howling gales and blasting sun on Victoria's high country. It even flowers under melting snow .... but it cannot survive the trampling of hard hooves. This iconic alpine flower is one of a number of cattle affected plants listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act."

The Alpine Marsh Marigold survives very well. Every year there are hundreds and hundreds of flowers on Kevin Higgins Bennison Plains property with heavy grazing from horses with steel shoes. Its about time cattlemen showed some environmental respect and fitted steel slippers to their old cows to lessen the impact on this threatened iconic flower.

Just look at the global warming debate, as the world cools and Europe freezes. With the blizzard conditions now sweeping Europe they would be much worse off if we did not have global warming. The cattlemen just have to learn that you cannot let the truth stand in the way of a good environmental argument and the Europeans need to realise they need more farting cows.

Scientists around the world should take a close look at the science used to ban alpine grazing as in some ways they have achieved perfection. Decisions on grazing in burnt areas after the Caledonia fire were made with vegetation surveys consisting of two drafts and a summary, all unsigned. A "Draft Internal Working Paper" was passed off as "scientifically credible information needed to determine management options for the area." This had no finding or conclusion, no indication of who did the work, or their qualifications and no references from text books on the methodology which could have been little more than guess work. An extract from an email 26 Sep 2000 from Dr Henrik Wahren to Sally Troy Convenor "Alpine Ecology Scientific Review Panel" obtained under FOI states: *"is the PV draft proposal a joke? Its appalling! I have read both drafts of the proposed methodology and, in their current state, neither would pass as first year biology assignments"*. What has gone over the heads of cattlemen like Chris Cooper, and others complaining about the science in alpine management, is that this science has achieved near perfection - the almost perfect failure with Australian land management.

It is more than just the science that the cattlemen should be looking at and taking the lead from the scientists involved. They would do well if they followed the "natural approach" of Dick Williams with their dress standards when working in the alpine area. The cattlemen could dispense with oilskin coats, wool shirts, mole skin trousers and a whole lot more. They might need to pad out the saddles a little to make up for the missing clothing. By following the approach of Dick Williams, rather than R. M. Williams, they could save a lot of money and set a more streamlined trend on horseback mustering. They could even look at supplementing the "Cattlemen's Cup" with the "Williams Handicap." However it may be wise if cattlemen like Brian Higgins stayed as they are to protect the tradition and protect us from the shock. Lady Godiva he isn't.



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# The Alpine Marsh Marigold .... Tough or Tender?

In 2005 Ralph Barraclough sent the following letter to Philip Ingamells regarding the Alpine Marsh Marigold  
..... he is still waiting for a response .....

Philip Ingamells  
Alpine Campaigner  
Victorian National Parks Assn.  
60 Leicester St  
Carlton 3053  
philipi@vnpa.org.au  
Ph 9347 5188  
Fax 9347 5199

L.Ralph Barraclough  
Licola 3858  
lralphb@bigpond.com  
Ph 5148 8792

22-8-2005

## *Alpine Marsh Marigold*

Dear Phil

*The very pretty, very tough Alpine Marsh Marigold survives cool burning, howling gales, blasting sun, intense grazing, the trampling of cattle and horses with steel shoes in Victoria's high country. It even flowers under melting snow .... but it cannot survive Alpine Park management. This iconic alpine flower along with ancient single trunk snow gums are a number of park effected plants threatened under the type of management promoted by environmental groups like the VNPA.*

*In a VNPA newsletter of October 2003 as Alpine Campaigner you stated: "The very pretty, very tough Alpine Marsh Marigold survives howling gales and blasting sun on Victoria's high country. It even flowers under melting snow .... but it cannot survive the trampling of hard hooves. This iconic alpine flower is one of a number of cattle effected plants listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act."*

*The Alpine Marsh Marigold survives very well (we have photos) there are hundreds and hundreds of flowers on Kevin Higgins Bennison Plains property with heavy grazing and cool burning. Few would dispute that it is a threatened species in the matt of snow grass too thick for it to penetrate through in the Alpine National Park. On country not grazed since 1998 I found a handful of flowers and country not grazed for decades could only find two flowers. I spent a whole day at the beginning of flowering failing to even find one flower on the country not grazed for decades.*

*I have the following questions:*

- (1) Could you please advise how you arrived at the conclusion that the alpine Marsh Marigold "cannot survive the trampling of hard hooves." and is threatened by grazing?*
- (2) Could you advise an area where I could take media to in the many marsh areas in the Alpine National Park around Bennison with a display of hundreds of flowers similar to the Higgins property?*
- (3) During Easter 2001, over 600 people signed a letter to the Premier and independents with a sentence stating: "Many from the Licola community and visitors to the area, expect to be misled, frustrated and lied to, when dealing with Parks Victoria." Do you support this approach to promote environmental issues?*
- (4) What is the VNPA going to do to try and save this plant that appears to be seriously threatened not by grazing but the build up of a thick matt of snow grass in the Alpine National Park from the lack of cool burning and grazing?*

*Could I suggest Phil that more appropriate wording of material to try and save this plant should read like my introductory paragraph.*

*Yours sincerely  
L.Ralph Barraclough*

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# A brief, but emphatic response to Who killed Jim Barclay?

GLENN CHALWELL challenges Wally Mortimer's interpretation in his latest publication

*Authors and historians have a "duty of care" to present our history as accurately as possible, and while some of it may be subject to interpretation there should always be documentary evidence to support any theory. To do otherwise is to treat our history disrespectfully and potentially create a "false history" for once it is published - it is believed. Sources and information should be cited and referenced. If an author cannot spell a name correctly it should raise questions about the accuracy and credibility of the whole and that is exactly why Glenn Chalwell is challenging the book Who killed Jim Barclay? by Wallace Mortimer.*

I am Ada Bank's (nee Beveridge) grandson and a great nephew of Jack and Sid Beveridge. The Beveridge brothers were extraordinary people. They were without peer as both bushmen and cattle people as well as fine community members. As both men have died and therefore cannot respond to the allegations made in this book, I am doing so on their behalf. Members of two long standing Buckland Valley families Colin McCormack and Peter Eggleston, both strongly support my position. There are blatant proveable errors Mortimer's book. These reflect both the clear lack of checking proper and critical detail by the author and/or reflect the author's clear attempt to discredit the Beveridge brothers. For example:

1. The reference as to where Jack and Sid are buried. If the author was fully aware of their background, he would realise that Jack and Sid were both buried at Harrierville. (pps 100, 101 and 118)

2. The author has 'censored' a photograph of Sid (p. 71) to suit his description of him as a young person, alone in the bush. The cropped image shows someone else's hand. The full image shows him in a group on a pack horse trip. The references to Sid being in the bush avoiding conscription is without foundation and the caption is misdirecting.

3. The Jacobs purchased two paddocks from Sid directly south of Harris's Lane on the Buckland Valley Road. The Jacobs never purchased the Beveridge house block and outbuildings. Those properties were ultimately acquired by the Michellini's who still own them. Nightingales now own the Jacob properties. (p. 118)

4. The allegation that Jack and Sid never had any descendants (p. 118). They may not have had any **direct** descendants however I am their great nephew. Mortimer is aware of who I am and at no time has he spoken to me about Jack or Sid or any matter referred to in the book.

5. Mortimer alleges that Jack died unloved and unwanted. (p. 100, 108). Mortimer's research and enquiries were poor. The person he refers to in his book as Dolly Eccleston was actually Dolly Eggleston. The Eggleston family farm was just down the Buckland Valley

Road from the Beveridge home. The road next to the old farm is known as Egglestons Lane. When Dolly died she was buried with a lock of Jack Beveridge's hair in a locket around her neck. Dolly was loyal to Jack until his death and attended his funeral. Mortimer alleges (p. 108) "Jack died in his eighties, no one to mourn him even Dolly had deserted him." The Eggleston family believe otherwise.

6. Sid Beveridge never spent any time in Hawthorn Lodge contrary to Mortimer's claim. (p. 101)

From my reading of the book it appears that:

1. Mortimer has not accurately checked the most simple facts in respect to the Beveridges. He failed to speak to the closest and potentially most accurate sources of information while they were alive - that being Jack and Sid themselves - thus the credibility of the book is questionable.

2. Mortimer has failed to speak to, and indeed by his unsubstantiated comments has deeply upset the Beveridge family members, people in the Buckland Valley and Bright area.

3. Mortimer has made general reference in the book's bibliography with only general sources.

4. Mortimer makes specific comment as to his beliefs as to who killed Barclay and Bamford without referring to his source material but even going further without foundation and recounting actual purported conversations between Jack and Sid and their actions in absolute detail. This detail on any account or version cannot be correct or accurate and is totally unsubstantiated. It is total baseless supposition.

The whole book and the author's approach and reasoning in the book is disappointing. I feel that his absolute obsession with Wonnangatta distorts his objectivity. The whole purpose of the book appears to concentrate on the author attempting to destroy the reputation of Jack and Sid Beveridge. I hope people who have read the book do not take away from it a wrong and incorrect view of Jack and Sid. They do not deserve it. Their reputation in the eyes of people who do know remains intact.

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## On the Book Shelf

Mountain history buffs will be interested to hear that Ian Stapleton's latest book is about to hit the shelves. This one is called *Of Pioneers & Perseverance*, with a fine photo of old James Pender on the cover and covers all sorts of mountain identities, with "perseverance" being the one ingredient they all have in common.

It begins with the remarkable stories of two of the earliest and most remote mountain grazing families – the Pendergasts of Benambra and the Sweetapples of Glencairn. Then there's a whole chapter devoted to the Chinese miners and another on the bush women with its collection of heart-wrenching stories - enough to stop any of us today from ever complaining again! The mountain mailmen, the pack track builders and the men who looked after the early mountain roads are also covered. The long forgotten story of Ted Carlile of Mt Buffalo, who ran a 30 bed hospice there long before there was a road. Then there's the Rundell family at Flourbag Plain and their superhuman forbear, Rachael Francis, who was heavily pregnant when she crossed the Great Divide via Mt Feathertop and The Razorback in the winter of 1865, with her husband, 6 children and a packhorse or two. She gave birth to a baby boy on the banks of the Cobungra River on 22 August 1865, but he only lasted three days. First-hand accounts of the fires hitting Hotham Heights, Omeo, Woods Point and Aberfeldy, and all sorts of interesting comparisons to be made with Black Saturday. The book finishes up with the pioneering ski tourers and bushwalkers, including Cleve Cole's fatal trip to Bogong in 1936 and Charlie Derrick's epic attempt to ski from Bogong to Hotham in one day, in 1965. As usual the stories are told mostly through the memories of numerous mountain identities whom Ian has been interviewing over the last 30 years, and their accounts are mixed with a wonderful collection of historic photographs and humorous anecdotes. This time there are memories from many cattlemen including Arthur Guy, Ron and Jack Sweetapple, Jack Treasure, Jack Batty, Percy Weston, Charlie McNamara, Bren Fitzgerald, Vic Attridge, Bill Hollonds and many more.

*Of Pioneers & Perseverance* available direct from Ian at Feathertop Track, Harrietteville, Vic 3741.

Historically more than 2.9 million ounces of gold (today worth over \$350 million) have been produced from the West Gippsland area of Victoria in the belt which extends from the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range at Matlock extending down through Jericho, Aberfeldy, Toombon and Walhalla and on to Russells Creek to Foster.

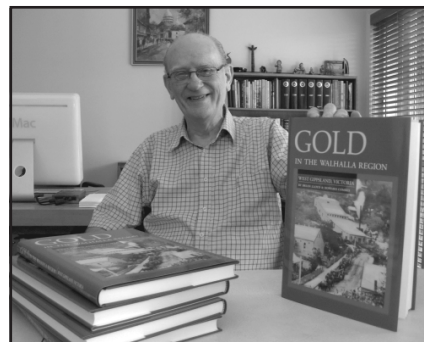
The first discovery of gold on the Jordan occurred at 1862 closely followed by Stringers Creek (Walhalla) in 1863.

The mining history of this remarkable remote part of Victoria is presented in a new 300 page history written by noted Victorian gold historian Dr Brian Lloyd AM. This latest work is co-written with Howard Coombes who with more than thirty years of mining experience holds a first class mine manager's qualification.

*Gold in the Walhalla Region, West Gippsland Victoria* is a mining history rather than a social history of the historic Walhalla mining ventures. Dr Lloyd points out that the book's story is about "where gold was found and mined in the local area, how much and by whom."

There are many biographies and company histories, much about mining methods and machinery and the contribution which other Victorian based industries made to the developments. The book is also extensively illustrated with many photos that have never been reproduced before.

Available for sale at \$70 plus \$8 postage if needed and can be ordered from 12A King Street, Hampton East, 3188 or see the website [www.histec.com](http://www.histec.com).





# Hinnomunjie Recreation Reserve

The MCAV would like to acknowledge and thank all those concerned in relocating the Get-Together to the 2011 site at Hinnomunjie. The Hinnomunjie Recreation Reserve has always been Crown Land for the recreational use of the local community. It is governed by a Committee of Management who periodically lease the land to young farmers for sheep grazing.

The Hinnomunjie Picnic Races were established at the site in 1876 with horses coming from afar to participate. Races continue to be held annually on the Saturday of the March Labour Day weekend. A grandstand was constructed for patrons to view the races but this was removed in the 1960s.

During the 1950s the Hinnomunjie Golf Club was also established at the reserve by local cattlemen Doug Gibson, Alan McKenzie and Jack Cook (father of our current Get-together coordinator John Cook). This was a thriving club until around 1970 when the Omeo Golf Club re-established in Omeo. It was also once the home of the Benambra Football Club and Hinnomunjie Tennis Club. The Shire of Omeo combined primary school sports have also been held at the site on alternate years.

Fond memories of numerous dances and other social functions held at the Hinnomunjie Hall are often recalled by locals. The Hinnomunjie Riding Club was established here as well as the Hinnomunjie Campdraft Association which raises funds for our association from their annual campdraft.



This year's planned site was at Junction Plain, north of Cobungra Station, but when inspected late last year, the site was very wet, waterlogged and deemed to be unsatisfactory. The organizing committee made the decision to move the weekend to the reserve site to ensure a more enjoyable weekend for all concerned.



## RICHARDS

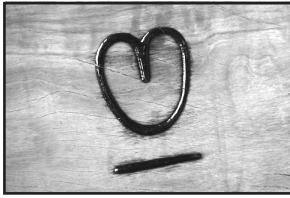
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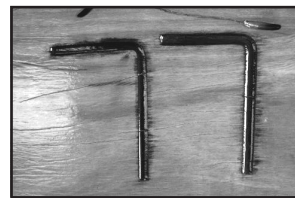
# The Brands on the Hinnomunjie Bar 2011



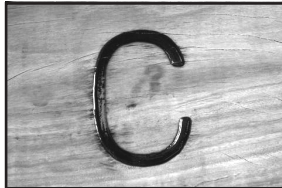
Mary Mainlands



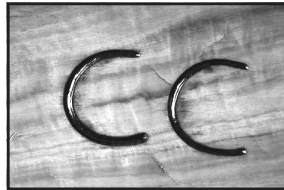
Cobungra Station



Jim Commins  
used by Bruce and  
Chris Commins



Rusty Connley



Charley Commins/  
Bluey "Phillip" Commins



(Rump) Claude  
Pendergast, Omeo  
Station now John and  
Nola Ross



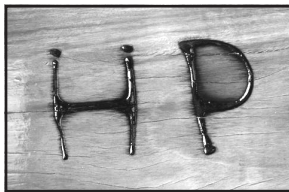
(Ribs) Charles "Togo"  
Pendergast, now his  
daughter Dina Howe,  
Mt Leinster



Geoff Burston  
purchased Doug  
Gibson property



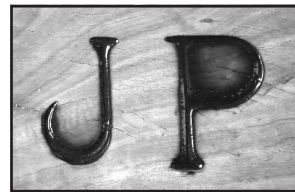
Henry Gill



Henry Louis  
Pendergast, now son  
Louis Pendergast



James Gibson, sons  
Bill and Doug Gibson,  
then Anne (nee  
Gibson) and Richard  
Faithfull. Now use  
Faithfull brand.



James Pendergast used  
by son "Creamy"  
(Charles) and now his  
sons Max and Ray



John and Danny Cook



Simon Turner



William "Wap"  
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Aaron Ralph - Livestock 0427 533 003

Livestock Agents

Don McMillan 0428 498 320

Trevor Stothers 0428 656 270

Greg Birss 0417 454 052

Bob Scott 5148 6255



## The Porter behind the Port: the MCAV Port Collection

**DON PORTER has been given Associate Life Membership of the MCAV in recognition of his ongoing graphic design work that he has undertaken for the cattlemen.**

In 1983 I was working as the photography consultant with Applied Media Resources (AMR), a unit within the Audio Visual Education Centre (AVEC) of the Education Department of Victoria.

As a photographer and graphic designer I produced media notes for teachers and students. We became well known for our film, television photography, screen study, advertising, newspaper and general media presentations.

We had already made several comprehensive Australian, and overseas, film study kits that had met with strong appeal from the industry and schools. Out of the blue we were approached by the producers of the up and coming film based on A. B. (Banjo) Paterson's *The Man From Snowy River*.

After a little discussion it was agreed that a few of us would go and observe several days of filming at Mansfield and Merrijig, especially the homestead, the start of the chase (several individual scenes of it) and the "jump". In Mansfield we were given very good access to the production team and the actors involved. Staying over a few days after the "Media Day" we were given access for special interviews on production, characterisation, and post-production. This resulted in two extensive productions with several video interviews.

I was already somewhat involved, or would have been, as two of my wife's cousins were the Higgins boys (Anthony and Kevin), both of whom were extras in the film.

At the time I was 34, I had been photographing, hiking and camping all over the high country for years as a teenager, including a lone walk from Kosciusko to the Buckland Valley during the Christmas Holidays of my sixteenth

year. One of my clients, Joe Vondra, editor of the *Forest Grower Magazine*, put me in contact with Tor Holth, who gave me valuable information and images just before his death. I had met some of the cattlemen on my hikes, but not as many as I'd heard about.

At the time there was a political side to the development of the film - to introduce and promote to the city people, the high country and the cause to save the high country grazing and lifestyle. This was to be done by introducing a "Friends of the High Country" to raise physical support and some money to help in the fight that was just starting at the time.

At this time I had far more hair than I have now and it was somewhat darker than now. I remember hearing a few of the boys at the Box Hill Town Hall commenting on *that long haired bearded Greenie type* photographing everyone as they arrived for the meeting ... I knew I had to improve my image and get involved.

Sue Silvers was my saviour - a telephone call and the rest of my life was organised! At the first meeting they were talking about the port bottles and my photographs were accepted for the first few, however the huts were the obvious illustration to use for the association's publicity. There were other activities - the photographic collection that never really got off the ground in a non-digital world; and the more successful photographic competitions and exhibitions that prove people still love to go to the high country and camp if only for a short time.

This year, 2010, I have just finished my 27<sup>th</sup> port bottle label which is Long Plain, Benambra. It is this that will grace the port bottles when members and friends converge at the next Get-Together.



## *The MCAV P*

- |       |   |       |            |
|-------|---|-------|------------|
| No. 1 | “The Jump” (1985)   | No.10 | Blairs Hut |
| No. 2 | Man and Horse resting (1986)                              | No.11 | Jamieson H |
| No. 3 | “The Ride” (1987)   | No.12 | Moroka H   |
| No. 4 | “The Dash” (1988)   | No.13 | Fitzgerald |
| No. 5 | R. M. Williams Outback Heritage Award, 12.8.88 (1989)     | No.14 | Ross Blair |
| No. 6 | “After the Runaways” (1990)                               | No.15 | Frys Hut ( |
| No. 7 | Higgins Hut 1913 (1991) <i>(first of the hut designs)</i> | No.16 | Higgins H  |
| No. 8 | Ropers Hut (1992)   | No.17 | Buckwong   |
| No. 9 | Davies Hut (1993)   | No.18 | Centenary  |



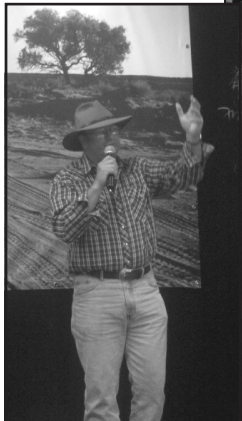
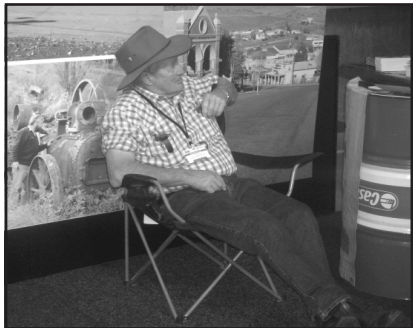
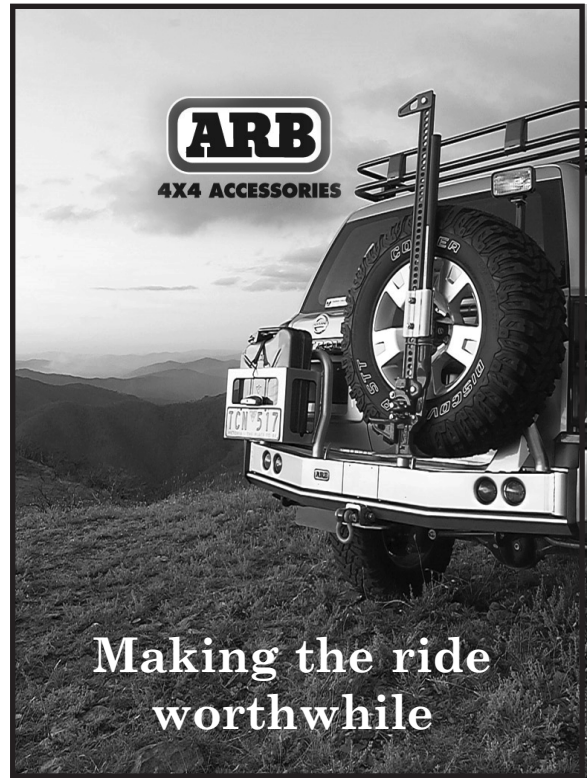
## Port Collection

- 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1994)
- Hut (1995)
- Hut (1996)
- Hut (1997)
- Special Edition (1998)
- (1999)
- Hut (rebuilt) (2000)
- Hut (2001)
- of Federation 2001 (2002)
- No.19 Lovick Hut (2003)
- No.20 Guys Hut – Bryce Plain (2004)
- No.21 Horsehair Hut (2005)
- No.22 Westons Hut (2006)
- No.23 Howitt Hut (2007)
- No.24 Commins Hut (2008)
- No.25 Craigs Hut (2009)
- No.26 Golden Point Hut (2010)
- No.27 Long Plain Hut - Benambra (2011)

# Cattlemen promoted at the 4WD Show

On the weekend of 3rd/5th September, a group of MCAV members went to the Victorian 4WD show at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds to advertise the 2011 G2G.

We were on the “Gippsland’s High Country” stand, promoting exactly that. We were lucky enough to be offered two x 20 minute displays on the main stage where Dennis Carstairs (poet) and Di Hurley and junior crackers, Emiliqua East and Riley Walsh wowed the crowd with cracks reverberating throughout the hall. ARB announced their ongoing sponsorship and many of the 34,000 people who passed through the doors wanted to buy tickets for the G2G there and then! More than 8,000 stickers and 2,000 flyers were handed out. Many thanks to those who made it all happen - Dennis Carstairs, Di Hurley, Riley Walsh, Emiliqua and Katie East, Regina Phillips, Jane Tait, Cam Steed, Bill Maiden, Scott Mitchell, Mark Coleman, John Cook and Scott Jennison.



*Clockwise (from left): Dennis Carstairs spinning a yarn; Cooky, laid back as usual; Riley Walsh, Diana Hurley and Emiliqua East with their whips; Scott Jennison and Cookiee manning the bar and Regina Phillips handing out flyers to all those interested.*



---

# Weston's Hut rebuild

BARRY HAZELDINE AND MARY GOLDSWORTHY



*28 helicopter lifts x 350kg results in all the gear at the site thanks to Parks Victoria Mt Beauty (March 2010).  
Unknown photographer*

With ominous weather forecast over the March long weekend, eighteen people headed up to Bogong for the start for the Weston's Hut rebuild.

In the week previously Parks Victoria had flown in 28 helicopter loads of materials including a slow combustion stove, insulation, scaffolding, bags of rocks for the fireplace, a generator and all the timber.

Using Blair Hut as a base camp supported by Victorian Mobile Landcare Group and under the project management of Andrew Cross, PV, the team achieved outstanding progress in spite of the varied weather conditions.

On Saturday, while dodging sunburn, the foundations for the fireplace were done, the holes for the stumps dug and stumps in place.

The showers started on Saturday night. Sunday began cold and wet and didn't improve. By the time the soaked team retreated from the bleakness back to the warmth and shelter of Blairs for the rest of the afternoon, all the bearers were on the stumps and the slab had been laid for the fireplace.

Meanwhile, nearby Mt Hotham recorded approximately 150 millimetres of rain.

By the time it came to call lunch and pack up on Monday for everyone to drive home, all the floor joists were completed. Great work everyone.

Great progress was achieved with second and third working parties held in March and April with much kinder working conditions.

On the fourth working party held on the weekend of 22/23 May the hut progressed to 'lock-up' stage. The palings were attached to the west end and the back of the hut.

The under roofing iron and ridge cap was also attached and the door and windows all fitted.

All materials not so far used were stored in the hut for protection from the winter weather. Bill Goldsworthy, Brendan Weston, the draftsman and Mary Goldsworthy walked into the hut to check on progress and thanked all the hardworking volunteers for their sterling efforts.

Work will recommence on Weston's Hut on the November long weekend.

*Rumour has it that the November weekend was also fraught with inclement weather. Congratulations to all concerned on getting this far with the rebuild. -ed.*



# *Childhood Sweethearts*

## **Verse 1:**

*She's a townie and he's a drover,  
And they both have no social lives,  
Their chosen careers didn't go far,  
Childhood dreams don't always work out right  
And they've been waiting for a miracle,  
Childhood sweethearts.*

## **Verse 2:**

*She wants to get serious and buy their own place,  
And maybe a farm when their ship comes in,  
But she should know that dreams don't go far,  
And wishin' should be condemned a sin.  
And she's been waiting for a miracle,  
Childhood sweethearts.*

## **Verse 3:**

*He's pretty oblivious to the fact,  
That she's the main breadwinner,  
And he still thinks that  
His droving dreams will come true.  
And he's been waiting for a miracle,  
Childhood sweethearts.*



## **Bridge:**

*She wanted a prince, instead she got him,  
  
He wanted a beauty, now he's stuck with her,  
  
Neither of them deserves it.....*

## **Verse 4:**

*This is a story about a townie and a drover,  
Whose childhood dreams didn't work out right,  
And they're both square pegs stuck in round holes,  
Condemned to be there for the rest of their lives.  
And, they're still waiting for a miracle,  
Childhood sweethearts.*

*Childhood Sweethearts by Molly Coleman won the Bush Minstrel section of the Don Kneebone 2010.  
Music and Lyrics by Molly Coleman*

---

# Wonnangatta Fire Risk - as relevant now as then

In 2006, three thousand copies of a newsletter were circulated regarding the Wonnangatta Valley .....  
it seems that things never change.

*This is a warning to all people going into the Wonnangatta Valley in the Alpine National Park on the Labour Day weekend 11 - 13 March 2006.*

Parks Victoria has stopped grazing and allowed grass fuel in the Wonnangatta Valley to build up way past dangerous levels. There is a real risk to the safety of visitors to the area being trapped with little chance of escape in a fast moving fire racing down the valley.

On 7/ 8 March 2006, two bushfire experts visited the area at the request of mountain cattleman and members of the Licola Fire Brigade. David Packham has been a bushfire scientist for over 40 years including eight years as supervising meteorologist for bushfire weather with the Bureau of Meteorology. Rod Incoll was a former chief fire officer with the old Forests Commission. The two experts along with senior cattlemen, the daughter and grand daughter of one of the previous owners of Wonnangatta Station, an elderly stockman who started work there when he was fourteen and the captain of the Licola Fire Brigade, all made an inspection of the area. Fuel levels on the river flats and surrounding valley were assessed and the potential of a fire breaking out with fuel loads of over 10 tonnes/ha of dead dry grass on the flats was estimated. The results were truly frightening.

With 40 kilometre per hour wind gusts and 39 degree temperatures, as well as 10% humidity forecast for 12 March, a fire on the flats would race down the valley with a flame height of more than 30 metres travelling at three metres a second. The fire that killed the five fire fighters at Linton in 1998 on a CFA tanker was estimated to have an intensity of 10 megawatts per meter (MW/meter). A fire on the Wonnangatta flats could produce an intensity of 54 MW/meter. This is totally unsurvivable to anyone trapped in the fire front, even in vehicles. The sides of the valley around the flats has maximum fuel accumulations which is around 30 tonnes/ha which would cause a full crown fire (burning above treetops) with an intensity of 100 MW/metre travelling at 2.2 metres per second making escape for many from the area along the rough 4WD tracks near on impossible. A comment made by Packham was the thing that most amazed him with the place was that nobody had already been killed there.

The north - south direction of the valley greatly increases the fire risk. A hot northerly wind (as forecast for Sunday, going into Monday), would roar down this valley. The many river gums have a huge accumulation of candle bark which is the very worst material to produce spot fires. A fire starting at the head of the valley would

rapidly throw spots with the potential to light up the whole area in a very short time filling the place with smoke and blocking all escape to the hundreds of people who visit the area on a long weekend.

Up until Parks Victoria took over Wonnangatta it had always been a safe place. The 1939 and 1965 fires did not get into the valley. Because of this reason little is known about localised fire behaviour, it could be far worse than outlined. The only place in the area with any hope of survival from a hot fire is under a woollen blanket inside vehicles in the elm forest just south of the homestead, though survival even there could not be guaranteed. This won't be for much longer as the trees are infested with elm beetles and unlikely Parks Victoria will care enough to address the issue.

For a long time Parks Victoria have not been answering letters from the Licola CFA Captain on the risk to lives in campsites in the Alpine National Park along the Wellington River. Parks have not returned phone calls on the Wonnangatta fire risks this weekend either and refuse to close the area. Parks intend to increase patrols during the long weekend. This will cause some improvement stopping campfires escaping, but if a fire does break out, all this is likely to do is increase the number of body bags to be carried out. The question of where OH&S stands with Parks employees put into such a situation needs to be addressed. The serious risks in Wonnangatta have been known for sometime. Up until this long weekend the grass has been green enough to retard a fire and the weather forecast has been for cool conditions, unlike the extreme conditions coming this weekend. It is unlikely any of the relevant Government agencies involved are going to address these issues. It is unfortunate our very responsible and competent Police have no power to close the park as this solely rests with Parks Victoria who created the problem in the first place. It would seem Parks Victoria have an appalling record of placing political agendas far ahead of human safety and exercising a duty of care.

On a visit to the area on January 10, 2006 to observe the cattleman's protest the captain of the Licola Fire Brigade was not able to get answers from Park Rangers as to how they would address the fire risk. Rangers were also not able to give any evacuation plans for the hundreds of people who frequent the area. The worst aspect was the rangers even refused to witness measurements of the extreme fuel build up beside where their own vehicle was parked.

*L. Ralph Barraclough, Licola 10 March 2006*



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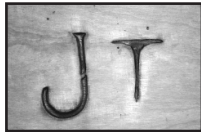
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# The Brands on the Presidents' Bar

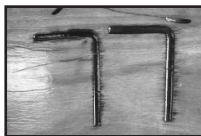
*All Presidents' of the MCAV have their brands on the Hinnomunjie Bar 2011*



*S.J. "Jack" Treasure  
1969 - 1976*



*Simon Turner  
1999 - 2005*



*J.A. "Jim" Commins  
1977 - 1987*



*Doug Treasure  
2006 - 2007  
\* plus position on beast*



*David Treasure  
1988 - 1990  
\* plus position on beast*



*Christa Treasure  
2008 - 2009*



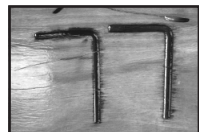
*Doug Treasure  
1991 - 1993  
\* plus position on beast*



*Doug Treasure  
2009 - 2009 (retired ill)  
\* plus position on beast*



*Mary Goldsworthy  
(nee Weston)  
1994 - 1996*



*Chris Commins  
2009 - 2010*

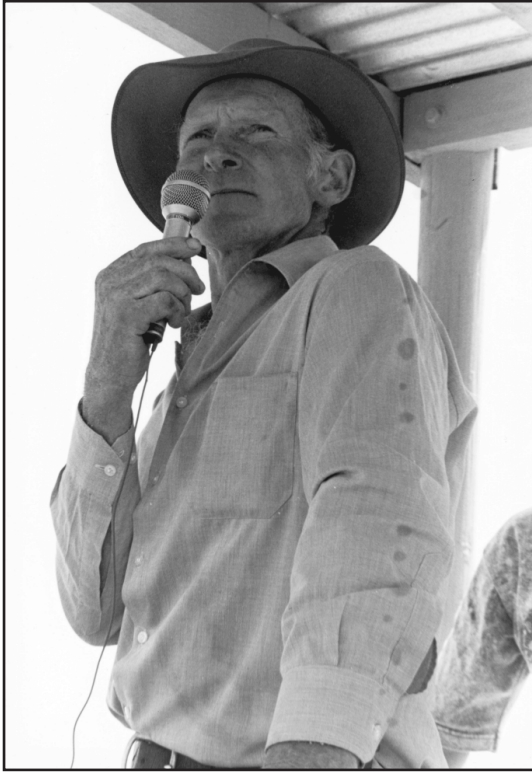


*Harry Ryder  
1997 - 1998*



*Mark "Nook" Coleman  
2010 -*

*The bar tops and boards at Hinnomunjie were proudly crafted by the Duncan family - Terry, Lisa, Don and Valma, Mick and Sue.*



## Graham "Rusty" Connely

13 July 1937 - 27 November 2010

Graham James Connley known to most people as Rusty was born at Carlton on 13 July 1937, the third child of James and Grace Connley of Omeo (both deceased).

Rusty spent his early childhood at Bingo, until the family moved to Omeo to be closer to school.

Rusty grew up with his brothers and sisters Eileen, Ron, Jeanette, Helena, Tom (dec), Ken and Roger. In recent years Rusty was thrilled to find out he had another sister Dorothy who is now very much a part of their family.

Rusty was educated at Omeo Primary School, but most of his education came from life on the land. He knew what hard work was on the family farm from a very early age.

He loved his football playing for Benambra from 1954 to 1973. In 1963 he played for Omeo, who went through undefeated that year, with Rusty playing in the position of full back or centre half back. The year he played for Omeo his father was not at all pleased with him so he knew he had to return to the Benambra Footy Club.

Rusty enjoyed rodeos and competing, bringing home many ribbons. In 1966 he won the Gippsland Champion Bronc ride.

Rusty married Pauline Pendergast in 1966 and they had two sons, Wayne and Michael. Rusty gave his two boys nick names as soon as they were born, Wayne became Joe, and Michael became Doc. Pauline said 'it was a waste of time giving their sons a name because no one really knew them by their right name'.

Unfortunately Doc tragically lost his life fifteen years ago.

Rusty's father Jim was the microphone announcer for the Omeo rodeo and the Omeo and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society Show for many years. On his father's death Rusty took over his father's job and Rusty's voice has been heard over the microphone at the Omeo Rodeo and the Omeo Show for over 40 years. Rusty was also the microphone announcer for the Australian Mountain Bush Racing Association for many years. His voice has always been heard at the Mountain Cattlemen's Get-Together held each January.

Each Easter he looked forward to mixing it with the city blokes, and called the action at the Cuff and Collar vs Geebung Polo match with his mate Jim Castricum.



Both Rusty and his son Joe played for the Geebung team. Rusty was proud of Joe's ability to hit the ball from one end of the field almost to the other.

Rusty took part in the *Man from Snowy River II* film, as a crack rider and wrangler.

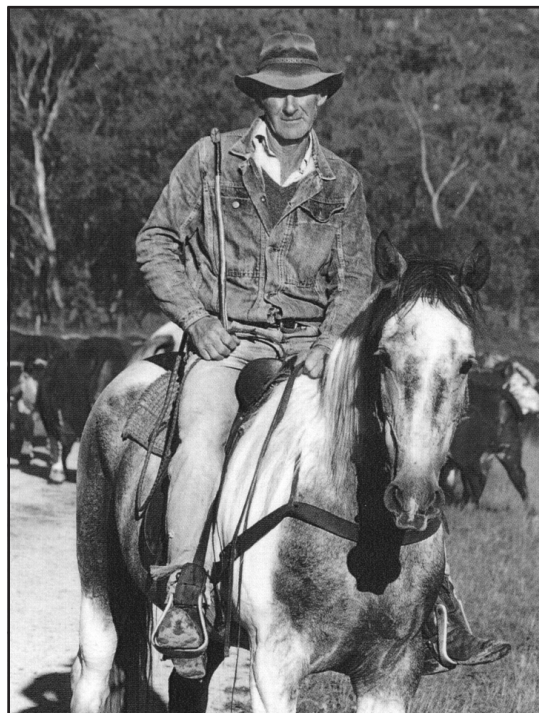
On one occasion when Rusty took part in the Mountain Cattlemen's Cup, he was going quite well until he jumped his horse Riley over a log while carrying a billy of water. The breast plate broke leaving Rusty seated in his saddle on the rump of his horse with a long rein, but he still held the billy just minus the water.

Rusty freely gave up his time to help others, such as lost bush walkers in need, helping young people in need of advice with their horses or wishing to develop their bushcraft, and volunteered on many local committees.

He was a life member of the Omeo and District Race Club, being a member for 30 years and president for 13 years; Omeo Rodeo Committee; Omeo and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society; Australian Mountain Bush Racing Association; and a member of the Benambra Football Club; Omeo Football Club; Benambra Hall Committee; Hinnomunjie Recreation Reserve Committee; Benambra School Committee; Benambra Landcare Group; Hereford Society; Victorian Farmers Federation and the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria with 30 plus years on Central Council.

Rusty loved to dance and would dance the night away no matter what the function was, as long as he could grab a pretty girl to dance with he was happy.

The management of the bush was very important to Rusty. A trip to the bush could take extra time if Rusty saw a weed on the side



of the road that should not be there. He would stop and pull or dig it out, at the same time cursing the so and sos who make no attempt to control weeds and just drive past them.

Rusty loved the high country and the serenity of the bush, the sound of birds, the wildlife and wildflowers. Nothing he loved more than to be riding his horse with his dogs and droving or mustering his Hereford cattle on the high country leases, and camping at Charlie's Creek or Buckwong.

He would say when you are in the bush and you look around you realise there is a god.

He always said the best meals were cooked in a camp oven over the open fire, the only way to cook toast was over an open fire with a toasting fork he had made from number 8 wire, and there was nothing nicer than billy tea.

When the National Park leases ceased and Rusty's three huts were destroyed in the 2003 fires, he was devastated. It was Mountain Cattlemen's history taken away from those who cared and managed the bush.

Rusty loved his Beloka property and was passionate about improving his pastures, and spent countless hours studying the breeding genetics of his Hereford cattle.

He enjoyed educating his young horses by using them as pack horses and would lead them with one of his homemade baling twine halters or bridles to his favourite bush spots. He loved to plait halters and bridles sitting warm in front of the open fire.

He believed the only way to work cattle was on horseback with his trusty Smithfield dogs. Rusty believed they were the best dogs for finding cattle in the bush, and when back home, he would be seen putting them over the shearing board to removed their shaggy winter coat in preparation for the hot summer.

Throughout Rusty's illness he was positive and determined to return to good health right to the end, lifting weights and making plans for the farm, but most of all he wanted to get back on a horse again, which he achieved in February

2010 at Buckwong when his cattle were there for the summer grazing period. He would look forward to spending time at his Beloka home with his dogs and horses, looking around the paddocks and his beloved stock. Many days he would be seen in the yards at Beloka pushing his wheelie walker covered in mud and shit in the stock yards, giving orders on what needed to be done. Only a few weeks ago he was making decisions on what bull to put with what cows, and did not lose interest in running the farm to the end.

Rusty returned to the family home where Pauline, Joe and Trudy cared for him throughout his illness until he peacefully passed away, where he wanted to be, at home with his family.

As we farewell Rusty today, on the anniversary of his father's birthday, he will leave us supported by his family - former wife Pauline; son Joe and his partner Trudy; his brothers, sisters and friends. His horse - Larry - and saddle, his dogs - Kozzie, Wolf, Charcoal, and Tackles, his swag and tuckerbox. He will return to the High Country to watch over the cattleman and their leases, and no doubt keep an eye on us too!

*This eulogy was given at Rusty's funeral held at Benambra on 3rd December 2010.*



## *My Beloka Mate*

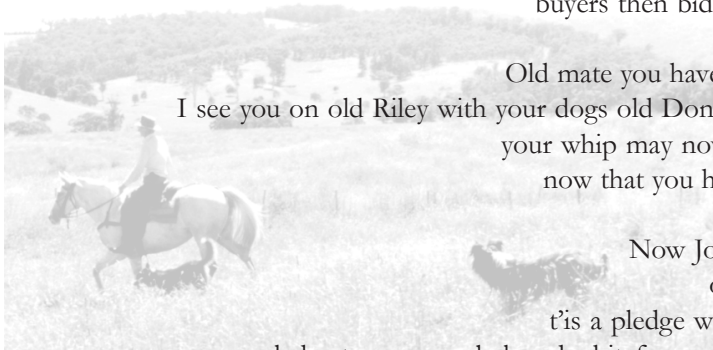
I first met Rusty at Groggin Station yards back in 1978,  
we shook hands and yarned,  
and I knew this man from Beloka would be a real true mate.  
The many years of friendship through the good times and the bad,  
looking back I remember, all the good times we both had.

We used to broadcast at Bush Races and Get Togethers too,  
no matter how tough things got, Rusty stood by you.  
It was at times real hard work, but with Rusty you could turn it into fun,  
we worked together to see the events were properly run.  
Sometimes he'd say, "I would like a sleep, if I had the chance",  
but when all events were finished, he'd stay up all night and dance.

Rusty as a father, was proud of his two sons,  
then sadly a tragic accident saw the family lose Doc.  
Rusty told me man to man, he never could come to terms with that shock.  
As a mate I know that caused him so much heartache and pain,  
then his chest would swell with pride, when he saw Joe take the reins.  
The Charlies Creek run was taken up back in 56,  
then our friends the National Parks closed the run in 2006.

For fifty years Rusty cared for his mountain run,  
there's no cattle up there now, not even one.  
I know that made him sad, but the decision had been made,  
he told me since the trees were burnt, there's barely any shade.  
The hut burnt down, his summer home for those fifty years,  
when he told me that, his eyes were filled with tears.

Rusty as a cattleman, he sure had no peers,  
t'was always a pleasure at sale time, splitting the heifers from the steers,  
then drafting them up the tops then two's and three's.  
When buying any bulls Rusty didn't need to check the EBVs.  
Auctioneers would say Connley cattle of renown,  
buyers then bid up, and sang out "knock them down".

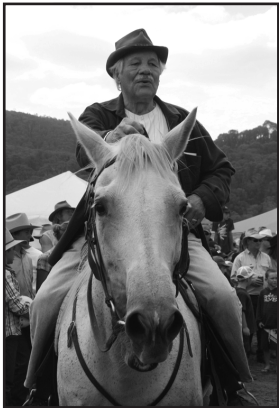


Old mate you have left us now, for that muster in the sky.  
I see you on old Riley with your dogs old Don, Drover and Wally sitting by your side,  
your whip may now be silent, but your memories remain,  
now that you have gone things will never be the same.

Now Joe and Trudy with Pauline by their side,  
once more your mountain run will ride,  
t'is a pledge we have made, and we will fight to keep,  
a pledge to see your beloved whiteface cattle, once again graze at Charlies Creek.

*Alan Brewer*





## Gus Mercurio

10 August 1928 - 7 December 2010

Gus Mercurio, the gravelly voiced actor who played Frew in *The Main from Snowy River* was one of the most recognised and loved faces in Australian television and honorary cattleman.

Born in Milwaukee, in a boxing family, he joined the Marines when he was fifteen and served three years before becoming a professional boxer. After being injured he went to university in Iowa to become a chiropractor. He came to Melbourne with the US Olympic boxing team in 1956 and never left.

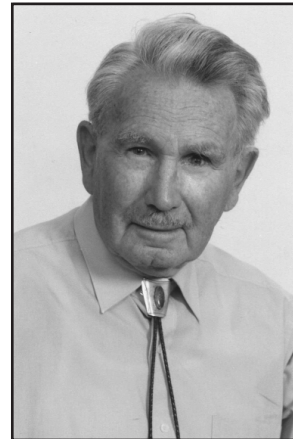
He worked as a chiropractor in country Victoria and was involved in boxing as a world-class referee, commentator and administrator. But it was his knockabout looks and laid-back attitude that earned him a string of character acting roles and made him a favourite with local audiences.

When remembered by fellow *Snowy* star, Sigrid Thornton, she said, "he had a rugged kind of look, but that belied the sensitivity of his personality. He was a kind, generous, spirited human being."

Gus wasn't well two years ago when the Get-Together was scheduled to be held at Mansfield but there was no way he was missing out, making a supreme effort to be there for the reunion of the *Snowy* cast - much to everyone's delight. As his son Paul reportedly said, "Dad was 82 and he loved the business, he loved getting in front of the camera and he loved people....It's a great shame. I would have loved for him to have written his autobiography because he had a few secrets that he didn't tell."

The MCAV extends its sincere sympathy to the Mercurio family for their loss.

*Eulogy has been extracted from The Age and Herald-Sun.*



## R.W. "Dick" Condon

OAM, B.Sc Agr, FAIAS

1924 - 2010

Dick Condon, who died on 8 March, aged 85, was best known for his ten year tenure as Western Lands Commissioner NSW from 1974 to 1984. But that came after a successful career as Special Soil Conservationist with the then NSW Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as a Research Officer and botanist, and was followed by a later stint as a much-in-demand rangeland and environmental consultant.

He had a long career in the ecology of difficult environments and was responsible for ensuring the satisfactory stabilisation of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Authority construction works. He also had responsibility for directing the reclamation programme carried out by the SCS in the summit of the NSW Snowy Mountains.

Dick had been a keen proponent of National Parks as repositories of the natural environment, however he had serious second thoughts about the wisdom of total protection from man-made influences and saw it as having an adverse influence, creating a false environment which, in the case of Kosciusko National Park, could only lead to disaster.

A strong supporter of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, he was an ardent advocate for the use of grazing and cool fire as management tools.

Dick Condon is survived by his wife, Dorothy, sons Greg, John, Tony and Peter, and a daughter, Jane (Rogers) and their families.

# Mountain Cattleman Bernie Lawler remembered



On Saturday 3 April 2010 along Dungey's Track the MCAV relocated the memorial plaque for Bernie Lawler from Mt Hotham.

Mary Goldsworthy, the youngest child of Eric Weston was on hand to represent the MCAV. Mary and her husband Bill, took over her father's B.H.P. run after his death in 1991. The plaque was relocated from its original position as ski runs and tourism have encroached on the area originally selected on Mt Hotham overlooking the valleys.

The following comes from the speech that Mary gave on that day.

"The friendship between the two families, the Lawlers and the Westons was indeed a long and lasting one. My earliest memories of the strength of that friendship, which goes back nearly ninety years, and sixty of those I remember clearly. Few people outside the family circle get honoured with the term "Aunty" and "Uncle". Such was the case with the Lawlers. As a small child I loved to visit Aunty Annie, Uncle Vic and Uncle Ned up Snowy Creek. If a trip to the Lawlers was mentioned, my late brothers soon readied their fishing poles and a tin of worms. Seldom was I asked to join them down at Snowy Creek on their expeditions. I wasn't really that fussed because I received special treats from Aunty Annie who was a fantastic cook – her sponges, scones and ginger nuts were a treat. She also let me explore the garden around the Lawler home and visit the chooks and chickens.

Vic and Ned were always willing to help Dad and the Briggs family when cattle came in early from

## MARY GOLDSWORTHY

the High Plains following snow on the mountains. They would muster the cattle, put them in a paddock and contact Dad. Such was the case with the stragglers (those cattle that came in after the main muster). Bernie carried on this tradition long after Vic and Ned passed away.

Many times my father would arrive home in a flannel shirt and trousers of Ned's as Dad was a similar build. He would have arrived into Lawler's, cold, wet and hungry and Aunty Annie would soon provide a meal fit for a king and a change of clothes.

The Lawler family had a long association with grazing on the high plains with the distinction of having three huts along the route from Freeburgh, along Dungey's track. Two of the huts were along the east Kiewa Valley with a third on Mt Higginbottom, adjacent to Hotham Heights at an altitude of 5800 feet.

Many changes have occurred in the High Country since Bernie's death in 1983 and the unveiling of his plaque on Mt Hotham in 1986. Gone from the high country are all the mountain cattlemen and women, their leases, their cattle and a special way of life. Two wild fires in 2003 and 2006 have changed our beloved high country forever.

Today we gather to relocate Bernie's plaque closer to home in more tranquil surroundings. We fondly remember Bernie and all the Lawler family as proficient horsemen, successful graziers and some of the best people you could ever meet.

*Photographs supplied by Sue Ryder*

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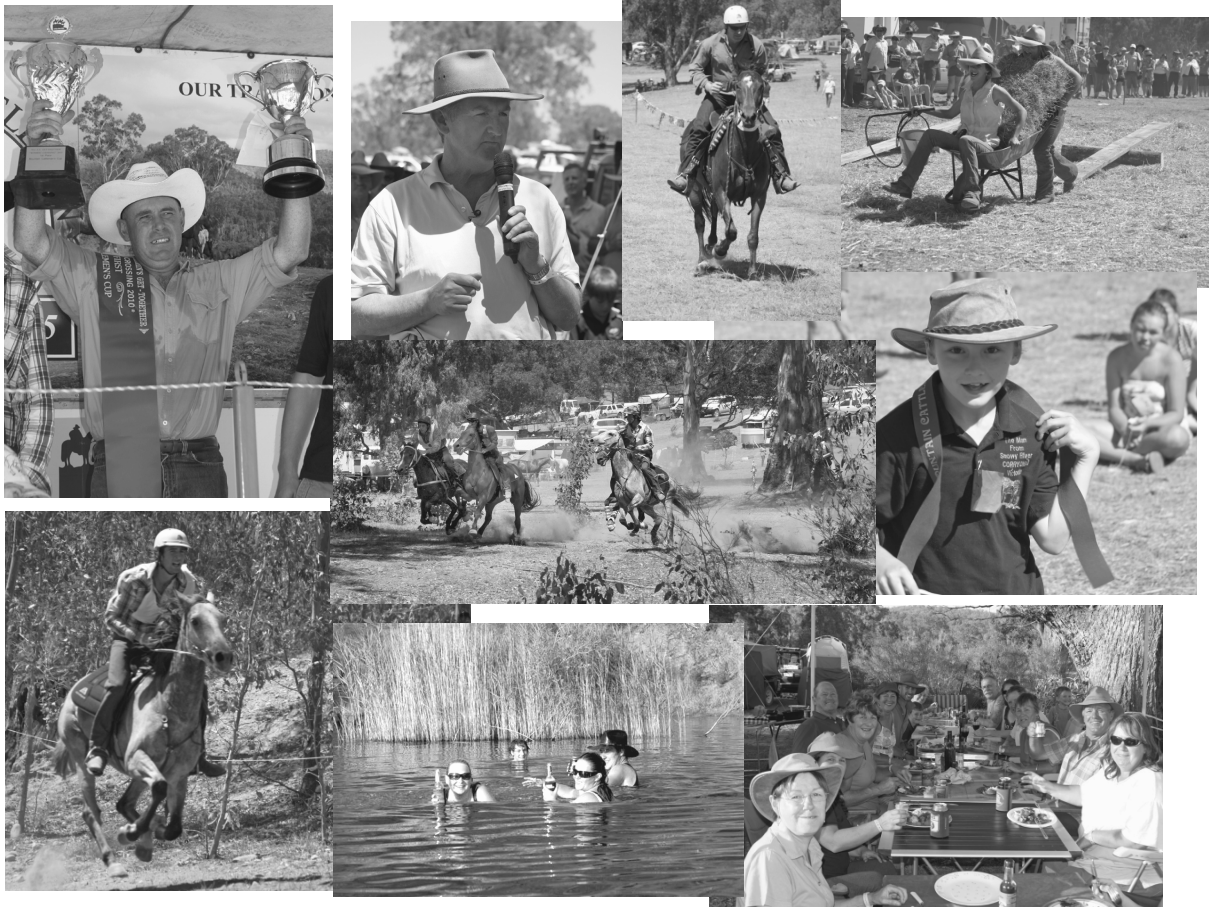
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# 36th Annual Get-Together Wombat Crossing 2010



The 2010 Get Together on January 8, 9 and 10 at Howson's property on the Avon River, Boisdale, was a tremendous success, locally, domestically and internationally and was held on the beautiful, undulating Avon river hill country.

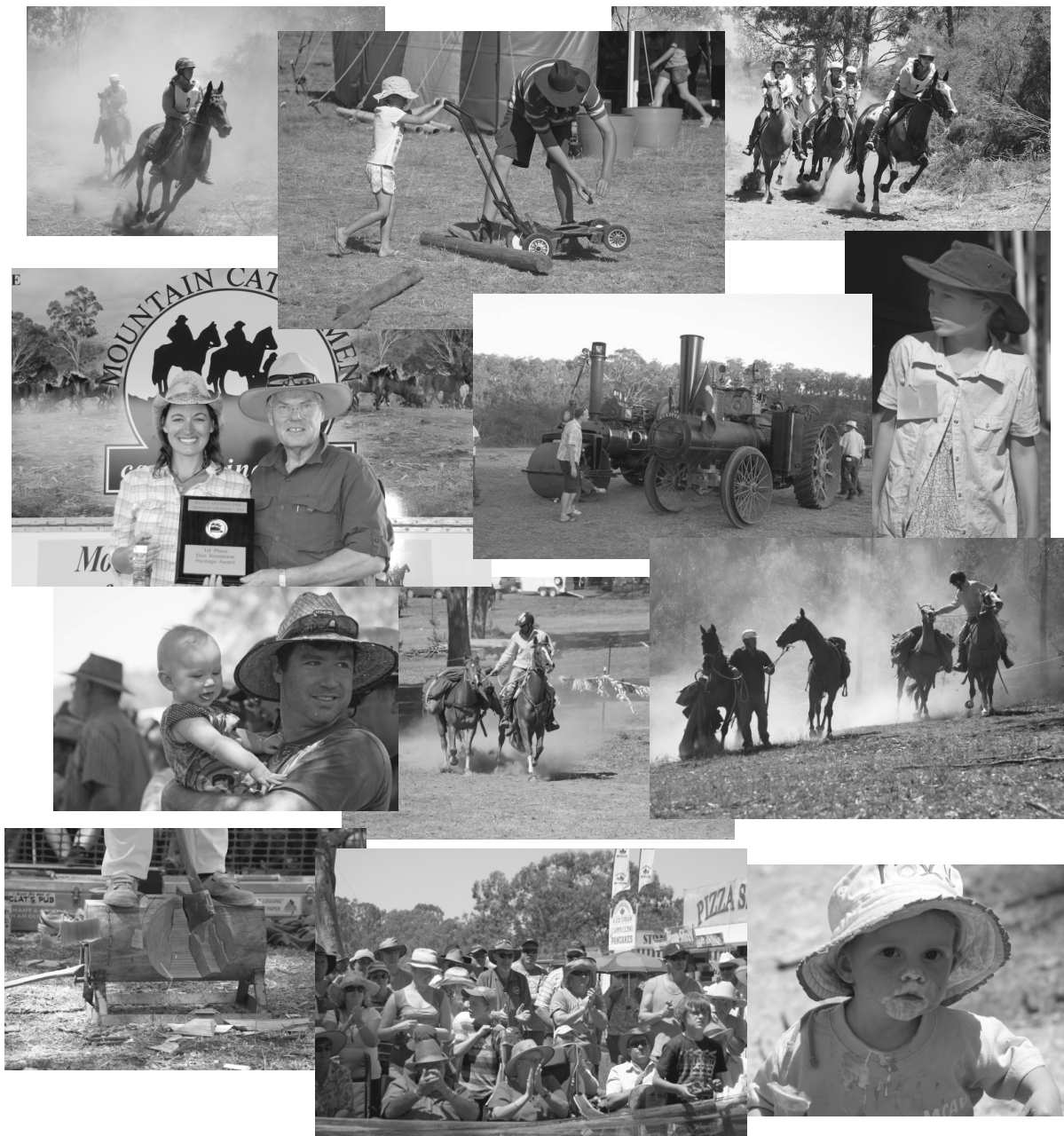
The Cattlemen's Get Together celebrates the heritage and history of grazing in the high country and was originally set up for cattlemen from the different grazing areas to meet and discuss common issues.

Despite the heat, a strong 4000-plus crowd was in attendance over the weekend and many kids' activities were well received. The Don Kneebone Poetry Award and the Bush Minstrel, Poet Laureate and Junior Poet sections were all very well received and definitely highlighted the importance of this event to the cultural heritage

of the mountain cattlemen's life. The Bush Poetry is a critical part of the Get Together, and is a major drawcard and experience, and anyone interested or who has friends who are interested should be strongly encouraged to take part.

Horse events including the famous Cattleman's Cup, (both Senior and Junior), the Frank Ryan Packhorse Championship, sprint races, polocrosse, whipcracking and fun novelty events were held and were extremely successful.

Again the local community was extremely generous in donating its time, resources and experience. The MCAV wishes to gratefully thank the Howson family for the generous use of their wonderful property for the Get-Together and the hardworking Get-Together committee organisers. The MCAV also wishes



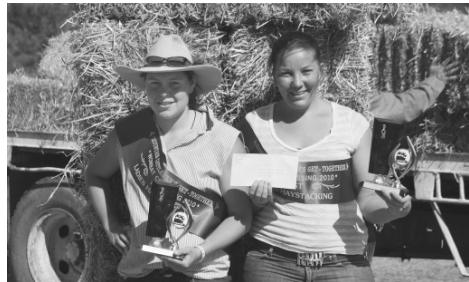
to wholeheartedly thank all the wonderful people who gave their time, and our terrific sponsors that were listed in the last issue of *Voice of the Mountains*. Many of them help us out year after year.

The MCAV Get-Together was also attended by a number of politicians. The leader of the Nationals, Peter Ryan, received a rousing reception when he announced that, should the

coalition be elected at the next state election, it was their intent to re-introduce cattle grazing to the Victorian High Country as part of their fire mitigation plan.

Plenty of good food to eat, merchandise, and fellowship was had over the weekend and we look forward to seeing everyone again at Junction Plain, Cobungra Station.

*Ben Treasure 2010 MCAV G2G Co-ordinator*



**Wombat Crossing  
2010**



Results for 2010 were -

**Junior Whipcracking  
10 yrs and under**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Jacqueline Davies
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Emiliqua East
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sophie Clark
- 4<sup>th</sup> Riley Walsh

**Juvenile Whipcracking**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Luke Higgins
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Paige Williams
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Emma Higgins
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sarah Rennick

**Ladies Whipcracking**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Aleshia Sievers
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Diana Hurley
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Paige Williams
- 4<sup>th</sup> Jodi Walsh

**Open Whipcracking**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Aleshia Sievers
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Diana Hurley
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Paige Williams

**Dog High Jump**

- 1<sup>st</sup> "George" and Hugh McWhinney  
World Record Height 2.92m (9'7")
- 2<sup>nd</sup> "Collette" and Tim Crooke

**Bushmen's Challenge**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Melory and Darren
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Emma and Gemma
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Rianna and Richard
- 4<sup>th</sup> Shaun and Jade

**Ladies Haystacking**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Jo and Tab Ashlin
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sonia and Rianna
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kerri and Gemma Mowbray

**Men's Haystacking**

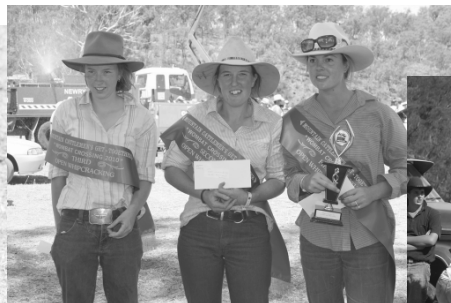
- 1<sup>st</sup> Ben Conway and Leo
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Scott and Shaun
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Chris and Roxi

**Men's Tug-O-War**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Victor Bravos

**Ladies Tug-O-War**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kate Hodge and Wombat Warriors



**Wombat  
Crossing  
2010**

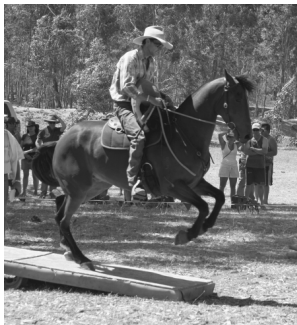
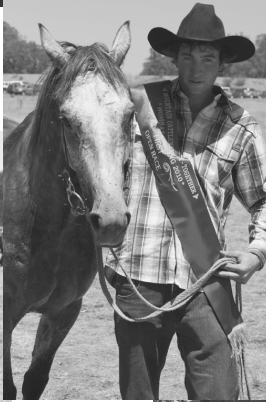


An 'Eclipse' traction engine featured in displays by the Heyfield and District Vintage Machinery Group.

*Photographs of the Get-Together courtesy of Frances Westbury and Regina Phillips  
with feature photographs by James Vereker (©W www.horsephotographics.com.au)*



# Wombat Crossing 2010



**Walking Race**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Don Euendon
- 2<sup>nd</sup> John Douglas
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Roger Smitharam on "Abby"

**Relay Race**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Treasure family

**Open Race**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Chris Connley on "Cascade Blue"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jo Stephens on "Dollem"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lukas Roberts on "Blue"
- 4<sup>th</sup> Matt Maliki on "Kip"

**Sprint Race**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Catherine Marriot on "Rosie"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zoe Jennings on "Indie"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ellen Forge on "Barney"

**Frank Ryan Memorial Australian Packhorse Championship**

**Men's**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Graham Forge on "Barney", packing "Sebastian"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron Connley on "Surprise" packing "Crikey"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kane Lamperd
- 4<sup>th</sup> Ian Forge

**Ladies**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ann-Maree Forge on "Sebastian", packing "Barney"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Bonnie Newton on "Sox", packing "Spikey"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Melinda Douglas on "Cody", packing "Dan"

**Junior**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ellen Forge on "Morrie", packing "Denny"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kerri Ann Forge on "Sebastian", packing "Barney"

**Neatest Pack**

Ann-Maree Forge

**Mazda Junior Cattlemen's Cup**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marika Angrove on "Streetwise"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Micaela Vanwinden on "Kojack"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sammy Lizars on "Kardy"
- 4<sup>th</sup> Cassie Malady on "Maisie"



Start of the Open Race, won by Chris Connley on "Cascade Blue" (r).





**Mazda Mountain**

**Cattlemen's Cup**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Neil Waite on "Sam"
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Dean Pendergast on "Spur"
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brett Lancaster on "Grey Mare"
- 4<sup>th</sup> Dale Perdon on "Wrangler"

**Don Kneebone Heritage Award**

**Snr** Sonia Buckley with her song "Rusty"

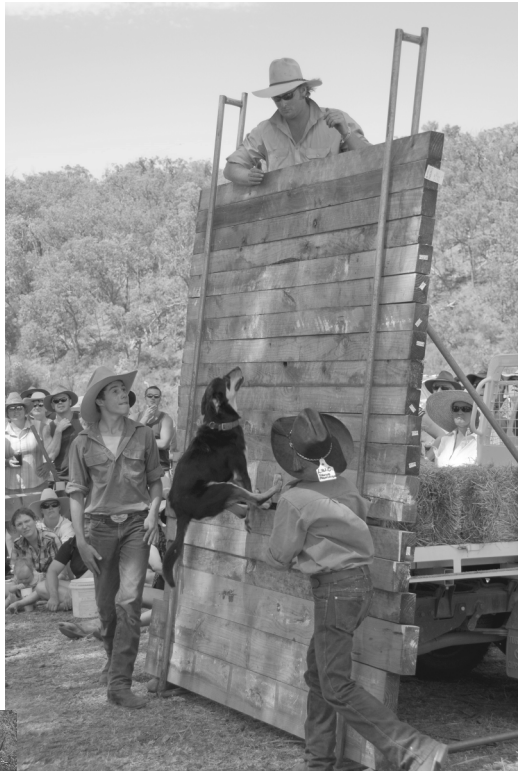
**Bush Minstrel Award**

Mollie Coleman with her song "Childhood Sweethearts"



*Dale Perdon on "Wrangler" descends the gully in the Cattlemen's Cup.*





*Hugh McWhinney waits for his kelpie "George" to scale the jump and below, "George" claws his way to a world record 2.92 m. in the Dog High Jump.*



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## Buff Rogers inducted to the Stockman's Hall of Fame

BUFF ROGERS FROM "ROCKBANK", WULGULMERANG has family ties to the mountains dating back to 1903 when his father went to live at Black Mountain - a cattle property with extensive High Country leases. Well known amongst the high country families, Buff has recently been recognized by the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach, Queensland.

For Buff Rogers there is no greater pleasure than riding around the High Country in nice weather and watching your cattle grow fat and shiny in the summer months.

A long-time member of the MCAV Buff was recently inducted to the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach with life membership for his association and service to the High Country.

"I was quite thrilled and it was a nice gesture," Buff said at the presentation held at Beechworth.

"More importantly, it is great for Victorian cattlemen to be involved with something like the Stockman's Hall of Fame because they are such an important part of our national heritage."

The honour bestowed on Buff proved timely as the state election delivered a change of government and the promise of a reversal on the ban on High Country cattle grazing.

Buff could not be more excited by Labor's dismissal as he recalled that some of his darkest days came in the devastating wake of the 2003 fires and afterwards the Labor Government's refusal to renew grazing leases.

"I did not think I'd see this day and to be honest I didn't think the Coalition would get in," he said. He's confident the new government will deliver on its commitment to restore some grazing rights to mountain farmers. "I'm sure it will go ahead, but I'm not sure what the scale of it will be

– and there will be some big challenges as the logistics are worked out," Buff said.

"Bureaucracy gets a pretty big say these days and you've got potential causes of conflict with the likes of National Parks. A lot of work will need to be done in the first few years, a lot of the old tracks need to be opened up and you need people who know how to run cattle in the bush. But I believe there are enough mountain families equipped with the skills to make this work and to save an important part of our heritage."

For Buff now it's a time to reflect on what these changes will mean not only for the future of his fellow cattlemen but for his own family – his niece Janine Cooper and her husband Chris lease much of his country to run a very successful Hereford operation.

"Yes, it's a lot of work to run cattle in the high country but it's very enjoyable," he said.

"I love cattle, I love the bush and, despite what they say, mountain grazing is a good tool for lessening the intensity of fires, of which we are all too aware up here.

"The cattle do very well through summer, it keeps them healthy and fit and gives the home country a spell, saving feed for winter and making management easier."

It's a way of life he holds dear.



---

# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria held on Friday 29 October 2010 at Akoonah Park, Berwick commencing at 10.13am.

## **Present**

Neville Wright, Cath Noble, Susan Noble, Diana Hurley, Peter Monds, Brian Higgins, Scott Jennison, Melissa Kerr, Steve Kerr, Mathew Jameson, Simon Turner, Danny Cook, John Cook, Chris Cooper, Ben Treasure, John Andrews, Jane Tait, Christa Treasure, Ray Anderson, Rhonda Treasure, Frances Westbury, Amanda Whyte, Graham Osborne, David Hurley, Leonie Phelan, Tania Coleman, Ross Brown, Richard Faithfull, Janelle Coles, Anne Faithfull, Mark Coleman, Chris Commins and Fiona Treasure.

## **Apologies**

Geoff Beechy, Rod and Stephanie Bedggood, Jim Blundell, Des and Sally Green, Jane Sage, Don McCarthy, Sandra and Ellsworth Vonthien, Jack Geddes, Howard James, Bruce McCormack, Peter O'Reilly, Chris Jenkins, Pieter Arriens, Anthony Higgins, Kevin Higgins, Rita and John McMahan, Erica Kirk, Ron Briggs, Alan McKenzie, Craig Willis, Sue Donnelly, Darren and Michelle Shepherd, Noel Levin, Janette O'Keefe, David Evans, Scott Maddison, Judi Anderson, Alison Tovey, Terry Langley, Jane Holth, Alison Clark, Bill Gear, Ronald Farrell, Bernard Evans, Kathy Junor, Bryan Bassett, Charlie Lovick, Rose Faithfull, Colleen Hurley, Doug and Mary Treasure, Magda Brown, Janine Cooper, John Rogers, Wayne Coleman, Pat Coleman, Max Blair, Lyn Wright.

## **Confirmation of Official Proxy Votes**

Charlie Lovick proxy to Graeme Stoney  
John Rogers proxy to Chris Cooper  
Brian McCormack proxy to Richard Faithfull  
Colleen Hurley proxy to Brian Higgins  
Bruce Treasure proxy to Christa Treasure  
Rose Hurley proxy to David Hurley

## **Confirmation of Minutes**

It was agreed that the minutes as circulated of the Annual General Meeting dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009 held at Akoonah Park, Berwick are a true and correct record of proceedings.

*Christa Treasure / Simon Turner*

*Carried*

## **Reports**

### **President's Report**

Chris Commins presented his annual report as tabled.

### **Financial Report**

Anne Faithfull presented the financial report for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 as tabled.

*John Cook / Brian Higgins*      *Carried*

### **Marketing Report**

Susan Noble presented her annual report as tabled.

### **Election of Office Bearers**

All office bearers vacated their positions and the chair was occupied by Graeme Stoney.

#### *President*

Mark Coleman was nominated by David Hurley and Brian Higgins and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Mark Coleman was declared elected to the position of President.

#### *Vice President*

Simon Turner was nominated by John Cook and Richard Faithfull.  
Chris Cooper was nominated by Mark Coleman and Brian Higgins.  
Both nominees indicated that they would only accept the nomination conditional upon it being a joint position. Simon Turner and Chris Cooper were declared elected jointly to the position of Vice President.

#### *Executive Officer*

Graeme Stoney was nominated by Chris Commins and Ross Brown and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Graeme Stoney was declared elected to the position of Executive Officer.

#### *Secretary*

Amanda Whyte was nominated by Christa Treasure and Ben Treasure.  
Janelle Coles was nominated by Richard Faithfull and John Cook.

Graeme Stoney elected to conduct a secret ballot with Fiona Treasure and Anne Faithfull as scrutineers.

After a vote was taken Janelle Coles was declared elected to the position of Secretary.

*Treasurer*

Anne Faithfull was nominated by John Cook and Wayne (Joe) Connley and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Anne Faithfull was declared elected to the position of Treasurer.

*Marketing Officer*

Jane Tait was nominated by Mark Coleman and Simon Turner and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Jane Tait was declared elected to the position of Marketing Officer.

*Project Officer*

Chris Commins was nominated by John Cook and Brian Higgins and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Chris Commins was declared elected to the position of Project Officer.

**Appointment of Auditor**

It was agreed that Ken White (Chartered Accountant) from Whites Accounting and Taxation Solutions continue as auditor.

*Graeme Stoney / David Hurley Carried*

**Appointment of Public Officer**

It was noted that according to the Associations Incorporation Amendment Act 2009 (No. 12 of 2009) section 56(6) “(a) a person who was the public officer of an incorporated association immediately before the commencement of Part 3 of the 2009 Act is deemed until the next annual general meeting of the incorporated association to be the secretary of the incorporated association”...

Therefore the Secretary of the association is now responsible for the duties of the Public Officer and there is no longer a need to appoint a Public Officer.

*Graeme Stoney / David Hurley Carried*

**Fixing Honorariums**

Simon Turner moved to rollover honorariums as per previous year. Graham Stoney agreed with Simon and asked that Central Council have the power to review them after the Get-Together. Following discussion, it was decided that both Vice Presidents would receive \$2,500 each and that Get Together Coordinators John Cook and Scott Jennison would receive \$3,000 each.

President	\$21,000
Vice President	\$2,500
Treasurer	\$10,000
Secretary	\$7,000
Marketing Officer	\$3,000
Get Together Coordinator	\$3,000

*Simon Turner / Brian Higgins Carried*

It was decided to continue reimbursement of President’s expenses as per last year. “That the President’s expenses to include an \$80 per month reimbursement for phone and out of pocket expenses plus travel cost of 30 cents per km when on official business.”

*Amanda Whyte / Ross Brown Carried*

**Setting Membership Subscription Fees**

Full membership fees and Associate membership fees to remain the same as last year.

*Full Membership*

Grazing Members	\$220.00
Non-Grazing Members	\$50.00
Associate Membership	\$30.00 single \$40.00 family

*Graeme Stoney / David Hurley Carried*

**Branch Annual Reports**

*Mansfield – Graeme Stoney*

There are only a few members in the Mansfield Branch so it is easily run. We generally communicate via phone and are very active supporters of the association.

<i>President</i>	Bruce McCormack
<i>Secretary</i>	Graeme Stoney
<i>Central Council Delegates</i>	Graeme Stoney Charlie Lovick Bruce McCormack

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## *Gippsland – Ross Brown*

Although the weather was extremely hot and dry, Gippsland held a successful Get Together this year and we thank Ben Treasure, Scott Jennison and John Cook for their hard work under the extreme conditions. The Gippsland branch is growing with an effort to encourage associate members to attend meetings as well as enjoying social activities too.

*President*            Ross Brown  
*Secretary*         Tania Coleman  
*Central Council Delegates* Brian Higgins  
                                 Chris Cooper  
                                 David Hurley

## *Omeo – Chris Commins*

The camp draft at Hinnomunjie was a great success this year raising \$5,000 for the MCAV thanks to Phillip (Bluey) Commins for his efforts. The 2011 Get Together is all in order and on course. The only issue may be that the venue will be too wet but an alternate venue has been sourced. There will be a working bee on the Sunday before the Get Together. All signage has been organised and the Get Together trailer will

be in use. The trailer will go to the Mansfield branch for the 2012 Get Together. The 4WD show in Melbourne was a success with 8,000 stickers and 4,000 flyers being handed out – we will push to have our own MCAV stand next year.

*President*            Bruce Commins  
*Vice President*    Wayne (Joe) Connley  
*Secretary*         Chris Commins  
*Central Council Delegates* Danny Cook  
                                 Simon Turner  
                                 Wayne (Joe) Connley

## *North East – Ken Heyward*

The North East branch has been in recess for some time but is once again alive and well, and getting back on track.

*President*            Ken Heyward  
*Secretary*         Fiona Treasure  
*Central Council Delegates* Christa Treasure  
                                 Glen Chalwell  
                                 Ken Heyward

Reports accepted as presented.

*David Hurley / Amanda Whyte*      *Carried*

**Special Resolution – Changes to Constitution**

To discard the previous Statement of Purposes and Rules of the Association dated August 1984 and adopt a new Statement of Purposes and Rules of the Association dated October 2010.

*This resolution cannot be acted upon due to the omission of the Grievance Procedure which is required by the Associations Incorporations Act.*

Some items of the current constitution are outdated and need to be changed to comply with the Associations Incorporations Act. Discussion to be carried over to the next Central Council meeting.

*Chris Commins / Christa Treasure Carried*

**Formation of Constitution Committee**

It was agreed to set up a Constitution Committee to develop and complete a new Statement of Purposes and Rules of the Association. Any new ideas from Branches to be sent to the Secretary for forwarding to the Constitution Committee Convenor for consideration.

The Constitution Committee will include President Mark Coleman and the following members - Scott Jennison  
nominated by Ross Brown / Danny Cook

Ray Anderson  
nominated by Christa Treasure / Rhonda Treasure

David Hurley  
nominated by Leonie Phelan / Ross Brown

Simon Turner  
nominated by Brian Higgins / Danny Cook

Neville Wright  
nominated by Ben Treasure / Ken Heyward

Chris Commins  
nominated by Graeme Stoney / Glen Chalwell

Graeme Stoney  
nominated by Chris Commins / Amanda Whyte as elected, with Anne Faithfull as the Convenor of the Committee.

*Graeme Stoney / Ross Brown Carried*

The final draft will be presented to Central Council for ratification before being distributed to all members, as per procedures detailed by the Associations Incorporations Act. Amanda Whyte requested that all members have a copy of the current constitution.

**The meeting was declared closed at 11.55am.  
Next AGM scheduled Friday 24th Sept. 2011**

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The Olde Country Kitchen Omeo  
Bairnsdale Horse Centre  
Aleisha Sievers and Brett Lancaster  
Advantage Pharmacy Omeo  
Blue Duck Inn  
Eskdale Hotel  
Ross International  
Lifeaid



The Association is indebted to these businesses, organisations and individuals for their loyal support of the mountain cattlemen. And if we have overlooked including you in this list .... our apologies and thanks. This year we owe a special thanks to the Hinnomunjie Racing Club for the use of their facilities at such short notice and all the Get Together workers who attended working bees and spent untold hours "getting things ready" to ensure a successful weekend. Thank you all.



# Acknowledgments and Back Issues

*Voice of the Mountains* is a voluntary project.

Each year it comes together because a small number of people answer my phone calls and emails.

This year was no different - the same late night phone calls and emails were sent and received. Thank you everyone who assisted.

This year the lucky recipients of the pushy phone calls and emails were:

Anne Faithfull, Ian Stapleton, Scott Jennison, Laurie Webb, Graeme Stoney, Wendy Jubb Stoney, Terry and Lisa Duncan, Susan Noble, Brian Higgins, Simon Turner, Ralph Barraclough, Mack Stagg, Chris Commins, Christa Treasure, Fiona Treasure, Don Porter and Mark Coleman and I know others responded quickly to requests on my behalf so thank you one and all.

Our photographic contributions just keep getting better and better.

Once again, Frances Westbury has thoroughly documented the Get Together with her photographs as well as Regina Phillips and I thank them for their efforts every year. Frances also took the cover image of

Ron Connley. Thanks also to James Vereker, who sent me some wonderful images at the last minute including the one of Ron on the reverse cover. His images are all commercially available from his website [www.horsephotographics.com.au](http://www.horsephotographics.com.au) and well worth a look.

Leanne Dyson who after years of helping still hasn't learnt that helping me complete *Voice* means 2am (and after) finishes for a week.

Her assistance with the actual production of *Voice* in the "find this", "read that" and coffee departments is invaluable. Thanks Leanne.

Neil Cox also got "roped in" at the last minute and again spent hours on end proof reading when he should have been hay carting. Thank you Neil. If there are any typos it is something I changed after they had finished.

Every year Stephen Baggs (my employer), let's me put *Voice* ahead of work, for the MCAV. He also supplies all the computing power, facilities, internet, phone and e-mail access that I need..

This year has been no different. Thank you again Stephen.

The team at E-Gee Printers have again come through and got the job finished in time. It has become somewhat of a New Year ritual with them. Thanks guys.

Everyone helps - so it happens and it gets done.

If you have something to contribute to the next edition please feel free to send it to me at P.O. Box 816, Bairnsdale 3875.

Debbie Squires, Editor

**Limited back copies of some of the past issues are available by post from MCAV, P.O. Box 1840, Bairnsdale 3850**

