

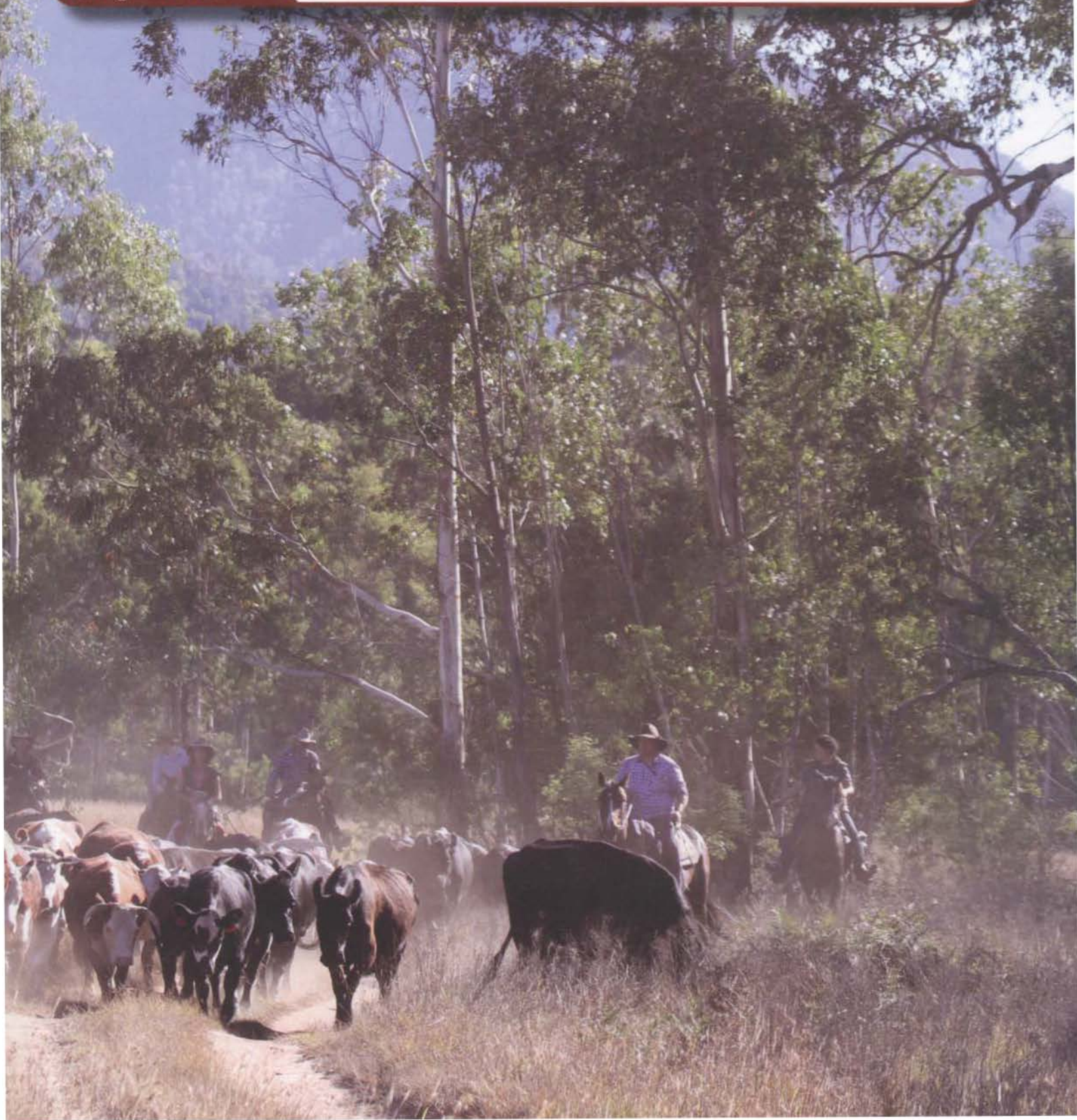


Voice of the Mountains

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

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No. 38 (2015)



Voice of the Mountains

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

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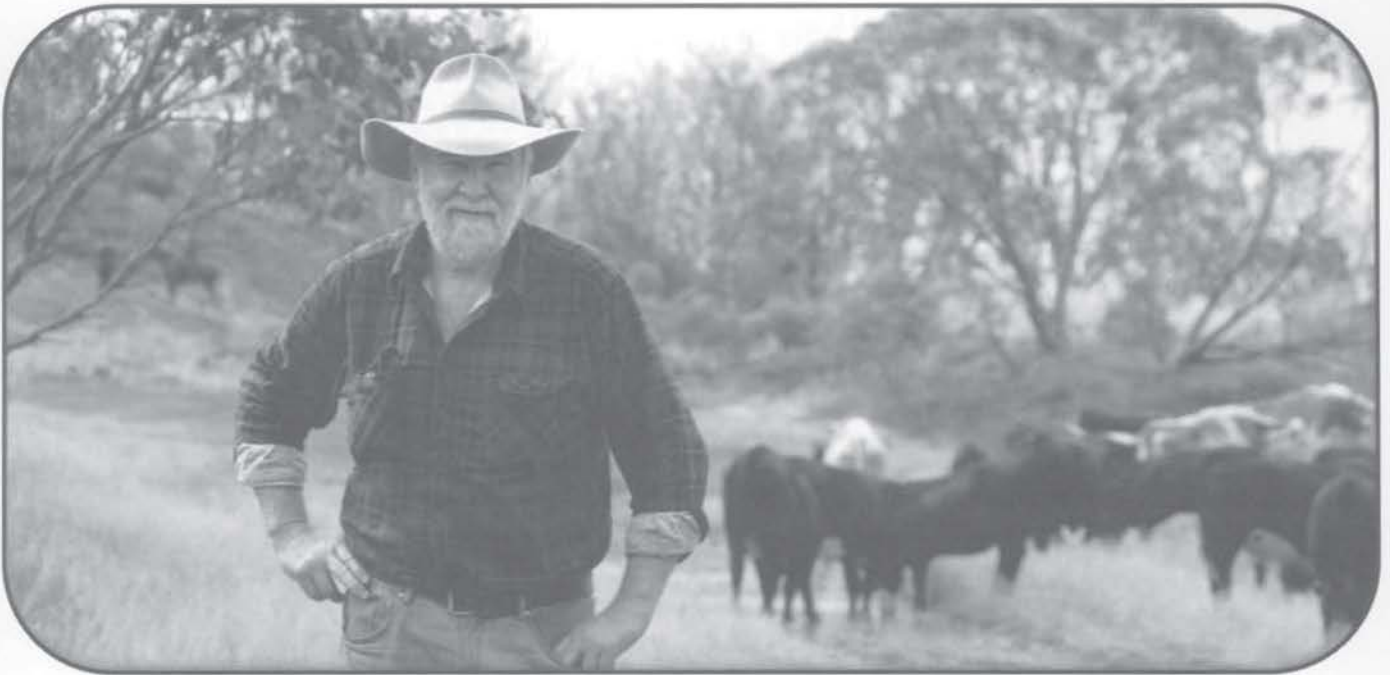
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COVER IMAGE

Melanie Faith Dove was on hand when cattle returned to Wonnangatta Valley for the trial that has now been cancelled. You may have seen Melanie's work in her publication *Best Mates: Australian dogs and their two-legged friends*. Rumour has it that a new publication later this year will be devoted to the mountain cattlemen.

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President's Message 2015

A word from Charlie Lovick

Wonnangatta trial dumped by the new Government
MCAV and its families treated with contempt.

IN a major setback for future management of the High Country, the new Minister for the Environment, Lisa Neville, and the newly elected Labor Government have cancelled the three year Wonnangatta grazing trial after one year.

The Minister treated the MCAV with disrespect by informing us of her decision through rural radio on 10 December 2014 and then sending nothing in writing for the next nineteen days.

The Government's decision to cancel the trial came despite the MCAV writing to the Minister on the day she was sworn in, asking her to hold off on any final decision. The MCAV letter and nine page briefing document to the Minister, pointed out that the trial is vastly different to Alpine Grazing which is on a rangeland scale and thus could be seen to be a different activity to the Government policy which is to ban Alpine grazing. For the record last September, we had met the Minister when she was Opposition Spokesperson as we did with the other political parties.

Charlie Lovick and cattle on Howitt Plain en route to Wonnangatta when the now abandoned trial was commenced.

Melanie Faith Dove photographer.

Over the nineteen day period from 10 December *Channel Nine* and the rural media picked up the story as did *The Age* newspaper but it took until 29 December for an official letter to be emailed notifying us that the trial had been cancelled.

When the Minister's original radio announcement was made, the MCAV was in the advanced stages of planning the second year of the trial including arranging cattle from all over the High Country to be taken to Wonnangatta. The trial was due to start after 1 January 2015 so arrangements had to be put in place. Because of the many rules required in the contract by the Government, the project is complicated and thus costly to the MCAV. Planning and administration included trips to the valley last Spring to organise a new supervisor's camp, assess stocking rates, plan several new access routes and meet officials.

On 10 December, we had to put everything on hold, including another planned trip to Wonnangatta while we waited for the official letter.

This is the worst treatment the MCAV has received from a Minister or Government since our Association was formed in the mid 1960s.

Since that time, we have dealt with at least nine different State Governments. We have always been polite and respectful in our lobbying. Without exception until now, that respect has always been returned by respective Ministers and Premiers from all sides of politics.

For example, when the cattlemen rallied on the steps of Parliament in 1984 with 304 horses and two dogs, Ministers from the Labor Government accepted a petition on the steps. Afterwards, Premier John Cain showed respect by inviting MCAV representatives into Parliament House to discuss the issue.

In the mid 1980s, a group of Labor Government Ministers came to the High Country and were taken on horseback for an inspection by my father Jack Lovick. They were polite and respectful during the three day trip, even though opinions strongly differed. They joked that the grazed country looked so good that it should be in a National Park! (It doesn't look so good now, by the way).

Some years later Minister Joan Kirner attended a dinner where the retiring President of the MCAV Jim Commins was recognized for his lobbying efforts to retain Alpine grazing and for his untiring efforts to alert authorities about the deteriorating condition of public land. Mrs Kirner spoke with and was gracious to, the cattlemen who had been fiercely campaigning against her Government's plans to create an Alpine National Park and conclude alpine grazing. Mrs Kirner told the audience that the Cattlemen were the best lobbyists she had ever come across and that one of their secrets of success was the polite way they treated everyone, even when they were angry.

In 2004 a partisan Labor Parliamentary Committee, which had no experience in public land management or had any scientific background, was given the task of collating a case to ban Alpine grazing. This committee at least had the courtesy of inspecting the High Country and politely listening to our members' point of view. It was inevitable that in the end it chose to accept the

view of a small group of scientists who had a personal vendetta against Alpine grazing because that suited the Government's political agenda.

Now we have a new Minister and a new Government which has shown no interest in the history or conventions established during this long running and historic dispute. It has completely dismissed any need to show respect for a group of well-known and responsible rural people exercising their rights to defend their heritage and culture and promote good public land management.

It also unilaterally cancelled an agreement we had made with the Gurnaikurnai people and the Government to develop a joint management plan for Wonnangatta.

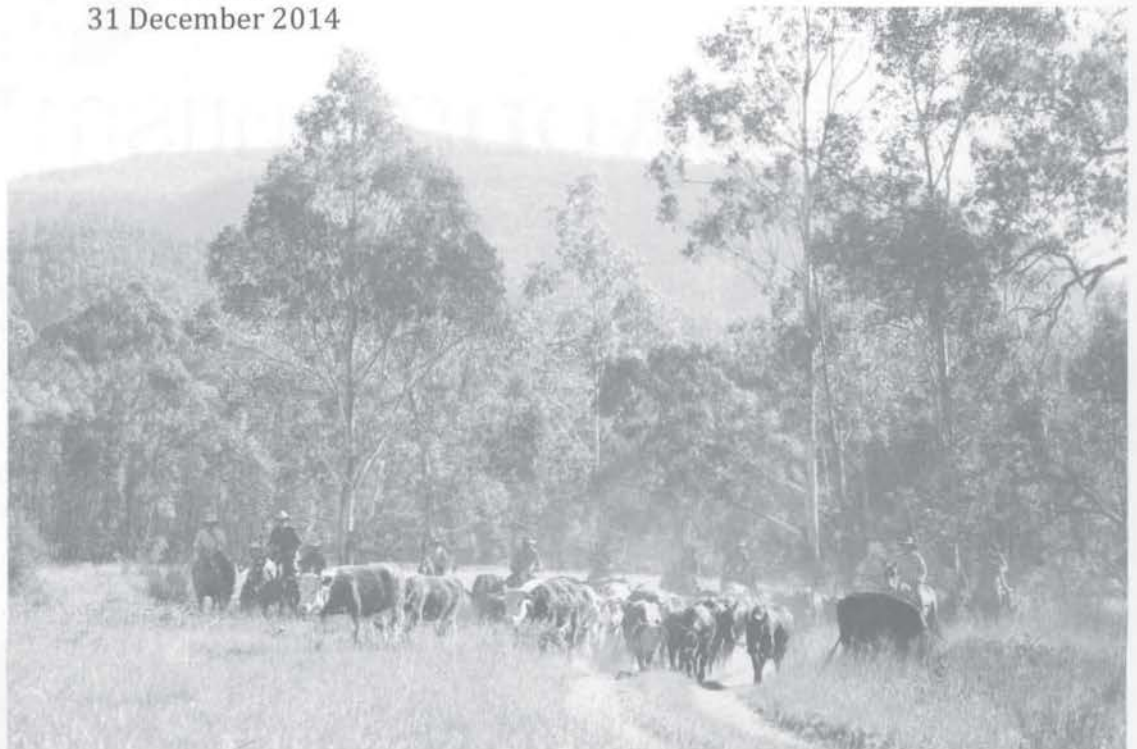
The implication of these actions to our members is that the new Government believes the traditions and culture of the mountain cattlemen are worthless. Its actions confirms that a group of rural and remotely based Victorians, with generations of knowledge and a long history of settlement in the High Country (dating back to James McFarlane in 1834), is no longer of any use or interest to a city centric Government.

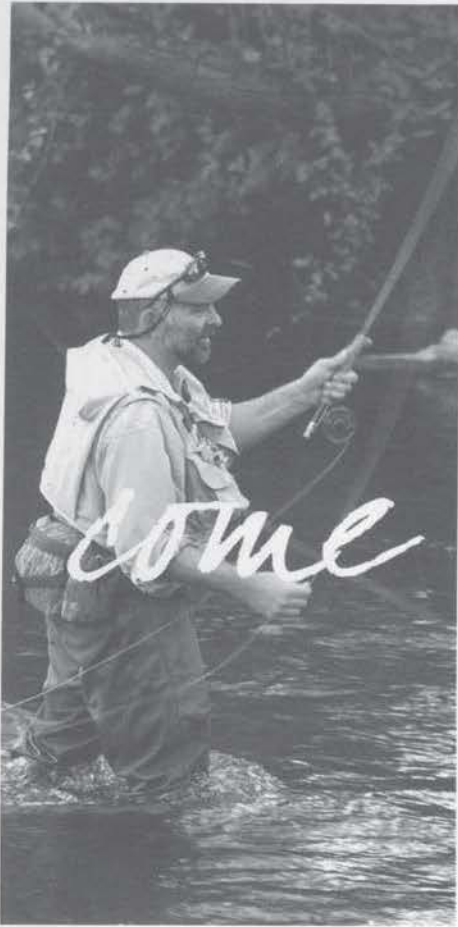
This situation is a disgrace and we will not accept that treatment.

The three year trial was to prove once and for all if grazing reduces fuel loads in the grazing zones in the High Country. The MCAV had agreed to accept the findings. The cancellation of the trial after the cattle had been in the trial site for only half of one grazing season means the basic question remains unanswered. It is inevitable now that the debate will continue without any chance of a resolution.

What an opportunity lost.

Charlie Lovick
31 December 2014

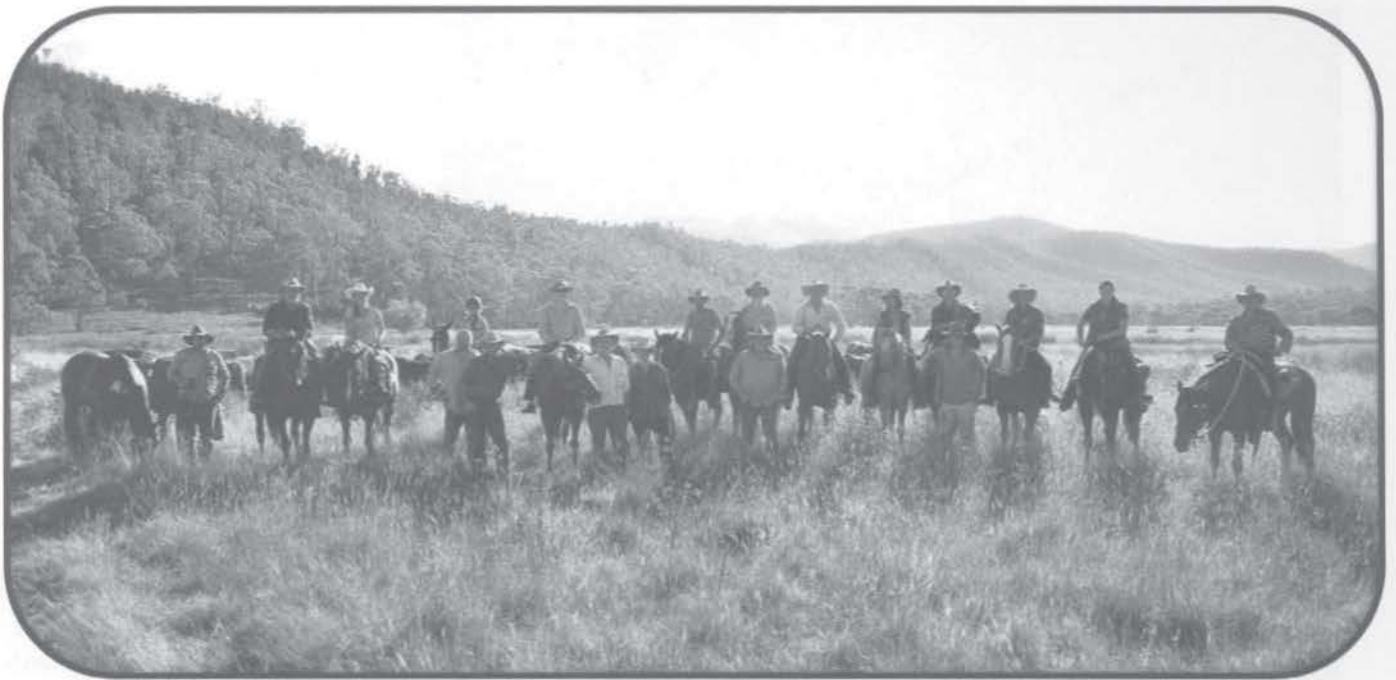




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The Wonnangatta Trial

came and went after one season!

Will we ever go back?

AT the 2014 Get-Together held in January 2014, the MCAV was unsure if the proposed three year grazing trial in Wonnangatta would get the green light. When it finally went ahead, it only lasted the one year. Year two and three of the planned trial was ripped up by the incoming Labor Government, in the first few days of power.

When the final Federal Environment approval was given to the Coalition State Government in February, the State then engaged the MCAV to supply cattle for the trial. On 19 March 2014, fifty seven head of cattle arrived in the Wonnangatta valley from Merrijig walking down the traditional stock route - the Dry River track.



The drovers and back up crew line up at the trial site when the cattle arrived in the valley. Minister Ryan Smith in the saddle. *Melanie Faith Dove* photographer.

The trial site was located on the flats on the West of the Dry River and extended to the Myrtleford road. The cattle were contained with electric fencing and cattle grids placed on the four wheel drive track.

The Minister for Environment, Ryan Smith MP, was on hand to greet the cattle and the drovers. Television and other media recorded the event. It was an historic and highly significant day for the Mountain Cattlemen.

Geoff Burrowes who was part of the team that brought the cattle in has written since ;

"From our own perspective the trial has been immensely rewarding. The lift in spirits, after so many years in despond, as our cattle streamed out over the Howitt High Plains was palpable ... even though they were restricted to the road. As you know, our arrival in the Valley was



Gatta, the red roan calf and new mascot of the MCAV (the only calf born in Wonnangatta in the last fifty years) belongs to John Lovick.

celebrated long and hard. We felt like we were home, again. Our membership is rejuvenated, our young ones inspired and even the hoary old hands have a tear in their eye and spring in their step. We have a new mascot: the only calf born in the Wonnangatta Valley in the past half century, a little red-roan fellow that walked all the way out under his own steam. His name is Gatta."

Under the requirements of the trial the cattle had to be supervised 24 hours a day. This was totally unnecessary as were other stringent requirements. We were fortunate that many supporters offered their time to oversee the cattle. This strong interest and support was greatly appreciated by the MCAV. The cattle grazed the trial site until 11 May and then were driven out via Van Dammes saddle and the West Buffalo before being trucked home from Ken Heywood's yards at Catherine Station.

Independent scientific survey work was undertaken before and after the cattle were at the trial site.

The trial generated great interest from both supporters and opponents of Alpine grazing.

Centre of the attention was the elusive pale Golden Moths Orchid. It became obvious

that little is known about its habits around Wonnangatta but the trial created a surge of interest among scientists; interest that had been lacking until suddenly the cattle arrived!

When Labor was elected, the MCAV immediately attempted to put the case to the Minister that the trial is different from rangeland Alpine Grazing but to no avail. The Minister announced on ABC radio that the trial was cancelled. There was no notification of this decision to the MCAV until nineteen days later.

This was total disrespect shown by the new and obviously city centric Government, towards a group of people who have always been polite and respectful over forty years of lobbying to various Governments.

The original six trial sites which were cancelled by Federal Minister Tony Burke in 2011 and the Wonnangatta trial last year, generated unprecedented publicity about Alpine grazing for the Cattlemen. This has had the effect of protecting the State Forest runs as the cattlemen have signalled they haven't gone away and continue to stand up for their position. It is clear by the firm approach we have constantly taken that any Government move to take the State Forest runs will be met with force by the MCAV on behalf of the families.

THE NEW MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, LISA NEVILLE

The MCAV letter to the Minister asking her not to cancel the second year of the trial.

Dear Minister

Alpine grazing trial at Wonnangatta

The MCAV congratulates you on your appointment as Minister for the Environment and wishes you and your Government well.

I confirm the undertaking we gave you at our September meeting that the MCAV would work cooperatively with a new Labor Government in the wider interests of the High Country. As you know, our members' involvement with that country is deeply felt, culturally important and based on a comprehensive body of knowledge built up over 180 years. Nobody is more concerned for its conservation than we are.

The MCAV acknowledges that the Victorian branch of the Labor Party has adopted a policy banning cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park.

We urge you, as Minister responsible, to allow the present grazing trial in the Wonnangatta valley to continue to its scheduled conclusion in two years. This trial, which is principally about fuel reduction and bushfire mitigation, is not the same as traditional alpine grazing, even though it is being conducted inside the Park. It is a properly constructed scientific trial and it meets stringent environmental conditions imposed by the Federal Department of the Environment, DEPI and PV. The trial's approach is consistent with work being done in Europe and the USA on alpine desertification and high intensity bushfires. On these grounds alone it can be argued the trial falls outside the scope of Party policy.

We enclose a background paper which explains the trial and identifies some interesting and positive outcomes. There is an assessment of the condition of the Wonnangatta Valley, which sadly is anything but pristine. It also identifies a significant change of direction and thinking by Victoria's public land managers on the "lock it up and leave it" approach that has underpinned the public land management policies of Labor and Coalition governments alike for the past thirty years. This change of thinking is very important.

The MCAV would be delighted to take up your offer to meet with us in the high country to "see it through our eyes". It would be very fitting to meet in the valley and share our knowledge and ideas with you.

Once again we request that nothing hasty is decided regarding the trial until you have the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the project. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully



Charlie Lovick
President MCAV
5/12/2014
0429775510

THE BENEFITS OF THE WONNANGATTA TRIAL

This is an extract of the MCAVs' nine page brief to the New Minister which was attached to the above letter.

.....“ The trial has produced some extraordinary side benefits after only one year.

For years the MCAV has been attempting to draw attention to the dreadful state of Wonnangatta, without success. Suddenly for the first time ever, when the trial was announced a year ago, attention was paid to the serious environmental and fire issues in the valley by both opponents and supporters of the trial, along with Government departments and independent observers.

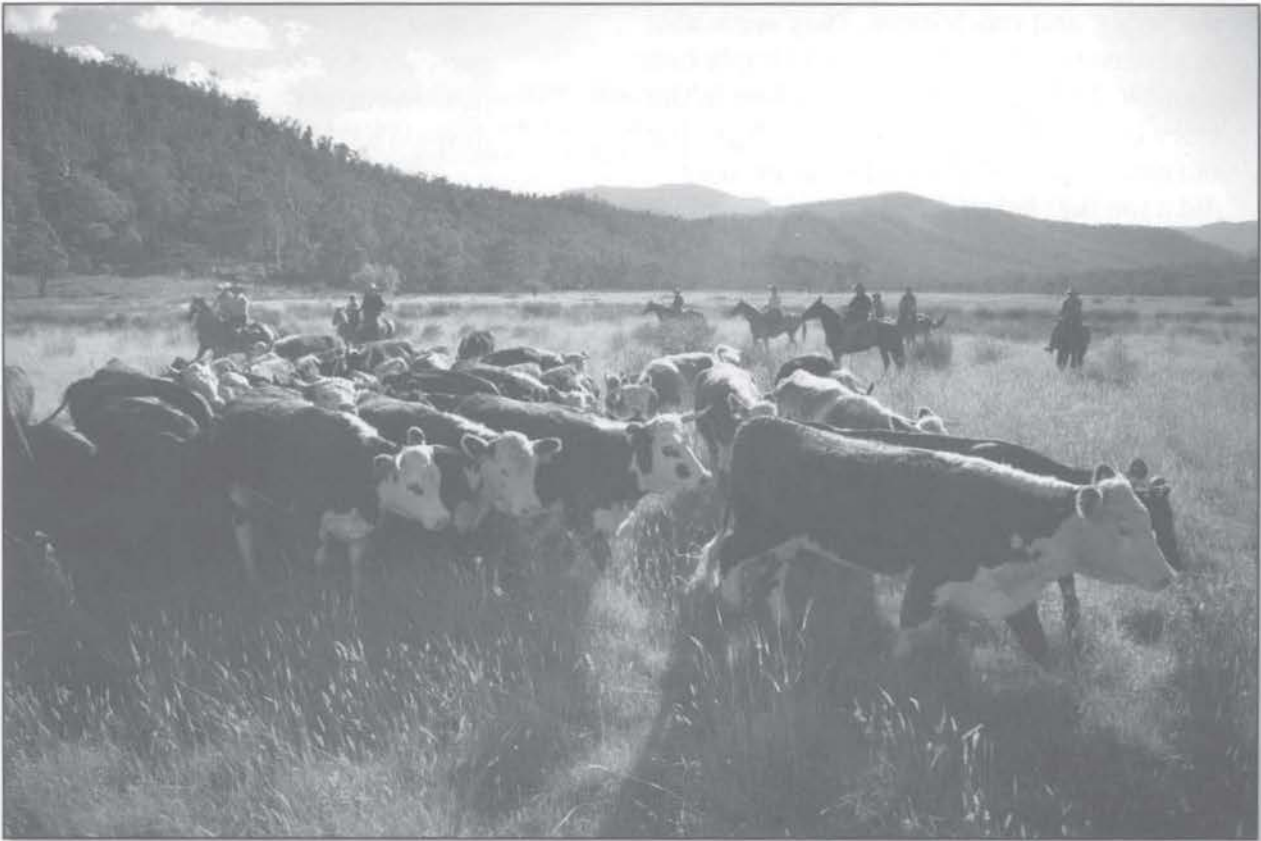
A government report, conducted before the cattle were placed in the trial last year and available on the DEPI website, cites and confirms the woeful environmental and physical state of Wonnangatta. This awakened interest in a remote valley in the heart of the high country is welcome and long overdue.

The trial has already produced an array of beneficial outcomes:

1. An historic agreement has been signed between the MCAV, the Gunaikurnai people and the State Government. This followed discussions between the MCAV and the Gunaikurnai about areas of mutual interest centring on good public land management and how both groups could work together and assist the Government with advice and actions to improve management in Wonnangatta.
2. A deed of agreement has been signed between DEPI and the MCAV to conduct trial work over the next two years.
3. Access tracks to the valley (including the Dry River section of the Bi-Centennial horse trail, that was previously impossible to find) were cleared and opened up by PV. This will greatly assist tourism.
4. Due completely to the trial, urgent investigatory work has been done on the rare pale golden moths orchid, which has been totally neglected by scientists for years. The trials have galvanised scientists from the Federal Dept. of Environment, DEPI, Arthur Rylah institute, VNPA and others, all claiming the moth orchid is threatened by the trial work.

This sudden activity begs a serious question. If the orchid is so rare and endangered, how is it that almost nothing is known about it and nothing much has been done to increase the knowledge for years? When the grazing trial was proposed, scientists were unable to answer even the most basic questions about the orchid and its needs.

Answers to pertinent questions such as, does it like fire and can grazing actually assist its survival, are not known. One may scoff at a current theory that grazing may assist the orchid, except for the fact that arguably the best example of an orchid colony in Victoria is on private land, relatively close to Wonnangatta and which is quite heavily grazed. Given this important fact, why wouldn't the trial be allowed to continue to add to knowledge about what management is in the orchid's best interest? It could be that closing up the land since 1989 is actually killing off the orchid because it may need more open vegetation. It is interesting to note that at the time of writing, it is believed that the elusive orchid has not flowered this season in Wonnangatta or on the aforementioned private land.
5. Two significant planned burns in the valley were conducted by DEPI and Parks Victoria, one in the grazed trial site. The results are stunning. It is highly unlikely these burns would have occurred without the spur of the trial.
6. The 4-wheel drive track into Wonnangatta from Howitt Plains has been renovated, as



Philip Davis, Charlie Lovick, Geoff Burrowes, Graeme Stoney celebrate the cattle arriving on the Howitt Plain.
The cattle and drovers arrive at Wonnangatta.
Melanie Faith Dove photographer.

has the King Billy to Howitt Plains track. Both these tracks had become so rough that, with little attention for years, they were renowned for damaging vehicles. Once again a boon for tourism.

7. The Cattlemen were requested by the authorities to assist in a search and rescue of a lost hiker. Of course they fully cooperated, (as Cattlemen have done many, many times over the past 100 plus years). They searched a designated area on horses until the hiker was successfully found by search teams. The MCAV were in constant contact with Cattlemen in the valley over this tense time by satellite phone.
8. Extended time spent back in the Wonnangatta was invaluable for the education of the cattlemen families' young ones. We were able to school them in the heritage stock routes, in droving, night camping cattle on the trail, interaction with the public and much more. They were able to experience their culture, not simply hear about it. They immersed themselves in the story of the valley, day after day. In getting the cattle into and out of the valley, they did a job that very few adults would be able to do. It is impossible to overstate the

value of that time on those kids fortunate enough to be part of it.

9. For the old-timers the experience was profoundly emotional. It was frequently overwhelming. Just being back where we belong, in country we were born and bred to, getting a good job done and done well. Equally affecting was seeing old friends and new, who came from all points of the compass into the valley to see us. We were never alone in our camp. It was just like the bush used to be.
10. The MCAV was able to forge a relationship with some of the DEPI and PV people that was far more satisfying than has been the norm. There was, from time to time, a palpable feeling of being joined in common purpose. The foundations for a bridge of mutual respect have been laid. It was very gratifying to be asked by officials to participate in the search and other incidents concerning general visitors in the Valley. The institutionalised animosity between the old people of the bush and the new wardens may be starting to break down. That has to be a good thing."

Graeme Stoney, Executive Officer, MCAV




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THE RESPONSE

The letter received from the Minister, nineteen days later.



Department of Environment and Primary Industries

Ref: SBR007543

File:

XX

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29 DEC 2014

Mr Graeme Stoney
Executive Officer
Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria
Shop 11, 12-20 Highett Street
MANSFIELD VIC 3722

Dear Mr Stoney

WONNANGATTA VALLEY RESEARCH TRIAL

I am writing to inform you that the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, has directed that the research trial to investigate the effectiveness of cattle grazing in reducing bushfire fuel in the Wonnangatta Valley be terminated. The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is in the process of giving effect to this direction.

To this end, the services of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) are no longer required. I hereby notify you that in accordance with clause 9.2 of the Deed of Agreement between DEPI and MCAV (the Deed) is terminated.

I want to thank you for your ongoing support during the conduct of research trial. In accordance with clause 9.4 of the Deed, please provide details of and invoices for, all reasonable, direct out of pocket expenses incurred by the MCAV in the provision of services to the research trial. Please send information to Mr Lee Miezis, Executive Director Fire and Emergency Management at PO Box 500, East Melbourne Vic 3002 or email lee.miezis@depi.vic.gov.au

As a result of the termination of the trial the Cooperative Operating Agreement between DEPI, Parks Victoria, the MCAV and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (the Agreement) that outlined how the parties would work together in the implementation of the research trial has no application. I have notified all parties to the Agreement of this and that the Agreement is ended effective immediately.

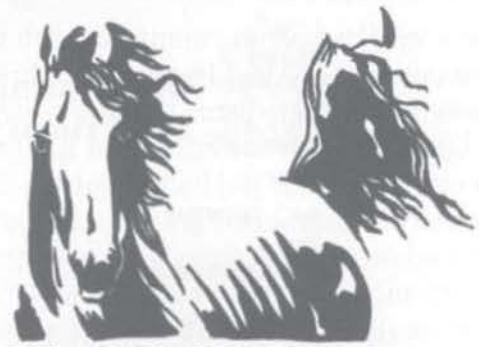
I look forward to continuing to engage with the MCAV on future initiatives to improve the environmental condition, protect cultural heritage and manage bushfire risk in the Alpine National Park and Victoria's high country more broadly.

If you have any questions regarding the termination of the trial please contact Mr Miezis on (03) 9637 8959.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to be 'Paul Smith'.

Paul Smith
Acting Secretary



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Fuelling the Flames

THE Bushfire Mitigation Meeting held in Bairnsdale on 14 November last year brought together over 100 concerned members of the community who were fortunate to hear some of the most informed, educated and level headed speakers on the subject of the current land management policy (or lack thereof) in the High Country.

It is not possible to print the complete proceedings here in *Voice* (one would hope they might become available in the future) so a summary and some of the "quotable quotes" will have to suffice. Some of the speakers were:

Bill Gammage, AM, academic historian, Adjunct Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Humanities Centre, ANU, fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences. Bill drew material from his recent award winning publication (see the book reviews in this issue) explaining, among other things, how the landscape pre settlement (1788) was cultivated by the Aboriginal societies and can only return to a perceived pristine state by adopting those management principles that include burning. He also suggested that bad fire was managed by the use of good fire.

David Packham, AM, former CSIRO bushfire scientist with 52 years experience in fire research and retired fire weather specialist with the Bureau of Meteorology. He told the forum Australia's fire problem was the most serious in the world and that East Gippsland's the most serious in the south east. He feels that the next time the Rossby wave (a particular atmospheric condition) breaks, thousands of lives could be at risk as fire policy has hardly shifted yet urbanisation has increased.

Garry Squires, ex-government employee and ex-forester and now a consultant to the timber industry. Garry suggested that the window of opportunity to effect the legislated burns was too small with insufficient funding and resources. He feels that other resources, such as empowering local landowners in consultation with authorities could be beneficial. He also suggested that regular burns may need to be over a six year cycle citing areas at Halls Gap that were burnt seven years ago did not stop wildfire however areas that were burnt four years ago did.

Geoff Burrowes from Merrijig, film producer and "student" of the high country when compared to Bill Gammage, Wally Ryder and Jack Lovick. Geoff believes we're killing the high country. Day by day, year by year, one of the most iconic landscapes in our country, one that our politicians and

"Politicians and bureaucrats fear community scrutiny and this risk-averse culture has resulted in an attitude of it's better to do nothing than risk a mistake." Garry Squires

"The most pervasive cultural value in the high country at the moment is the climate of fear. The fear of another bushfire." Geoff Burrowes

"Victorian bushfire fuels are at "disastrous levels" and if a megafire ignited in the Dandenongs or in Melbourne's eastern or northern fringe, thousands of lives could be lost. ... Only management of fuel by prescribed burning can avert this certain future disaster." David Packham

"The fire-fighting bureaucracy is a massive money-consuming machine that is failing, (it) doesn't even turn up to fires now. It didn't turn up to me for a month." Rob Belcher

"One of the principal scientists who supports the current lock it up and leave it approach to management (this devastation is so profound) actually said words to the effect that what we are seeing here is landscape over write. We are seeing ecology in action, ... we are seeing the end of what there is now, and the start of something, we know not what. This is one of the government's chief advisors on the high country, the man responsible for processes of management in the high country right now, giving up on the high country. Surrendering it to its unknowable, unknown fate. Weed world or an alpine desert. They are out of ideas." Geoff Burrowes

"Until there is a well thought out and constructive debate there will be no change; and that is the kind of debate we need. We've been promised change and that hasn't occurred. Reviews and reports after each severe bushfire protect the status quo and policy doesn't change." Chris Nixon

"There cannot be a single approach to high country. The high country was neither pristine nor homogenous, it has to be a varied approach to management and there is plenty of scope for all in the bush – there's room for Aboriginal restructuring of the bush, there's room for cattlemen, there's even room for logging in the bush if it is done right, to achieve conservation goals. Cattlemen and loggers can learn just as farmers can learn. We can all learn together. We can begin to learn to respect the bush and respect people in the bush."
Geoff Burrowes

"Never before in human presence in Australia (30,000 - 50,000 years) have our bushfire fuels been at such disastrous levels. We now have a new type of fuel that has resulted from intense unrestrained disastrous fires over the last ten years. The returning fuels have changed the rules for bushfires in Australia, maybe leading to a much more intense and an extensive fire threat."
David Packham

"For the last 30 years the Victorian high country, public land, has been managed on the basis of 'lock it up and leave it' and this has produced a perfect fire-trap. There is so much vegetation, so much fuel built up that the promise of widespread devastation is certain. It's not possible, it is certain."
Geoff Burrowes

commentators in Melbourne still extol as being pristine, precious and well conserved, is dying. He spoke of transhumant pastoralisation - the 10,000 year old practice of moving stock from one eco-region to another as it is by over 200,000 farmers in Europe. He also spoke of mountain cattlemen who have acquired traditional ecological knowledge. Geoff concluded that to claim that science is adequate to the task is not only false - it is damned dishonest! We know less about the high country than we do about the universe.



Chris Nixon, agri-politican and 2003 Wulgulmerang fire victim. Chris gave a short ten minute presentation which is included in this edition of *Voice* that was supplemented with images from the Wulgulmerang fires. He lost sheds, fences, pasture and hundreds of head of cattle in the fire. His disappointment with Bruce Esplin, who sat at his kitchen table and promised there would be change, was palpable. He has every reason to feel utterly betrayed.

Ian Cane, experienced apiarist who informed the group that an immediate consequence of wildfire is the non pollination by bees of agricultural industries (like the almond industry) with potential costs running into the multi millions.

Rob Belcher Bonang farmer and victim of the 2014 fires.

The meeting concluded with a number of resolutions being passed for presentation by the taskforce to the relevant authorities.

A short fifteen minute video of the day was produced by *Stock and Land* reporter Jeanette Severs and this can be viewed online at <http://www.stockandland.com.au/news/agriculture/general/news/urgency-needed-in-fire-debate/2717271.aspx>

Transhumant Pastoralisation :
Dairy cattle on Alpine pasture in the Swiss Alps.

A farmer's perspective

WULGULMERANG 2003

I had been following the tracks for the last kilometre. They had wandered aimlessly down the road from side to side. There was no point leaving the road, the countryside was scorched earth - even the roots and some of the topsoil had burnt leaving nothing behind.

I wondered why the result was so bad! We had plenty of warning. For weeks we had been preparing sprinklers around the yards and houses, putting plough lines in around fence lines so cattle could stand off on bare dirt. Those weeks seemed to drag on forever.

The anxiety of waiting. Each morning you would wake up and think - is this the day? First is the initial preparation. You are too busy on those long summer days, early on, making sure you have everything in order. But as the list of jobs diminishes, the anxiety starts to increase.

Have we got enough water around the house?

Are the sprinklers working?

Have we mown and slashed enough?

Will the cattle be safe?

Have we got enough plough lines in?

Are the pumps all working?

Torches, goggles, generators, food?

The list goes on.

Oh the waiting.

I round the bend in the road. The black baldy cow and calf were standing there in the middle of the road. No wonder they were easy to track. Both animals had their hooves burnt off. Blood from the stumps of their legs had seared the asphalt of the road. The calf was blind, its ears and tail were burnt and blisters covered its face and belly.

Its mother stood protecting it. She moved between the calf and me, her mothering instincts over riding her own distress. Tail and ears burnt, no hooves and her teats nothing but charred blisters.

I removed my goggles. The lingering smoke stung my eyes as I raised my rifle and fired. I shot the cow, then the calf. I had to. They could walk no further.

I continued on to the Wire Paddock. The scene was total devastation. Hundreds of animals lay dead, scattered across the paddock and roadside as they tried to flee. So much for the plough lines, whole paddocks ploughed would not have prevented this. The force of the fire had blown the roof off the hayshed and sent it several hundred metres down the road.

The stock agents were the first to arrive. Elders, Landmark, Wyndhams and Fullgrabe to name a few. From Orbost and Bairnsdale they came. There was none of the easygoing banter. They simply pulled out chains and using their vehicles pulled the dead animals to a central spot for burial at a later date.

The next couple of days were spent searching for and removing dead and injured animals. Hasty repairs to yards were done so that those healthy enough to travel could be sent away for agistment wherever that could be found.

Tales from the neighbours emerged. Blue had lost his house. He and his brother David had received a frantic call over the two way to get out. The whistling they could hear that sounded like an old kettle on the stove was in fact the outside gas cylinder venting from the heat. The promised fire trucks had been pulled out early in the day.

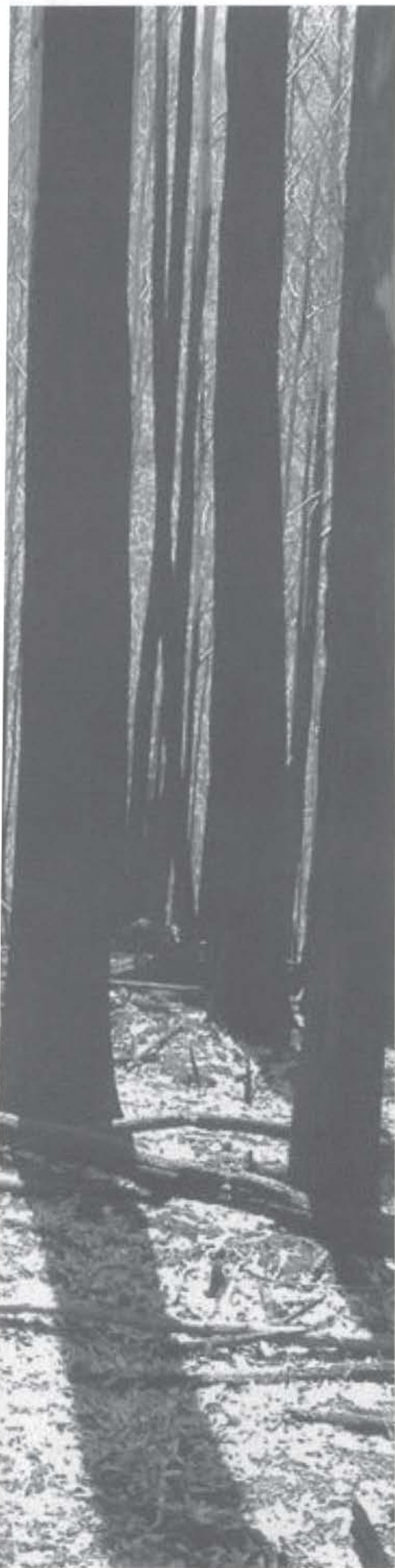
Bill Livingstone was saved by sheltering behind his grader blade. He was more concerned about losing his hat that had caught on fire than the house he was trying to protect.

Buff Rogers lost very few cattle. He had placed them in an area of bush that he had burnt the winter before. He had burnt an area that had not burnt for years and the authorities had no interest in burning. It was August and he made the decision to light up this area knowing that the fuel was dry enough to burn and could not get out of control.

He went to court and paid a fine for that fire – later confiding it was the cheapest fine he ever paid as he still had his cattle.

The shiny fire trucks are parading up and down the road as if they actually did something. But they didn't leave the road, even if a spot fire sprang up in some of the few unburnt areas. It was up to the locals to put them out!





The fire is finally out, the cattle have all gone. We have no power, no phones, no fences, our stockyards need rebuilding, our hay reserves all burnt and paddocks that are so scorched that each passing vehicle leaves tracks centimetres deep. We pray for rain, but only light showers. Heavier falls would wash the ash and debris into the dams making them unusable and requiring them to be cleaned out.

Where do we start the rebuilding process? We have a blank canvas and my grief for our loss turns to anger! The emergency services commissioner, Bruce Esplin, sat at my kitchen table and promised there would be change.

Yes – there will be more fuel reduction burning.

Yes – landholders can be used to help with fire protection practices.

Yes – there needs to be a cultural change in the agencies regarding fire, there is no such thing as cool damp microclimates protecting our forests.

His report is released.

He protects the status quo.

He sat at my table and lied to my face.

I have been betrayed beyond belief.

A million hectares burnt by uncontrolled wildfire and we have more of the same as policy.

I drive down the road. The footprints of the black baldy cow and calf are still stained in the asphalt. I wonder how much more suffering will take place before we see any real change.

CHRIS NIXON

*In memory of Hugh Adams who passed away on
14 September 2003.*

Chris delivered this piece at the Bushfire Mitigation Meeting at Bairnsdale in November 2014. This meeting was attended by over 150 people. While Chris delivered this paper images from area were projected on a screen behind him. Some were brutal, but they reinforced the message that Chris delivered. At the conclusion there was silence - deathly silence - and a deep appreciation of the tragedy of the events in 2003.

Nationals support alpine grazing

As the proud granddaughter of a high country cattleman I am outraged at the Victorian Labor Government's decision to scrap the cattle grazing trial in the High Country which we worked so hard together to secure.

The State Labor government hasn't wasted any time in playing politics to appease the Greens while ignoring proper scientific processes.

The Nationals will continue to fight for your rights and your heritage.

Bridget McKenzie
The Nationals Senator for Victoria



Leader of the Victorian Nationals, Peter Walsh and Senator McKenzie show their support at the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Annual Festival



“ Mountain cattlemen have been environmental stewards and land managers in Victoria's alpine region for more than 190 years. ”

- Senator Bridget McKenzie

Contact Bridget

279 Hargreaves St Bendigo VIC 3550
T: (03) 5441 4251 or 1300 889 103
E: senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au
W: www.bridgetmckenzie.com.au



@senbmckenzie



senatormckenzie

THE NATIONALS for Regional Australia

Authorised by Senator Bridget McKenzie, 279 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo VIC 3550

a gentle burn is what you need

The mountains live, in my mind,
the way they used to be,
gullies green and snow gums lean
and open plains to see.
Mist that hung on branches gnarled
and dew on every leaf,
crystal streams of water clean
trickled through the seeps.

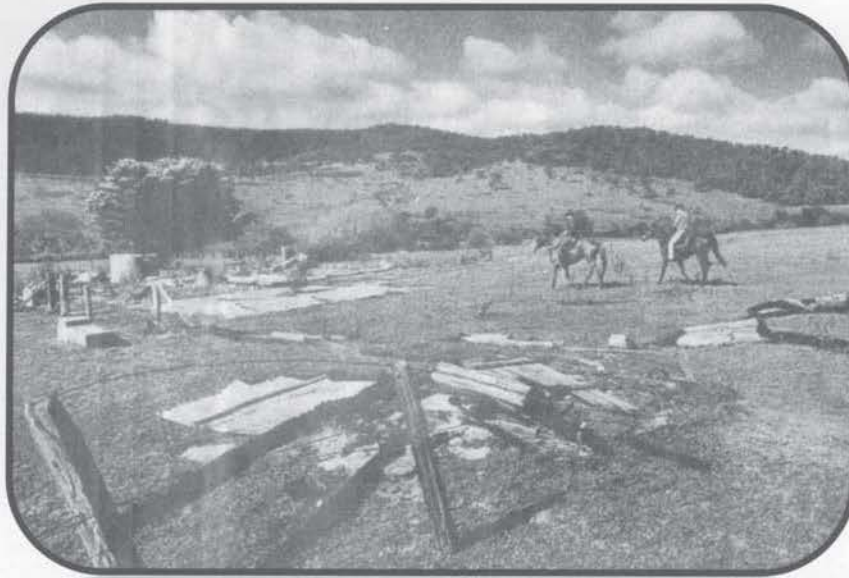
But open eyes they see it all,
the way it really is -
tangled weeds with burnt black trees
all along the ridge.
It shouldn't look the way it does
the trees and land all scorched.
It's been attacked, assaulted yet,
with hot and burning torch.

The ferns along the gullies gone,
blackberries now grow thick.
Where once you rode along a trail
you cannot wave a stick.
A gentle burn is what you need
it doesn't scar the land,
with wildflowers abloom, all anew,
the mountains then look grand.

I close my eyes, I'd rather see,
the way it used to look -
for bureaucrats have given us
a park that's run by book!
That bloody book they should discard,
the rules are all askew,
with cattlemen in charge again
the mountains they'd renew.

George A. Knights

Bryce's Gorge



From Wilderness to Wasteland

In The Weekend Australian 14 May 1988, Julian Cribb reported on the state of the high country. It is perhaps more relevant today than it was 25 years ago.

For more than a century the High Country has stood as a symbol of Australia's heritage, of courage and fierce pride- but also of love, and caring for the land.

Now all that is disappearing, as a matter of policy.

THERE are no neighbours anywhere near Kiley's Run.

The hospitable homes are bare,
the gardens gone; for no pretence
must hinder cutting down expense:
the homestead that we held so dear
contains a half paid overseer
on Kiley's Run.

All life and sport and hope have died
on Kiley's Run,
no longer there the stockmen ride...

So, in 1890, Banjo Paterson lamented the passing of one of the great mountain cattle runs, its owner Kiley, bankrupt and dying of a broken heart, his property passing into the hand of heedless absentee landlords. Today, Kiley's Run labours under a new sentence – it is to be a government pine plantation, a fate of which even Banjo Paterson could not have dreamed.

In this Bicentennial year, the remorseless process of the erosion and despoliation of one of Australia's great heritages proceed unabated. Men whose

fathers fought with the Light Horse, whose grandfathers toiled with sweat and sinew to win a living in the mountains, who tended and nurtured the wild High Country and know its ways, are being thrust and jostled and cajoled out of their inheritance.

Behind them the wilderness is turning steadily to wasteland. Swept by fires of explosive intensity, meshed in briars, thorns and thistles, ravaged by vermin, conservation is hardly an apt word to describe the process that is taking place in the High Country. John Ryan stands on a spur of the mountain, looking out over Merambego where he grew up, surveying the devastation wrought by a giant blaze that savaged its gums and stringy-barks, obliterating whole hillsides in January this year.

In 1969 his father had sold the property to be incorporated in the Kosciusko National

Riders Clive Cotterel and George Reid survey the ruins of Merambego. *Original photographs, as published, taken by Graham Thomson.*

Park. Today it is a desolation in the wilderness. Its tree-lined ridges are charred and blackened from the fire, its once-lush clover and lucerne pastures rife with blackberry and thistle. The old homestead is a gutter pile of rubble. Rabbits have made a warren of the silage pit. After the family left, prisoners from the Cooma jail in NSW, were used to take down the fences. They bundled up the wire and threw it in the creek.

Mr Ryan shakes his head. Like many of the mountain folk he does not display emotions openly. "After the fire, some locals came through. They found dozens of kangaroos just sitting, their feet too burnt and charred to move. They had to shoot them. The loss of wildlife must have been horrendous in the fire." He doesn't say it directly, but you know what he means: this is the fault of the people who didn't manage country to prevent the fire, who couldn't fight fire properly when it came, who couldn't be bothered to tend the wild animals afterwards.

There is a deep hurt in all these people, mountain stockmen and graziers. They say, "People will say we've an axe to grind..." and apologise for defending the way of life and the country they love.

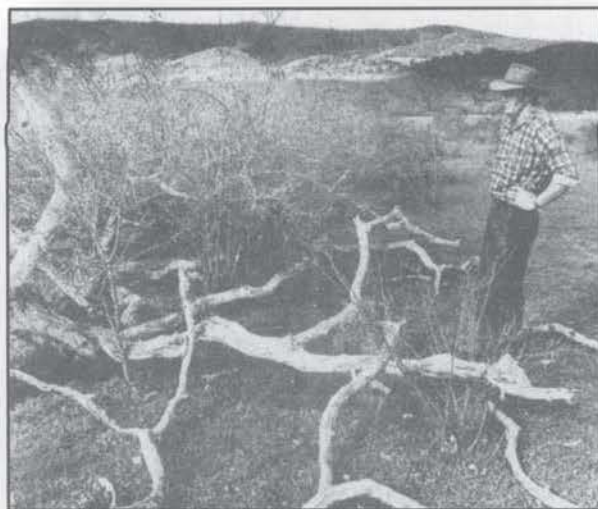
Gordon Walker has spent his 66 years in the mountains. Surveying the wreck of Merambego he observes: "This place used to feed two families, easy. Now they've just bugged the country, it's gone back to nothin'. What hurt most," he recollects, was the time when "they" took the mountain cattle runs away. "I built two huts in the bush, in my time, and four sets of yards. Then just one little letter, and you're finished."

The idea that a lifetime, generations even, of toil and care can be obliterated by a bureaucratic pen stroke seems almost too apocalyptic to grasp.

At 75, George Reed has seen more than half a century of life in the mountains around

Delegate, in Southern NSW. He once shared the cattle run with John Ryan's father, on Merambego. "I just feel disgusted, when I remember what this property once was. It looks to me as if locking up the country is just destroying it.

"The unfortunate part is that it always looks as if we've got an axe to grind - but the truth is we had a big hand in avoiding all this sort of thing. ... We didn't hurt the country...not like this."



Jim Commins has come across the ranges from Ensay in Victoria to see first-hand what has happened to Merambego. His motive is easy to fathom - the Victorian Government is blocking the sale of one of the mountain country's most historic properties so that it can buy it itself.

If Wonnangatta Station, high in the remote fastnesses below Mt Buller, is taken by the Government, Mr Commins is convinced it will revert to the kind of ecological disaster occurring on scores of other former leases, runs and freeholds in the mountains. "The bitterest blow," he says, "is not so much the loss of the mountain cattle runs, a lifetime's work, an inheritance passed from father and grandfather - it is the mismanagement of the High Country."

"Because all this is being done in the name of conservation, people assume it is being well-managed, that the bush is being conserved. That isn't the case," he said. When cattlemen worked the High Country, they burned strategically and with great care, to prevent the build-up of fuel and litter which today creates vast raging conflagrations.

"The grasses were grazed down so they did not become tinder for the fires", he said. They checked the briars and weeds, controlled the pests - the rabbits, wild dogs and cats, foxes and other introduced creatures that now kill or

John Ryan with what was once prime grazing land.

out-compete the native wildlife in the parks. By grazing the snowgrass back in summer, the cattle made the mountain pastures a carpet of beautiful wild flowers, which today are obliterated by the tough, rank, tussocky grasses.

The pleasant, park-like qualities of the virgin bush, of open sward among majestic gums which the earliest settlers admired and recorded in their journals, are slowly disappearing under a tangle of scrub.

Mr Commins is one of a dying breed, the last of the mountain cattlemen. His family was among the first to settle in the Mansfield region, back in 1838. His father rode with 9th Light Horse and was at Gallipoli. Jim Commins himself served in New Guinea in World War II. Like others, the family has fought for an Australian heritage and a way of life.

"All those old people, who sweated and laboured to build homes, yards, fences and make a damn good run – they'd be horrified at what is happening today. They are creating thousands of square kilometres of waste country, with fences falling down, a breeding ground for pests. People's hard work, hopes, and aspirations are all going to nothing. Thousands of Australians gave their lives to stop this process of government taking away our freedoms and our history. It's pretty hard to bear."

Mr Commins is a member of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, whose 200 members have cantered across the newspaper front pages and television screens of the nation, and into history, in the movie of *The Man From Snowy River*, their desperate attempt to win a reprieve for their traditions and livelihoods.

▲
Jim Commins (left) with John Ryan in the park after the January bushfire.



Despite their foray into politics at the Nunawading by-election, and all their rallies, protests, submissions, letters and appeals, the remorseless process of closing up the mountains grinds on.

"There are thousands upon thousands of acres of good grazing country locked up in NSW alone. It's a scandal – not only the pointlessness, but the lack of management," Mr Commins argues. "It is quite clear that the final aim is to remove all cattle from the alpine areas and terminate our industry."

"Bit by bit, all the old runs are being bought out by governments, who haven't the resources to manage them correctly. They are taking them over to grow more rabbits, more briars and provide kindling for huge fires that just take out a large slice of the environment. People today would not believe the devastation they are capable of causing."

"Together with over-hot bushfires they are the greatest initiators of accelerated erosion in the recorded history of this land. People have been fed propaganda about the damage caused by cattle, but they turn a blind eye to the damage caused by feral animals."

"Cattle," Mr Commins argues, "must always be managed in harmony with their environment, and can benefit it. They are, he says, a valuable and cost free environmental management tool."

But the political arithmetic of conservation is remorseless. City voters to be courted with the delusion of protected heritage far outnumber the dwindling ranks of the mountain folk. In the end, he is convinced, the purpose of the conservation lobby is to create an enormous wilderness region extending from Canberra almost to Melbourne.

"But it won't be a wilderness –it will be a wasteland."

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Authorised by Tim Bull MLA
143 Main Street (PO Box 1278), Bairnsdale 3875
Phone (03) 5152 3491
Email tim.bull@parliament.vic.gov.au

the men from the mountain

Have you heard of a place called Heathy Spur, the Bluff, Mount Clear or Nelse?
Maybe Stoneys and Wabonga Plateau.
If you haven't then sit right down and listen to my song,
you'll know where the country's doing wrong.

One hundred odd years or so cattle have walked these plains
and lived their lives not hurting any one.
Now the people in the city who think they know the best
have decided to phase out everyone.

Chorus

Yes we're talking 'bout the cattleman you know,
like Clancy of the Overflow.
He was born in the saddle of a wiry mountain horse
and if we change him you know it'll be our loss.
Yes the cattleman that drove the plains on high
are Australian through and through until they die,
so you office sitting cockies better have another think -
too late! Another Aussie legend's extinct.

These people that they're pushing out are pioneers you know.
They opened up the land on high where people dare not go,
and when someone got lost or needed shelter from the storm
the cattleman was there to take him home.

The city folk would like to keep this land for their kids
but there's one thing I think they overlooked.
Is that cattlemen are landlords and look after the land
better than an office written book. *Chorus*

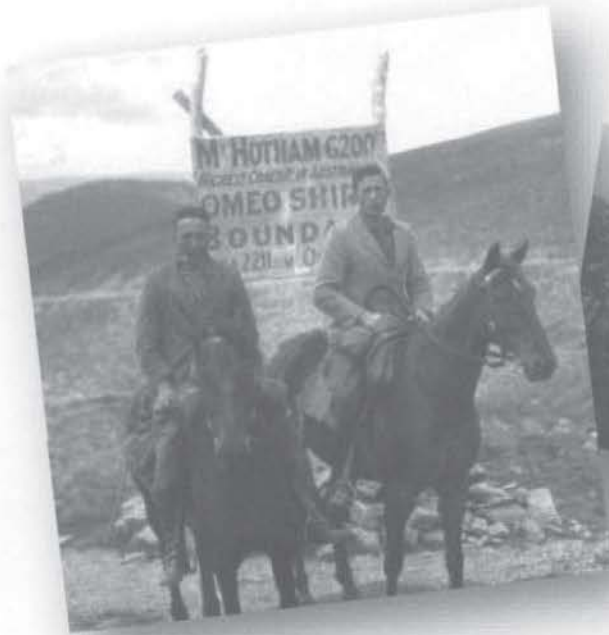
So the cows don't hurt the flowers and they keep the land so clean.
These pioneering families are never heard of or seen.
Now these mountain people are just like me and you,
they've had enough of city folk telling them what to do.

These cattlemen that live on high hold Australian pride,
they've got a quality that we all admire.
A strength but a tenderness that puts them on their own
and I'm proud that Australia is their home. *Chorus*

*Words and music Maria Harkins
Winner of the Don Kneebone Heritage Award 2014*

Riders negotiating Razorback c1940s

Reflecting on the Past



THE digitising and archiving project continues within the MCAV and is of major significance. We are wanting to gather as complete a record as possible of our presence in the high country and every member of the Association can help.

If you have ANY images taken in the high country or of individuals associated with the high country, please consider organising a copy of them for the Association's archive. They don't have to be black and white and old - the images taken pre 2000 show how the Alps looked when we were there - the images after show the effects of our removal and fire. We don't want your original photographs - we would just dearly love to have a copy. Most people have access to scanners on the family computer and if the images could be scanned (high resolution 300 dpi minimum please) and forwarded to the Association on a disc or USB it would be greatly appreciated. If you are having difficulty get in touch with the Association and we will talk you through it or organize another option.

Think of it this way, it may take you a little time to do it but it is cheap insurance. If anyone ever loses their images then they will be able to get copies from the archive. It really is cheap insurance!

It doesn't have to be just photographs, think about the old letters, the newspaper clippings, diaries, journals, even early home movies or video (yes, they are harder to copy but it can be done).

Elsewhere in *Voice* we have raised the issue of place names potentially being changed and we know the policy of removal of structures within the Park. Your photographs are evidence of those places and structures and therefore are important.



Left: Who are they? Early trail riders or cattlemen?
Any one with information please let us know.
Royal Historical Society of Victoria archives

Right: Does anyone recognise where these yards were?
For those eagle eyed you will see a youth in the middle sitting on the rails and there are stock in the yards.



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The Hodgkins of the Mitta Mitta Valley and Mt Bogong

THE Hodgkins have lived in the Mitta Mitta Valley since the mid 1860s.

They ran cattle on Mt Bogong, Victoria's highest mountain, until the Government banned cattle grazing in the 1990s. Present day patriarch Bill Hodgkin turns 85 in January 2015.

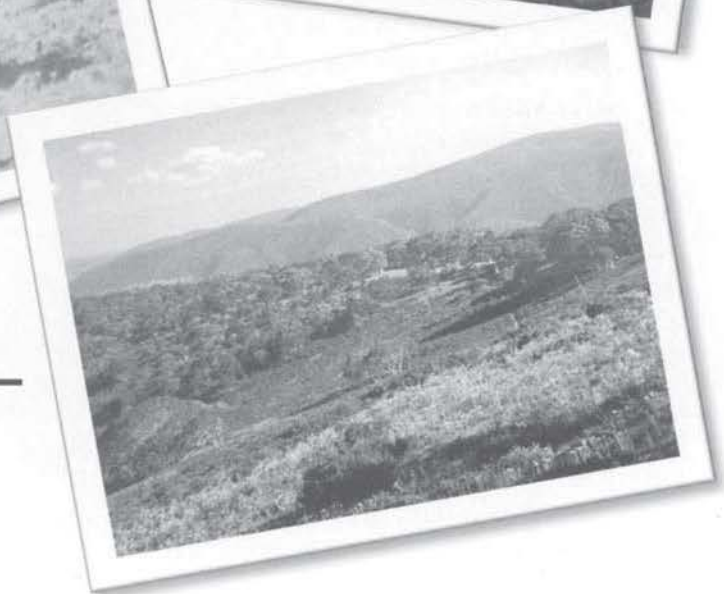
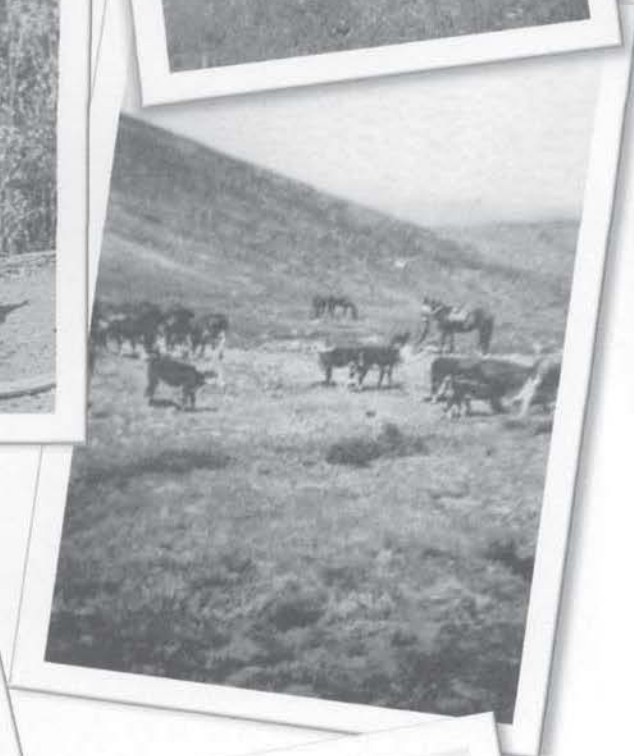
Bill was eleven years old when he first recalls going to Mt Bogong in 1941, and the last time he rode up there was for a ride with friends and family in 2012 when he was 82 years old. Bill still rides today mustering and taking cattle to the family's state forest leases at Lords Creek and up Little Snowy Creek. Bill yearns for the open plains and misses going to the tops.

Bill's family started going to the mountain with cattle in 1919. Harry Downs, Howman, Maddison, Arter, Hodgkin, Prichard and later Walsh and Ryder took more than 2000 head to graze on Mt Bogong. They used

packhorses to carry their supplies and their faithful dogs were with them the whole trip. The cattle would roam right down to Paddy's Flat and over all the Plains. It would take more than three weeks to muster the stragglers.

It was a three day trip to drove cattle up to the Hodgkin leases. They originally took the cattle up Eskdale Spur before the first fade outs of licenses. After that they went up past the Hollow Hut down through Big Snowy, then up Malhauser spur. This spur was rough and steep with no other way in. The family had to hand cut the track to keep it open so the cattle would lead on.

Later, as the country was opened up for logging, they took the cattle up the Omeo Highway from Mitta Mitta to Snowy Creek logging road then up the Malhauser spur then the Long Spur. This was after they had been kicked off Mt Bogong.



Images from the family album including Hodgkin's Hut (top left), Hollow Hut (middle left), stock on Bogong (middle right) and members of the family up top.

Previous page "salting" the stock.



Bill. Wyvern. Lee. Ross. Blair. Grandfather Grandmother
Bill. Amy.

Hodgkins used most of the huts up on Bogong at one stage or another. The main one was the Hollow hut. Over the years there were three different huts all built by the family. The last one was wrecked by snow and due to difficulties with the authorities they were unable to rebuild. Malhauser hut was also built by the Hodgkin family and sadly it was burnt down in the 2003 fires. Lords Creek hut was built by Bill with the help of Wally Ryder, and the family still uses it today.

Originally the Hodgkin family took over 150 head of Hereford cattle to Mt Bogong each season. They spent a lot of their summer up there with their cattle and can tell a few yarns of things that happened on the run. Bill Hodgkin's family, including the three sons Blair, Ross and Lee and his wife Wyvern and other family, all helped him with the musters. His sons were only kids when they started going with him, and Ross and Lee and the grandchildren all still help out now but miss and wish they could still go "up the top".

Bill recalls his most memorable moment at Bogong was of course his honeymoon.

Gradually the pressure came on the Hodgkins, and all the other families, to reduce and close runs.

In 1955 the authorities closed the west end of the mountain off for a trial patch. Then they fenced the middle of Mt Bogong so the cattle wouldn't go past it. The ban was lifted after a few years but in 1973 some runs were closed to grazing. In 1975 the authorities pushed the family and their cattle down to the tree line.

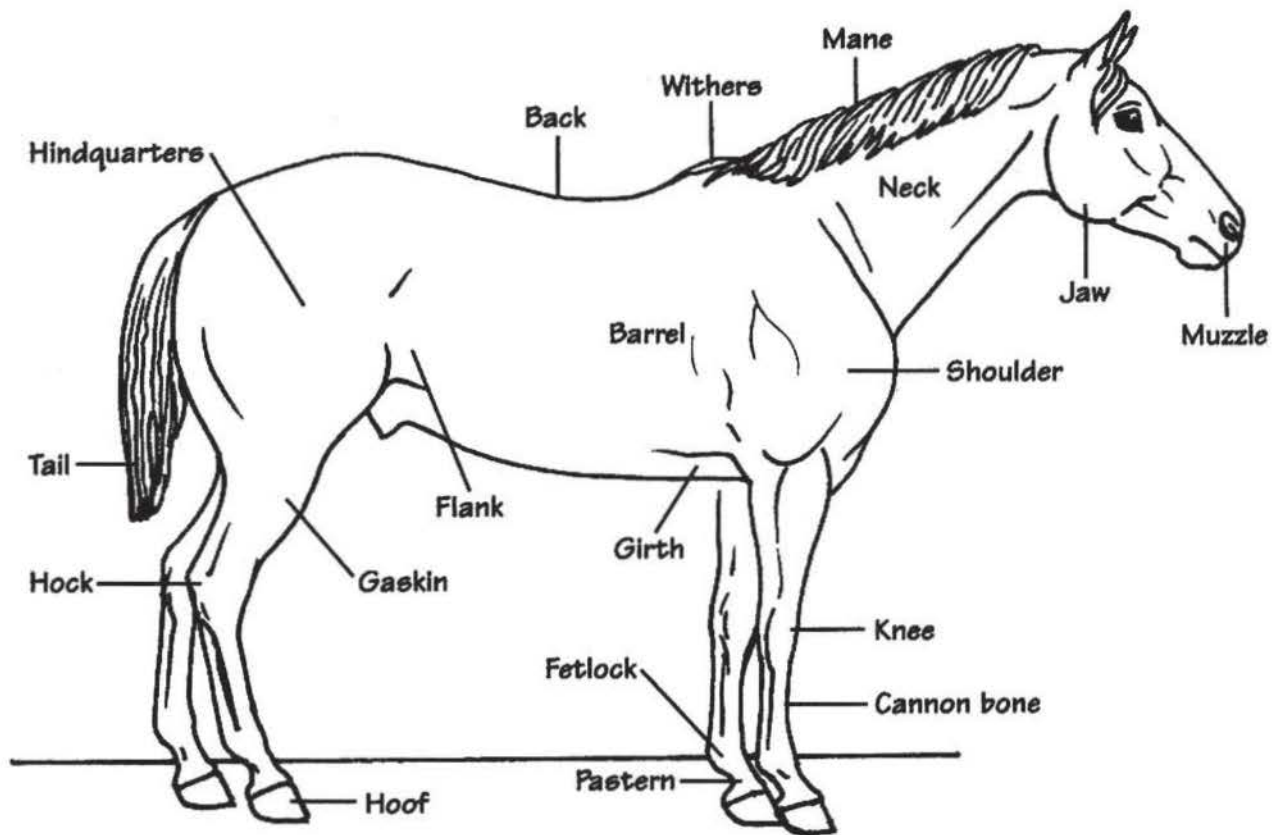
The Hodgkin family lost Long Spur in 1997/98 and were pushed further down to the low country leases at the West Branch, Lords Creek and Little Snowy Creek State Forest leases on which they still run cattle today.

The family still runs beef cattle on the home farms. Lee and his family are living at Stockyard Creek on the same property as Bill and Wyvern. Ross is running cattle on his farm which used to be old Charlie Hodgkin's situated up Scrubby Creek.

The Hodgkins are true Mountain Cattlemen and are very proud of their heritage.

Robyn Cook, member of the Hodgkin family

Hodgkin's Hut features on the Cattlemen's Old Port crock this year.



Parts of a Horse Word Search

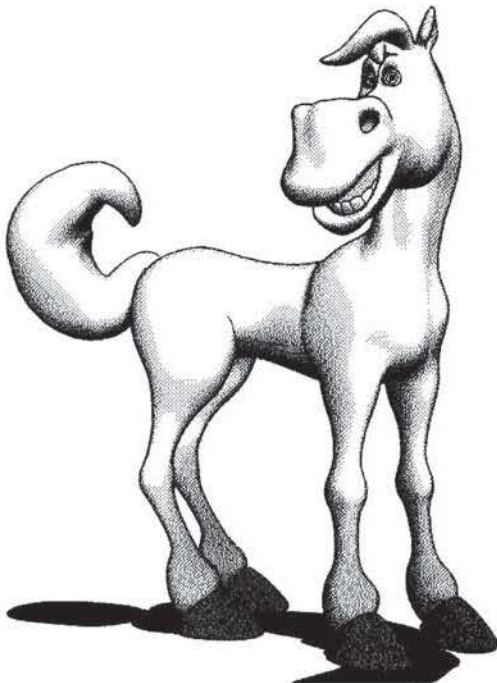
J D H I N D Q U A R T E R S D F A L N P
 A B O Z Z E G J B M A C X H P K N E E A
 W U C M P S N R F O O H T O F I P R V S
 X M K G A H T P J C E K Q U D E Y B L T
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 A Q E V C A N N O N B O N E C L E R S N
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 K P L A C M R U E B A C K I N S A L G I
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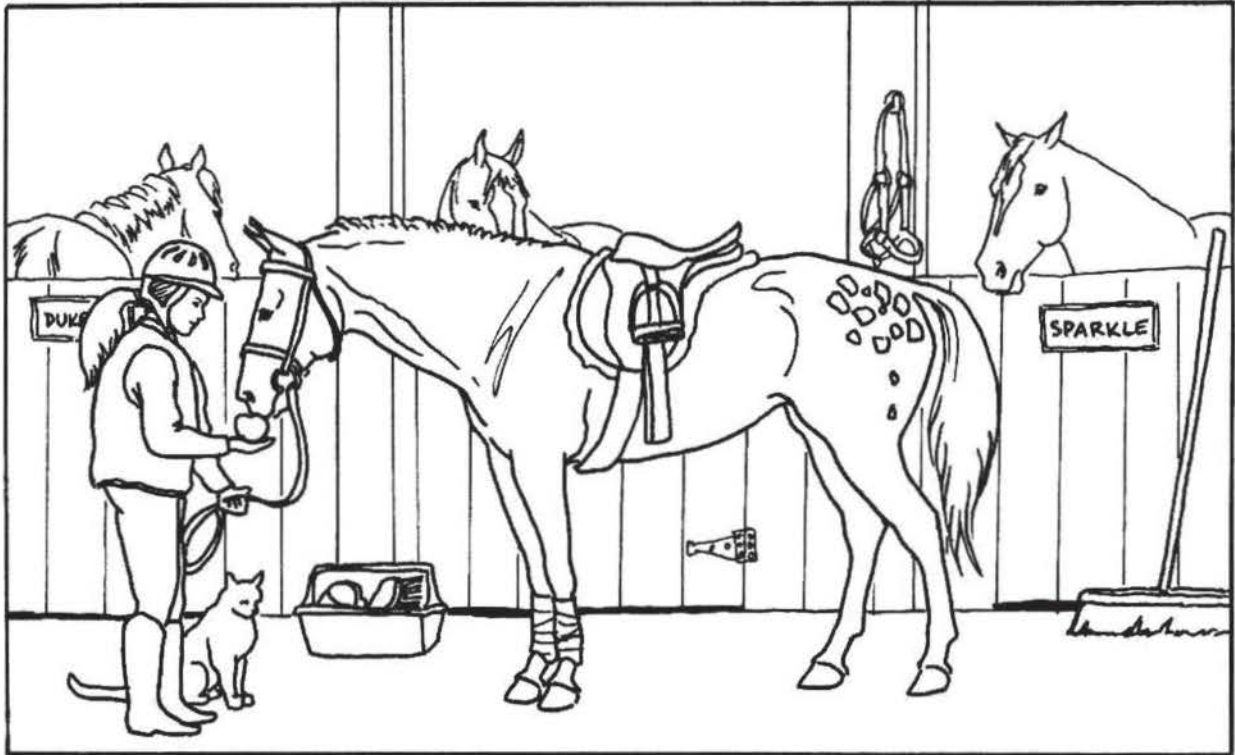
How many words?

How many words can you find by using any of these nine letters? Words must have three letters or more and there is one nine letter word to be found. No names, abbreviations, plurals or foreign words allowed.

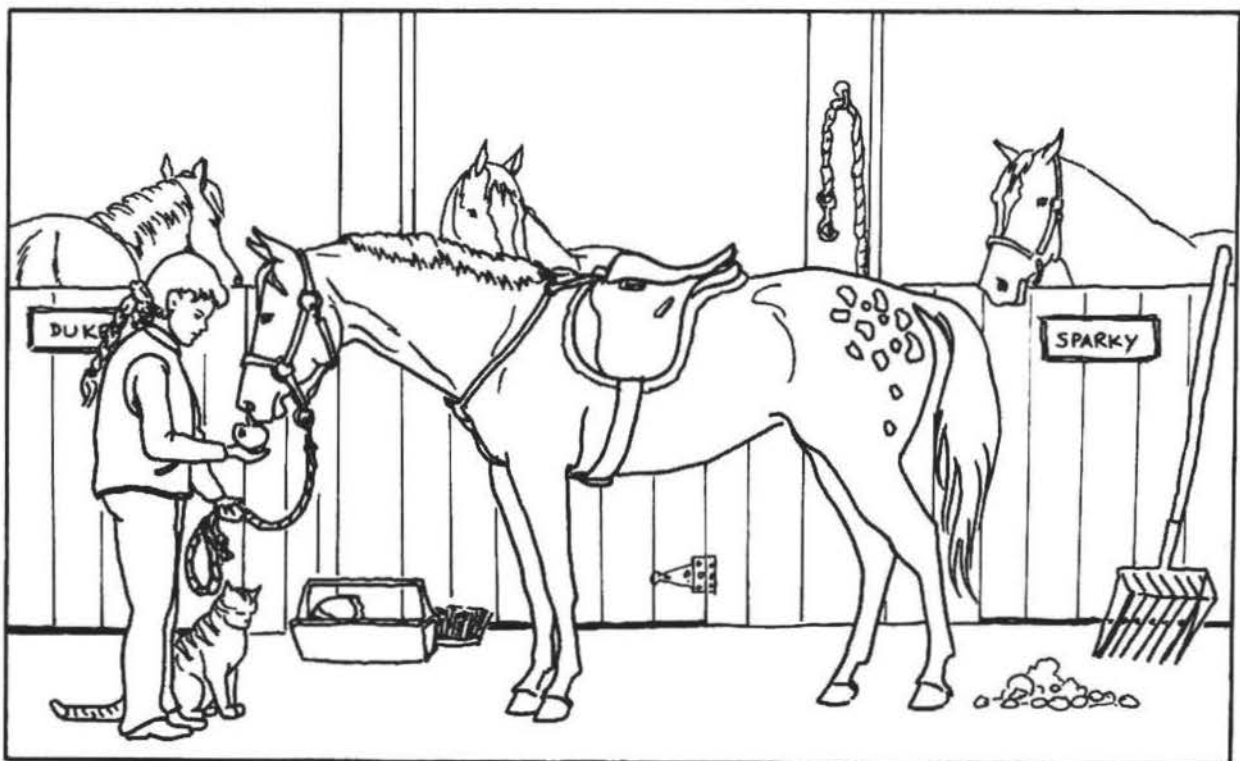
- 10 Is that all?
- 20 That's better
- 30 Excellent
- 40 Budding genius



Spot the Difference



There are at least SEVENTEEN differences in the two pictures. Can you spot them?



The answers are somewhere else in this edition of *Voice of the Mountains*.



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The Man from Coxs River

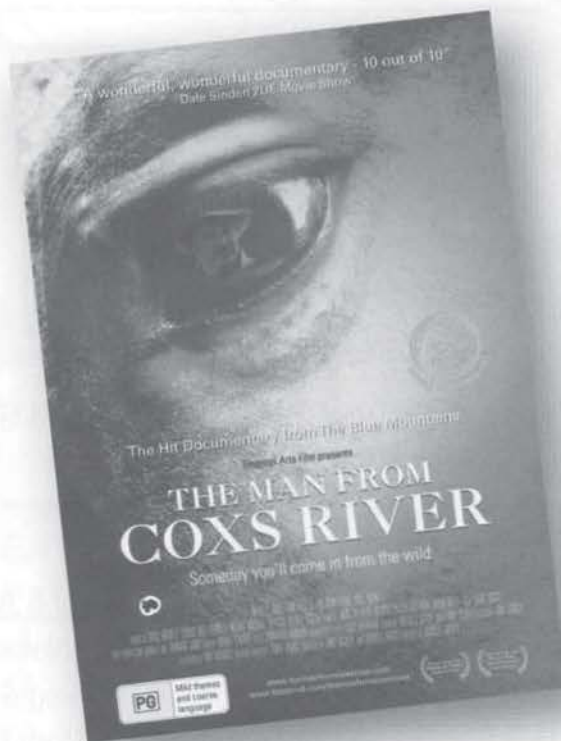
The Man from Coxs River film set in the Blue Mountains in NSW has more parallels with the mountain cattleman of Victoria than one may initially think. On the face of it this film is about how multiple authorities went about using local knowledge and people to catch brumbies in a wilderness area and relocate them. But it also raises the issue of identity, sense of place, recognition of acquired generational knowledge and other heritage issues.

THE FILM

YEARS ago the Sydney Water Catchment Authority that manages the Warragamba Special Area within the Blue Mountains National Park, decided that they had to do something about the brumby population in the water catchment area. This area covers the Warragamba Dam, Sydney's main water source that flooded the Burratorang Valley and impounded, in part, several rivers, including Cox's River about fifty years ago.

It was perceived that brumbies were polluting the catchment (never mind about the pigs, deer, goats, fish, birdlife and native wildlife in the area).

Typically a consultant was bought in to ascertain the most effective way to deal with the problem. In March 2007 the lengthy *Wild Horse Management Plan* for the area was released. It resolved that given the choice of aerial shooting, which seemed the most feasible (leaving the carcass to rot and the guaranteed public anger at such an action) or capture, that they would "catch and relocate" the horses. This was not a simple exercise and it took four years before anything actually happened. There were numerous authorities involved and the steering committee ended up with representatives from NPWS Blue Mountains Region Advisory Committee, National Parks Association (NPA), Royal Society for Protection and Care of Animals (RSPCA), Brumby



Protection Group, Rural Lands Protection Board, Sydney Catchment Authority, community members, local landholders, NPWS staff and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. It was also complicated by the fact that this is a Schedule 1 zone of the catchment meaning that is a no go zone for the general public with limited access by vehicle of any description.

At this point the authorities recognised that they themselves did not have the expertise or ability to do the catching themselves so a laterally thinking parks official Chris Banffy consulted with a local – Luke Carlon. Chris had

five years to implement the plan and optimistically was looking for an answer. Luke was well known locally for his horse handling skills and had the acquired knowledge that comes from father to son over generations. His family had settled between the Megalong and Burratorang in the 1830s. Some of this area is now up to 150ft under water.

It is also around this time that film producer, Russell Kilbey heard about 'this local guy who is going up bush to try and catch the brumbies to bring them out'. Somehow, against all odds, he gets permission from all authorities concerned to document the exercise. At the time Luke thought there was no way that the authorities would give permission and it was the last thing that he wanted. Not that they would be doing anything wrong for them to document but from the point of view of being restricted about what, and how, they did his job



to accommodate the film crew. He was lucky Russell turned out to be a reasonable bloke.

Russell was there to document the helicopters flying in yard panels, the building, the days of feeding out to entice the horses and checking and "hiding" and working out just how the horses would be caught. Eventually a system was devised that the horses trapped themselves when self-closing gates were used but this meant the traps needed very regular checking and when horses were caught. No trucks could get anywhere near the trapping site. So all of the horses had to be broken to lead on the site then individually led out to the closest truck point, five bone crunching kilometres (through rugged bush with river crossings) away!

Luke was initially apprehensive about working with the authorities but felt someone had to at least try and prevent the horses from being shot. He put together an experienced team to do the job including his nephew who was keen to "reconnect" to the land his family had been associated with for over 150 years and a stockman from Japan. What eventuated was over 80 hours of film over a period of years to create *The Man from Coxs River*.

The film itself tells the difficulties that were encountered by Luke – some of them manmade and some of them environmental. The level of difficulty was commensurate with the rules and regulations that they had to work with and around. It became evident, that even though common sense said one thing, bureaucracy demanded a different course of action. Ultimately the whole exercise cost \$4,000 per horse and 52 horses were rehomed.

It deals with the "conflict" between wanting to do the right thing and being

compromised by legislation and unreal expectations. But this is not about "city" vs "country" or "parks" vs "locals" as there is a palpable level of respect and understanding between all parties involved and ultimately, under tough conditions, they achieved the impossible.

This film was not backed by a mega studio budget. It took more than four years of filming, editing and finding finance before the makers, and their son, travelled Australia to get the movie shown in country cinemas. While this was happening a small but vocal arm of Brumby groups, who you would have thought would have encouraged the catch and release plan, vehemently opposed it!

As the film's producer, Amy Sculley states on *The Man from Coxs River* website

*When we started making this film we never imagined we would be the subject of consistent and disturbing attacks on our integrity as film-makers, least of all from a brumby group. Naively we thought because Luke was rescuing brumbies and risking his life to do it, it would be the sort of thing they might appreciate. A documentary film-makers job is to document events before they are lost forever. This enables our society to consider and reflect on occurrences they were not present at. It's quite an important job. Unfortunately one or two brumby groups have repeated publicly and to the defamation of our name and film that there was a conspiracy between us - the film makers and Luke Carlon, The NPWS and Sydney Catchment Authority. According to these two women who love to quote from documentation of all types the only time pressure on the contractor (Luke) was the budget of our film. I quote from a letter they have been circulating to cinema owners and others to scare them away from showing or viewing the film. "Wild horses were clearly traumatised and injured for the sake of the dramatisation of the movie and the sense of urgency, for a film crew that had insufficient budget to document a five year removal plan as per the plan; put further unnecessary stress on the animals." **This allegation is completely false and amounts to defamation of our craft and character.** Ladies please read the Warragamba Wild Horse Management Plan 2007 before you start slinging the mud.*

They accused the team of animal abuse and then black banned the film at their local cinemas! The film did however go on to jointly win the National Heritage Award for Education and Interpretation from the National Trust.

This film is a must-watch for anyone interested in the oral history of early Australia; in horses and horsemanship or park management. In the week before Christmas it was the #1 top seller at *Sanity* stores and you can purchase it direct from *The Man from Coxs River* website.

THE FAMILY

Luke's great-great grandfather, Patrick Carlon, had settled the isolated and spectacular valley in the 1830s. They were hard-working Irish Catholics who bred cattle and as the family grew his sons and grandsons looked for land close by of their own.

Luke's grandfather, Norbert, resettled in the Megalong Valley on a property called Green Gully, which Luke's parents, Bert and Norma eventually took over. They built a new home not far from Norbert's in the 1950s. Bert had been a horsemaster and stuntman on Australian movie sets such as Charles Chauvel's 1949 release of the *The Sons of Matthew*.

The Carlon family successfully ran cattle, in the adjoining National Park, and a trail riding business from the property for over 45 years. 'Packsaddlers' employed up to ten people and hosted numerous visitors from within Australia and overseas. Ironically, when Myles Dunphy was bushwalking through the area it was with the Carlons that he chose to camp. It was at this time that he was gathering material to support the establishment of the Wilderness Area, drawing up maps of the area and imposing what are now regarded by some as pseudo-Aboriginal placenames.

Luke grew up with "Packsaddlers", taking tourists up the Coxs River as part of the family business that had run for 45 years. At its busiest it employed ten people with rides going out three times a day, and accommodation.

In the 1980s they lost their leases for the cattle, and as Luke says, "that took a chunk out of Dad". The declaration of the Wilderness Area was looming and when horses were banned "was when Dad started to die" according to



Luke. They were left with no option other than to shut down. Parks had tried to acquire Green Gully in the 1970s and in the late 1990s they succeeded.

Luke and his family still live in Megalong Valley. Norma still lives in the local community and as one of the oldest residents of the valley regularly visits the school at Katoomba to talk to the students about early life in Megalong. Luke finds it difficult to visit the home site that is now a camping ground, named after, of all people, Myles Dunphy! All the old signage is gone and the relics of the past



are being removed. The home Bert and Norma built was pulled down.

Where once a flourishing homestead stood, little remains. Norbert's original homestead is being allowed to fall down with the evidence of occupation being diligently removed. When the Carlons left the original corn shed that had been built by his grandfather c1900 still stood. The saddle shed with its huge open fire and brick chimney that Luke carried some of the bricks for in the 1980s, still stood. Some years later, it was gone - all except the chimney - it was deemed to have heritage values ... heritage values from the 1980s, but the one hundred year old structure was gone. Those who made the decisions did not consult with the family as to the heritage values of any of the structures.

Such is the attachment the Carlons have to this area that Norbert and Bert have both been memorialised at Kangagra Walls which is now contained within the Wilderness Area. When the family chose this place there were no access restrictions. It was here that Luke's grandfather would camp in the 1960s and it is here that plaques have been placed by the family in memory of both men.



THE ISSUES

While I was sitting there watching *The Man from Cocks River* a particular segment really resonated with me and I am struck with thoughts like - what the hell? The Carlon family name has been in this place for years when along comes Myles Dunphy—his actions virtually destroyed their livelihood and the ultimate insult—the site of their property is renamed after the very person who bought about their demise! Before conservationists jump on me let me say, that I am not belittling the man himself, however I discovered (after research) that there are at least three other places in the area that carry his name.

So what makes the conservation history more important than the heritage of occupation? Or does it come down to who has the most push when it comes to official place names a conservation group or a family?

The Carlon family has been on the land in Megalong Valley since the 1830s. Since settlement what has always been known as *Carlons* or *Carlons Homestead* is now renamed

Dunphy's Camping Area adding to the already named *Dunphy's Pass*, *Dunphy's Lookout* and *Myles Dunphy Reserve*.

Consider this too – presently the Carlon family have permission to visit the family plaques on horseback six times a year (with a maximum of twelve horses), for ten years. Because this is now in a declared Wilderness Area they are fearful that they are in danger of losing this access. Of being denied access to their own heritage. It is like being told that you can't go visit at the cemetery. Yes, they chose to place the ashes there, however the laws around their access are a fluid situation. When you chose a cemetery it is usually for perpetuity not on a ten year lease.



When you consider the whole situation Luke and his family were perhaps in a very similar situation to what the mountain cattlemen find themselves in from time to time. They (us) were removed from the land that they had been physically and emotionally tied to for generations and when things go wrong

We can't catch the brumbies can you come and get them?

There's some bushwalkers lost can you help us find them?

The alps are a blaze we need a hand to put it out?

..... Who is consulted and bought in to "save the day" those who have known the land for generations. It is our expertise that has come from generations of working with and living in the area that is then needed.

To quote Luke himself

"heritage is a burden, if I didn't care about it, it would be easier – but I do care."

On the cattlemen's bookshelf



***The Biggest Estate on Earth:
How Aborigines made Australia***
by Bill Gammage

2011, 436pp., Allen and Unwin
ISBN 978 1 74331 132 5, 2011

Available from all good book stores.

Across Australia, early Europeans commented again and again that the land looked like a park. With extensive grassy patches and pathways, open woodlands and abundant wildlife, it evoked a country estate in England. Bill confirms that this was because Aboriginal people managed the land in a far more systematic and scientific fashion than most have ever realised. It is a theory that the cattlemen have long supported.

Bill has researched this theory for over ten years and the conclusions that he draws have huge implications on the land management strategies of today. He confirms that once the Aboriginal people were no longer able to tend their country, it became overgrown and vulnerable to the hugely damaging bushfires that we are now experiencing. Our historic practice of cool patch burning is much in line with that complex fire management system of the past. As Bill explains, what many regard as virgin bush in a national park is nothing of the kind.

Bill has a profound understanding of the Australian environment and landscape and eloquently presents his diligent and enlightening research and interpretations. The *Sydney Morning Herald* said, *to read Gammage's scrupulous and painstaking account is to feel the scales fall from your eyes. Once you know what to look for, you can see it everywhere.*

This much awarded tome is fast becoming the recognised "go to" book on the history of land management in Australia. It is the most authoritative (and readable) book of its type and is highly recommended. If you want to be able to answer the accusations that are made against controlled burning with the same scientific authority, then read Bill's book.

As Bill himself concludes, *We have a continent to learn. If we are to survive, let alone feel at home, we must begin to understand our country. If we succeed, one day we might become Australian.*

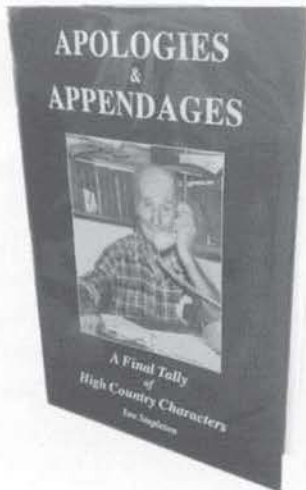
Bill Gammage is a historian and adjunct professor in the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University. He has previously written several articles for Voice of the Mountains and most recently spoke at the Bushfire Mitigation meeting held in November last year at Bairnsdale.

Apologies & Appendages:
A Final Tally of High Country Characters

by Ian Stapleton

2014, 250pp., ISBN 0 9756080 5 3

Available from the author at
Feathertop Track, Harrierville



A lifetime ago (actually 2003) Ian Stapleton put his money where his passion was and self-published *Hairy Chested History* the first of his planned six volumes exploring the lives of the characters and identities of the high country. This was followed by *From Fraser's to Freezeout*, *From Drovers to Daisy Pickers*, *Weatherbeaten Wisdom*, *Of Pioneers & Perserverance* and finally *A Mountain Muster*. Each volume recorded more and contributed to the resources relating to high country heritage but each, sadly, appeared without an index. There is no doubt that Ian was pressured (I was one of them!) to do something about an index to his commendable work.

Apologies & Appendages is the much wished for index for all six volumes. Ian was concerned that a book that was "just an index" would be rather boring so he has taken the opportunity to do something rather clever and unusual.

During the life of this work extra information, photographs and stories have come to light (as they always do the instant that the book is finished and printed). It is also at this time that you quickly become aware of any typos or errors in fact that you may have made, despite the text having been read by at least ten

people who should have known better. The *Apologies* are just that - they are corrections (three pages of them) to what Ian considers he got wrong, however small an error it was and I commend him for including this list. It doesn't matter how carefully we record, transcribe, interpret or write there will always be errors. None of Ian's errors are worthy of a law suit so I think he is pretty safe.

The *Appendages* are all those "extra bits", like a bonus track on a CD or the extra footage in a movie, that includes all the wonderful "extra" photographs - all 100 plus pages of them!



Congratulations Ian - you made it to the index and what an index it is! I have now forgiven you for all the extra reading and searching that I had to do with your books and recognise that it was all a clever marketing plan for this very publication! I could almost say it is a work of art such is my admiration of a good index.

PS ... The heartfelt dedication to former President of the MCAV and good friend Doug Treasure has not gone unnoticed and sums up the characteristics of both individuals succinctly.

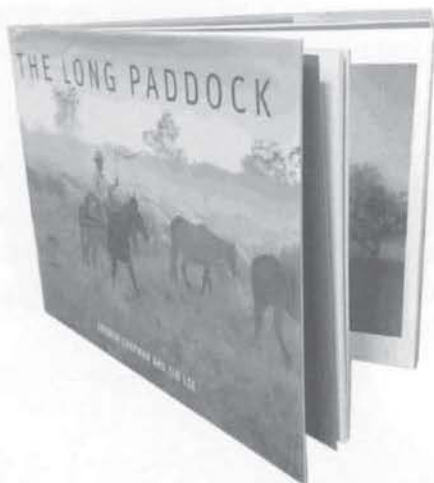
Ian Stapleton is living proof that bushwalkers and cattlemen can see eye to eye. In the 1960s and 70s he was the hiking master at Timbertop and then established Mittagundi and Wollangarra. Along the way he has become an esteemed friend and supporter of the MCAV which is mutually recognised.

The Long Paddock

by Andrew Chapman and Tim Lee

2014, 224pp., ISBN 9781743467268

Available from all good booksellers



Andrew Chapman and Tim Lee have created the ultimate tribute to the drovers and the lifestyle of “the long paddock”, focusing on the stock route from Wilcannia to Echuca. It is a celebration of the life of the drover.

Magnificently photographed by Andrew Chapman and with masterfully crafted text by Tim Lee, it captures the essence of today’s droving life while reflecting on its cultural values to the Australian psyche. Andrew has evocatively used the environment and natural light to convey life on the road. Be they “off guard” images, aerials or extreme close-ups the images are a joy to browse through. He has the ability to convey the heat, the dust, the haze and the vastness on the page, so much so that you can feel the dust on your hands and feel the rays of the sun on your back. Andrew is one of Australia’s best photographers no matter what the subject matter, but is particularly good with images of a “rural” aspect and is widely published.

Tim, who originally hails from Briagolong in East Gippsland, is well known to many readers from the ABC television production *Landline* and is one of their main rural reporters. His grandfather, Danny Scott, was one of the original mountain cattlemen running stock on crown leases in the high country and the family has been on the land for



generations. With other family members he also has farming interests at Dargo. There is none of your “city journo” reporting on “country life” here. Tim is well respected within the rural community for his “telling it like it is” attitude. His words are well researched and fall off the page eloquently. They are a pleasure to read. He has the ability to truthfully convey the stories he has been told with honesty and insightfulness and in doing so, draws word portraits of the drovers and their families that complement the images. This is Tim’s fourth book, the most recent being *Wanganella and the Merino Aristocrats*.

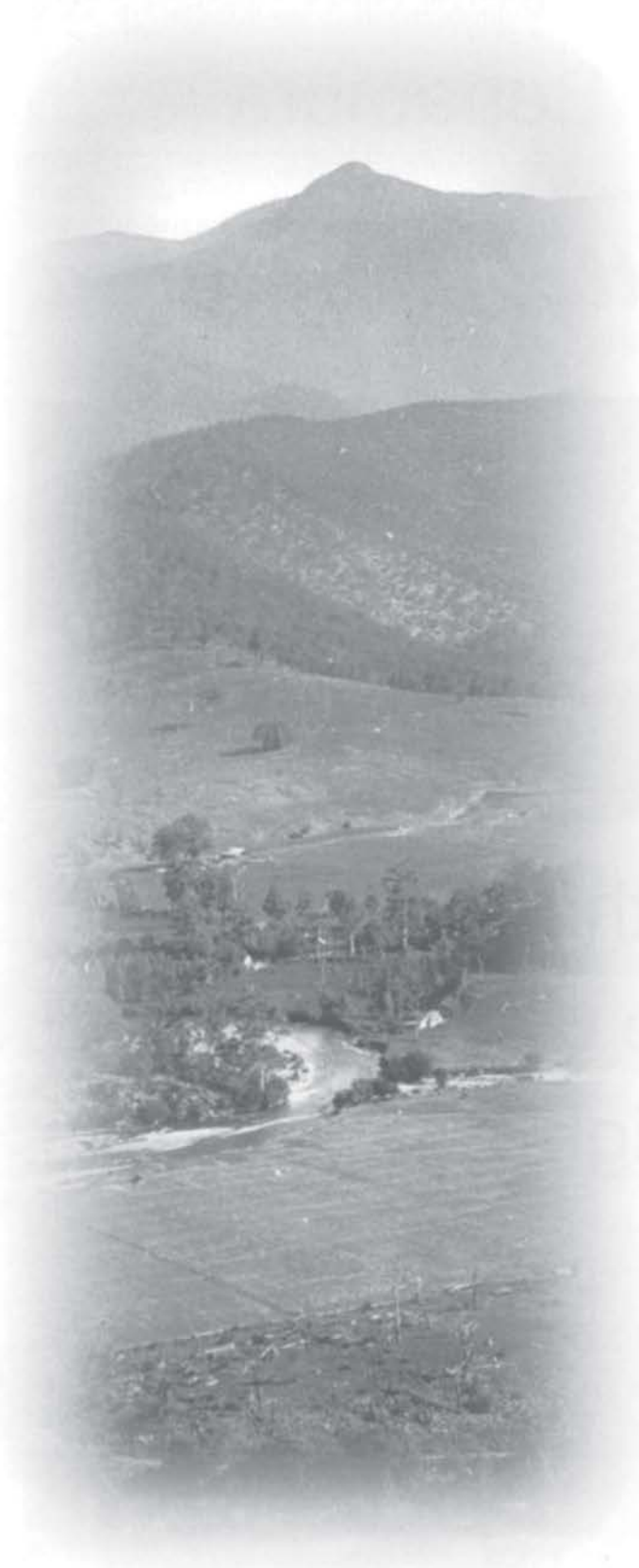
The Long Paddock records all aspects of the stock route - the people, the places, the history, the dogs, the droughts, the stock and more. The combination of Andrew’s images and Tim’s words makes for a formidable pairing. This combined with a gifted book designer has produced a publication that is truly beautiful to look at and read.

And if you are wondering why there isn't a book like this available on the mountain cattlemen and the high country well just wait until later this year.

Melanie Faith Dove, whose work graces the front cover of this Voice, has been working on such a book for a little while now. You may have seen some of her work in her dog book Best Mates: Australian dogs and their two-legged friends or in Working Dogs which was a collaborative work with Andrew Chapman.

Melanie has been working closely with Andrew and you can see his influence in her amazing photographs. Her book is sure to be on the “most wanted for Christmas” list when it comes out in the second half of this year.

on the mountain



Down the dusky glades of sundown,
where golden colours leave their glow,
you can hear the quietness settle
in the valley far below.

Soft winds slow to weary languor
as the bird calls come to light,
their soothing tones draw us to slumber
as they warble in the night.

The flies have finally found a tree to rest
as cooling peace is sinking down,
beneath the red glow of horizon
shines the heather's purple gown.
As the campfire boils the billy
and there's no more work to do,
you can breathe in sweet redemption,
a greater force looks over you.

Like the animals around us
let your mind still with the night,
With no net or television
it feels tranquil and quite right.
Let your heartbeat slow and steady...
feel your racing mind let go,
and you may find that inner peace...
that all the bushfolk know.

Laurence Webb

Bill TILLEY MLA

Member for Benambra

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Supporting the return of mountain cattle grazing to the Victorian High Country

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Soldiers from the Snowline

ON 6 January 1916, during World War I, a contingent of high country men marched out of Delegate and thus the "Men from Snowy River" march was born. Recruiting along the way they marched to the nearest training depot at Goulburn. This march is well documented. There were, however, many other cattlemen from the high country who went onto to be 'soldiers from the snowline' who should also be acknowledged. This year marks the start of centenary publications recognising WW1 for the next four years. We too will be acknowledging those men, some of whom were the original mountain cattlemen.

Readers are invited to send details of any servicemen from the high country who enlisted to *Voice* for inclusion in a future edition.



Robert Connley from Omeo was the second son of Robert and Mary Connley who had a family of nine children. On 25 October 1916, when he was 34 years old, he enlisted with the 21st Battalion and sailed on the *Hororata* on 23 November 1916 for the front. He remained with the 21st battalion for the duration of his service until he received multiple gunshot wounds on 4 October 1917 at Etaples, France. He was hospitalised in England before returning home on 10 January 1918. He married May Delaney that same year.

Stephen William Dyer from Benambra was the youngest child born in 1893 to John and Ellen (Helen) Dyer; he had ten siblings. Three months before his 23rd birthday he enlisted at Sale with the 10th Machine Gun Company and left Melbourne on 27 May on the *Ascanius*. He never made it to the front. When the *Ascanius* docked at Capetown in South Africa he was admitted to the city hospital with spinal meningitis and died there on 2 July. His death was not confirmed until four months later. He was buried in the Woltemade Cemetery, South Africa.

Frank Stanley and Frederick Gordon Faithfull, brothers from Omeo, were the sons of William and Louisa Faithfull and had eight brothers and sisters. They walked to Yerong Creek where their sister lived, to enlist together on 28 March 1916, (when Frank was 27 and Fred was 23), and joined the 5th Battalion. Later both transferred to the 59th

Battalion. They sailed together on the *Ayrshire* on 3 July. When they landed in Egypt they were both absent for two days before re-joining the 59th battalion and sailing for France. Fred suffered with severe trench foot and Frank was wounded on 29 September 1917 and was away from the front for three months. They both returned to Australia on 10 June 1919 and were discharged. In 1921 they married local girls, Frank to Margaret Hunter and Fred to Olive Smith. Their uncle Frederick George Faithfull however, did not return.



Frank (on the left) and Fred Faithfull "in camp" before leaving Australia. AWM DA71080

Frederick George Faithfull was 41 years old when he enlisted two months after his nephews on 7 May 1916 and listed his brother, the boys' father, as his next of kin. He joined the 2nd Pioneer Battalion and was transferred to France and the front on 2 November. One of the last letters that the family had from him was to his niece Emma on 27 August 1917 when he expressed a wish that the war would end soon and "the boys will all come home." He signs off "au-revoir but not goodbye" but was killed on 2 November and was memorialised at Ypres, Belgium.

William James Guy was the first child to William and Martha Guy of Talbotville. He had seven siblings, three of whom died as children. William needed his mother's consent to join on 22 July 1915 when he was just 19 years old. He was in Egypt in 1916, just "missing out" on the Gallipoli campaign and was promoted to Bombardier on 1 January 1917 before going to France in April with the 12th Field Artillery Brigade. He was killed in action in Belgium on 25 August 1917 where many other Australians lost their lives.

James Alfred Kneebone from Whorouly was the son of Albert and Theresa Kneebone and was born in 1891. On 3 April 1916, when aged 23 years, he signed up with the 37th Battalion and sailed on the *Shropshire* on 25 September 1916. He stayed with the 37th, seeing action on the Western front, being twice wounded. On the third occasion, when he was shot in the leg he was discharged home arriving on 12 March 1918. He married Florence Kemp the same year.



William Guy "in camp" before leaving Australia.
AWM DA12251

John Edmund Lovick was born at Mansfield in 1874, the second son of seven children born to William and Catherine Lovick. He was the great uncle of MCAV President Charlie Lovick. In 1916 when he was 41 years old and a single man, he enlisted from Mansfield in the middle of winter on 8 July 1916 and initially joined as a Private with the 4th Light Horse Regiment. His unit left from Melbourne on the *Ulysses* three months later on 25 October. The majority of his service was in France. He returned home, a Gunner with the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column, on 27 May 1919.

**Tallangatta
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FOR ALL TYPES OF EARTHWORKS

Charles Vivian Pendergast, the eldest son of Charles and Julia Pendergast of Omeo Station, Benambra, was 22 years old when he enlisted on 29 June 1915. He trained as a driver with the Field Artillery Brigade and embarked five months later on the *Wandilla*. In April 1916, while stationed in France he was reported as being dangerously ill with appendicitis. This hospitalised him for some time before he rejoined his unit and then transferred to the Divisional Ammunition Column in October 1918. After almost four years service he was discharged on 12 April 1919. Four years later, in 1923, he married Marjorie Evans.

James Patrick Pendergast, the son of James and Matilda Pendergast of Kimberley Park, Benambra was 49 years old when he enlisted on 27 March 1915, though he put his age down six years. He left Melbourne in May and went straight to the front at Gallipoli where he suffered extreme shell shock. This, combined with dyspepsia and trouble with his right foot from an old break, saw him hospitalised on 9 October. He did not return to his unit and was discharged home on 3 March 1916.

Keith Churchill Rogers a young 20 year old from Black Mountain was the first son of John and Alice who had married in 1893. He had three brothers, Lionel, Jonathon and Cecil who died as an infant. He enlisted on 19 April 1916 and joined the 7th Battalion sailing from Melbourne on the *Themistocles* on 28 July 1916. He was in France when he was wounded in action on 14 October 1917 and after recovering transferred to the 3rd Machine Gun Battalion. He returned to Australia the day after



Keith Rogers "somewhere in France" 1917.
June Moon

Anzac Day in 1919 and later, in 1926, married Janet Beryl (known as Beryl) Hodge.

Bertie Henry Roper was born at Tawonga in 1893 and was the third son of eight children to Frederick and Mary Roper. On 16 March 1916, when he was 22 years old, he enlisted with the 37th Battalion and sailed from Melbourne on the *Orontes* on 16 August that year. He saw action in France before developing a severe bout of pleurisy that eventually saw him discharged home just over twelve months later on 21 December 1917. He married Annie Loudon in 1922.



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Hugh Guthrie Brown

26 October 1933 - 28 April 2014

FORMER Mansfield District Forester Hugh Brown passed away on 28 April 2014. Hughie became a legend in the High Country during his time at Mansfield because of his positive approach to practical issues in the bush and passion for fuel reduction burning. He was renowned for his ability to read the weather and quickly implemented large cool burns safely and with minimal staff.

Hughie oversaw the development of many roads in the bush including the Bluff Link road which became a vital part of the Forests Commission's fire fighting network. This road joined Jamieson to Wrens Flat, Mt Sunday, the Upper Jamieson, the Bluff Link, Bindaree and Mt Stirling Circuit Road.

Hughie Brown proudly told everyone he could drive the Forests Commission's two-wheel drive Holden station wagon from Woods Point to Whitfield without leaving the bush!

However, Mother Nature won and most of that road proved to be too costly to maintain at that level so reverted to 4x4 only.

Hughie was a huge supporter of the Cattlemen and this was evidenced right to the end. When he left Mansfield, the President of the Mansfield branch of the MCAV, Jack Lovick, presented Hughie with an Aukubra hat. A hat that became a much-treasured possession.

The essence of the cattlemen was present at Hughie's service when the family chose his favourite piece of music, Bruce Rowland's theme from *The Man from Snowy River*. A reminder of happier times spent in the bush that he loved.

The association regrets his passing and acknowledges the support that he gave during his time at Mansfield. Our condolences to his wife Maureen and family.



Donald Knox Richardson

1 December 1925 - 10 July 2014

THE beef industry lost one of its performance pioneers with the passing of Don Richardson, arguably one of Victoria's most successful soldier settlers.

Don left Scotch College in Melbourne the day he turned 17 and joined the navy. He spent three years on an ammunition ship in the Pacific before breaking his leg playing football on the day of his discharge, causing him to have to spend months in traction. Malaria also weakened him.

On his recovery he obtained a soldier settler block at Dunkeld, which was developed quickly, and more land was purchased. While exploring the bush around Omeo, he discovered Cobungra Station on the market. He eventually purchased the station and the move was made from Dunkeld to the high country.

The opportunity to develop a large property under uniquely difficult conditions was tackled with determination and courage by Don, who also had to contend with snow, thousands of acres of leasehold country, a large herd that needed upgrading, wild dogs and rabbits in plague proportions.

About seven years after establishing his management of Cobungra, he married Carol and a unique team was formed to take the station into a new and progressive mode.

Performance recording of cattle was just starting in the late 1960s and Cobungra – along

with the Yellands' Glentrevor stud and the Garnocks' South Bukalong – were some of the true pioneers of this among Herefords. Cobungra Herefords were icons of the breed. In fact, the first cattle to be weighed on the Department of Agriculture's new mobile scales were Cobungra bulls. As the enterprise grew Don took on one last challenge: to create a financially innovative joint venture, which involved purchasing an irrigated property at Berrigan so that young cattle could be value-added through the business. This innovative financial structure enabled Cobungra to obtain economies of scale.

Don was very courageous from start to finish, whether it be running off to join the navy or battling his ill health at the end. He was just shy of his 89th birthday when he died.

The association extends its sympathies to Carol, their children Sarah, Jock and Mark and grandchildren Isabelle, Austin, Claudia, Thomas and Hannah.

Don Lawson, Mansfield



Don with Richard Faithfull at the Omeo yards during one of Cobungra's Bull Sales and at the fireplace at Cobungra.

Two members of the pioneering Faithfull family in Omeo and two from the Traill family of Dargo are also acknowledged. Esma and Dorothy Faithfull, passed away within weeks of each other as did Stan Traill and Nancy Traill of Dargo.

Dorothy May Faithfull

30 December 2013

(nee Forsyth)

Dorothy, of Bairnsdale, passed away on 30 December 2013, aged 83 years.

Dearly loved wife of Frank (dec.).

Cherished mother and mother-in-law of Marlene and Bob. Proud Nan of Tania and Ange; Jason and Kate; Scott and Meeghan. Old Nan of Jordyn and Joshua; Amity and Ashely; Astrid, Des, Jake and Kaylee.

Dorothy's funeral took place at Bairnsdale on 3 January 2014.



Esma May Faithfull

11 November 2013

(nee Ah Sam)

Esma May, formerly of Omeo, passed away peacefully on November 11, 2014 aged 84 years.

Much loved wife of Ken (dec.). Loving mother and mother-in-law of Rod and Mira, Neil and Kay and Terrienne. Nana of Damien (Red) and Bernie, Janice and Daryl, Michelle and Leigh, Annileece and Tim. Great Nana Et of Jae, Nash and Dominic.

Esma's funeral took place at Omeo on 18 November 2013.

Stanley George Traill

18 September 1937 - 13 April 2014

Stan was the son of Thomas and Elsie May Traill of the Dargo Traill family. Loved brother of Beryl Blake, Norman, Eileen (dec.), Ken, Craig, Jackie Haynes, Graeme and Trevor (dec.). Husband of Judy .

A large crowd of mourners attended the service held at Dargo.



Catherine "Nancy" Traill

1939 - 26 April 2014

Nancy was the daughter of Walter and Nellie Gibbs (nee Guy) from Crooked River and descended from the "Wonnangatta" Guys, the Connollys and "Delvine" Scott families.

She had a lifelong association with the high country.

She married Geoff Traill and they had two sons, Brian and John with the marriage ending in divorce. Her passing is mourned by her children Brian and Jenny, John and Vanessa and grandchildren Mathew, Kylie, Mitchell and MacKenzie and great grandchildren Sophie and Jack.

The community hall at Dargo was filled to capacity for her service on 6 May 2014.

the Condamine bell

His brown hands are tired and worn
as he hangs up the old dusty bell
their lives had been moulded together
and stories are theirs to tell.

He remembers when he was a lad
and the Condamine bell was new.
It was bought for him at auction
from a drover his father once knew.

It had travelled down from Queensland
on the neck of a red baldy steer
that would turn and stand defiant
whenever the drover rode near.

Its ring was heard through the ranges
and changes of seasons too
as it donged its mellow tune out
in places only bushmen knew.

And when it was time for the muster
with all the lost strays to be found,
the stockman would listen keenly
for the Condamine to give out its sound.

And now their work days are over
with memories and tales to recall.
The old man has hung up his stockwhip
and the bell gathers dust on the wall.

Sometimes I still think the old drover
as he sleeps snug and warm in his bed,
still dreams he can hear the ringing
of the bell on that wild baldy red.

*Val Kirley, Mansfield
Winner of the Peter McCormack Bush Laureate 2014*

40th Annual Get-Together

HINNOMUNJIE 2014

Cattlemen's Cup Senior

- 1st Chris Connley
- 2nd John Douglas
- 3rd Anthony O'Ryan
- 4th Brett Lancaster
- 5th Matt Clark
- 6th Annette Fitzgerald

Cattlemen's Cup Junior

- 1st Tahnee Olsson
- 2nd Sophie Clark
- 3rd Nadine Harte
- 4th Amber Rendell
- 5th Josh Oatley
- 6th Jade Clark

Wally Ryder

Senior Walking Race

- 1st John Douglas
- 2nd Bill Pendergast
- 3rd Terry Moore

Doug Treasure

Junior Walking Race

- 1st Brittany Armstrong
- 2nd Jake Douglas
- 3rd Emma Williams

Great Australian Frank Ryan

Memorial Open Packhorse

- 1st Graham Forge
- 2nd Davis Olson
- 3rd Charles Connley
- 4th Mitchell Ward

Ladies Packhorse

- 1st Ellen Forge
- 2nd Kristy McGrath

Junior Packhorse

- 1st Tuppy Forge
- 2nd Tahnee Olsson
- 3rd Jake Douglas

Neatest Pack

Kristy McGrath

Wild Horse Catch

- 1st Todd Cameron
- 2nd Dean Pendergast
- 3rd Anthony Ryan
- 4th Tom King

Cattle Cutout

- 1st Todd Cameron
- 2nd Abbey Ingram

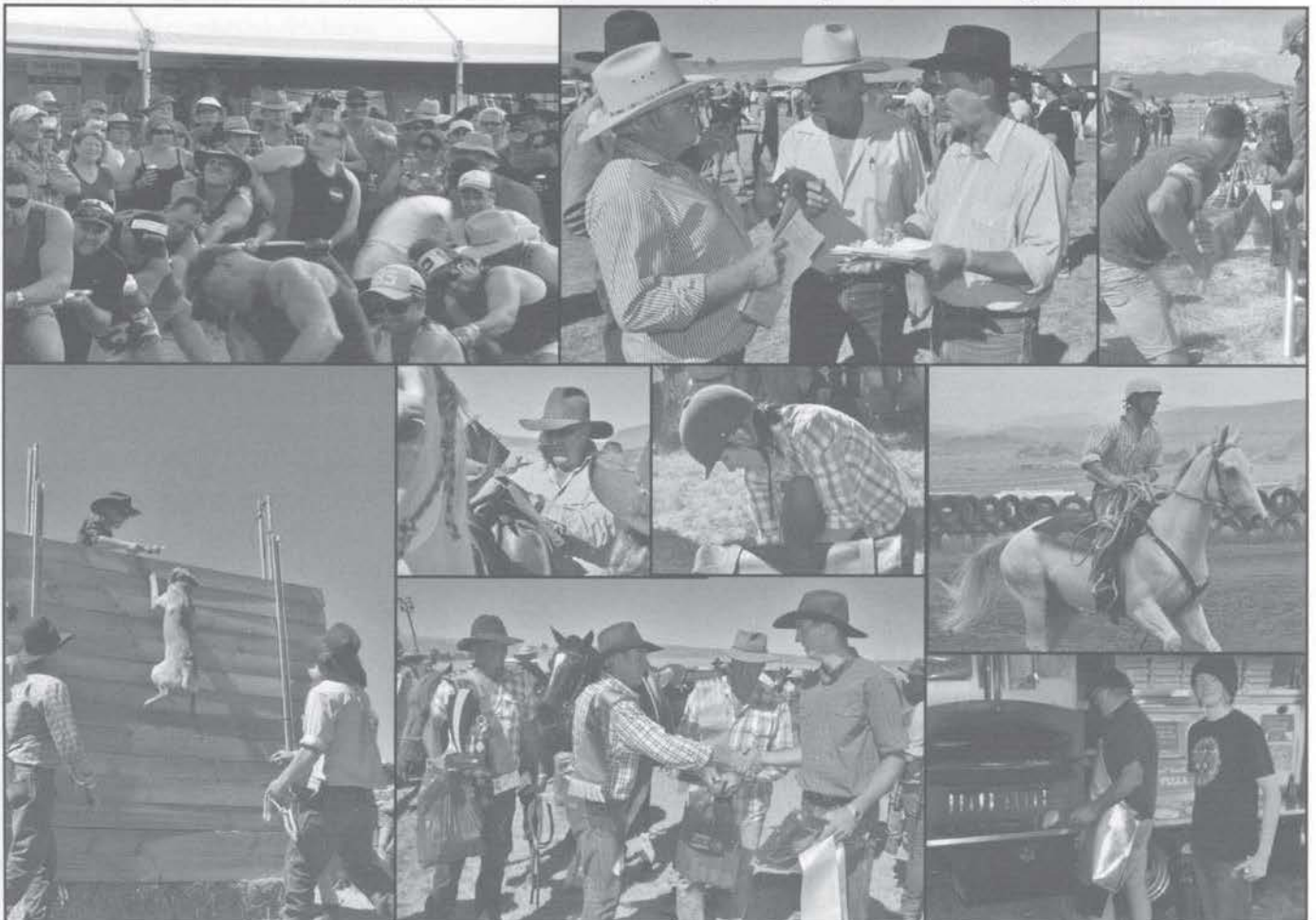
Rusty Connley Memorial Race

- 1st Tom King
- 2nd David Murphy
- 3rd Tom Buckley
- 4th Anthony O'Ryan

Haystacking - Ladies

- 1st Zan and Kas
- 2nd Kirsty and Cait Toose

These memorable images of Hinnomunjie were captured by Dale Wickberg - great job Dale !



Haystacking - Men's

- 1st Patrick Byrne and Jack Amery
- 2nd Chris and Botta

Bushman's Challenge - Ladies

- 1st Hayley Hinton and Emily Schultz
- 2nd Zoe and Darcy Boucher

Bushman's Challenge - Men

- 1st Sniz and Toby
- 2nd Hugh and Ben Amery

Whipcracking - Open

- 1st Diana Hurley
- 2nd Emiliqua East
- 3rd Wayne Campbell
- 4th Graham Jones

Whipcracking - Ladies

- 1st Emiliqua East
- 2nd Diana Hurley
- 3rd Paige Williams
- 4th Jacqueline Davies

Whipcracking - Juvenile

- 1st Emiliqua East
- 2nd Jacqueline Davies
- 3rd Joe Clausen

Whipcracking - Junior

- 1st Sarah Faithfull
- 2nd Clay Davies
- 3rd Danielle Hurley
- 4th Lucinda Hurley

Dog High Jump

- 1st - equal first place
IZZY and Sharon Blizzard
TIP and Ash King

Don Kneebone Heritage Award

Maria Harkins from Hazelwood North with the song *The Men from the Mountains*.

Bill Hicks Bush Minstrel Award

Billy Ruth from Toolangi with the poem *Last of the Line*.

Peter McCormack Bush Laureate

Val Kirley from Mansfield with the *The Condamine Bell*.

Jim Commins Judges Choice

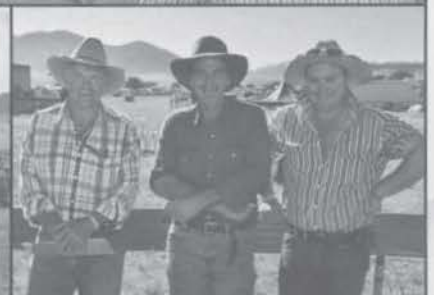
Don Dwyer from Newry.

Jack Treasure Traditional Award

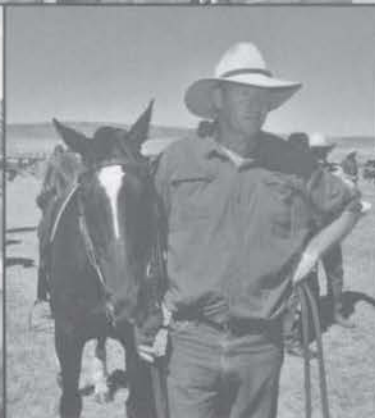
Jeff Aronson from Anglers Rest with the poem *The Cremation of Sam McGee* by Robert Service.

Laurence Webb Junior Award

Bridget Callahan from Mansfield with the poem *Horses Running Wild*.

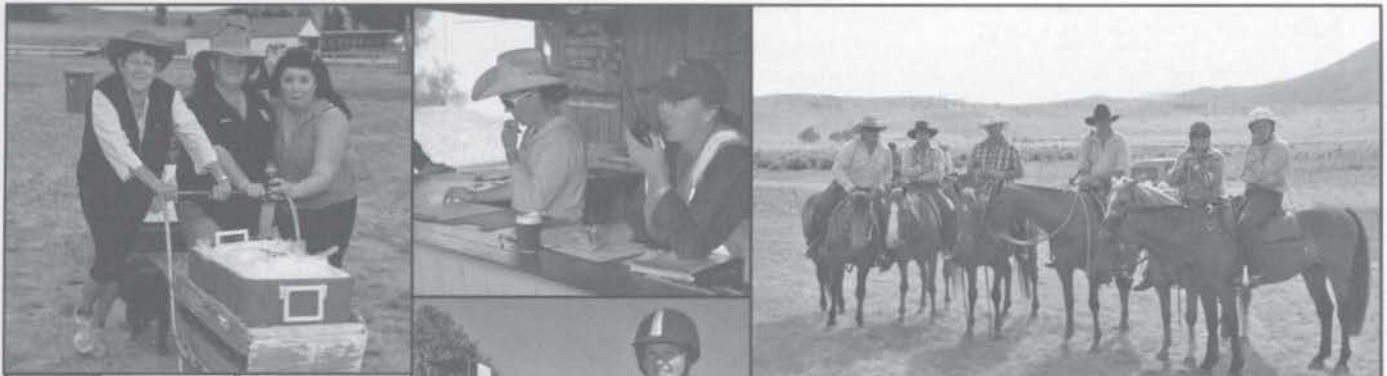












**HINNOMUNJIE
2014**





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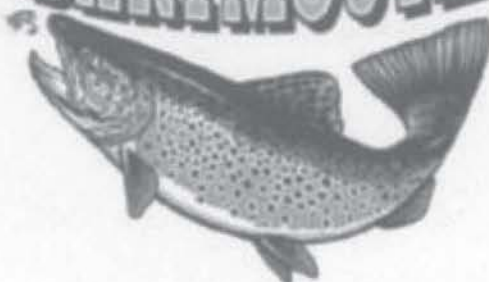
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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria held on Friday 19th September 2014 at Mill Valley Ranch, Tynong North commencing at 11.00am

Meeting opened at 11.15am.

1. Present

Bruce McCormack, Chris Cooper, Graeme Stoney, David Hurley, Leonie Phelan, Charlie Lovick, Kellie Lovick, Glenn Chalwell, Christa Treasure, Ray Anderson, Rhonda Treasure, Bruce Treasure, Chris Hodge, John Cook, Danny Cook, Neville Wright, Mary Treasure, Roger Hollis, Paul Davenport, Dennis Carstairs, John and Rita McMahon, Andrew Kee, Chris Commins, Rose Faithfull, Georgie Connan.

2. Apologies

Sue Reynolds, Simon Turner, Annie Patterson, Ken Heywood, Graham, Rosemary and Trent Osborne, Anne Faithfull, Richard Faithful, Brian Higgins, Joe Connley, Trudy Anderson, Peter Roper, Mark and Tania Coleman, Pat Coleman, Susan and Cath Noble, Peter Monds, Jack Hicks, Ben and Fiona Treasure, Wayne Turner (of Tom Groggin), Bruce Commins, Tim Faithfull, Diana Hurley, Barry and Fay Hicks, Leigh Woodgate, the Chesters, Anthony Higgins, Michael Higgins, Harry Ryder, Ross and Magda Brown, Greg Purcell, Colleen Hurley, Chris Lewis, Janine Cooper, Scott and Sarah Jennison, Senator Bridget McKenzie, Phil Davis MP, Mathew Jameson, Andrew Lancey, Tim Barker, Michelle Kirk, Ray Thomas, Peter Watkins, Terry Langley, Robyn Cook, Rebecca Farmer.

3. Confirmation of Official Proxies

Rose Hurley nominated David Hurley as her official proxy.

Simon Turner and Colleen Hurley nominated Chris Cooper as their official proxy.

Mark Coleman nominated Graeme Stoney as his official proxy.

Ben Treasure nominated Christa Treasure as his official proxy.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

It was agreed that the minutes, as circulated, of the Annual General Meeting dated 20th September 2013 held at Akoonah Park, Berwick are a true and correct record of proceedings.

David Hurley / Kellie Lovick Carried

5. Reports

5.1 President's Report

Charlie Lovick then presented his annual report verbally.

It has been a good year for the Cattlemen; we have forged partnerships with the Gunai Kurnai and Parks Victoria and have taken part in a very rewarding grazing trial at Wonnangatta. As we took the cattle in, the camaraderie between all the cattlemen was high. It was a great feeling to be going over the Howitt High Plains again. We arrived with 57 head and left with 58.

We have signed two Memorandums of Understanding, one with the State Government, Gunai Kurnai and Parks Victoria; the other with Parks Victoria about future management options and cooperation in the Alpine National Park.

Our future rests with the Coalition getting in at the 2014 November State election. I met with Lisa Neville MP, the Labor Shadow Minister for Environment. While Labor will not change their stance on reinstating grazing licences in the Alpine National Park (ANP), she agreed the Cattlemen have knowledge to share and passion for the high country. While cattle will not go back into the ANP during Labor's government, she is committed not to treat the Cattlemen as the enemy and hopefully utilise the Cattlemen's knowledge better.

Promotion of the MCAV has been extended through our projects such as the digital library, ongoing documentary filming and the "Outback Spectacular" that is featuring the Mountain Cattlemen and the High Country as their theme next year.

The Get Together will be held at Mitta Mitta in January 2015 and the organisation for the event is progressing well. I look forward to welcoming all of you at Mitta Mitta.

Graeme Stoney / Chris Commins Carried

5.2 Financial Report

Motion: That the financial report for the end of year 2014 is adopted by the MCAV and the secretary be directed to lodge the report with Consumer Affairs.

John McMahon / Christa Treasure Carried

Motion: That the MCAV retain the services of MMK Accounting as auditors for the MCAV for 2013-14 and 2014-15 financial years.

Dennis Carstairs / Bruce Treasure Carried

Motion: That Malcolm Blair is retained for the 2014-15 year as the MCAV Accountant.

Chris Commins / Kellie Lovick Carried

Motion: That the Secretary and Treasurer be authorised to implement the suggestions and recommendations of the Auditors' Report.

Graeme Stoney / Kellie Lovick Carried

Motion: That a letter of thanks for service to the MCAV as Treasurer be sent to Anne Faithfull.

Chris Commins / Charlie Lovick Carried

5.3 Marketing Report

Charlie Lovick presented Beck Farmer's annual report.

Welcome all from melting Mt Buller. Just a quick report as I have been inactive for the last 4 months running a lodge up here 24/7. There is little to report although I will attend Whittlesea on 2 November.

As you all know we halved our stock load at the last G2G and I am looking for new lines and to streamline our merchandise considerably. I have asked for a budget and MCAV credit card as I can no longer afford to carry purchases on my personal card and wait to be paid as I am paying interest. Most buying is now done online and a designated debit card would be ideal for the purpose.

I have done stock take and feel that if I had a budget of around \$10,000 that would ensure a great outcome for any up and coming events. Look forward to meeting with Graeme and Charlie for some input as to what direction you all would like to take. Heads up Scotty and Robyn!! My suggestion is that we put the food and coffee stalls near the Merchandise tent and as you're waiting in line for food you will also shop!

I will be off mountain on 26 September and happy for any input whatsoever.

If anyone has some ideas about new merchandise or events please do not hesitate to contact me. Like to thank Susan Noble for organising Port Crocks; we still have a considerable amount left from previous years and it's a good drop. Well done to all Wonnangatta crew and all travellers for their support! Bloody good job!! Gonna print t-shirts for you all.

5.4 Branch Annual Reports

5.4.1 Gippsland Branch

David Hurley reported that Gippsland Branch had three meetings during the year. David thanked all those supporters who have assisted and worked at the Get Togethers.

Office Bearers:

President	David Hurley
Vice President	Brian Higgins
Secretary	Leonie Phelan

5.4.2 North East Branch

Christa Treasure reported on the two Heritage rides at Dandongadale and Dargo High Plains organised by the NE branch over the past year. The history of the areas was related to all attending on the Saturday evening and it is a shame it was not recorded. The MCAV advertising signs are being moved to strategic locations in NE Vic and Gippsland to promote the Get Together.

Office Bearers:

Chairperson	Ken Heywood
Vice Chairperson	Christa Treasure
Secretary	Ben Treasure
Special Events	Neville Wright

5.4.3 Omeo Branch – Chris Commins

Chris Commins reported that the Omeo campdraft was once again successful, but that the funds have been donated to the Hinnomunjie Reserve to upgrade facilities.

Office Bearers:

President	Bruce Commins
Vice President	Joe Connley
Secretary	Chris Commins

5.4.4 Mansfield Branch – Bruce McCormack

Bruce McCormack reported that Mansfield branch took on the planning of the Wonnangatta trial earlier this year and must thank Ken Heywood for use of his yards and land. The MCAV also wanted to thank all members and friends for droving and supervising the cattle at Wonnangatta.

Office Bearers:

President Bruce McCormack
Vice President Kellie Purvis
Secretary Graeme Stoney

6. Election of Office Bearers

All positions within the MCAV were declared vacant. Charlie Lovick passed the Chair to Graeme Stoney to oversee the election process.

Motion: That Charlie Lovick be thanked for leading the MCAV through an exceptionally busy year.

Chris Cooper / Chris Commins Carried

As the positions of President, Vice President and Secretary only attracted one nominee, the roles were filled without election.

There were two nominations for the position of Treasurer. A secret ballot was undertaken and results were found in favour of Rose Faithfull 20 - 1. Rose Faithfull was declared the MCAV Treasurer.

Congratulations were offered to the incumbents for their service over the past year and for 2015.

President

Charlie Lovick was nominated by Kellie Purvis and Graeme Stoney and accepted the nomination. There being no further nominations Charlie was declared elected to the position of President.

Vice Presidents

Simon Turner was nominated by Graeme Stoney and Charlie Lovick.

Chris Cooper was nominated by Mary Treasure and Rose Faithfull.

Both nominees indicated that they would continue in the joint position. There being no further nominations Simon and Chris were declared elected to the position of Vice President.

Secretary

Georgina Connan was nominated by Graeme Stoney and Charlie Lovick. There being no further nominations Georgina was duly elected.

Motion: That all elected position holders be accepted for 2014-15.

Chris Commins / Chris Cooper Carried

8. Central Council Delegates 2014-15

Gippsland

Chris Cooper, David Hurley, John McMahon with Mark (Nook) Coleman (reserve).

Mansfield

Bruce McCormack, Kellie Purvis and Graeme Stoney.

North East

Ken Heywood, Glen Chalwell, Christa Treasure with Ray Anderson (reserve).

Omeo

Simon Turner, Chris Commins, Danny Cook with Joe Connley (reserve).

Motion: That the MCAV accept the nominations of Central Council delegates.

Chris Cooper / Rita McMahon Carried

Motion: That a letter of thanks be sent to Brian Higgins for his service to the MCAV as a Central Councillor.

David Hurley / Graeme Stoney Carried

9. Fixing Honorariums

Honorariums are to be rolled over as per previous year.

President *	\$21,000
Vice Presidents	\$2,500 (each)
Executive Officer *	\$30 per hour
Secretary *	\$35 per hour
Treasurer	\$35 per hour
Merchandise Officer	\$3,000
Get-Together Co-Ordinator	\$8,000
Get-Together Manager	\$1,000
Voice of the Mountains Editor	\$1,000

*Additional phone entitlement of \$80, \$60 and \$50 per month respectively with superannuation contributions being made for the Secretary and Treasurer. Merchandise Officer with addition of 5% of achieved sales.

Motion: That honorariums and payments shall be made by the MCAV for the 2014-15 year as per the table above.

Christa Treasure / Graeme Stoney Carried

10. Setting Membership Subscription Fees

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

Full Membership

Grazing Members	\$220
Non-Grazing Members	\$50
Associate Membership	\$30 (single)
	\$40 (family)

Christa Treasure / Graeme Stoney Carried

**The meeting was declared closed at 12.19pm.
Date of next AGM to be advised.**

ANSWERS

Spot the Difference

- 1. Horse's bridle 2. missing stirrup 3. hanging halter
- 4. brush out of box 5. cat stripes 6. girl's hair 7. girl's helmet
- 8. name on stall 9. horse in stall wearing halter 10. wraps on horse's legs
- 11. pitchfork and broom 12. manure 13. breastplate on horse
- 14. horse's mane 15. girl's boots 16. reins to rope
- 17. pocket on jacket

How many words?

moo, moon, moor, moot, morn, moron, moss, most, mot, motor, mow, norm, own, roo, room, roost, root, rot, row, snoot, snort, snot, snow, **snowstorm**, son, soon, soot, sort, sow, sown, storm, stow, swoon, sworn, swot, ton, torso, toss, tow, town, trow, two, woo, worm, worst, west

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The Association is indebted to all our sponsors no matter how large or small as all contributions go toward us having a successful weekend. We thank these businesses, organisations and individuals for their loyal support of the Mountain Cattlemen.

Our sincere apologies to anyone we have overlooked - it is not that we appreciate you any less as our fight and we, the MCAV, could not continue without a strong supporter base.

Every year we owe a special debt of thanks to the Get Together workers. They prepare the site, starting months ahead of time, to ensure it is safe and workable for the three days of the Get-Together. Every year we have a collective of volunteers who work each day: the judges, stewards, announcers, bar staff, rubbish removers, marketing staff and more who work the entire weekend for everyone's enjoyment. A HUGE THANK YOU to all concerned.

Acknowledgments

THE physical production of *Voice of the Mountains* comes together each year through the concerted and dedicated effort of a very small group of people. We would have nothing if it wasn't for the poets and photographers who give us access to their works. We would have nothing without the news from the Association office and we would have nothing without the volunteers and the people who help every year.

This year Graeme Stoney, Charlie Lovick, Laurence Webb, Robyn Cook, Tania Coleman, Ian Stapleton, Geoff Burrowes, Luke Carlon and Chris Nixon contributed directly to the content of *Voice*. Their emails arrived in my inbox with articles and/or the requested information attached. It made things much easier for me. I also appreciate those who supplied "the gatherers" with information. So when you have responded to a request from Graeme, Charlie, Georgie or Tania it is noticed at the other end and I thank you. Thank you also to the sponsors who supplied their advertisements copy ready - it helps immensely.

Dale Wickberg - thank you - you worked hard at covering all aspects of the G2G at Hinnomunjie and the photos are fabulous. I know they will be enjoyed by all readers. Thank you also to Melanie Faith Dove who graciously allowed us to use some of her Wonnangatta photos that were taken for her own publication due to come out later this year. Look out for it - it is gonna' be a ripper!

Georgie Connan, our Secretary, is a vital part of the production of *Voice* and nothing I ask is ever too much for her. Thank you, thank you Georgie. In between hay carting, child caring, family duties and administering veterinary care to horses Neil Cox and Leanne Dyson have managed to proof read at all hours of the night and morning. I can't thank you enough. Everyone at EGFHG (you know who you are, but particularly Stella and Lizzie), who suggested, accommodated, cajoled and encouraged while shifting a library - thank you.

Egee Printers have become so proficient at the short time turn around needed on *Voice* that it is, frankly, scary that it can be produced so fast and still come up trumps. Thanks Tatts and team.

In all the years I have worked on *Voice* I have overlooked one person. Thank you Mum. I am sure there have been years that you thought I was absolutely mad but every December you have supported the production of *Voice* and it is really appreciated.

Debbie Squires
Editor

P.O. Box 816, Bairnsdale
inkpress@bigpond.com



