

• Cattlemen make history

# RIDING HOME A PROTEST AGAINST THE PARK

History was made on September 4th, 1984 when Melbourne was invaded by Mountain Cattlemen and their supporters on horseback, in what some Commentators called "the greatest display of horsemen since the Light Horse left Melbourne for war".



• Photo courtesy The Herald.

The two day protest was designed to achieve maximum anti-National Park publicity, and with key Cattlemen taking set areas of responsibility, the exercise ran like clockwork.

Clive Hodge's wide experience with civil defence and search and rescue work was called on to co-ordinate police and City Councils' requirements, Jim Cummins handled V.I.P. invitations and associated matters, Josette Chircop was the Melbourne assistant, with the rest of the "Ride" committee; Don Kneebone, Jack and Charlie Lovick and Graeme Connley taking responsibility for sections of the organization.

Graeme Stoney as liaison officer, was the overall co-ordinator of the project, Media contact and one of the spokesmen.

The exercise started with an overnight camp at Dandenong Showgrounds, which was arranged courtesy of the Dandenong City Council.

The media flocked to the scene, and from Sunday evening the publicity flowed freely.

At a press lunch on Monday September 3rd, Jim Cummins, Kevin Sanderson, Des Crowe and Graeme Stoney explained Cattlemen's problems to the media, and explained that the issue was a lot wider than just Alpine grazing. The Producer of "The Man from Snowy River", Geoff Burrowes had the biggest impact when he concisely explained the heritage of the Mountain Cattlemen and the serious threat which exists to the Continuation of a National institution.

Clive Hodge introduced Liam Bradley, a conservationist, who had written a song especially for the occasion. Liam explained that he has always been very conscious of conservation issues such as the Franklin problem, but had decided that the Cattlemen's cause was totally different to other conservation issues, and therefore decided to write a supporting song. Liam performed his song for the media, and a tape of the song plus one by the Cobbers which was also written for the occasion was played throughout the two day protest.

The afternoon was spent in a ride through Dandenong "to see how the horses liked trams." No trouble with trams in Dandenong!

The next morning, 307 riders, two waggons and more than 200 people in 4WD descended on Parliament House to the applause and delight of a large crowd. Ministers Rod Mackenzie and Evan Walker, along with Opposition Leader Jeff Kennett, National Party Leader Peter Ross-Edwards and many other politicians assembled to watch the show. (National Party spokesman for Conservation, David Evans actually rode in the demonstration.)

**Gus Mercurio kept the ball rolling on Don Leithheads P.A. System which could be heard blocks away.**

#### PRESENTATIONS

After a speech and presentation of a Petition containing 12,000 signatures by Jim Cummins, Clive Hodge and Christa Mitchell presented representatives of the three political parties with a Mountain Cattlemen poster.

A highlight of the rally was Jack

Lovick leading "Denny", the horse used by The Man in the film The Man from Snowy River. Denny was saddled and had a pair of boots reversed in the stirrups. Jack took the microphone and still on horseback explained the significance of this tradition. He explained that people such as the Cattlemen who know the full story, consider that the proposal by the Government for a massive Alpine National Park sounds the deathknell for the High Country as we know it today. Therefore the boots reversed is a sign of mourning.

Premier John Cain did not accept an invitation to attend the rally and accept the Petition. A Government press release described the ride as a pointless grandstanding exercise. However, Mr. Cain did meet Jim Cummins, Clive Hodge and Graeme Stoney (still in their riding gear and spurs) in his Parliament House Office later in the day when it became obvious how popular the Protest was with the public and the media.

In discussions after the ride, old

hands at Parliament House named various memorable Protests. The most violent, the most peaceful, the largest, the smallest, and the most unpopular were mentioned. All were agreed that the sight of the horses, wagons and people outside the House was by far the most inspiring and made people proud to be Australian. Even the people held up in trams were clapping.

The media treated the Cattlemen accordingly, and the exercise received favourable treatment, including Editorials in the Melbourne Herald, and Stock and Land.

Television was at saturation point and included a special production by Channel 10 of Liam Bradley's song, with film footage of the Cattlemen in the Mountains.

The Willisee Show, ABC, Nationwide, Countrywide, and News Bulletins, covered the ride and the Alpine Park Protest in detail.

# WHO WANTS TO HELP?

Since the Melbourne Ride Cattlemen and Associate members throughout Victoria have rallied to help by organizing stalls selling Posters, T Shirts and Stickers at various shows and gatherings.

Besides the money these efforts generate, the projects are keeping the Cattlemen and their friends before the Public.

Some of the Cattlemen Associates attended the Great

## Pack horses from Walhalla

Well known Mountain Cattleman, safari operator and bushman, Clive Hodge is undertaking a big project early in March.

Clive has been asked to bring a string of packhorses from Walhalla to Rosedale in a re-enactment of early transport in that area.

The trip has been organised as part of the Shires of Rosedale, Naracan and Port Albert's 150th celebrations.

In the early days, waggons could only carry goods as far as Rosedale from the ships at Port Albert.

The country between Rosedale and the diggings became too rough and pack horses were used to carry supplies to the miners working in the Walhalla area.

Clive's horses will be carrying letters which will largely consist of stamp collectors' mail.

When he finishes the project, Clive hopes to load two horses and head straight to Melbourne for the Moomba parade by the cattlemen on March 11.

## Mountain Cattlemen's Who's Who

### MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OFFICE BEARERS

President, Jim Commins, Ensay.  
Sec'treasurer, Coral Aston, Ensay.  
Vice president, Clive Hodge, Valencia Ck.  
Vice president, Harry Ryder, Tawonga.  
Vice president, Graeme Connley, Benambra.  
Liaison and P.R. officer, Graeme Stoney, Mansfield.  
Special Projects, Lyle McCready, Whorouly.  
Marketing, Joanne Rogers, Bairnsdale.

### MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN ASSOCIATES

President, Bill Sweetland, Hawthorn.  
Secretary, Sue Silvers, Nth Balwyn.  
Cattlemen's Rep., Graeme Stoney, Mansfield.  
Committee: Mark Granland, Josette Bradley, Geoff Ritter, Neil Perrett.  
\*Please note: This is an interim committee and all hope eventually to be replaced.  
Anyone interested in nominating please call Sue Silvers (sec.) (03) 859 3165.

## MEETING AT THE EXHIBITION BUILDINGS

We had an overwhelming response and more than 300 people attended the Meeting held at the Exhibition Buildings on October 25th, 1984, 150 Apologies were received from people who regretted that they could not be present, but showed interest and support and expressed the wish to join any new association which was to be formed.

Originally it was considered that we form a group called "Friends of the Mountain Cattlemen" but at the Meeting it was agreed that we could maintain closer links with the Mountain Cattlemen themselves if we joined their present Associates. This organization is now simply an enlargement and mobilization of the original Associates of the Mountain Cattlemen group.

A Steering Committee was announced at the Meeting and it consists of Mr. Bill Sweetland, Chairman, Graeme Stoney, Geoff Ritter, Josette Chircop, Neil Perrett, Sue Silvers and Mark Granland. This committee all hope to be eventually replaced - please consider offering yourself for nomination.

### The Issue

As we all know, the issue of the

Mountain Race of Victoria at Sheeppark Flat which was organized by the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce.

They conducted a stall of products and were swamped with people.

They took more than \$3,500 with customers three deep wanting to buy.

The busy workers were Helen Stoney and children, Sue Dyason and children, Lyn Brewster, Josette Bradley, Sue Silvers, Jan Hobbs and others.

Sue Silvers held a stall at the Mansfield Show and at the Geelong Show Lyn Mulligan and family and Ken Connley showed the flag.

Judy McCormack and her friends had a stall at the Merrigig Bush Picnic and at Myrtleford Max Blair, Harry Ryder and the North East Cattlemen's Branch members had a most successful two days.

Barry Masters organized a very

grand display and stall at Traralgon Show.

He went into it with great enthusiasm and professionalism, with photographs of the Ride and various huts in the High Country.

He was assisted by Craig and Dawn Wood.

Craig was interviewed on the two local radio stations about the issue of the Mountain Cattlemen.

### THE FUTURE

Because the effort is growing we now need to establish a procedure for future stalls, return of money, goods, ordering etc.

To avoid confusion and get the best deal, MCAV Marketing Officer, Joanne Rogers, will be doing the ordering for all goods with the manufacturer.

### PROCEDURE

Cattlemen's Branches are to deal direct with Joanne (phone 051 524 128).

She will organize orders and arrange for delivery and/or return of unsold items and payment for the goods.

Cattlemen's Branches have the option of retaining profits for local branch needs, or returning the total amount to Joanne's Merchandise account.

**PLEASE DO NOT DEAL DIRECT WITH OUR MANUFACTURERS.**

### ASSOCIATE EFFORTS

Associates who wish to help should contact Sue Silvers who will co-ordinate your efforts and order goods from Joanne on your behalf.

All Associate's efforts are to go through Sue to Joanne to avoid confusion in ordering.

### PERSONAL ORDERS

Order direct from Joanne Rogers, Box 744, Bairnsdale, Phone: 051 524 128.

## HOWQUA RIVER STORM

A devastating storm hit the 8 - 12 mile area on the Howqua River on December 13th, 1984.

The storm appeared to follow up Howqua River and blew down the windward side of each spur above the 8 mile cutting, leaving some areas untouched but completely stripping other areas and uprooting large trees.

Cattlemen Jack Lovick said that in all his experience he had not seen anything like the destruction.

Families of two early cattlemen recall that those two men were caught in a similar storm in 1945.

The late Eadley Stoney and the late Jack Ware were hit by a storm of similar proportions on the 12 mile flat as they were taking their cattle to the Bluff run, about the same time of the year.

Jack Ware threw himself between two logs and Eadley Stoney dropped down a convenient mine shaft about 10' deep.

Both cattlemen and their horses escaped unhurt, but shaken by the incident.



• Photo - courtesy Stock & Land.

## ASSOCIATES OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN

### CONNLEY TAKES HIS SECOND CATTLEMEN'S CUP

Ken Connley proved his superiority to notch up his second win in this event, held at the 1984 Get Together.

Confusion reigned shortly after the start, when the riders dismounted to collect their "feed bags". Graeme Stoney snatched a long lead through the trees and cattle yards, with Connley tying second and Johnny Harvey closing the gap in third place.

At Shaws Creek, Harvey, attempting to pass the other two riders, took an almighty spill and landed in front of the other horses.

Harvey's horse fell into the creek. In the resulting tangle Connley took the lead and won comfortably from Stoney and Hayden Hamilton.

The game Harvey remounted and still finished in the middle of the field.

The Wonnangatta "Ghost" disguised as Clive Hodge in Marion's best tablecloth appeared during the flat races, to the great delight of the crowd, and finished off an exciting morning.

Ken Connley took second place in the Great Mountain Race of Victoria held at Sheeppark Flat in November.

This race is conducted by the Mansfield Festival Committee and is open to all comers.

Well done Ken!

a note, that you, as a constituent are firmly against the extension to the Alpine Park, and that he must consider YOUR opinion on this matter.

It was quite obvious at the Meeting that a great number of people are concerned about the proposal to create a massive National Park in the Alps.

Since October the Committee has been quietly working behind the scenes in several confidential areas. For up to date details of this work you should speak to any of the Committee.

The current membership of the Associates has swelled to almost 600. The more Members we have the stronger our position. Please encourage your friends to join us.

If you would like to join or help in any way, please write to Sue Silvers, 28 Cityview Road, North Balwyn, 3104. Sue has been appointed Assistant Secretary to the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria and will handle all Associate Memberships, queries etc. If you have any ideas you think may help the cause please either write to or phone her - 03 859 3165, and she will be pleased to forward your suggestions to the Committee.

Those of you who have expressed a wish to join and have not yet paid your membership fee, please make sure your cheque is sent to Sue Silvers as soon as possible.

## CATTELMEN'S POSTER

Thanks to a generous effort by Christa Mitchell, Rhonda Treasure and John Rogers, a fine poster was produced in time for the Melbourne campaign.

Bearing the 150th anniversary logo, the poster depicts three Cattlemen on horses on Mt. Wombargo looking north toward Mt. Kosciusko. This is on the Rogers cattle run which the Rogers have held since 1904 and which is now included in the National Park proposals.

John Rogers, Gordon Moon and Hayden Hamilton are featured on the Poster which is on sale at the Get Together, and available from Joanne Rogers or the three cattlemen who organised the project.

"I want my children to carry on our tradition, but will they be allowed?"

Christa Mitchell  
Bairnsdale

# WHICH WAY THE ALPS?

by Jim Commins

Some years ago, a book entitled "Alps at the Crossroads" appeared on bookshelves but as we leave the past for history and progress into 1985 it now does appear that the Alpine area of Victoria really is at the crossroads.

A vast expanse of territory larger than some states in Europe, with extensive natural and renewable resources, and good prospects for valuable underground resources that are as yet generally undefined, lies before us, waiting to be utilised indefinitely into the future.

The whole area is the State's most valuable water catchment and is an extensive mosaic that includes extensive areas suitable for cattle grazing, large tracts of valuable milling timber and regenerating forests, plus very large areas of natural wilderness, most of which is unlikely to have any use for man except for recreational activities.

Conflict of opinion has arisen during the planning stage for the future of this large land mass that has been the work place for three to five generations of many families.

All natural bushland in the State that is unalienated from the Crown has always been a natural park where commercial interests and recreational activities co-existed in harmony until professional agitators stirred up unrest.

We are now in a period of considerable change with the restructuring of public departments associated with public land into one managing authority with regional areas of management.

This could be a very progressive move provided local inhabitants are able to make positive inputs and the regional managers are not merely the puppets of distant bureaucracy.

Just as a need for restructuring at administrative level may be considered necessary it might equally be conceived that the schedule of rules and regulations for a Victorian Alpine National Park should be redefined and set a new standard rather than blindly follow ancient guidelines that will lead to profligate waste.

### THE NAME ISN'T IMPORTANT

It matters little what a given area of land is named. It is efficient management and wise use of resources that is most important.

Until there is official acknowledgement of the many and considerable positive net benefits from cattle grazing, and longer term assurances are given for tenure and

other matters, mountain cattlemen are strenuously opposed to the proposed massive extension to the already large alpine national park plans.

There are also good grounds for rejection by the members of the general public as they become aware of the many general restrictions and bureaucratic humbug that is now associated with National Parks. (Take for example the long list of planned rules for saddle horses while wild brumbies are free to roam and graze as they will).

### WILL THERE BE A NATIONAL PARK AND IF SO — HOW BIG?

In spite of the result of the last round of submissions relating to this, that were invited by the Government when over 70 per cent of some thousands of respondents indicated a preference for not enlarging the proposed alpine park, the Government seems determined to gloss over this significant indicator, and press for the extended area.

Together with resolving this matter, the wider issue of management and utilisation needs to be addressed.

Unless a genuine multi use concept can be adopted where the efforts and enterprise of individuals or groups can be allowed to operate and provide employment or services in harmony with the environment then the national parks within the alpine area should be reduced rather than enlarged.

There are many indications that this nation can no longer afford to be wasteful of resources and opportunities.

It is hoped that the people of Victoria will consider all aspects of the far reaching decisions to be made and make their opinions known to their Parliamentary representative before it is too late.

The next few months will probably show what direction will be taken in the Eastern Highlands of Victoria. Let us hope it is the right one.



Photos courtesy Danny Lopez

## MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN COME TO TOWN

President Jim Commins, Ensay —  
"A resounding success."



# THE GRAZING COSTS ISSUE

by Tim Barker V.F.G.A.

If the Government proceeds with its proposal to sharply increase the cost of grazing leases, cattlemen will be forced off the high country.

Last year, following a review of grazing leases on all Crown land, the Government proposed to increase the cost of grazing leases to the rate of \$3 per dry sheep equivalent. The Mountain Cattlemen's Association, together with the Victorian Farmers and Graziers' Association, has so far been able to convince the Government that an annual fee based only on carrying capacity with no discount for the additional costs involved in Alpine grazing would be inequitable and lead to excessive and unacceptable charges. They argued that there are significant additional costs incurred by cattlemen in moving cattle on to high country leases and there are costs of animal husbandry not incurred in lower level agistment.

The MCA together with the VFGA convinced the Government not to apply its new format of charges until a detailed survey of grazing costs had been undertaken. As a result the increase in grazing charges for 1983 was limited to 10%.

A grazing cost survey conducted by the VFGA showed that the total costs of high country grazing incurred by mountain cattlemen varied substantially from 80c per head per week to over \$5 per head per week. Similarly, licence charges varied considerably with a range of less than 5c per head per week to over 60c per head per week. For some cattlemen the lease, as a proportion of total costs, was almost a quarter, whereas for some it was as low as one per cent. In a bid to cope with this range of circumstances, the VFGA proposed the following formula to the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands:

An acceptance of commercial agistment discounted for the costs associated with cattle husbandry and travel peculiar to the alpine runs, and discounted where appropriate for the quality of agistment.

This formula was designed to calculate the cost of leases, but some individual cattlemen's costs are so high that the formula produced an unacceptably low licence charge for some cattlemen. As the formula tended to subsidise or at least compensate for high cost operations, it was considered

appropriate to standardise the cattlemen's cost per head at an average of \$2.70 per head per week. If the market price for agistment of \$3 per head per week was used after the costs associated with high country grazing were deducted, this left a 30c per head per week standard charge for grazing leases.

This proposition was put to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands which then referred it to the Department of Agriculture. Although a year has elapsed there has been no response by the Government.

Recent and very high accounts for grazing leases indicate that the Government is again attempting to force the issue of dramatic increases in grazing licences.

Recently MCA President Jim Commins wrote to the Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands:

"At a recent meeting of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association great concern was expressed at the exorbitant fees for grazing runs that some of our members have recently received from the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands.

The accounts received were not only far above the normal percentage rise for Government charges, but they also included arrears for the excessive amounts that were charged last year, plus interest. I believe that most of our members would have paid last year on the basis of the direction you gave that charges based on the previous year's rate, plus 10%, would be acceptable until the matter of

fees for Crown land grazing allotments could be fairly resolved.

Since there has been no further communication on this matter directly from you or through the Victorian Farmers and Graziers' Association who have been representing us, I can only believe that these unrealistic scale of fees have somehow got into a modern computerised system and unless there is some positive remedial action, are likely to remain.

Our members are alarmed and apprehensive by the release of these demands and resolved that unless they are quickly withdrawn, they will use every avenue they can to try and correct the situation."

At the time of going to Press the Government was indicating that it is currently reviewing the existing systems for levelling grazing charges however no comment was forthcoming at that stage.

## "VOICE"

### Contributors Wanted

Anyone with stories, Photographs, Poetry, or comments about the High Country are invited to submit copy for the next Edition of the Voice of the Mountains.

SEND TO:  
Coral Aston, Essay — or  
Sue Silvers, 28 Cityview Road,  
North Balwyn, 3104 —  
or your nearest Mountain  
Cattlemans.

# STATE ELECTION

As we went to Press, a state election was called for March 2.

If re-elected the Government has indicated that they will proceed with legislation to almost double the size of National Parks in the Alpine area.

Their proposal is opposed by Mountain Cattlemen, their associates, and many thousands of the Victorian community.

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association is a non-political organisation and until now have been extremely careful to remain so.

However, we have reached a point where we have to make a political stand.

In view of the forthcoming election and the implications for us, we

have no alternative but to recommend to our supporters that they give wholehearted backing to candidates whose policy does not promise support to the extension of Alpine National Parks.

During the campaign please speak to candidates for both Houses on the issue and make your views known.

J. A. Commins  
President M.C.A.V.

## BOGONG INSPECTION

A small inspection party travelled by 4WD and horseback across the Bogong High Plains recently.

In the group was a Professor of Forest Pathology with the University of Washington, U.S.A., Professor Charles Driver.

Led by Mountain Cattlemen, Bill Hicks and Wally Ryder, the group included Rob Patrick and Tony Plowman (SCA), Harm Van Rees (Research), Ken Terry (SCA retired), and Graeme, Chris and David Stoney (cattlemen).

Inspections were made of research projects being carried out by Harm Van Rees and the state of the High Plains generally.

Professor Driver made interesting and pertinent comments on the comparisons between the U.S.A. rangeland and the Victorian High Plains.

## THANKS

The Mountain Cattlemen wish to thank Harry Stephenson for making the current Edition of the Voice of the Mountains possible.

Its on sale now from various outlets or Joanne Rogers, Box 744, Balmssdale.

Jim Commins  
President

## MCAV BRANCH NEWS FROM MYRTLEFORD

Boxing Day 1984 saw the first Mountain Cattlemans stall at the Myrtleford Golden Spurs Rodeo.

The stall was a tremendous success and was warmly received by the public.

More than 60 T Shirts, 35 posters and many stickers were sold.

The stall was manned by Max Blair, Sharon Twitchett, Kelvin Bush and Harry Ryder.

On the 4th January the Myrtleford Bush Market was the venue for an even better stall and a ride through the streets by more than 40 Cattlemen accompanied by pack-horses and dogs.

The Bush Market is an annual event and this year the street was lined with an estimated 6,000 people.

It was a great publicity opportunity for the Cattlemen.

The majority of the crowd were visitors.

The stall was financially successful with more than 70 garments being sold.

Thanks to the efforts of Jeannette Chalwell, Sharon Twitchett, Julie Witherow and Max and Leanne Blair.

The fact that these stalls go so well shows what progress has been made by the Cattlemen in the last couple of years.

The momentum must be maintained!

Harry Ryder,  
Sec. N.E. Branch  
Tawonga.



## WEDDING AT HOLMES PLAIN

Highlight of the 1984 Get Together was the marriage of Cattlemans Tom Connley and Sue Briggs on the Saturday afternoon.

Attended by approximately 20 mounted cattlemen and her daughters as bridesmaids, Sue and her brother were driven by Doug Treasure in his jinker slowly across the plain towards the large crowd near the cattle yards.

Tom, attended by his brothers rode in from the other direction.

A short and moving ceremony was conducted by a Priest who was flown into the Snowy Plains airstrip by Ben Buckley, and the happy couple were congratulated later that evening during the festivities at the barbecue.

Tom competed in the Cattlemen's Cup the next morning.

## COBBERS RELEASE A CATTLEMEN'S SONG

The well known Cobbers musical group recently released a single of their song written in support of the Mountain Cattlemen.

The Festival single is available at all record shops and is for sale at the Get Together and through Joanne Rogers phone: 051 524 128, Box 744, Balmssdale.

Liam Bradley who played a song he composed at the Press conference at Dandenong will release his single this year and this will be available from Joanne later in the year.

## EARLY "VOICE" COPIES WANTED

A supporter of the Mountain Cattlemen has donated several Voice of the Mountains to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

To complete the set for the Society, and for her to compile a personal set of the editions, she wishes to purchase Volumes 1, 2 and 3 plus some later editions.

Anyone who can help is asked to contact: Mrs. Lorna Bodman, 32 Wanda Road, North Caulfield, Phone: 03 509 7520

# THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN MANAGING THE ALPS

by Rob Patrick  
Senior Soil Conservationist (Alpine)

Alpine areas are known for their natural beauty and resources as well as their severe climate.

Those of us who use the Alps for grazing, timber harvesting, mining or a host of recreational pursuits do so because of the resources available.

We also know that each of these uses has an impact on the land — sometimes obvious, sometimes not.

Whether these changes are acceptable or not depends firstly on the ability of the land to sustain such uses without detriment to water supply catchments and, secondly, on other values that individuals or groups place on the Alps.

It is in this minefield of value judgements and emotive arguments that rational decisions on sound land management can be overlooked.

How often have you been faced with opposing points of view from people you consider have years of alpine experience?

Research is the tool we can use to compare different sets of observations in order to find common ground. Relevant research can provide us with useful information on which to base management decisions.

However, we need to be mindful of the fact that no one can observe everything.

Your quality as a "scientist" depends on what you select to observe and how well you do it.

Two common errors in observation which apply to all of us are:

- (a) missing the obvious

- (b) inventing false observations.

Soil conservation interests in the Alps revolve around managing the alpine vegetation to ensure there is adequate plant cover to protect the land from erosion.

We are therefore concerned with management of the rangelands, which are used primarily for summer grazing, and revegetation of all land disturbance caused through construction activities, ski resort development and other recreational activities.

Space does not permit detailed explanation of these projects or results to date.

It would also be unfair of me to condense such research into a few words.

Current research projects include:-

1. Vegetation survey and mapping of the Bogong High Plains - an aid to land use planning and monitoring of vegetation changes.

2. Vegetation change on the Bogong High Plains - an assessment of vegetation changes since 1936 through detailed comparison of aerial photographs.

3. Revegetation trials to determine:-

- (i) the benefits of using both native and exotic plants.

- (ii) the effect of mulch and fertilizer on recolonization by native plants.

- (iii) the use of snowgrasses for soil stabilization.

4. Monitoring of grazed and ungrazed grassland on the Bogong High Plains. An extension to this research during the 1984/85 summer is the use of a rainfall simulator (making rain in a building that looks like a country dunny) to find out how much plant cover is needed to prevent soil erosion occurring.

5. The effect of fire in alpine heathland on soil loss and vegetation changes.

I have made current research reports available to Cattlemen representatives on the Alpine District Advisory Committee (Bill Hicks, Bill Cumming) and all of you are welcome to contact myself, or the research workers concerned, to discuss the detail.

We will never have all the answers on the effects of land use on the alpine environment and I suggest that as responsible land managers and cattlemen we should heed the words of Lowell, who said "The mark of an educated man is the ability to make a reasoned guess on the basis of insufficient information."

## OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of well known Mountain Cattleman Mr. Jack Guy of Waterford.

The Guy family owned Wonnagatta Station for many years and is one of the best known families in the High Country.

## MEN OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

The Mountain Men came riding  
Through the streets of Melbourne  
Town.

They came from Gods Own Country  
Where the jagged mountain peaks  
Stand watch, as Horsemen, bring  
the cattle down

They come to bring their message  
Of a fight just for survival.

They tell of how their forbears  
Left a heritage behind them.

How they braved the savage storms  
Triumphed over weariness and pain,  
Their sons now ride those rugged  
trails again

So let them graze the High Plains  
Let them bring the cattle through  
For no man loves our country as  
they do.

True Australian Bushman, men of  
character and pride.

Let all of us remember the reason  
for their ride.

Syd McGain  
Strathmore  
Sept. 1984

## The Man that Couldn't Go

When you ride down Swanston  
Street

Those city folk to show,  
If you notice a small gap in the  
procession,  
One horse just couldn't go.

I fed him up and rugged him,  
I even changed his shoes,  
It's not his fault he won't be there,  
I was born to lose.

I didn't deliberately let you down,  
And I'd like you all to know,  
My thoughts will still be with you,  
Although I couldn't go.

No man is indispensable,  
Though every hand should show,  
And I sincerely apologise,  
I just couldn't go.

Don Kneebone  
\*Copyright August, 1984

## Mountain Cattlemen care for the High Country

Associate member Josette Bradley  
models the Cattlemen's T-shirt



T-shirts, Windcheaters,  
Stickers with this slogan  
are available from

M.C.A.V. Marketing  
Manager, Joanne Rogers,  
Box 744, Bairnsdale.  
Phone: 051-524 128

# BUSHFIRES

## — WHEN WILL THEY LISTEN?

Mountain Cattlemen have again spoken out in support of more protective burning of forests.

They believe the low priority given by some Forest Managers and by implication the government, to the practice of protective burning has been a major contributing factor to the recent bushfires.

After the intense lightning activity which sparked off the many serious fires in the Alpine area recently, the fire, which gave the most trouble and at the time of going to Press were still burning fiercely were the ones in areas that had not been managed by cool burning in the Autumn.

Observers state that many lightning strikes occurred in areas that had been managed correctly and most of those fires either went out themselves or were brought under control with comparative ease.

Well known forester, Mr Hugh Brown, who was recently appointed Fire Prescription Officer was in charge of the Mansfield group of fires and then the major fire in the Hotham-St Bernard area.

"The lack of fuel reduction burning in some areas of the country has been extremely frustrating," he said with feeling, speaking from the control centre for the fires at Mt Hotham.

Mr Brown cited the case of a lightning strike which occurred on Rocky Ridge in the Mansfield area, during a hot north wind, (Rocky Ridge was burnt within the last two years as a management strategy).

"It just burnt slowly around a bit and the boys finished it off with some rakes," he said.

Mountain Cattlemen, Lyle McCready and Don Kneebone have made the following observations:

"What a pity last week's bushfires ravaged the beautiful, well cared for Mt Buffalo National Park. More than a coincidence that this is the first time since the '39 fires, a great pity the Beveridges and Crambones are not still grazing cattle there, the inflammable material would have been cut down and access to fight fires much easier.

"Had the thousands of dollars spent on aircraft helicopters, army, navy, airforce personnel, etc. been spent by experienced people on precautionary burns, the area covered by lightning strike fires would have been minimal.

"When dealing with the elements and their effects anticipatory work is essential.

"The 'Greenies' who demand vast areas of this same country for their ideals and pleasure expect someone else to care for it, never appearing or commenting when there is strife.

"Surely the Government can see this, and as far as they are concerned current disastrous fires must have shown them that comparatively small sums spent on protective burning could save a lot of beautiful country and save the taxpayer millions of dollars.

"Let us all support the idea of multiple usage and sensible management of these once beautiful mountains," he said.

Mountain Cattlemen are scathing of the radical elements in the conservation movement who, they say, have influenced Governments and Alpine Managers against sensible forest management practices.

Elders

DSM  
ESTATES

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mountain Cattlemen wish to thank Elders DSM Estates for their generous sponsorship of this publication.

The Cattlemen and the Elders company are both conscious of the value of the High Country to the prosperity of Victoria and both have been working in the rural environment for the past 150 years.

We trust we can look forward to the next 150 years with confidence.

## FORTHCOMING AUTUMN CALF SALES

EVERTON	— 700 calves	1st February 1985
BENALLA	— 1,000 calves	8th February 1985
WANGARATTA	— 800 calves	15th February 1985
BAIRNSDALE	— 700 calves	19th February 1985
MANSFIELD	— 1,500 calves	22nd February 1985
BAIRNSDALE	— 800 calves	5th March 1985
BENAMBRA	— 1,500 calves )	12th and 13th March 1985
OMEQ	— 2,500 calves )	" "
ENSAY	— 1,500 calves	" "
TINTALDRA/CORRYONG	— 1,000 calves	14th March 1985
WANGARATTA	— 800 calves	15th March 1985
BAIRNSDALE	— 800 calves	19th March 1985
BAIRNSDALE	— 2,000 calves	26th March 1985
MANSFIELD	— 1,200 calves	29th March 1985
BENAMBRA	— 800 calves )	
OMEQ	— 800 calves )	15th and 16th April 1985
ENSAY	— 500 calves )	
MYRTLEFORD	— 1,000 calves	To be Announced

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR NEAREST

BRANCH

AT:—

BAIRNSDALE	— David Walker, Ian Parker, Gerald Newcomen (051) 52-3037
OMEQ	— Tony Henson (051) 59-1325
ENSAY	— Jamie Beckingsale (051) 57-3255
ORBOST	— Bill Lynn (051) 54-1906
BENAMBRA	— Reg Tomkins (051) 59-9315
MANSFIELD	— Rob Neely, John Murray (057) 75-2422
BENALLA	— John Bourke, John Horne, Greg Lewis, Don McDonald (057) 62-1344
MYRTLEFORD	— Peter Nicoll (057) 52-1098
WANGARATTA	— John Canning, Mark Ryan (057) 21-2147
WODONGA	— Bob Taylor, Peter Ruaro (060) 24-1944
ALBURY	— Colin Weissel, Peter Crawshaw (060) 21-3355
CORRYONG	— Bob Yule (060) 76-1224, Stuart Peterkin (060) 76-1049
WALWA	— Toby McDermott (060) 37-1286

# THE CATTLEMEN'S CONTINUING BATTLE

## DIARY OF EVENTS

1940 - 1985

The following is a brief resume of major events in the past 45 years that have affected the Mountain Cattlemen's way of life in the Alps.

### THE 1940's

- As an aftermath of the 1939 fires the Government instigated a Royal Commission into Forest Grazing. The report released by Judge Stretton, severely criticised cattlemen for lighting fires in the Alpine area but virtually ignored the major effects of lightning strikes. Cattlemen regarded the report as a massive "cover up" with the Cattlemen as the scapegoats.
- An estimated 40 thousand cattle were being grazed in the High Country and on bush runs in the Alpine area.

### THE 1950's

- Young scientist Alec Costin released his findings on the Alpine area. Working at the time with the Soil Conservation Authority he claimed grave damage had occurred to Alpine vegetation from overgrazing. Paying little or no attention to the effects the rabbit plague and horse population had on the Alps, his published works have been used against the cattlemen by conservation groups ever since. Since the findings were published, the Mountain Cattlemen have constantly maintained that Costin's findings contain a high personal bias against Alpine grazing and are grossly inaccurate.

### The 1960's

- The Conservation movement gained momentum from Costin's reports.
- Some areas closed to grazing.
- Mountain Cattlemen's Association formed to combat the increasing threat, with Jack Treasure as founding President.
- Regular inspections of the High Country made by Politicians, Government officials and cattlemen.
- Little follow-up scientific work done.

### 1970's

- Dick Johnson published "Alps at the Crossroads" which became the Bible of the growing Conservation movement.
- Radical elements took control of the Australian Conservation Foundation.
- More cattle runs closed for various reasons (ski resorts, national parks, etc.).
- Hamer Government aligned itself with the Conservation movement and instigated a comprehensive Land Conservation Council Alpine area inquiry with a view to declaring more areas as Alpine National Parks.
- Mountain Cattlemen led by Jim Commins released comprehensive documentation of the Alpine Grazing Industry, compiled by McGowan & Associates. This was to aid the L.C.C. Alpine Investigation.
- Late in the 1970's the L.C.C. recommended sweeping management changes to the Alpine area, including the phasing out over 10 years of some of the best grazing area. These recommendations were subsequently accepted by the Liberal Government of the day.

### 1980 - 1985

- Mr. Peter Cabena released a comprehensive Thesis documenting the origins of the Mountain Cattlemen who came in from the Monaro in 1834-5.
- Cattle numbers down to an estimated 20,000 - 18,000 head and falling.
- The new Labor Government instigated a second L.C.C. inquiry and issued explicit directions to the L.C.C. This was to bring to fruition Labor party policy of a contiguous Alpine National Park.

- Cattlemen became increasingly restless and despondent.
- Cattlemen decide to use the 1982 Sheeppark get together to launch a full scale counter-offensive to Conservation demands and Government moves to yet again increase National Parks and scale down Alpine grazing.

Full success achieved, with the media discovering the cattlemen's point of view and what benefit their industry is to the community. Helicopters were used to ferry press to the High Plains to take photos of cattle. (These are still being used from time to time.)

- Slogan and Logo launched stating "Mountain Cattlemen care for the High Country", T-Shirts, Windcheaters and stickers released.

Studies on Alpine grazing released by Harm Van Reese. Second L.C.C. report recommends doubling the size of Alpine parks, and the withdrawing of more areas from grazing. The Government announced that it intended to accept the L.C.C. recommendations with Legislation in the 1985 Autumn session of Parliament (if re-elected).

- 16 Alpine Shire Councils protest against the proposed park.

When the proposal was announced the Cattlemen immediately stated their opposition to the park and announced they intended to demonstrate in Melbourne.

They said they were fed up with dealing with constant inspections, inquiries, and submissions to no apparent avail. They stated they were completely against the proposal to double

the Park system on the grounds of cost to the community and loss of public freedoms. They further threw into question, the correctness of present National Park Service regulations and management techniques as applied to large Alpine areas. They further stated that they intended to push to have recognised the value of Alpine grazing which they said should be encouraged not discouraged as was happening at present.

Protest ride organized - a great success with the Melbourne public. 12,000 strong petition delivered to the steps of Parliament House by 307 riders, 2 wagons and 4 dogs and 200 people in 4WD.

Conservation Movement react strongly and accuse the cattlemen of being "arrogant" and their heritage a "gross conceit". Mountain Cattlemen Associates formed at a meeting in Melbourne attended by over 300 people. Membership stands at more than 550 people.

Mountain Cattlemen becoming a household word and cattlemen in demand to appear at Shows and functions throughout the State.

100 strong Mountain Cattlemen contingent invited to ride in the 1985 Moomba parade as the cattlemen's contribution to Victoria's 150th celebrations.

Meanwhile Cattlemen fear for their future with the pending Legislation and await the outcome of the election.

# CATTLEMEN IN MOOMBA

The Mountain Cattlemen will be riding in this year's Moomba Parade as their contribution to Victoria's 150th celebrations.

Director of the parade, Mr Tom Morrissey, said he was delighted that the cattlemen were riding in the parade and said that it would provide an inspiring spectacle.

The following is a letter received by the cattlemen, confirming the event.

The Liaison Officer,  
Mountain Cattlemen.

Dear Graeme,

It is with great pleasure that the Moomba Directors accept your entry and participation in the 1985 Moomba Procession, to be held on Monday, March 11.

We understand that the people taking part in the Parade will be members of the Mountain Cattlemen families, or people who work with horses on the high

plains of Victoria. As you can appreciate we would like our Parade to be as genuine as possible.

We would ask that the Cattlemen form in a tight formation, and keep that formation throughout the whole Procession. The Procession Director or Procession Marshalls will be available on the day for any question you may have.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me. Looking forward to your participation in the Procession.

Tom Morrissey

Procession Director.

Graeme Stoney will be organising the day and co-ordinating branch participation in the ride which will be approximately 100 horses.

It is hoped that as many Mountain Cattlemen's children as possible will take part in the historic occasion.

## MANSFIELD BRANCH NEWS

Mansfield Cattlemen were asked by the Mansfield Mountain Festival Committee to open the Mountain Festival weekend which was held the first weekend in November.

The parade was organized by local secretary John Gough, and the Cattlemen were applauded as they rode down the street at dusk on Friday evening; and again on Saturday as part of a full procession.

With local Cattlemen and identity Jack Purcell carrying the Australian Flag the Cattlemen led the street crown to the sports oval on the Friday evening for a fireworks display.

M.C.A.V. Liaison Officer, Graeme Stoney was asked to invite the crowd to the Great Mountain Race of Victoria held on the Sunday of the Festival and open to all corners.

He explained to the large crowd that the race is modelled on the traditional bush riding of the Mountain Cattlemen who have built up special bush riding expertise and knowledge for 150 years.

"The winner will be using all the talents of Mountain horsemanship - daring, skill and native cunning" he said.

He went on to say that people had better attend the event in case the area is eventually closed to horse riding and the skills of the Mountain Horseman were lost forever.

## OBITUARY

We regretfully record the passing of two members of early Mansfield Mountain Cattlemen families, Mr. Fred Ross and Mr. Jack Klingsporn.

From Page 1.

## PROTEST RIDE

The print media was generous and probably was summed up best in the Bulletin which said in part -

"...the modern heirs of the Man From Snowy River do not trust governments and especially do not trust "greenies". So the Victorian Government's announcement of its intention to create a single linked Alpine National Park was greeted by a public relations coup that left the greenies gaping and the government miffed...their message hardly required commentary. With broad brimmed hats, moleskin trousers, Williams boots and battered "Dryzabone" oil skins they were the genuine Australian pastoral article. Fronting for them was Graeme Stoney. An articulate land owner from Mansfield and tactician of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria. Stoney looked into the cameras, proclaimed that the Alpine National Park legislation inevitably would result in the extinction of something truly Australian and laid the blame squarely on the greenies...to describe the reaction of the Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation Dr. Geoff Mosley as sour grapes is an understatement, "its greenie versus greedy" he said."

The ride and comments to the press by the Cattlemen certainly revealed the true intentions of the conservation movement. On radio and in newspapers statements by conservation leaders branded Cattlemen "arrogant, their heritage a "gross conceit" and they were told in no uncertain terms that they were to be "got rid of".

As the statements were made, the reasons for riding were justified. The conservation leaders displayed no empathy with a young nation striving to preserve the heritage of its pioneers, and no understanding of our point of view.

It can therefore be understood why the Mountain Cattlemen are cynical and worried about the long term implications of the Government's proposal for a massive National Park.

**THE CATTLEMEN KNOW. THAT ONCE THAT PARK IS CREATED, THE PRESSURE FROM CONSERVATION GROUPS WILL INCREASE AND THEY WILL NOT REST UNTIL THE LAST CATTLEMAN LEAVES THE ALPS AND THEIR HERITAGE (WHICH BELONGS TO YOU ALL) IS BURIED FOREVER.**

## FROM PAGE 5 BUSHFIRES

They believe the serious bushfires that have been experienced this summer are a direct result of conservation groups impractical attitude and approach to good Forest Management which includes protective burning and clearing of dangerous undergrowth near dwellings.

Liaison Officer for the Cattlemen, Mr Graeme Stoney of Mansfield, said that Mountain Cattlemen have been pressing for more protective burning to be done for many years.

If this management practice is withdrawn from the lower alpine country and grazing withdrawn from alpine meadows, it is possible that within our lifetime a situation will develop where the Victorian Alps could be utterly destroyed by fire from the valley floors to the peak of Bogong, Victoria's highest mountain.

## SPECIAL 150th ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR - OLD CATTLEMEN'S PORT

This excellent idea came from Associate Kelvin Bush who did all the initial groundwork and then sent all the information down to the Committee. Geoff Ritter, Marion Pennicuk and Don Porter took over and organized it. Old Cattlemens Port comes in an attractive stoneware jug with handle, and is beautifully presented in its own special box. - A Great Present.

The Brown Bros. Old Cattlemens Port 150th Anniversary Special will be released on 2nd February at Junction Plains at the Cattlemen Get Together, and will be available later from Hotels around the Alpine area.

