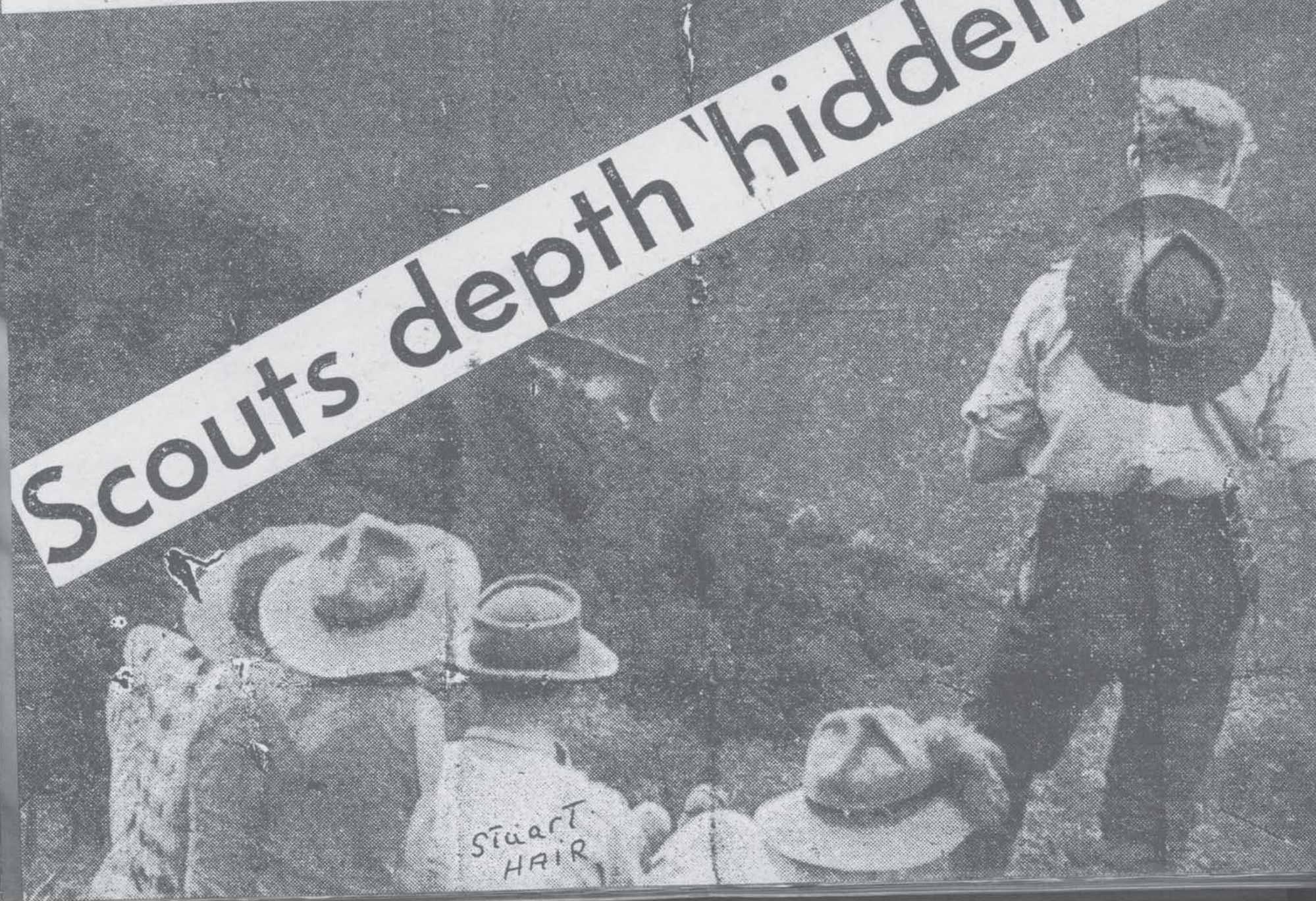


FIRST GLIMPSE of Lake Tarli Karng, hidden in the mountains 50 miles from Maffra, Gippsland, on the slopes of the Australian Alps. It was photographed by one of a party of 12 senior Scouts from the 1st Albert Park Troop, headed by scoutmaster R. G. Day, on the first horseback expedition last week. The party was led by two cattlemen. Hiking parties have visited the lake before.

Scouts depth 'hidden' lake



Gippsland

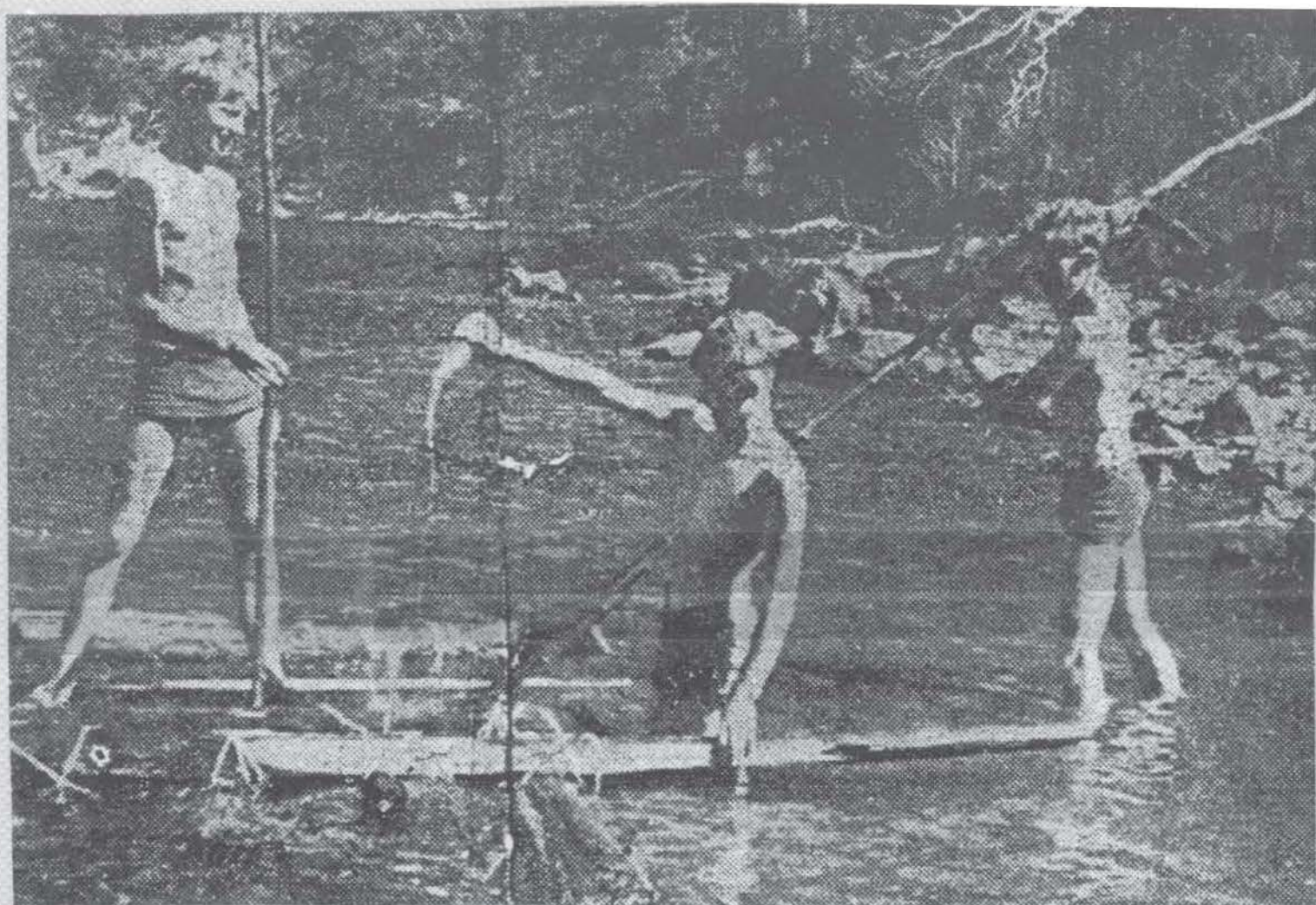
STUART HAIR

The Herald, Wednesday,
January 20, 1954

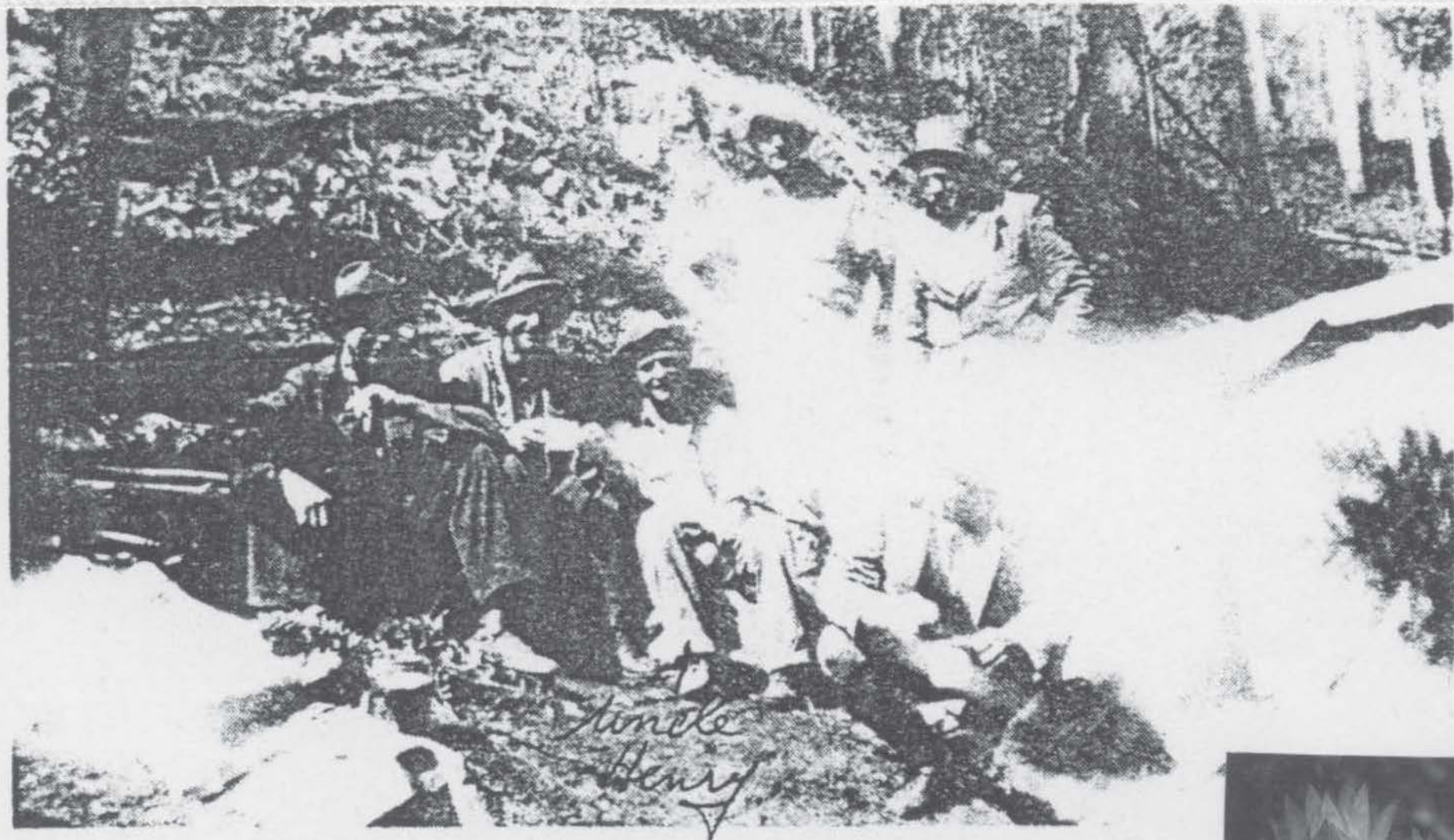
—Page 13



THE HIGHEST POINT reached by the expedition—the summit of Mt. Wellington (5400 ft. above sea level). One of the party led his horse to the summit.



SCOUTS ON HORSEBACK during the 12-day trip. They said some of the going was "a bit rough." Some of the boys had trouble getting their horses across the flooded Avon River. **RIGHT: FROM A CRUDE RAFT** the Scouts depth the lake. Their reading was 151½ ft. Fifty years ago the depth was measured at 150 ft.



The site of the accident. The men are (L-R across back) Bill Gillio, Rex Miller, ^{W. Redwood} ~~Billy Jones~~, the RAAF doctor, and Constable Draper. Constable Kennedy from Briagolong is in front. (Isabelle Estoppey)

A BUSHMAN'S WAY OF TELLING THINGS

By "Brumby"

There was movement at Valencia
and quite a lot of fun,
When a bloke from out at Wadelock
claimed the Avon River run.
Now, Bob and Rex and Wallie have
rode this run for years;
You can just imagine how they felt
when Jack pricked up his ears.
Now, Bob and Rex and Wallie, with
Paddy and the rest,
Have ridden to Mt. Wellington, and
right up to the crest.
They have driven mountain cattle
and brought them safely back,
But the last trip up, these bushmen
had one man get off the track.
The horse that Bob was riding, tried
this cattleman to best,
But he rode him down the mountain
to the bottom of the hill.
And there, when Rex did find him,
Bob had had a nasty spill.
But these bushmen being together,
like ivy to the wall,
And they came and made a camp
there, where Bob had had his fall.
Then they tried to make him comfy,
and they did a darned good job,
Then Rex said: "I'll stay with him,
Jonesy; go and get the mob."
Now, Jonesy is a stripling, and he's
worked for Rex for years,
And he's learned those bushmen's
tactics, and obeys them without
fears.

He rode and rode in moonlight, till
at daybreak down the plain,
He could see there in the distance -
Rex's homestead once again.
Then he got the boys together, and
he made it pretty plain
That a fast trip back to Wellington
would save Bob some pain.
Then they got an Air Force doctor,
and a party big and strong,
Who intended, when they got there,
to bring poor Bob along.
Now, the place where Bob went over
is a very steep ravine;
From the bottom to the top of it is
feet just seventeen.
Now, the doctor did a good job, and
he patched him up outside,
Then they put him on a horse again
to have another ride.
Through the rough and hill country
back again he went at last,
Till they landed up on top again,
where he'd been in the past.
Now, the place where Bob went over
they have called it "Goldie's
Fall."
But he is made of good stuff, and I
tell you that ain't all.
Then they set to work together, to
make a landing for a plane.
Then a pilot, name of Hepburn, in a
Hudson tried the cloth;
But he turned and went away again,
and came back in a Moth.
Now, he made darned good landing,
after he had tried again,
Then they put Bob in the pilot's seat,
then he took off again.
Now, people, this is history, and I
say it once again -

A large summer party at Miller's Hut.. Note the original bark roof with the substantial supporting log framework.



MUSTERING— USING SKIS

It was a snow covered trek for three district bush men when they brought 140 cattle out of the Moroka Valley.

Owner of the cattle was Mr Andrew Estoppey, Briagolong.

Horses would have been useless, and would have floundered in the foot of snow.

Making the trek with Mr Estoppey was Dargo grazier. Mr Jack Treasure and district dingo trapper, Clive Hodge.

Usually at the start of Winter Mr Estoppey brings the cattle down from the valley, about 4000 ft. on the Great Divide, where they fatten through the Summer.

But his Briagolong property, 35 miles away, was scorched bare by the March bush fires.

The cattle were kept in the high country for as long as possible, but an early fall of snow trapped them.

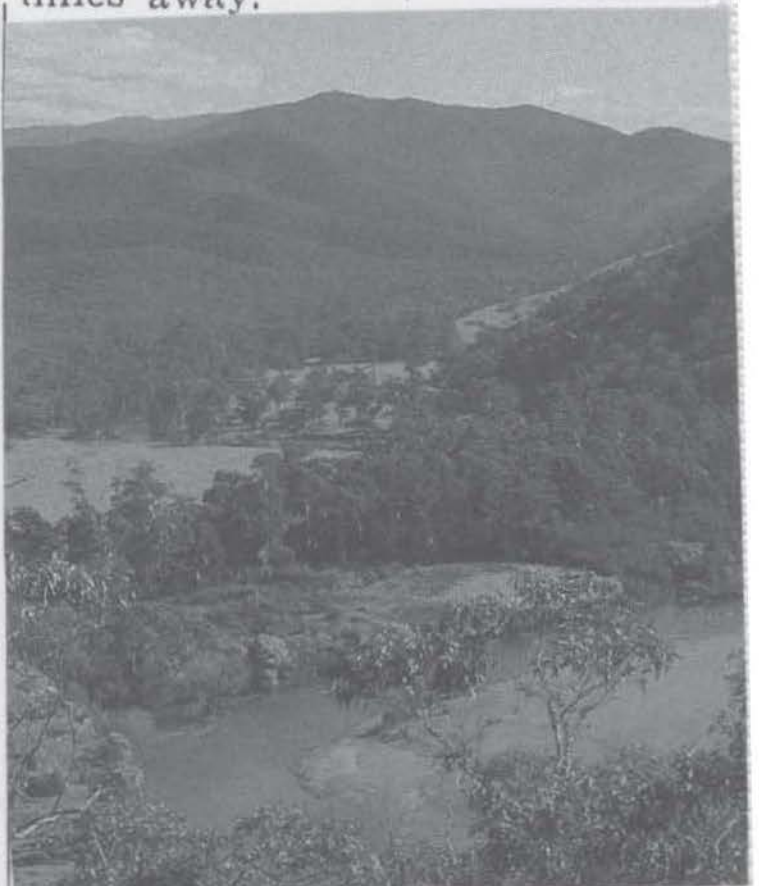
Mr Jack Treasure described the fall as unusually heavy for the valley—a foot or so, he told a reporter from The Age.

After waiting a week for the thaw which didn't come, the trio set out in a Land Rover, going through the wild country.

The Moroka River was frozen over, with six to eight inches of ice on top—enough to have ridden a horse across.

The trip back was slow. it took from a Sunday to Tuesday to cover about four miles. The cattle were very weak, and had to be shepherded very carefully.

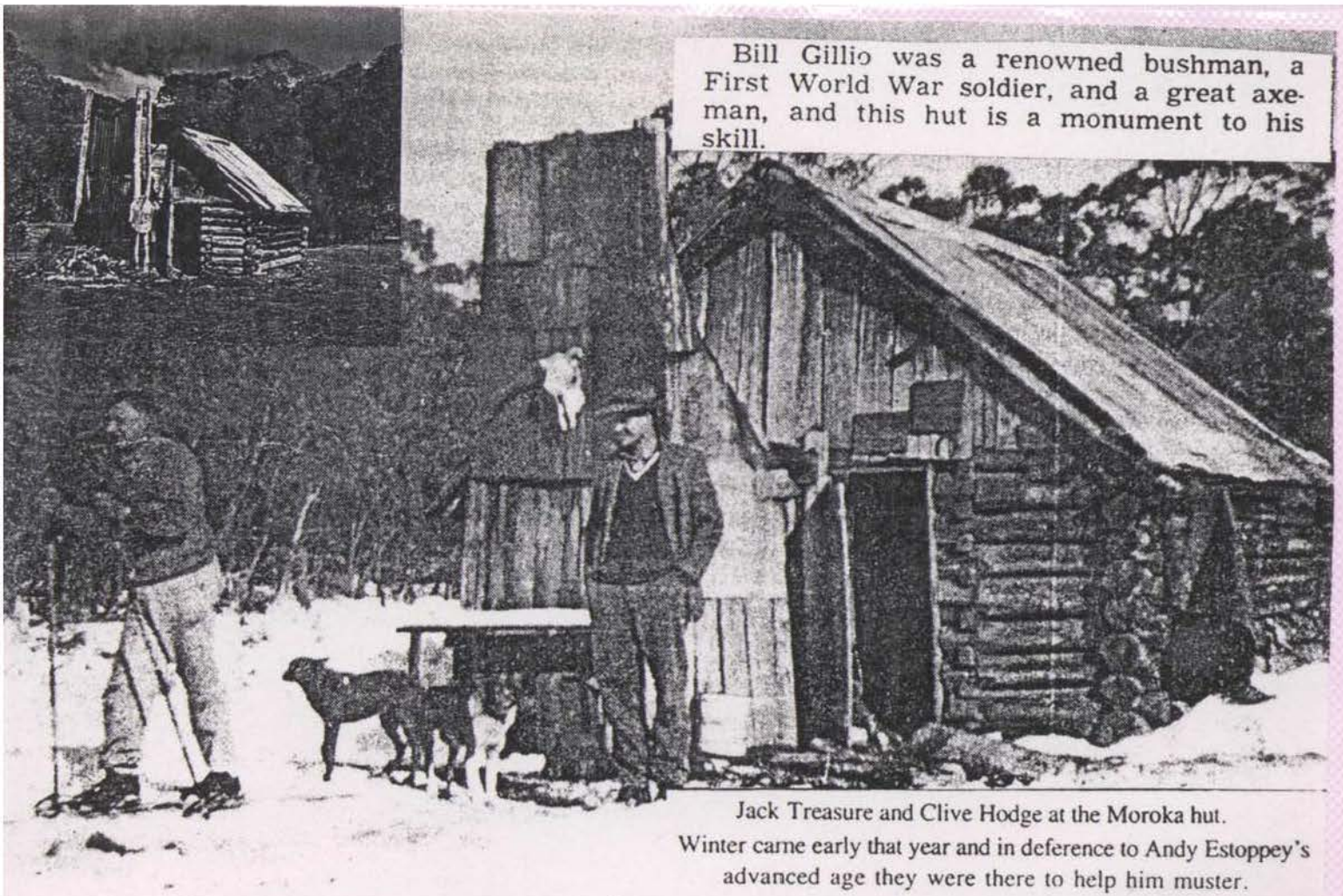
On low ground, the cattle were fed and spelled for a week, then moved to Mr Estoppey's farm another 30 miles away.



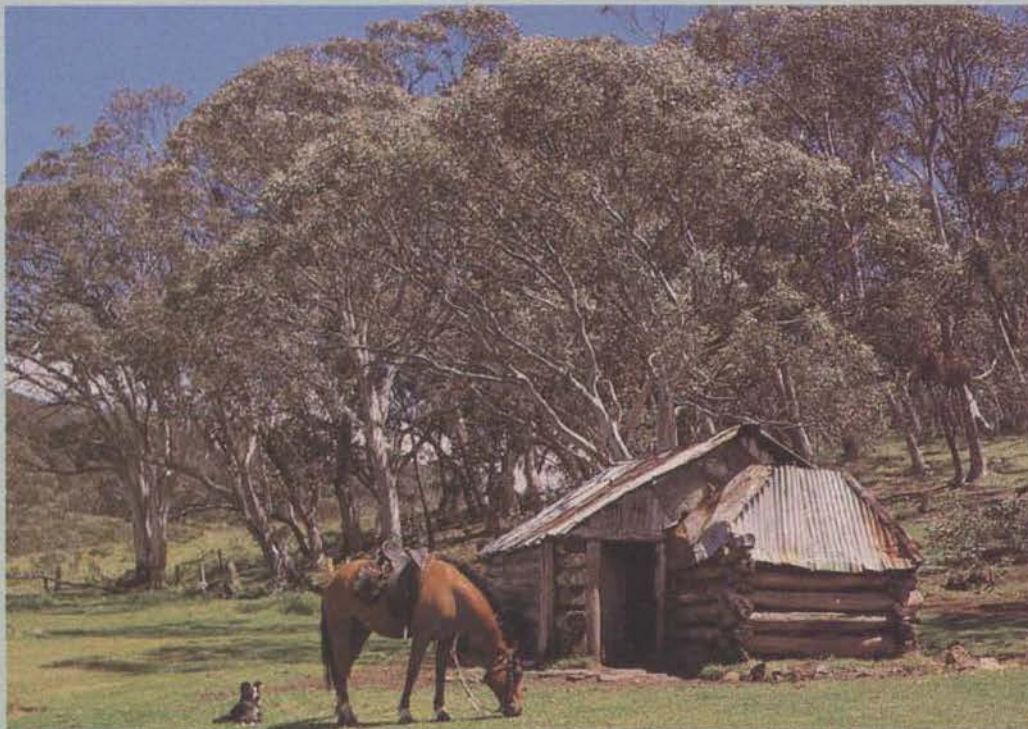
THREE MEN experienced bitter cold conditions to get cattle to Briagolong from the snow-clad Moroka Valley. Two of the trekkers are seen on the hard — frozen Moroka River —



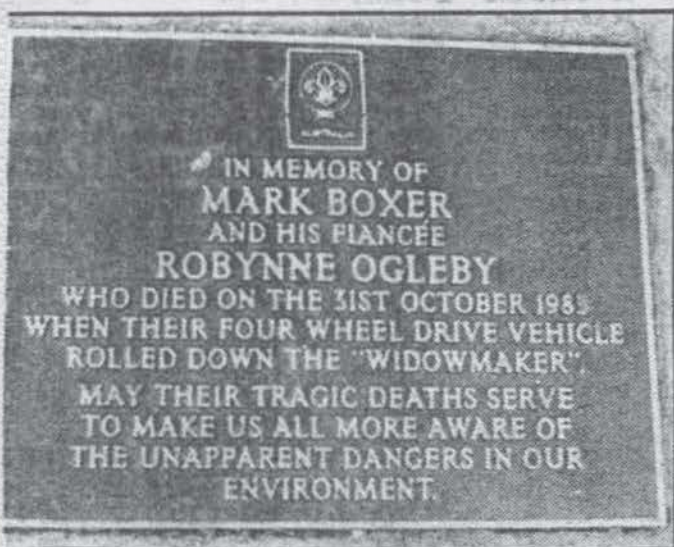
Bill Gillio was a renowned bushman, a First World War soldier, and a great axeman, and this hut is a monument to his skill.



Jack Treasure and Clive Hodge at the Moroka hut. Winter came early that year and in deference to Andy Estoppey's advanced age they were there to help him muster.

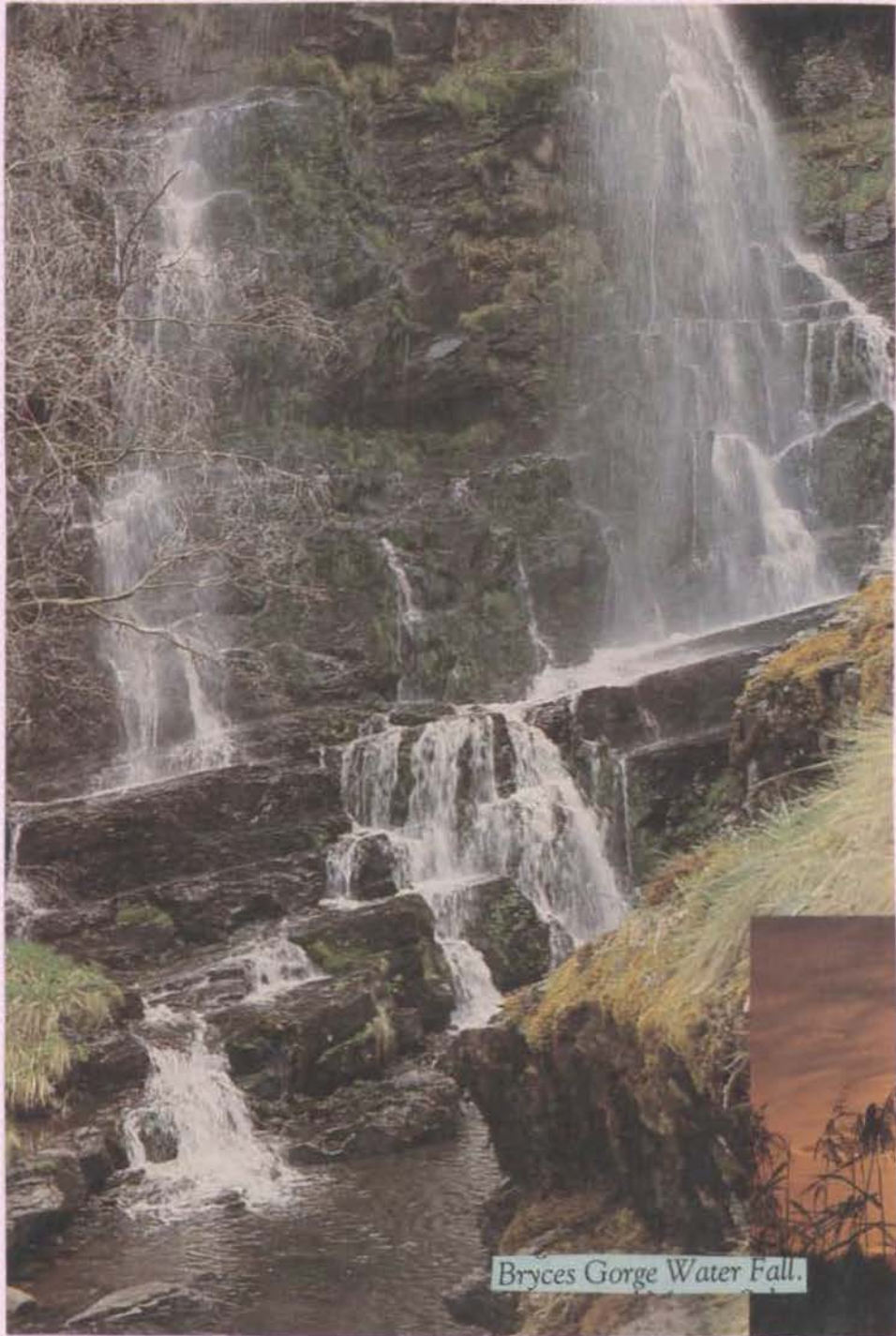


= Guy Hat =

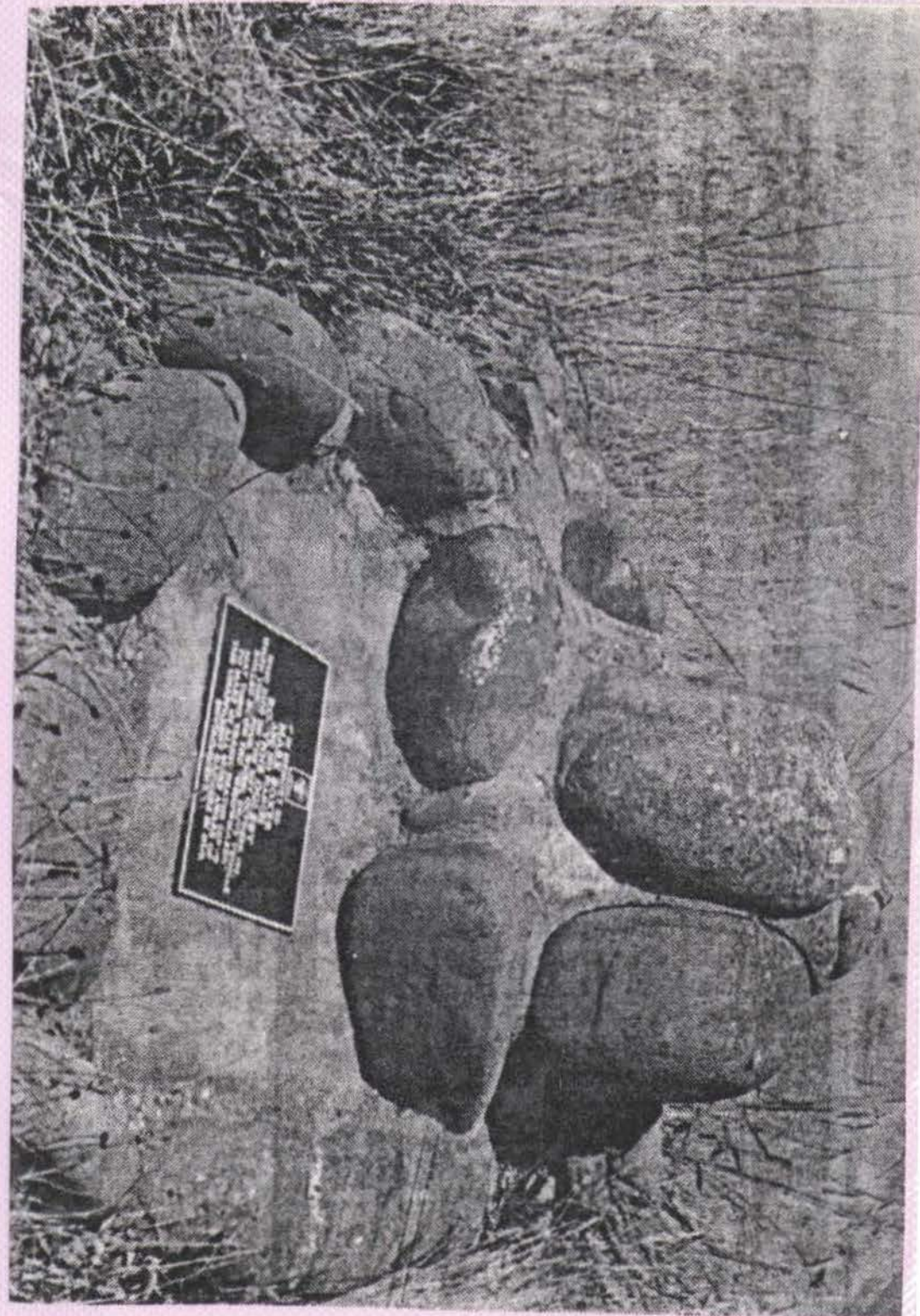


THE Wonnangatta Valley, one of the most beautiful, isolated and mysterious regions in Victoria, has claimed its share of victims. The notorious 'Widowmaker' (above), in the heart of the Wonnangatta Valley, has tested the courage and daring of many four-wheel drive experts, but in 1983 two people didn't live to tell the tale. For years Department of Conservation and Environment rangers have warned campers not to attempt to drive up the 'Widowmaker', however many have ignored the warnings. According to a DCE ranger, the woman (Robynne Ogleby) got out of the four-wheel drive as her fiancée (Mark Boxer) continued up the hill. However, he failed to go much further and the vehicle rolled down the hill collecting the girl on the way. Both were killed. The plaque (left) was installed at the foot of the 'Widowmaker' after the accident as a reminder to others who attempted to make the climb.





Bryces Gorge Water Fall.



on the left branch of the same creek, where camp was made for the night - fifteen miles for the day. Here it was peaceful and calm.



25th December Though hobbled, the majority of the pack-horses had worked their way a long way up the creek, causing a delay in starting. The walkers, however, set off half an hour before the horses, which caught up on the steep climb to Moroka Valley. The high wind of the morning died down at mid-day when the Moroka Valley was reached - a distance of seven miles.

This pretty valley was smiling in pleasant bracing sunshine. Camp was made near the stockyards and after lunch the girls busied themselves preparing dinner. Later a jolly time was had by all at the delicious and substantial Xmas dinner, followed by a sing song round a huge camp fire.

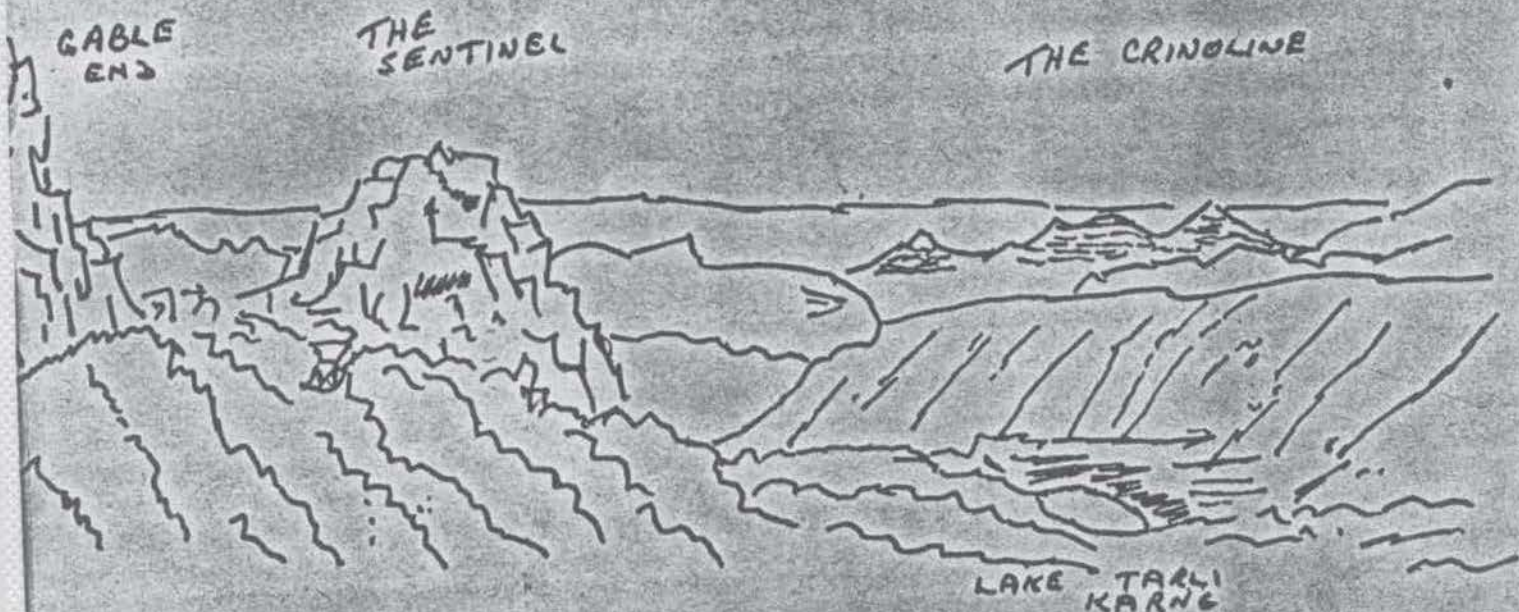
26th December A start was made at 9am in lovely sunshine for Millers hut on Mt Wellington via Trig Hill (5,365'). This was a very beautiful part of the trip. The track winds up the Moroka Valley passing through parklands of white sally gums and finally rises steeply up the grassy ridge on which, further south, stands Trig Hill.

It was on this steep sidling track that an unbalanced pack several times slipped round on a packhorse which was being led. There were scenes of fast action as all the men struggled with the roaring and plunging horse which had dislodged packing cases and top load.

A pause for lunch was made at a spring near the Trig, which was later climbed by the party, who stayed for some time admiring the magnificent panorama which lies spread out on all sides. The party moved down the track and arrived at the hut in the middle of the afternoon, having covered a distance of nine miles for the day.

27th/28th December These two days were spent in sight seeing and were blessed with lovely weather. The first day was taken up with a trip down Gillies Track to Lake Tarli Karng, where the reflections from the surrounding slopes gave the still water the colour of dark green glass. Lunch was enjoyed beside the tarn, after which some of the party made a circuit of the lake and admired the falls at

its head.



The second day was fine and clear. In the morning most of the party climbed Spion Kop and admired the western panorama; also the magnificent sight of a wedge tailed eagle gliding as it came close under the peak. In the afternoon the party went to Lake Lookout.

near the Sentinel on the Big Hill. The lake nestles like a small emerald almost hidden among the folds of the mountains. On a fine day this is a scene of solemn splendour, from the grim brooding Sentinel across the sweeping hollow of the great Wellington Basin to the grand walls of the Dividing Range on the western skyline. We then proceeded to Gable End and admired the southern panorama from the top of the 700' cliffs before returning to the hut.

29th December Some of the crowd climbed the ridge to the east of the hut in the faint light of dawn and watched the sun rise from the sea over the shining Gippsland Lakes and the distant plains. There is something enchanting about the soft creeping light of the dawn in the high country, the silence and the stirring chilly breeze.

At 9am the cavalcade left Millers Hut on the journey southwards twenty-three miles to Golden Point. Lunch time at Connollys Soak (a mere patch of wet mud) afforded no water, but luckily a little; of this necessity had been brought along.

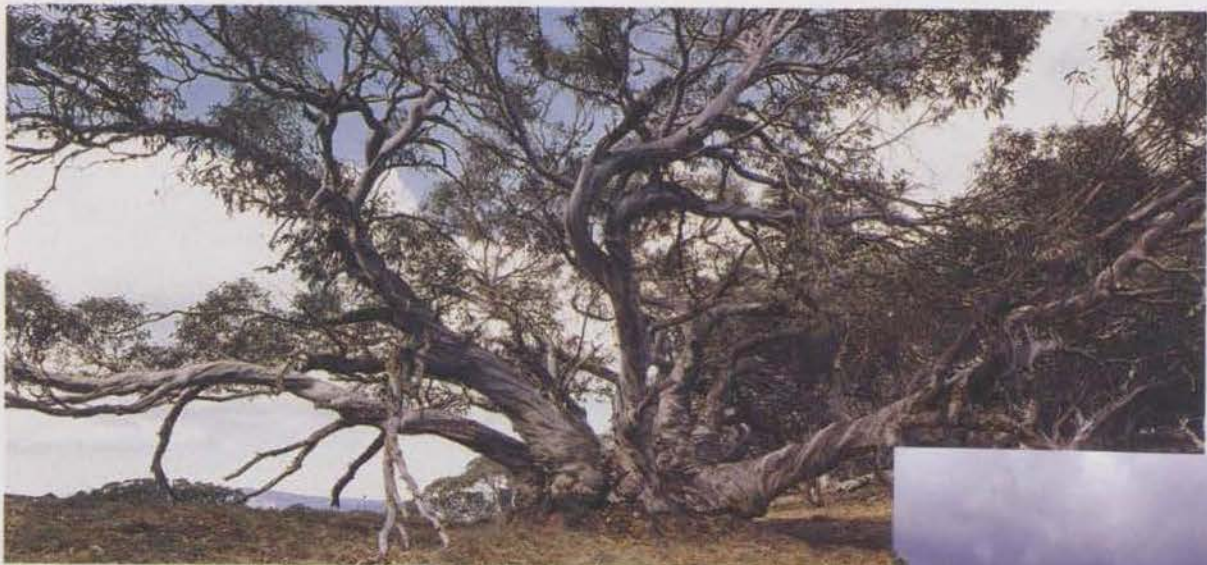
We then proceeded along the rough track of the Razorback, with its pretty views to east and west and down Purgatory Spur to Little River. The billy was boiled beside the clear pools at the foot of the spur, but the Little River had ceased to run. We camped for the night at Golden Point, where the hut was occupied by cattlemen who were taking beasts up to "The Mount", as Wellington is locally known. That evening they entertained the party with tales of the country.

30th December At 8am we left on the longest section of the journey, a distance of twenty-six miles to Wombat Flat, down the lovely colourful Avon Gorge. It was originally intended to camp at Huggets clearing, but the country was in the grip of the worst known drought, and as there was no grass or water at Huggets, it was looking for trouble to try to hold the horses there. It was therefore decided to push on to Wombat Flat beside the Avon River, and it was late in the evening when we got there.

31st December The morning was spent bathing in the river and resting. After lunch the last eight miles were covered to the quarry at Briagolong, where the final camp was made.



»»»»»»»»»»«««««««««««



Snowgum





Pilots Bob Lansbury (left) of Bairnsdale and Ben Buckley of Benambra conducted the first operational firebombing flights in 1967. Their pioneering efforts were recognised officially with plaques presented to both men by Minister for Conservation and Environment, Mr Barry Pullen. (See story)

Victoria has been at the leading edge in aerial firefighting since the day 25 years ago when a firebombing run made aviation history, the Conservation and Environment Minister, Mr Barry Pullen said on Wednesday at a ceremony at Snowy Range.

Aerial firebombing was still in its infancy overseas when the two contract pilots took off from Benambra in February 1967 for Australia's first operational use of the technique.

Mr Pullen honored the breakthrough when he presented plaques to the two pilots involved, Ben Buckley, of Benambra, and Bob Lansbury, of Bairnsdale.

The presentation took place at Snowy Range, north of Licola in Victoria's High Country during a training day and demonstration of the Conservation & Environment Department's latest aerial firefighting techniques and

equipment.

"Victoria has come a long way in aerial firefighting since the day when Ben Buckley and Bob Lansbury took off in their Piper Pawnee light planes from Benambra with loads of fire retardant and successfully controlled a remote blaze," Mr Pullen said.

"Ground crews from what was then the Forests Commission had to drive and walk for seven hours to get to the fire, and rather than having to fight a raging bush-fire found that only the mopping up was left to do.

"This was an Australian first, and Victoria still leads the way with research, equipment and techniques.

"To-day, Victorians can have every confidence that their national parks, State forests and public land are given the greatest protection possible from fire with the use of helicopters, light planes

1992
Barry Pullen

and computer assessment and forecasting.

"Expert firefighters are on standby throughout the summer months, and crews airlifted to rugged and remote fires can rappel to the ground or get out of a helicopter through the hover exit technique. The immediate response time of aerial firefighting allows the Department to attack remote fires quickly and limit their impact on the environment.

"Aerial firebombing is still a frontline weapon in our firefighting methods, although the technique has been significantly refined and the equipment and aircraft upgraded since the day a quarter of a century ago when Victoria pioneered the technique," the Minister said.

Mr Pullen said it was fitting that the anniversary was marked at Snowy Range, which at 5,300 feet is Australia's highest airstrip and

2
in the same High Country region as the initial Benambra flights. The Snowy Range and Benambra strips were set up as Victoria's first two firebombing bases shortly before the first operation.

Mr Pullen said Victoria now had a State-wide network of 14 firebombing bases and 90 fire spotting towers as part of its defence against bush-fires.

1992
March
"Victoria is one of the most fire prone regions in the world, and the Department is responsible for protecting about seven and a half million hectares of public land - a third of the State," he said.

"The fleet of planes and helicopters at the Department's disposal represents one of the most versatile, comprehensive and cost-effective firefighting aircraft collections in the world, and we have the management and the training to use it to best advantage."



Craig's Hut Mt. Stirling

THE last of the Wonnangatta Station cattle will be sold at auction today in Heyfield, ending a tradition which goes back to the 1860s.

The isolated station, in the mountains above Licola, has been sold by Bob Gilder, ironically, to the cattlemen's arch enemy — the Conservation, Forests and Lands Department.

Cattle grazing has been banned on the 445 ha. property, and Conservation, Forests and Lands Minister Mrs Kirner has been quoted as saying that when grazing leases totalling 40,000 ha. expire at the year's end, they will not be renewed.

Wonnangatta station will become national park, joining vast areas of parkland which surround it.

There is some consolation for those who have not yet seen the station — the department will still allow bush walkers, four wheel drivers and horseriders into the area.

The station was first settled in 1861 by an American, Oliver Smith, his wife Ellen and her son Harry.

He had first been lured to the area by gold prospecting, but saw the valley's potential as a cattle run.

They built a slab homestead at the junction of the Conglomerate Creek

and the Wonnangatta River.

The property had several owners since then, including a syndicate, which ran leaseholds in conjunction with the property.

It was sold by the Guy family to Bob Gilder, of Glenfalloch, in 1970.

Its colorful history included a double murder in 1917 to 1918, when station manager James Barclay and cook John Bamford were murdered.

That murder remains unsolved to this day.

The last Wonnangatta muster recently took place, rounding up the last of the 350 three-year-old Angus and Hereford bullocks which will be offered in Heyfield's annual mountain cattle sale.

Involved in the muster were head stockman Trevor Archer, of Newry, Anthony Higgins, Glencairn, Felix Blayney, Myrtlebank, and David Hynd, Maffra.

David Hynd has taken part in the last three musters and said he had been pleased to take part in a muster which had ended a chapter in the history of Wonnangatta Station.

Wonnangatta

Last cattle
April 15 - 1988
muster at



RIDERS TAKE time out for a billy tea while walking the last of the Wonnangatta station cattle towards Heyfield. The cattle will be sold today. Pictured (from left) Bob Gilder, Felix Blayney and "Darkie" Gallatly, Maffra.

BILL GILLES

Bill Gilles was born and, apart from service during the war, spent all his life near Briagolong. His mother died when he was young, and he was associated with the Estoppey family from a very early age. He enlisted in the 1st A.I.F. in the First World War, and served overseas, probably in France. He is credited with saving the life of another local, Billy Reeves, there. Suffering from shrapnel wounds to the neck, he recovered despite being at first passed over for medical treatment as he was not expected to survive. He was then invalided home.

Bill eventually obtained land up Georges Creek, and a run around the Wellington/Moroka area, but it was his leadership of the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau 'Skyline Tours' for which he was best-known. These organised tours, initially over the December/January period, were personally escorted walking trips where cattlemen such as Bill, and later Andy Estoppey provided the pack horses that carried all luggage and equipment. Unofficial stories of the times also infer that as late as eleven and twelve at night the pack horse men would be also going back to carry the hikers who, more often than their cattle, would 'go down and refuse to walk'. These tours, which began in the late 1920s, ran until at least 1940, with Bill, Andy and a team

that often included **Albie Conway** and **George Maxwell** taking horses at least as far as Bright to meet groups. In time he succeeded to Henry Miller's title, and became the next King of Mount Wellington.

Bill Gilles was known as a bushman. He cut the original Gilles's Track down Riggall's Spur into Tarli Karng as a result of a tourist grant obtained by Jim Kelly and Rex Miller. After Bill's death another route was cut in to the lake and named Gilles's Track in memory of him. In 1946 he and Andy Estoppey, assisted by **Arch Timbs** and **Eric Bateson** built the Moroka log hut, replacing an earlier one which had burnt down. He was also associated with the construction of the Briagolong RSL log cabin, and both are monuments to his well-known skill with an axe. Bill did not marry, and spent the last years of his life living at the Briagolong Hotel. He died in 1967 aged 75 years.

ANDY ESTOPPEY

Henry Miller and Bill Gilles have both, in turn, been called the King of Mount Wellington, and so Andy deserves the title of King of the Moroka. He was born in 1906 near Briagolong, the son of Ferdinand Estoppey and Isabella nee Wishart, both of Swiss extraction. The family was then living at what many now know as Peter Black's place. His father later built at Culloden and the family moved there. Andy initially ran a few cattle in the bush there, but first went up top with the Treasure 'boys'

in 1927. He bought the Meek farm on the Freestone at Briagolong, and named it 'Bonnie Doon', and ran cattle from there in the Moroka. Along with several other cattlemen, he also became a beekeeper. He made his last trip into Moroka in 1982, several months before his death in 1983, spanning a period of 55 years.

Many names were associated with Andy Estoppey over this time, apart from that of Bill Gilleo. Among others that have been in there with him were **Vince Cummins** and **Arch Timbs**. In later years there was **Johnny Pritchard**, who died around the early 1970s, aged about 38, after a car accident. He had run in the Moroka that is now held by **David Freeman** of Dargo. '**Cooge**' **Short**, who first went into the Moroka with Andy and Bill Gilleo in 1946, when he was 14, held a run in the Valencia himself from 1965 to 1968. He clearly remembers that first trip in, to the just completed Moroka Hut. Today he is saddened by the state in which he has found it, a hut built and maintained with pride in the best traditions of bushmanship, now despoiled by careless visitors.

Following the death of Andy Estoppey his country in Moroka was transferred to **Bob and Stan Dunsmuir** of Briagolong and Munro respectively. They still hold runs there today.



The staff of the 1931-1932 Skyline Tour, (L—R) George Maxwell, Andy Estoppey, Bill Gilleo, Albie Conway and D. Eunston (the cook).

Abelbourne Women's Walking Club. "1954
55."

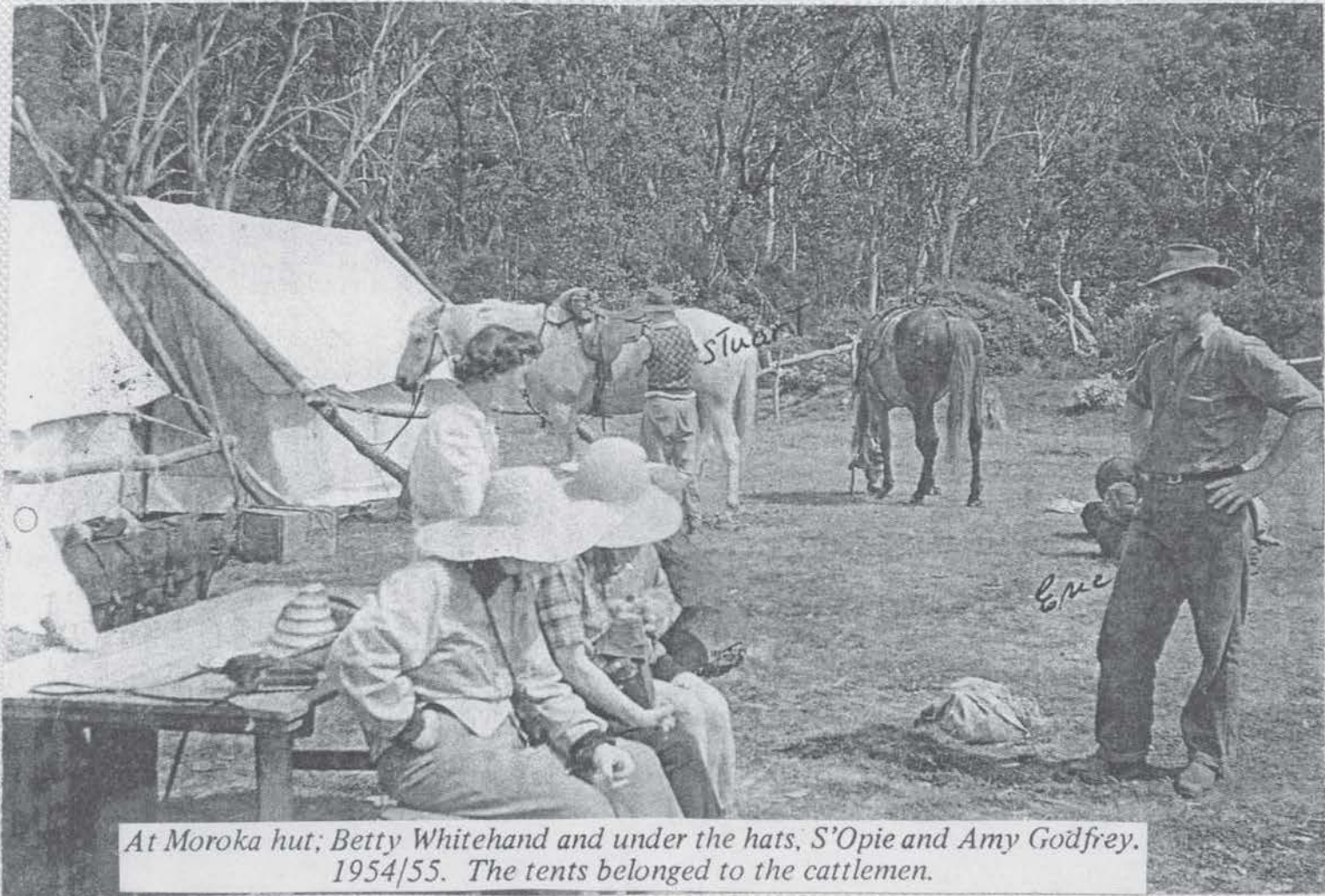
The era of the packhorses ended as it had begun with a visit to Tali Karng. Eight Club members, including Gretchen Fordyce who had been on the first trip, travelled by Gronow's van to Briagalong on Christmas Day 1954 and camped by the Freestone Creek. Here they met their old friend Andy Estoppey, who had arranged for their packhorses and guides. Early on Boxing Day a small local bus took them up a narrow winding forest road to within walking distance of the Moroka Hut, their first camp, where their guides Eric Bateson and Stewart Hair were waiting with six packhorses, three riding horses and two brown dogs. The next day they followed a bridle track to Mt Wellington where the otherwise lovely views were marred by a shimmering heat haze. Afterwards they walked down the Moroka valley - the Valley of the Sky, as the aborigines called it - and followed a track to Miller's Hut through flowering shrubs and snow gums in full bloom. Near the hut was a face carved in an old tree bole; green lichen for its hair and beard gave it a most realistic look.

As only one night was to be spent at Tali Karng the guides left three of the packhorses at Miller's Hut, and after erecting tents for the women on the shores of the lake, returned to the hut. Eleven bushwalkers were already in camp and at dusk a great tramping of feet heralded the arrival of 13 young Scouts. Despite the numbers camping in a small area it was an enjoyable and peaceful night.

The following days were spent on the Wellington Plateau climbing Spion Kopje and watching the sunset from Gable End. The long trek down Purgatory Spur lived up to its name as the day was hot, but a swim in the Avon River at Golden Point Hut soon revived everyone. They followed the river downstream for the next two days cooling themselves at intervals. The track left the valley at last and as it wound through patches of wild pink hyacinths and blue pincushions they saw Andy Estoppey riding to meet them. He escorted them to an open cattle truck in which they had a bumpy ride back to Briagolong. Later that night after dining with the Estoppey family the eight walkers returned to their camp and the last of the Club packhorse trips ended where it began, on the banks of the Freestone Creek.

The Tali Karng – Mt Wellington packhorse trip, 1954/55.

(Photos: Jean Blackburn)



At Moroka hut; Betty Whitehand and under the hats, S'Opie and Amy Godfrey, 1954/55. The tents belonged to the cattlemen.

Fitzgeralds Hut Destroyed by Fire

At approximately 10pm on 4 December 1991, Fitzgeralds Hut was raised to the ground by a fire that was bigger then the fireplace was ever intended to cater for.

A group of school children, (13 and 14 year old boys) were using Fitzgerald Hut as a base camp for storing their gear and sleeping in tents around the hut. Another group of boys were at Wallaces and the teachers were at Kellys. The boys were reportedly outside the hut in their tents, when one noticed a red glow and that the timber on the outside of the chimney was on fire. They then opened the door to find the hut alight.

The group was fortunate enough to rescue all of their equipment however they were unable to rescue anything relating to the hut such as the visitors book (which was estimated to have 1,000 names

since last April) or any other item that belonged to the history of this building.

This traumatic experience has resulted in some of the boys receiving counselling so they can cope with the experience.

A letter received by the Fitzgerald family stated that the boys were holding a 'cake stall' to raise money. We would hope that this cake stall is an outraging success for the cost of faithfully rebuilding this hut will not come cheaply. The proceeds of a cake stall would seem to be poor restitution for the loss of a building that would have been 90 years old next year.

Perhaps the group of boys responsible should also be involved in the hard yacka of the actual rebuilding? We wish the Fitzgeralds well in their endeavour to put Fitzgerald Hut back on the map.



It is ironic that the Fitzgerald family would have been occupying the hut at the time of the fire had they not been removed from their run.

Briag. stock yards are sold

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1974

BRIAGOLONG'S last round-up on Monday ended in beer and yarns.

Beer in Alf Hocken's hotel, and yarns about Briagolong's rip-roaring hey day.

The occasion was the nostalgic last cattle sale in the small town, and the sale of the cattle yards.

Publican Hocken, who owns the verandah, weatherboard hotel adjacent to the post and rail cattle yards, bought the lot rock stock and barrel for \$2000.

With the tumbling yards he got 2½ acres of road frontage land.

Veteran auctioneer Charlie Stagg, who years ago had land interests in the area, offered the yards on behalf of Dalgety.

About 150 spectators, mostly townsmen and district farmers who remembered the good old days when sales were regular, perched on the rails to see the yards sold.

Bush Cattle were sold here in Briagolong.

\$500 BIDS

Charlie Stagg accepted \$500 bids and it was apparent Alf Hocken would win.

Before the yards sale, 28 head of stock, a good number fewer than expected, went under the hammer at disappointingly low prices.

To add interest to the finale, a grey Ferguson tractor sold for \$345, two hens for \$2.50, and a saw bench and trailer were passed in.

And the Red Cross women set up a raffle table under the pub verandah.

For most at the sale, the best part of the gloomy day was the hour or two spent after the sale in the hotel.

It was drinks all round as a chapter in Briagolong's colorful history was resuscitated for an hour or two.

LOOKING at an old purchase sheet after the auction are Mr Greg Lee Snr., Mr Andy Estoppey, Mr Archie Geddes and Mr

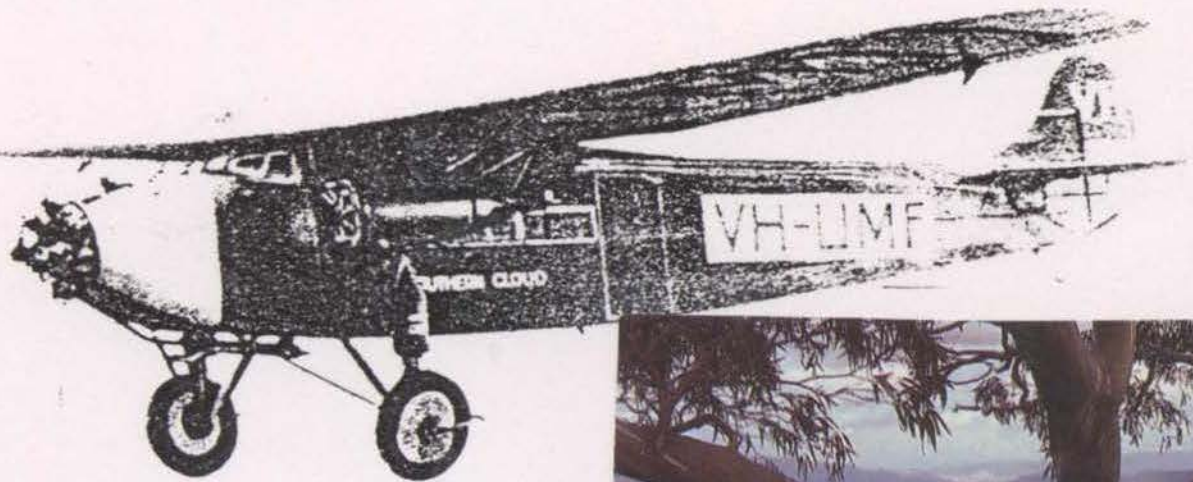
Ernie Jackson. The sheet, owned by Mr Lee's father, showed that he bought 12 steers for a total of 47 pounds, and one roan bull for £10 pounds.





Horseriders in the High Country

THE SOUTHERN CLOUD



There are at least two rescue stories concerning airmen and the mountains to our north. This is the one from 1947.

[In autumn..] stockmen are out on Mount Wellington and neighbouring mountains and hills, mustering cattle to bring them to the lower country for the winter months. It is a big undertaking, requiring the services of many experienced cattlemen who, of necessity, must be good horsemen. Most of them are residents of Heyfield or Upper Maffra.

On Wednesday, John Kelly, a grazier of Glenmaggie, was assisting in the muster on Mount Tamboritha, which is near Mount Wellington. His horse fell with him and he sustained severe head injuries and a possible fracture of the skull.

The scene of the accident was about the 5,000 feet altitude, and the only ingress and egress by land was by horse tracks. Those with the injured man were confronted with the problem of taking him to receive medical attention. Aeroplanes were suggested and so a Forestry Commission's radio, stationed in the mountains as a precaution against forest fires, was sought.

The RAAF decided a rescue attempt must be made, and a Tiger Moth rescue plane took off at 3.10pm. The pilot took as a guide a photographic mosaic map of the area which was rushed to Point Cook by a Forestry Commission officer. The map had been prepared by the RAAF for bush fire patrols.

As the moth had to fly almost 100 miles over some of the roughest country in the State, the RAAF sent along a Dakota to act as escort and to keep Point Cook advised as to what was happening.

The location of the injured man was found and the Tiger Moth landed on a small open but rough plain at 4.55pm. The larger machine, it was evident, could not land, but the pilot remained in the air.

A short while afterwards another Tiger Moth owned and piloted by Mr Neil McInnes of Tinamba, who was previously in the RAAF, arrived with

Dr Atkinson of Maffra. They had flown up the Macalister Valley. There Dr Atkinson met Wing Commander Charles Lelue, senior medical officer of Point Cook, who had been taken there by the Point Cook Tiger Moth.

It was decided to fly the patient to the Gippsland Hospital at Sale. Six o'clock approached and it was found that the RAAF Tiger Moth would not start. Nightfall was approaching and the journey in a small plane had to be made over mountain country. Mr McInnes's aeroplane was called into service and at seven o'clock it took off for Sale with Mr Kelly aboard. The Dakota accompanied it to assist if necessary.

This condition of affairs left Dr Atkinson and Wing Commander Lelue on the mountain with the crew of the RAAF Tiger Moth. There is no doubt the pilot of the small Tiger Moth had done a great job getting them to the spot and in landing them there.

On Thursday Mr McInnes made another trip to the area. He landed and found that the adjustments which had been made to the RAAF machine would enable it to take off. After it took off with Wing Commander Lelue to return to Point Cook, he took off with Dr Atkinson and returned to Heyfield.

Mr Kelly is a head stockman in the employ of Mr Bob Gilder and, with Mr Gilder, was mustering cattle on Mr Gilder's property at Mt Tamboritha. In an effort to report the accident and obtain help in getting Mr Kelly to hospital, Mr Gilder rode about seven miles to a Forestry Commission post.

Mr Kelly was moved from the Gippsland Hospital to St David's in Maffra, where he recovered.

This story originally appeared in a Melbourne paper and was reproduced in the Historical Society's Bulletin No. 74.

High on a hillside at World's End,
in the Toolong Range near Tooma
Dam, lies the tangled, rusting
remains of an old aircraft. Bushfires and the
ravages of 50 years have made it almost
unrecognisable. There is no hint that these are
the remnants of an aviation tragedy that
destroyed an airline and baffled Australians for
nearly 30 years.

At 8.00 a.m. on a wet Sydney morning in
March 1931, a three-engined Avro 10, the
"Southern Cloud", took off for Melbourne and
disappeared from view. More than 27 years
would pass before any trace of it was seen again.

The weather that morning was appalling over
the Snowy Mountains, which lay on the direct
route from Sydney to Melbourne, and Captain
T. W. Shortbridge would have encountered
violent turbulence, heavy rain and icing even
before he was over the mountains.

Weather forecasting then was a hit-and-miss
affair, with pilots of early morning flights
having to rely on the forecast in the newspapers,

because the meteorological office was only open
during office hours.

When the aircraft didn't arrive in Melbourne,
a massive search began and went on for days,
without finding anything. The "Southern
Cloud" had vanished.

The disappearance of the plane, which was
owned by Charles Kingsford-Smith and Charles
Ulm's Australian National Airways, became a
cause célèbre. Kingsford-Smith and Ulm were
desperate to secure the government mail subsidy
between the two cities, without which their
struggling airline had no chance of survival.
Their implacable rival was an unglamorous
little airline called the Queensland and Northern
Territory Aerial Service—Qantas—and its ultra-
cautious founder, Hudson Fysh.

Fysh made no secret of his contempt for the

that the mail must get through at any cost and he was convinced that recklessness caused the loss of the "Southern Cloud". Fairly or not, the stories of A.N.A. pilots flying by the seat of their pants were soon circulating, and public confidence in the airline evaporated. It went out of business, leaving Hudson Fysh to pick up the subsidy. Had it not been for the "Southern Cloud" tragedy it is arguable that A.N.A. and not Qantas would have become the national airline.

Not a single clue to the whereabouts of the missing plane was found until 27 years later, Tom Sonter, a young Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Authority worker was walking in the Toolong Range, 15 kilometres north-west of Jagungal. He climbed up through the undergrowth on a steep hillside rising sharply from the valley, turned to take a photograph and stepped back onto a rusty piece of tubular steel. The "Southern Cloud" had finally been found.

The plane had flown into the hill 80 metres below the summit. It had been steeply banked to the right at the moment of impact, perhaps because Shortbridge had seen too late that he was flying into the mountain. It was in any event 25 kilometres off course. Whether Shortbridge had decided to risk the weather and fly over the

mountains, or was pushed far to the east by the storm in spite of trying to fly around it by diverting over Goulburn.

Today, a few pieces of the Avro, salvaged from the wreckage, sit rather forlornly in a concrete cage beside the main road out of Cooma, a sun-bleached RAAF flag hanging beside them. At



the site of the crash, which is almost inaccessible, there is an incongruous monument, adorned with pink ceramic flowers. Both seem inadequate memorials to one of the great aviation mysteries of our time.

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