

Scots Lead the Way

Scotland, a world away from Gippsland, is a land of glens and mountains. ... In Northern Gippsland, amongst the hills and mountains of the Great Divide, is another such area. The river flowing through has the Scottish name of the Macalister. (Linda Barraclough and Minnie Higgins, A Valley of Glens, 1986.)

Chilly and hilly, the Australian Alps drew Scottish settlers to them like a magnet. As a result of this "glens" galore and a myriad of Macs adorn local placenames. In January 1838 the *Minerva* arrived in Sydney from Greenock. Aboard were Angus McMillan from the Isle of Skye and cousins, Malcolm MacFarlane and Walter Mitchell from the Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond. All these men left their mark on the area. Sheep and cattle were the mainstay.

Further north William Bryce, an Edinburgh University graduate, took over the running of the Wonnangatta Cattle Station from American Oliver Smith in 1866. Mr and Mrs Bryce had ten children, tragically they lost two, but successfully raising eight children was a great achievement in those days!

There are many families who settled here from the 1860s onwards, mostly of Irish or English extraction, whose descendants still reside in the area. Some would take their cattle up to the High Plains for summer grazing, a practice which only ceased in the Alpine National Park in 2005 and is still carried on in State Forest by some of these families today.



*Norman Chester, Jack Kelly, Denny Connolly, Eric Cumming
at Guys Hut 1946-47*

Photo courtesy of Bill and Joyce Cumming