

## ASSOCIATES OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN

NEWSLETTER No. 2. FEBRUARY, 1985.

The Get Together held at Junction Plain on 2nd and 3rd February was a great success. The Cattlemen's Cup was won for the third year in a row by Ken Connley on Ace, and it was a thrilling experience to be a spectator. It was good to see so many familiar faces, and meet more Associates who until then had been a voice on the telephone.

Our President, Jim Commins has written the following letter:

"Dear Member and Associates,

I feel that I should convey some news of what transpired at our Annual Get-together last week to those of you who were unable to be there.

We were again fortunate that the weather was near perfect and the location ideal and a large crowd of people, far greater than ever before, were able to enjoy a weekend of good company and entertainment.

I have not yet ascertained the nett financial results from the gate or the wares tent, but they should be very satisfactory.

We are indebted to Harry Stephenson for producing an anniversary issue of Voice of the Mountains that was ready for distribution at the gathering.

A ceramic bottle of port to celebrate the 150 years of mountain grazing was specially prepared by Brown Bros. Winery at Millawa and the initial stock was completely sold out.

Those who brought horses long distances to compete in the Cattlemen's Cup and Pack Horse Championship must be thanked for their contribution to highlights of the weekend.

A meeting of members and associates was held on Saturday afternoon and there were also several Members of Parliament as well as press representatives in attendance.

The meeting was a general discussion of topical issues and on directions that our Association should take.

There was confirmation of our stand against the currently proposed National Park extensions and while we are a non-political organisation, there was unanimous agreement that we are presently at odds with the Government on this issue. It was resolved to support candidates in the forthcoming election who will not support extensions to National Parks until the management of the alpine area is completely reviewed and grazing recognised for its true worth.

WE FEEL THAT ANY ELECTORAL SWING TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT,  
ESPECIALLY IF IT GAINS CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,  
WOULD NOT ONLY DISADVANTAGE US, BUT WOULD BE A DISASTROUS  
BLOW TO GOOD AND EFFICIENT UTILISATION OF ALL NATURAL  
RESOURCES AS WELL AS PLACE THE WHOLE REGION UNDER UN-  
NECESSARY REGULATION AND RISK.

The meeting was advised that some members have received extraordinarily high demands for payment of their grazing licence fees and all members are advised not to pay any of these excessive amounts until there is some agreement between our Association, the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association who represent us, and the Government.

We are in the most crucial period in the long history of mountain grazing and public support is essential. Further to this end we have been invited to take part in the Moomba procession in Melbourne on March 11th and I urge all members to make yet another special effort to take part in that if they possibly can as it is the means of securing much more vitally important publicity and support. After the parade we

will assemble as a group in Alexander Avenue for an hour or so to meet interested members of the public before we leave for home. It will also be a good opportunity to meet any Associate Members who are able to be there.

I want to publicly thank the donors of very substantial sponsorship funds that are coming to hand, and to again thank all Associate Members for their most valued support and may Members receive sufficient returns from their Autumn cattle sales to make all their efforts appear worthwhile.

With best wishes,

(signed) Jim Commins."

#### GET TO KNOW THE CATTLEMEN - PRESIDENT, MR. JAMES A. COMMINS - A PROFILE

Jim Commins was born at Ensay in 1922, the eldest of a family of two boys and a girl. He was educated firstly at a small bush school, one of many scattered throughout the country in the days before the Primary State School system, and finished his education at Bairnsdale Technical School at the age of fourteen. Jim's forebears have been living and working in the Gippsland district since 1850, and almost without exception associated with the land, although his Grandfather was a Solicitor in Bairnsdale. Jim's father came to Ensay as a soldier settler after the First World War. His father was born in Bairnsdale. Jim's mother was also a local girl, her family were associated with Bindi Station in the early days, although this property was sold before the first War. Jim's father, and his uncle on his mother's side, have been grazing cattle in the high country now for over 50 years, and Jim of course also runs cattle there, along with his brothers.

During the second World War Jim saw service with the 2nd 11th A.I.F. in New Guinea.

Married to Norma a local girl, but originally from Melbourne, they have three children, two boys who are involved in the running of the property with Jim, and Anne, the only daughter who now lives in Melbourne. Jim and Norma have three grand-daughters, and Bruce, who turned one three weeks ago.

A photograph of Jim appears on page 4 of the Mountain Cattlemens News, but it does not quite do him justice.

#### MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN TO RIDE IN THE MOOMBA PARADE.

This year the Moomba Committee have asked that the Mountain Cattlemen take part in the annual Moomba Parade through the streets of Melbourne over the March long weekend, the Parade of course being held on Monday March 11th. The Cattlemen have been asked to provide 100 riders, and there will also be 2 waggons. Substantial costs arise from this type of exercise, and it is with great pleasure that we can announce that the ride will be sponsored, in the main, by the Australian Eagle Insurance Company under the banner of the Victorian Farmers Insurance Agency. Their generosity and interest has been quite overwhelming, and we hope that they will take a continued interest in our cause. We welcome the Victorian Manager of the Australian Eagle, Mr. Ron Farrell, as a new Associate Member.

Naturally we want as many members as possible to attend the Parade as spectators and make sure the Mountain Cattlemen receive a rousing cheer!

After the Parade the riders will gather on the banks of the Yarra at Alexandra Avenue, and we hope that many of you will be able to come along and bring your friends. There will be free car stickers for the children, and depending on the outcome of negotiations with the City Council, our usual famous STALL! The most important thing of course is that you show your support.

#### DONATIONS

We wish to thank Mr. Bill Hill of Elders IXL Ltd. Elders most generously paid for us to produce the Mountain Cattlemens News. This newspaper is included with this letter, and was also distributed to everybody at the Get Together. It is packed with information, and is a very good read.

Dalgety Farmers Limited sent a large cheque, and a letter full of encouragement and support. The cheque will be used to keep pushing our cause as publicly as possible.

Mr. Harry Stephenson has been mentioned in Mr. Commins' letter, but we feel that your attention should be drawn to the fact that Mr. Stephenson not only gave up his time, his most considerable expertise, but also personally paid for the special Voice of the Mountains called Cobungra Station and other Mountain stories.

#### POSTERS AND PUBLICITY.

Publicity is vital, and every little bit helps. Those of you who are able to do so are asked to place a Poster in your office/shop/business premises, and perhaps also have some of the handout literature available for anybody who might express interest. Posters for this purpose are free, and available from Sue Silvers, 28 Cityview Road, North Balwyn (03 859 3165). Could some of you please approach your local friendly shops, and ask them to put a Poster in the window, or somewhere very prominent.

We have contacted all Municipal Libraries and asked them to make a special display on behalf of the 150th Anniversary of the Mountain Cattlemen, and have sent Posters and the current literature to them for this purpose.

We will also be launching into the Country Libraries as soon as the list comes to hand.

#### THE JANUARY 1985 BUSHFIRES - MOUNTAIN CATTLEMENS PRESS RELEASE.

"For release 25 January 1985.

#### Mountain Cattlemen seek Better Bushfire Protection.

Mountain Cattlemen have issued a scathing attack on conservation groups' attitudes to protective burning and other sensible management practices in the Victorian alpine area.

The President of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association, Jim Commins said today: "For some years there's been undue conservation influence on the State Government's Forest Management Authorities not to protective burn alpine forest areas and national parks."

According to Mr. Commins this influence is both misguided and regrettable and reflects the impractical attitudes of conservationists to forest management.

"The serious bushfires throughout Victoria's alpine area at the moment are a direct result of this misguided influence on our forest managers and the Government", Mr. Commins said.

Liason officer for the MCA, Graeme Stoney said that Mountain Cattlemen have up to five generations experience in the Alps and have been pressing for more protective burning for years.

"If this common sense preventative technique is not increased in the lower Alpine country and if grazing is further withdrawn from Alpine meadows; within our lifetime the Victorian Alps risk being utterly destroyed by fire from the valley floors to the top of Mt. Bogong, Victoria's highest mountain," said Mr. Stoney."

This is just the sort of material you Associates need to take up your pens and start writing to the newspapers.

Please also feel free to include the above in any discussions you may have with members of the general public.

#### WANTED: A SMALL COMMITTEE TO WORK WITH A SOCIAL SECRETARY.

We feel there is a great need for a Social Secretary and a small Committee to work on, perhaps, two or three events per year. A Bush Dance is one possibility which has already been suggested. This is of necessity a Melbourne-based group, but the idea could well be taken up in each of the regional areas. It is an opportunity for the Associates to get together from time to time socially, and exchange their

views and ideas as well as having a good time. The Melbourne Social Secretary is Anne Whittam, 357 Springvale Road, Forest Hill, and if you feel you can assist Anne in any way, please contact her on 03 878 7536.

#### BENDIGO EASTER FAIR - EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 7th 1985

we have had a most interesting letter from Mr. Alan Drash regarding the Bendigo Easter Fair, and are sure that many of you will want to attend. Mr. Drash has the following to say:

"I am writing re the Mountain Cattlemen riding in the Easter Saturday Horse and Harness Parade, also the Easter Monday processions. Some of the Cattlemen rode in the parade last year, and have stated that they will be riding again this year. I would like to see as many Associate members come to ride with the Cattlemen or help in other ways..... People can camp at the Showgrounds, there are horse boxes or stables.....I asked Gus Mercurio would he like to ride with the Cattlemen and he stated he would. Both the Parade and the processions will have T.V. cover, and if the Mountain Cattlemen news is printed could you advertise the Easter Parade in it. If the Associates would like to help in any way, could they please let me know as soon as possible."

What a great opportunity for you Melbourne horse lovers. Alan Drash has all the information and you can ring him on 054 397 312. His address is Bridle Vale Stables, Axedale. 3551. There must also be an Associate or two who would like to man a stall. If so please contact Sue Silvers as soon as possible.

#### PLEASE NOTE      BADGES.

This newsletter was also to contain an Associate Members Badge. Some of you already have them, but unfortunately we have run out of supplies. There has been an order placed for more, and they will be available in eight weeks time. We shall be sending out Badges to all of you who do not have one at that time. Sorry for the delay which is quite out of our control.

#### FINALLY ON A LIGHTER NOTE:

##### THE IMPORTANCE OF CAR STICKERS TO OUR MELBOURNE POSTMEN.

An account was forwarded to: Mountain Cattlemen, c/- Sue Silvers, 28 City Road, Templestowe.

Firstly Sue Silvers lives in North Balwyn, and not Templestowe, and secondly there is no City Road in Templestowe anyway. So the account sat for a short while in the Templestowe Post Office. Then suddenly it was delivered to Committee member Geoff Ritter's office in Serpells Road, Templestowe. When asked, the Postman explained that he thought he would give it a try, as he had noticed the Mountain Cattlemen stickers on all the cars parked outside Geoff's office. Not bad publicity. The moral of the story is - If you don't have a sticker on your car, you may not be getting your mail.

Associates Committee.  
February 1985.

#### STOP PRESS:

As a lead up to the Moomba Parade, we think it is very important for all Associates please to write to the Department of Planning and Environment, and Department of Conservation Forests and Lands. Most of you have done this before, but a letter now commenting on the January bushfires, and re-stating that the Mountain Cattlemen should be allowed to stay could well have some effect. Thanks.