



The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Inc.

AFFILIATED WITH
THE VICTORIAN FARMERS' AND GRAZIERS' ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATES OF THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN

NEWSLETTER NO. 6 - JUNE 1986

(Copies to all Mountain Cattlemen & Associate Members)

We all hoped that things would settle down after the extraordinary events of last year, but that was not to be. With the Alpine Parks Bill in the House and Ministerial pressure on the Cattlemen to compromise their stand there has been plenty happening.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jim Commins

Many months have passed since it was "all hands on deck" so to speak to gain the foothold we achieved with the Nunawading byelection. It may be thought by many to have been a time of inactivity but that certainly has not been the case for the Executive as this newsletter indicates.

The sterling efforts and support of our associates and friends, many who contributed days and weeks of concentrated effort with professional advice, or simply showing the flag, have given the Cattlemens' Association its real strength and power-base. The Mountain Cattlemens Association will be forever grateful to the associates for this fact.

Our opponents have now experienced several reversals, but do not think that they have given up. Their efforts to undermine us will become more determined and subtle and they have the financial resources to keep the pressure up. Be assured that we are on our guard and in our own way are applying equal pressure back to them all the time.

I cannot over-emphasise the need for everyone to remain rock solid and canvas ever growing support to overcome the inevitable future challenges from our opponents, and to ensure the ultimate safety and sensible management of our Mountain regions.

That, in a nutshell, is what we are all working towards - here's to the future.

Kind regards, Jim Commins.

GENERAL NEWSALPINE NATIONAL PARKS LEGISLATION

In March, President Jim Commins, Executive Officer Graeme Stoney and Sue Silvers as Minute Secretary met with Minister Joan Kirner who was attempting to reach a compromise on the National Park Bill with interested groups. The Cattlemen told the Minister that they did not believe any compromise was possible. The Minister stated she intended to have discussions with other interested parties, and would get back to the Cattlemen.

As no doubt most of you know, a month later the Alpine National Parks Bill, which had been languishing in the Upper House for many months, suddenly was brought on.

Executive Officer Graeme Stoney, Sue Silvers plus a couple of supporters spent the day at the House for the debate, and the Bill was rejected 20/21 on party lines. During the debate Mrs. Varty (member for Nunawading Province) spoke at length on the events surrounding Nunawading and the implications for the fate of the Bill. Strong speakers against the Bill included David Evans M.L.C. and Bruce Reid M.L.C.

An interesting comment was made by Mark Birrell M.L.C. in his speech regarding the change of leadership of the Australian Conservation Foundation, where Dr. Mosley no longer holds his former position. His comments justify the stand the Cattlemen and associates have made over the past 12 months against extreme conservation and the efforts we have made in drawing public attention to the situation:

Hansard 24/4/86. The Hon M.A. Birrell...."The federation's stance on this issue is flawed for the reasons that I have expressed in the debate. However, it is clear that it has taken its stance because the once respected Australian Conservation Foundation has been taken over by an influx of extremist elements and can no longer claim to be a broadly based conservation group.

As a former member of the A.C.F. who resigned because of the fact that it had been taken over by a group that did not have its better interests at heart, I certainly regret the fact that there is no

longer an organization that can claim to represent Australians in talking about genuine conservation issues as against those that are clearly politically motivated.

Over the past 24 months the federation has been infiltrated by a motley collection of political activists who wish to use the name of the Australian Conservation Federation for their own narrow, cynical purposes.

The sacking of the federation's director, Dr. Geoff Mosley, is but one example of the fact that he was not left wing enough and the federation was not left wing enough and, therefore, they had to get rid of him.

The vote in favour of getting rid of Geoff Mosley was an indication of who now controls the Australian Conservation Federation, and it is clearly not the grassroots, it is a politically-inspired group that will misuse the resources and insult the heritage of the federation.....". We expect the Bill to be reintroduced in the Spring session of Parliament. It is not over yet.

GRAZING FEES.

The ongoing negotiations between the Cattlemen and officers of Conservation Forests and Lands is continuing. After several meetings both sides are still unhappy with the discussions and at the time of publishing, a solution and common acceptable method of charging for Public Land grazing has not been agreed, although discussions appear to be moving toward a modified tender system with some built-in safeguards for the Cattlemen.

President Jim Commins is leading the Cattlemens Committee in the discussions and is being assisted and advised by Tim Barker, head of the V.F.G.A. Research team. Until the matter is resolved Cattlemen have been advised to only pay charges applying before negotiations began last year.

MARKETING REPORT.

By Ross Brown - M.C.A.V. Marketing Manager.

The Mountain Cattlemens Association of Victoria at their last Executive meeting decided to appoint a manufacturer-distributor to promote and sell T-shirts and Windcheaters bearing the M.C.A.V. logo.

A royalty is to be negotiated with the Company together with the

right to purchase from them at wholesale price, T-shirts and Windcheaters to sell at our Cattlemens Get-Togethers, Shows etc. on a sale or return basis, thus enabling us to good profits without the cost of retaining unsold stock which has been a big headache in the past. The Meeting decided that a traditional and well established company with a rural outlook be approached, and we settled on Thomas Cook Boot & Clothing Company.

We felt that a union between their Company and the M.C.A.V. could only lead to higher sales and revenue for both parties.

The Mountain men's stand has had intense publicity nationally on all forms of media - e.g. Television, newspapers and has attracted support of thousands, a great majority of these in the rural market-place. We also suggested the possibility of increasing sales of some products already in the market-place e.g. oil skin coats, mole-skins, hats, boots etc. simply by adding "Recommended by the Mountain Cattlemens Association", with the logo on the tags, with the assumption that Mountain Cattlemen stand behind quality products that they use in everyday life.

I am pleased to announce that Thomas Cook accepted our proposal, firstly with Windcheaters as the winter approaches, and then T-shirts followed by some products with our logo. So, as from Monday 19th May, Windcheaters will be available from - Thomas Cook Boot & Clothing Company, 29 Mollison Street, Abbotsford, and given time, from many of their outlets.

The advantages of Thomas Cook's merchandising our products are:

1. There is no cost handling or holding unsold stock.
2. They have 49 outlets throughout Australia, 42 of which are in Victoria our main market-place and are establishing a forthcoming export market in the U.S.A. They are a well established and growing company.
3. They have an efficient Mail Order Service.
4. They will be advertising our products, a luxury we can't afford.

Now that Thomas Cook are handling all merchandising of Windcheaters and T-shirts on the retail side, we now have the job of planning different shows and events where we can have stalls - e.g. Melbourne Show, Omeo Show, Mansfield Show and Festival, and so forth. We have to organise these shows well in advance so that we can give

Thomas Cook enough lead time to supply us with stock.

I would like to have some suggestions - in writing please regarding suitable venues for stalls and other ideas.

We expect to have many suggestions, but as the stock control would be an enormous problem I would like to see our marketing committee narrow it down to no more than 12 shows. These would be selected on the most promising areas for our cause. The re-organisation of our marketing is an enormous task. We think that to make this change is necessary and we have to ask all members and associate members to be patient with both the Executive Committee and Thomas Cook. Once totally organised you should be able to buy our products in stores throughout Australia.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members who assisted on the stalls throughout the year and a special thanks to Anne and Keith Whittam and their crew for looking after the stall at the Mansfield Festival, and to Mrs. Minnie Higgins who looked after the Dargo Walnut Festival stall totally on her own and with tremendous results.

We have had a successful year so far and the gross takings for the various shows are listed below:

Omeo Show	\$730.00
Heyfield Timber Festival	\$1,176.00
Catherine Station	\$11,400.00
Dargo Walnut Festival	\$2,400.00

Remember I would like to hear from any Associates with ideas and/or offers of help to organise sales at shows and festivals next year.

Ross Brown, Marketing Manager - M.C.A.V.

Address: Post Office Box 344, Morwell.

Phone 051 345 918

VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS

Congratulations to Linda Barraclough who produced a marvellous 1986 edition for the Get Together. It contains a full account of the past years M.C.A.V. activities including the Nunawading exercise. Copies are available from Ross Brown at the above address. Cost is \$5. which includes postage. Why not order some stickers and Port from Ross at the same time? Stickers .80c (plus postage) Port \$17.00 plus arranged delivery cost.

THE NUNAWADING ROW GOES ON AND ON AND ON...

As everyone is aware this drama involved the Mountain Cattlemen, when the A.L.P. in a desperate effort to draw attention away from serious problems they brought on themselves, cast about for an appropriate smokescreen, and rather foolishly as it turned out, sought to denigrate and cast aspersions on the honesty and integrity of the Mountain Cattlemen and their supporters who were exercising their democratic rights in campaigning, and handing out How to Vote Cards supporting the Liberal candidate Rosemary Varty in the Nunawading byelection.

We are sure you will have followed this curious tale in the newspapers.

Police resources were used in an extensive investigation for some 2½ months following up the most ridiculous allegations made by members of the A.L.P. The M.C.A.V. nevertheless took a very serious view of the matter, and legal assistance was sought from an Associate member Solicitor and senior Barristers.

To re-cap, accusations ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous.. That our How to Vote card misled voters, that people were masquerading as Mountain Cattlemen, and worse, that the Liberal Party had infiltrated the Mountain Cattlemens Association, and had hired hats, boots, coats and moleskins in order to mislead the voters. A prominent television journalist was accused of master-minding the Cattlemens publicity campaign. As the days went on - throughout September and October of 1985, the M.C.A.V. was dragged through the Parliament, which eventually led to Graeme Stoney being called to the Bar by the Opposition parties in order to refute the allegations made against the Cattlemen and their supporters. That this move fell to pieces in the 11th hour is now a matter of history, and is covered fully in a delightful article by Bryan Jameson in the current issue of Voice of the Mountains.

However that was not the end of the matter.

The police report into the activities of the Mountain Cattlemen was completed but not released to the public.

Recently some parts were apparently leaked to the Liberal Party who claimed that the report stated that the Police had been used for political purposes, that members of the A.L.P. had been less than helpful to police carrying out their investigations, that none of the allegations made to police had any basis in law, and that the police felt that the people making the complaints should have

sought legal advice before they bothered the police with their nonsense.

Then the Chief Electoral Officer made a statement to the effect that in the case of the Mountain Cattlemens How to Vote card, no offences had been committed.

That is all very fine, but what about the legal fees we paid? And what about the reputations of the people interviewed by the Police? We have not been formally advised by any person in authority regarding the outcome of this investigation. However as we did not commit any offences, we have nothing to fear.

The Association wants the report made public in order that the good name of the Cattlemen and the reputations of its supporters can be cleared.

We have been strongly pursuing the matter again recently, and have received good publicity in the Press for our point of view.

The ongoing publicity about the Nunawading affair has helped keep the Cattlemens' name in the public eye, and this has been a big plus for our image and status regardless of whether the Police report is eventually released or not.

NEW FILM - COOL CHANGE

Cool Change - a Geoff Burrowes/George Miller film has been released. The film was made at Mansfield last year with the assistance of local Cattlemen and horsemen, and is a love story set against the current conflict between conservationists and Cattlemen. The premiere of the film involved 50 horsemen riding to the Hoyts Theatre in Bourke Street in April.

Gerald Egan, a well-known Mansfield horseman rode up the stairs of the Theatre and cut a paper banner with his whip. Press coverage was excellent, and helped the Cattlemens' cause. Associate member JUDY DRAKE supplied some of the horses and organised the strappers and "pooper scoopers". Other associates helped with the horses. Joan Kirner, the Minister for Forests Conservation and Lands is well known for her sense of humour and shortly after the Cool Change premiere the following exchange took place in the Upper House:

Hansard 8/4/86 - WILD HORSES

The Hon. D.M. Evans (North Eastern Province) - "I direct the attention of the Minister for Conservation Forests and Lands to the increasing numbers of feral horses, - brumbies in the vernacular - throughout the alpine region of Victoria and the Barmah State

Forest. Does her Government have any policy on the control of those animals? What action has she already taken on this issue and is she aware of the problem?

The Hon. J.E. Kirner (Minister for Conservation Forests and Lands

"My department is not undertaking any control measures of brumbies in either the alpine area or the Barmah State Forest. Like the Honourable member and the mountain district cattlemen, the Government regards brumbies as part of Victoria's heritage. Brumbies extend from within the honourable member's electorate - from Wangaratta and Wodonga to Bairnsdale and Orbost, as well as there being significant populations in the Kosciusko National Park.

The lives and lifestyles of brumbies would make a wonderful script for a third mountain district cattlemen's film. I suggest the title might be "Short Change" by Graeme Stoney out of Political Necessity".

1986 GET-TOGETHER - CATHERINE STATION

The most successful Get-Together yet held was organised by the North Eastern Branch of the Mountain Cattlemen in February.

Special guests included Minister Joan Kirner, R.M. Williams and Slim Dusty. Speakers on Saturday night included Jim Commins, Graeme Stoney and Ian Cumming. Ian is a member of the V.F.G.A. and well known for his up-front activities with the current farmer protests. Lazy Harry played the music and the crowd danced till dawn. (Harry has just released a song about the Cattlemen).

Full congratulations must go to President Don Kneebone and his willing team. The Get-Togethers are becoming bigger and harder work each year for the organisers, but most appreciated and looked forward to by the associates and the Cattlemens' friends.

Accident at Get-Together.

An unfortunate incident occurred on the Saturday of the Get-Together at Catherine Station when a man was severely burned. Apparently his station wagon was fitted with a gas refrigerator. The gas had been leaking for a period of time, and when it built up to reach the ignition spark on the fridge an explosion occurred severely burning the man who was inside the vehicle.

He was attended at the scene of the accident by the St. Johns Ambulance officers present at Catherine and also by a doctor, nurse and nurses' aide. As soon as the serious nature of his injuries became apparent, a helicopter was called by C.F.L. officer Mr. Hugh

Brown. Mr. Brown, formerly a district forester for the Mansfield Mt. Buller area, used the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands radio in the fire tanker at the scene, to call the fire tower on Mt. Buller and urgently summon the National Safety Council Service helicopter. At the same time Mr. Clive Hodge had contacted authorities on the same mission.

To the worried friends and onlookers, the N.S.C. helicopter appeared to take a long time to reach Catherine Station from its base at Traralgon.

The patient was lifted at 6.40 p.m. to the Alfred Hospital where his condition is satisfactory.

Thank you to everybody, Cattlemen and associates who assisted in this emergency.

1987 GET-TOGETHER - HELP REQUIRED PLEASE

It is the turn of the Mansfield Branch of the M.C.A.V. to host the 1987 Cattlemens function.

Mansfield Branch has only 8 Cattlemen members, and are facing the task with some concern as they have not the large number of people required to successfully run such an intense 2 day function.

The Cattlemens Executive have suggested that the associates be asked to assist with next February's function working under the co-ordination of the Mansfield Branch members.

Tasks will include Working Bees for 2 days before and after the Weekend, Communications, Stewards (on own horses), Gate (to be manned 24 hours a day for 3 days as was done at Catherine Station) etc. etc.

Anyone who would like to volunteer, please write to :

John Gough,
Sec. Mansfield Branch M.C.A.V.
Apollo Street,

MANSFIELD. 3722

stating their job preference and times they can help.

Closer to the function people responding will be notified of general arrangements.

BARMAH MUSTER

The first publicity function organised by the Barmah Cattlemen was the Barmah Muster which was held on Saturday and Sunday, 26th and 27th April. The Barmah Cattlemen have been agisting their cattle in the Barmah Forest for over 100 years.

The Barmah Cattlemen supported the Mountain Cattlemen in the Nunawading ride. They are only a small group, being only 40 in all. Their first Muster to which the public were invited was a great success.

Designed along the lines of the Get-Togethers, interested people were asked to camp in the Barmah Forest, and attend the Bush Dance on the Saturday night, and then the Muster on the Sunday.

Congratulations to the Barmah Cattlemen on the job well done. The music was great, the night mild, and 500 to 700 people had a wonderful time. It was very nice to see a number of associate members lending their support to our Mates on the Murray.

They are threatened with a Land Conservation Council report which is presently being considered by Government, and which, if adopted, threatens the Barmah Cattlemens future.

INSPECTION

The shadow Minister for Conservation Forests and Lands Mr. Jim Plowman made a three day trip with Graeme Stoney and the Treasures through much of the Victorian High Country including Nunniong, Bogong High Plains, Dargo High Plains, Bennison Plains and Connors Plains last February.

Mr. Plowman wished to brief himself on the current situation, and met with many Cattlemen including a day with the President Jim Commins. Mr. Plowman hopes to inspect the remaining areas of the High Country including the Mansfield district after the winter.

NEW BOOK ABOUT TO BE RELEASED.

Two of our associate members, Linda Barraclough and Minnie Higgins are in the final stages of their book A Valley of Glens which gives the history of the people and places from Glenmaggie to Glencairn, and deals with the High Country around the Macalister. The book will be quite substantial (over 200 pages with at least 250 photographs) and they are prepared to make it available at a reduced

price for those who wish to pay for copies in advance. The prices are \$13 for the paper back edition (\$18 after it is launched) and \$20 for the hardcover edition (\$25 after it is launched). The book will be available after the 30th August. Those wishing to order copies in advance should send orders and payment to Kapana Press, Post Office Box 86, Bairnsdale 3875 before 1st August 1986. Please add \$1.50 postage, if you are unable to collect it at the Back to Glenmaggie on the 30th August. Families especially mentioned who have, or in the past have had high country runs include: Chesters, Colemans, Cummings, Gells, Higgins, Kellys, Macfarlanes, McMichaels, Molphys, Monds, Riggalls, Sweetapples.

PROGRESS REPORT ON CATTLEMENS BOOK.

At the last Executive Meeting Mr. Bryan Jameson reported on the progress of the Book. He advised that the timing would be - book finished at the end of June 1986, and to be released at the Get Together in 1987. Mr. Jim Commins and Mr. Graeme Stoney will see the finished document before it goes to the Publishers.

WEDDING BELLS

Congratulations to Harry Ryder and Suzanne Walker who were married on May 3rd, 1986. Congratulations and best wishes to you both.

UNFINANCIAL MEMBERS

Our membership now stands at 1,000 families. The costs of stationery printing and postage has now become a major item of expenditure, and it is felt that newsletters, invitations etc. should only be sent to those who are financial members.

Therefore if you are not a financial member this will be your last newsletter.

If you are unsure of your financial status please contact Mrs. S. Silvers, 13 Tuxen Street North Balwyn 3104. Phone (03) 857 5316. Reminder notices to unfinancial members WILL be sent out in July. If you receive a reminder notice and wish to continue your valuable support for the M.C.A.V. please return your subscription promptly.

NEWSLETTERS ARE NOW TO BE 6 MONTHLY.

Contributions, letters and comments are most welcome. Please send any you wish included to G. Stoney, Minto Park Mansfield 3722, or Sue Silvers, 13 Tuxen Street North Balwyn. 3104

THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERS IN THE M.C.A.V.

At the Executive Committee meeting of the M.C.A.V. held on the 7th April 1986 there was a discussion regarding the role of the associate members. The meeting unanimously agreed that the support of the Associate members was of immense benefit to the Association, and that no thanks seemed adequate for the work undertaken by the associates in the past. The obvious problem of giving the associates a say in the running of the Cattlemens Association was also discussed at length. It was resolved that 2 Associate members be asked to join the Executive as non-voting members, and thereby to increase input and assist the Executive at the same time being available to other Associates as a means of putting forward ideas etc. If you would like to nominate for the Cattlemens Executive, please fill in the form below and return to Sue Silvers, 13 Tuxen Street, North Balwyn 3104. All nominations will be considered by the Executive, which will select and notify the two representatives.

Any comments associates may have on this concept would be considered by the Cattlemens Executive which is very conscious of the problem of communication with associates generally.

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Please complete this form if you wish to nominate for the Executive Committee. If you have any constructive ideas on this issue please write - not phone - Sue Silvers, 13 Tuxen Street North Balwyn.

I WISH TO NOMINATE FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

PHONE:.....OCCUPATION:.....