



# Echo from the Mountains

Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc – A0043804Y

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## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

The members' newsletter of the VHCHA is published quarterly – March, June, September & December. Editorial deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month. In time we will offer members the opportunity to place commercial adverts in the newsletter but for now any member who wishes to advertise an Alpine related event or activity for a non-profit organisation may do so.

### TO ADVERTISE OR TELL US A STORY CONTACT:

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## AGM DIARY DATE

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2004  
Mid afternoon start followed by dinner, meeting venue Mansfield Shire Hall, details in September Echo from the Mountains.  
Any member wishing to bring any business to the AGM must notify the Secretary by 1 August 2004.

## NEW WEBMASTER

Welcome to our new webmaster Amanda Penrose who put up her hand as a result of Dianne's request for support and has done a fantastic job of revamping the site and given it a whole new look. See the new page header below.  
Dianne and Amanda will work together to further update the site and keep it fresh. The future may include a secure members' only page and online ordering of merchandise. A slight technical error has caused the site to be down for several days, it is hoped to be rectified soon.

<http://www.vhcha.org.au>

## GENEROUS DONATIONS

### KLAUS HUENEKE - \$500.00

The following was received from Klaus Hueneke on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004.

*"Herewith \$500 donation from sales of Huts in Vict Alps as promised. No, this is not an April Fool joke...(just me being)...true to my word."*

And we never doubted it. Klaus offered to pay VHCHA part of the sales from his book, Huts in the Victorian Alps, and we are very grateful for his support of the VHCHA. He currently has a special offer – Buy all six of Klaus Hueneke's books on the high country including the one on Victoria's huts for \$150 plus \$10 postage, saving \$50. All books are signed. Send cheque or money order to Tabletop Press, 2 Lambell Close, Palmerston, 2913, or phone Klaus on 02 6242 0995 to organise an electronic transfer. He can also tell you the titles if you do not know.

### DAVID OLDFIELD – 4200 Swedish Krona (\$777.00 AUD)

*"Amateur and professional photographers alike share their work and ideas in each issue of Hasselblad Forum. Forum, first published in 1965, is a quarterly magazine published in English, German, Spanish and Swedish and is widely read by photo enthusiasts around the world."* from [www.hasselblad.se](http://www.hasselblad.se)

Go to [www.hasselblad.se](http://www.hasselblad.se) and then to [Gallery>Forum>2004>1/04>On location](http://www.hasselblad.se/Gallery>Forum>2004>1/04>On location) and you will find a wonderful story with beautiful black & white photographs taken by David Oldfield, of the resurrection of Horsehair Hut.

The story and photos were submitted to Hasselblad Forum by David Oldfield and he has kindly donated his publication fee to the VHCHA.

Our thanks to Klaus and David for their generosity in supporting the VHCHA.

## Victorian High Country Huts Association



I loved the life which freedom gave - the big broad life out yonder,

The memory lingers with me still where'er I chance to wander...

"Billy" Wye



## McNamara's Hut Rebuild

The original McNamara's Hut was built in January 1955 by "Roney" (John Meighan) McNamara, "Jack" (John Kevin) McNamara, "Little Mick" (Michael Francis) McNamara and "Bill" (William John) Toland. It was used by "Roney" Mac and the Naughton's of Cobungra Station, as they shared the Buckety Plain Run. The McNamara's arrived in the district in the 1850s and were related to the Gray Family, the original selectors of Cobungra Station.



The hut site is Buckety Plain north of Bundarra River and the original hut was destroyed by fire in January 2003. The Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre, which is a non-profit organisation who operate special programs for kids, have used McNamara's for over 30 years as part of their program and this was a great loss to them.

*Left: The original McNamara's Hut, photo courtesy of David Oldfield.*

This is the story of the long and winding (and at times tortuous) road to the reconstruction of McNamara's Hut at Buckety Plain.

The construction conditions were quite onerous because the site is in the National Park – everything from sanitary to environmental issues, to a record of every person and vehicle had to be detailed prior to entry. The people from Mittagundi were heavily involved in the reconstruction, doing all the preliminary work, under the guidance of Graham Fall and Jim Findlay.

This project took almost 12 months to organise. The Building Surveyor issued the permit on 22 March 2004, and with Mittagundi collecting all the required materials and arranging transport to the site, they were well on the way to completing the laying of the foundation rocks. The only really big question was "How to get 40 tonnes of 11 metre logs from the bush to the hut site in time for construction, when they won't fit on one log truck"!

Dianne Carroll sent out a request for volunteers via email and on ABC radio. This was a great success and by the end of March there were more than 15 willing workers signed on and even a builder from Castlemaine was coming! Our thanks to 4WD Victoria for their ongoing support, especially in forwarding the request for help to their members. Mick Vanderzalm (HMO Heyfield) arranged a donation of Tea, Coffee, and Sugar. Graham Fall would be onsite for the construction, along with Jimmy Findlay during the Easter period and Stretch and Keith from the Lang Lang boys.

The work site was strictly for the self-sufficient, BYO everything (except toilets) including energy, elbow grease, muscles, humour, hammer, axe, or favourite shovel. All workers had to sign the register upon arrival and before they commenced any work.

The transportation of those logs is story in itself, told here in Dianne's own words...*"logs being harvested at Dinner Plain/Hotham had to be transported to Swifts Creek Mill. I rang DSE Bairnsdale, who referred me to Swifts Creek, who referred me to Tambo Logging, who referred me to the log truck owner - a call to his place found he was camped in the bush, his driver, also not at home - so back to Tambo Logging, to get a message to the log truck owner to see if he would take the logs to Glen Wills instead of Swifts Creek. Knowing the cost to Swifts Creek was \$1200+, which I managed to get for nothing, I rang Mittagundi, to confirm it was OK to offer \$100 to \$200 for the extra distance.*

*Finding Pete Christensen (at Mittagundi) was away rang Jim Findlay, who gave the OK, then back to Tambo Logging to advise the offer. The logs would need two loads, and after checking with Graham Fall to get right measurements Tambo Logging had to re-harvest. Had the 40 tonne of logs going to Glen Wills but no machinery to get them off the truck. Rang several farmers but tractors were too small, so finally got onto the Mine and they had an excavator to do the job (again no charge)." All this for some logs - well done Dianne.*



*Above: The new McNamara's Hut nearing completion at the end of Easter, photo courtesy of David Oldfield.*



## McNamara's Hut Rebuild

April saw the foundations completed and Mittagundi along with the kids and Graham Fall put the base logs in place. The logs were placed over Easter and the plumbers from Yackandandah took care of roofing iron and capping, a company in Wodonga donated the 10kg of roofing nails and Mittagundi had the iron for the chimney. Dianne Carroll donated the doors, and the father of a Mittagundi "kid" made the windows.

In May, HMO Group Leader and member of the North East Freemasons Task Force Barry Hazeldine lead a party to complete the weatherproofing on the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> May. In spite of unfavourable weather reports the party of nine, including Bob Johnstone, HMO Bogong and Graham Fall arrived at McNamara's progressively from Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April morning until after dark.

The task was to make the hut weatherproof before the real onset of winter (although one could be forgiven for mistaking May 1<sup>st</sup> for July). This work involved building the chimney, digging a run off drain around the hut, hanging the rear door made at Mittagundi and making and hanging the front door.



These seemingly simple tasks were not made easy by sub-zero temperatures for most of Saturday, made even colder by the wind chill factor and constant snow showers. The team could only work outside between the snow showers, so they finished the flooring and skirting and laid the rock foundation for the fireplace, which was later concreted.

On Sunday morning the sun appeared early and there was no wind. This allowed the completion of the drain and chimney, hanging doors and clean up. The job was done.

*Some of the small crew that put the finishing touches to Mac's over the weekend of 1-2 May, pictured from left-right Roger Sievwright, Bob Johnstone (HMO Bogong), Patricia Porter, Michael Porter, David Kearney, John Cleland, Barry Hazeldine (HMO Group Leader) and Geoff Payne. Photo courtesy of Barry Hazeldine.*

But the story isn't finished yet ...Job done and Barry and the team left the site at 2pm on Sunday afternoon. In four vehicles, two with trailers they got within 15kms. of Falls Creek; then 35-40 knot winds, blizzard conditions, snow drifts over 18 inches deep, and with an invisible road they were forced to turn around, which was a problem in itself, particularly for the trailers. Once turned around they decided to go home via Mitta, having to traverse Mt. Wills where more snow was encountered, although not nearly as bad as that on the Alpine Road. Barry was finally home sometime after 8pm and very tired.

This ends the story of the completion of the re-born McNamara's Buckety Plain Hut, and we must thank the many people who contributed – far too many to list individually, but we know who you are and another hut rises from the ashes thanks to your efforts.

*"It is fantastic to see the final product. Thank you to all those that assisted in this wonderful project, including Parks Victoria for permitting its reconstruction." Acting President Dianne Carroll*



*Right: McNamara's Hut nestles amongst the trees on a snow covered Buckety Plain, 2 May 2004. Photo courtesy of Barry Hazeldine.*



## VHCHA MERCHANDISE

For information about purchasing any of the items see our website, [www.vhcha.org.au](http://www.vhcha.org.au) or phone 0428 591 964. Please note, we have limited sizes, those not in stock will take six weeks.



Caps (baseball style)	\$15	One size
Short sleeved polo shirts	\$35	XS-3XL
Cotton long sleeved shirts	\$45	S-2XL
Vests (red or yellow lining)	\$55	XS-3XL

### GET WELL SOON

Our HMO for Marysville, Tony Jones was recently involved in a serious car accident.

Tony has been with the VHCHA since its inception, and put his heart and soul into the Marysville region. Since volunteering to take on the role as HMO he has completed assessments on 80% of the huts within his region, and was gearing up for a very productive Spring.

Since the accident, Tony's greatest concern has been the future of his Hut Unit and Darren McRae has kindly offered to take over the role as HMO for Marysville in the interim. Thanks Darren.

Our thoughts and best wishes for a full recovery go to Tony and his partner Jill.

### AWARDS FOR KLAUS

Klaus Hueneke's book 'Huts in the Victorian Alps' has now won three awards.

- Best non-fiction, Fastbooks/NSW Writers Centre prize, 2003
- Highly commended, best community research, Victorian Community History Awards, 2004
- Special mention as an 'Outstanding contribution to Australian Culture' from Centre for Australian Cultural Studies, 2003.

## HUTS MAINTENANCE GROUP

Huts Maintenance Group Leader, Barry Hazeldine  
Phone 02 6020 8595 OR 0407 109 950  
Email BARRY.G.H@bigpond.com.au

The Huts Maintenance Group met in Bright on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and are well on the way with assessments and consolidating a Spring work program. More about this in September Echo from the Mountain.

### HMO Bogong

Bob Johnstone Ph: 02 6056 9491 or 0417 680 758

### HMO Corryong/Omeo

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Pip Brown [pip.brown@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pip.brown@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

### HMO Howqua King

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When in our precious Australian bush:  
**LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS**  
**TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

## REMINDERS

**Membership renewals** are due on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004. Please pay promptly so that we can continue the great work of the VHCHA in preserving, maintaining and re-building our huts heritage.

**AGM Agenda Items:** Any member wishing to bring any business to the AGM must notify the Secretary by 1 August 2004.

## CONTACTING US

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