



# Echo from the Mountains

Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc – A0043804Y

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## COMMITTEE MEETS AT BENTLEY PLAINS

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March the Committee met in the camping ground at Bentley Plains. The meeting was an interlude in the Photography Weekend (see page 7 for report) and while the weather was mild the sun was fierce and the meeting was forced to up tables and chairs and move into the shade on several occasions.

A number of our members participating in the Huts Photography Weekend attended the meeting as observers and offered comments on many issues discussed.

We were also delighted to welcome a strong contingent from Parks Victoria: Fleur Smith, Mansfield, Wayne McCallum, Heyfield, and Colleen Nagle, Omeo, as well as Kath Koch from DSE Swifts Creek. Just another example of the good relationship we have with the Government workers on the ground and their contribution at the meeting was appreciated by everyone present.



Bentley Plains Meeting Room Photo Mike Shaw

President Fiona has represented the VHCHA at the launch of *The Alps, A Fresh Start*. She has also been meeting regularly with Peter Jenkins from Parks Victoria to progress action on the PV grant and to discuss the new Australian National Parks Management Plan and the District Hut Management Strategy.

The old nemesis of volunteer workers – asbestos – has reared its ugly head again at Lankey Plain Hut. In an isolated position and heavily used, the hut suffered storm damage that revealed large amounts of asbestos. The cost of the asbestos removal will be taken from this year's Parks Victoria grant and a work party will be organised to repair the roof and replace the chimney.

## HERITAGE ADVISER

The VHCHA is delighted to announce that we have a member who has agreed to provide Heritage advice to the Committee. Anne Sedgley is currently the Manager of Heritage Information at Heritage Victoria and brings a wealth of experience in understanding what is and what is not "heritage". Anne attended the meeting at Bentley Plains and was accompanied by her father John Sedgley for a weekend of huts photography. She is passionate about huts and her expert comments were most helpful in the Committee's deliberations.

## Your Committee...

<b>President</b>	Fiona Magnussen *
<b>Vice President &amp; Newsletter Editor</b>	Paula Tomsett
<b>Secretary</b>	David Oldfield
<b>Treasurer</b>	Sue Manneken
Merchandising	Greg Love
Merchandising	Lee Magnussen *
	Ken & Vicky Birch
	Bob Johnstone *
	Mike Shaw
	David Sisson

\* These Committee members are also HMOs.

## OUR GENEROUS MEMBERS

Once again we are delighted to be able to acknowledge the generosity of members and friends who have made donations to the VHCHA. Thanks to Colin Wilson, Rob Kaufman and Graham Anderson.



## SPONSORS PROPOSAL

From time to time the Committee is advised by a member of a potential corporate sponsor however we are often not in a position to action these opportunities because the organisations require a written information pack.

Such an information pack would also serve as a useful marketing and public relations tool for presentation to the media, visiting dignitaries and politicians.

If you have had any experience in putting together sponsorship proposals or public relations or marketing plans OR would like to teach yourself how to do it then please contact the Committee c/- of our Secretary David Oldfield.

We really need some help on this one so if you are out there wondering what you can do to help manage and maintain our high country huts – but you don't know your adze\* from your hammer – then this could be the job for you.

Contact Paula Tomsett Ph: 03 9840 2595  
Email: paula@lynxgroup.com.au

## HUTS IN THE LANDSCAPE... a practical workshop about hut maintenance and maintenance planning.

A must for all HMOs and those who work on huts. The VHCHA has been allocated 10 places at this workshop.

**When:** From lunchtime on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006 (concluding with lunch)

**Where:** Currango Homestead,  
Kosciuszko National Park

**Cost:** This workshop is funded by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee – the VHCHA will pay the travel cost for approved attendees and all other costs will be paid for by the Alps Program.

### WANT TO GO? NEED TO GO?

Contact Fiona Magnussen NOW!  
Ph: 0427 596 554

Email: fiona.magnussen@bigpond.com

\* An adze is an axe with arched blade at right angles to the handle and is used to trim and shape wood.

## HIGH COUNTRY HUTS CONFERENCE DINNER PLAIN SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> & SUNDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2006

The aim of this weekend is to gather together a diverse group of people with an interest and passion for the Huts of the Victorian High Country.

Parks Victoria and Victorian High Country Huts Association invite you to register your interest in attending this conference.

**COST:** Attendance at the workshop is free (meals & accommodation) for official delegates. VHCHA members contact Fiona to be nominated. Reimbursement of travel expenses is at the discretion of the nominating organisation.

**TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:** Draft "Memorandum of Understanding" between Parks Victoria, VHCHA and others involved in management and maintenance of high country huts; issues associated with management of huts; strategies to improve hut conservation and deal with contemporary issues; individual knowledge, skills, experience and stories; feedback from the Currango weekend and much more. Visits to nearby huts will also be arranged on the Sunday morning

### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

PV Peter Jenkins 03 5755 0003  
VHCHA Fiona Magnussen 0427 596 554

## HERITAGE LIST HUTS

There are four huts on the State Heritage Register: Spargo's, Wallace's and Vallejo Ganter Huts and the Log Lockup, Omeo Justice Precinct.

There are two levels of heritage protection in Victoria:

1. at the State level, the list is the State Heritage Register;
2. at the local level, the list is on each Municipal Council's Planning Scheme, on the Heritage Overlay.

The State Register is online at the Heritage Victoria website:

<http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/index1.asp>

[See button in top right corner.]

The Heritage Overlays can be found via the Planning Schemes Online website:

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planningschemes/>

More on heritage in the next issue of *Echo from the Mountains*.



## HUTS MAINTENANCE

### **HMC WANTED**

With the departure of Barry Hazeldine as Huts Maintenance Coordinator late last year to concentrate on family matters the role of HMC has been filled jointly by David Oldfield and Fiona Magnussen. They are both very committed to the huts and already have very full roles as Secretary (David) and President and HMO for Hotham Area (Fiona) so we are calling for a members to take up the challenge of becoming the Huts Maintenance Coordinator.

#### **What does the job entail?**

As the title suggests, it is to liaise with the Huts Maintenance Officers (HMOs) and coordinate activities.

The main emphasis of the role is to stay in communication with the HMOs and ensure the Committee knows if the HMOs need any help with any of their projects and support the HMOs with the preparation of their maintenance programs.

#### **Interested? Please contact...**

David Oldfield Ph: 03 9747 1411

Email: dsoldf@netconnect.com.au

OR

Fiona Magnussen Ph: 0427 596 554

Email: fiona.magnussen@bigpond.com

<b>Huts Maintenance Coordinator: POSITION VACANT</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>Huts Maintenance Officer</b>
1 & 3: East Gippsland & Dargo	Damian Crozier Ph: 03 5152 3147 motley70@ozemail.com.au
<b>2: Nunniong</b>	<b>HMO Wanted</b>
4 & 5: Licola & Baw Baw	Mick Vanderzalm Ph: 0429 024 445 mickv@net-tech.com.au
<b>6: Marysville</b>	<b>HMO Wanted</b>
<b>7A &amp; 7B: Howqua</b>	<b>HMO Wanted</b>
8: Barry Mountains	Andy Kass Ph: 0438 300 713 huts@cfa4wd.org
9A: Hotham	Fiona & Lee Magnussen Ph: 0427 596 554 fiona.magnussen@bigpond.com
9B: Bogong	Bob Johnstone Ph: 02 6056 9491 or 0417 680 758 bobj@bigpond.net.au
10: Dartmouth	Brad Cooksey Ph: 02 6024 3137 traceynbradley@bigpond.com
11: Davies Plain	Richard Hubbard Ph: 02 6076 1570 hubbards@motherhubbards.com.au
<b>HMOs WANTED - IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A HMO OR WORKING WITH ONE OF OUR EXISTING HMOs PLEASE CONTACT DAVID OLDFIELD or FIONA MAGNUSSEN</b>	

## **WELCOME TO NEW HMOs Andy & Brad**

We are delighted to welcome two new HMOs to the VHCHA:

The CFA 4WD Club of Victoria has taken an interest in the preservation and maintenance of huts for many years and is now the official group to look after Area 8 (Barry Mountains).

Their designated contact as HMO for the area is Andy Kass. Area 8's huts currently include Cobbler Lake, Cropper Creek, Dandongadale, Guys, Hummfray River shelter, King River, Riley Creek, and Ryan's.

Our second new HMO is Brad Cooksey for Area 10 (Dartmouth). Brad is very familiar with the area and has helped on works at the CRB DP Hut with rocking the fireplace and building the chimney. He also joined one of the Fry's Hut inspections. Area 10 has the CRB, Kennedy's, Laverty's, Lazy H, Quart Pot Flat, Wombat PO huts.

## **AREA 9A - HOTHAM HMOs FIONA & LEE MAGNUSSEN**

### **Call for Expression of Interest CRB Hut Dinner Plain**

There is a small amount of work to be done to finalise the massive job started last year to repair and secure the CRB Hut at Dinner Plain. The job would suit a 4WD or Walking Club with a few skilled DIYers. Completing this work before winter this year would be desirable.

Can you help?

Contact HMOs Lee & Fiona

Email: fiona.magnussen@bigpond.com

Ph: 0427 596 554

### **Wire Plain Hut**

The Mount Hotham Resort Management Board (MHRMB) has issued a notice to the key holder of the Wire Plain hut to remove the hut and make good the site. The hut is the small green building on the Great Alpine Road opposite the Nordic Shelter.

Continued next page...

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The hut was assessed in the Butler report as locally significant however as it was locked no interior assessment was done.

With the strong possibility that the Wire Plain hut would contain asbestos the VHCHA cannot take on responsibility for the hut as removal of asbestos is well beyond the financial resources of the Association.

The VHCHA will write to the MHRMB indicating that VHCHA would like to fully document the hut before it is removed.

NOTE: HMO Area names are general geographic names only and do not reflect the extent or number of huts in each area. For this information see our website – [www.vhcha.org.au](http://www.vhcha.org.au).

## AREA 7 HOWQUA FRY'S HOMESTEAD WORK PARTIES - SUMMER 2006

Detailed planning for the substantial works required to be done at Fry's Homestead, near Mansfield, has been underway since December 2005 with project leader Fleur Smith from Parks Victoria Mansfield working closely with VHCHA Committee members Vicky & Ken Birch.

A memorandum of understanding, specifically for Fry's Hut, between Parks Victoria, VHCHA and the 4WD Club as caretaker group is expected to be completed by Fleur shortly.

A work plan is well underway for the Anzac Day long weekend (by taking the Monday) 22-25 April.



Fry's Hut

Photo: ParksVic

If you would like to help with this work please contact Vicky & Ken Birch on:

Ph: 03-97505029

Email: [vickyken@optusnet.com.au](mailto:vickyken@optusnet.com.au)

## AREA 9B - BOGONG HMO - BOB JOHNSTONE

On 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> December 2005 Bob Johnstone organised a clean-up weekend which was very successful in spite of being hampered by really bad weather conditions.

Bob and his crew managed to visit and fit log book holders in Ryder's, Pretty Valley, McNamara's, Cope, Wallace and Cope Saddle huts.



Log Book Holder for McNamara's Hut in place.

Photo: Bob Johnstone

Les McCallum from Mildura travelled over to give a hand which was a really good effort, and Ray Schriber from Beechworth was also a great help, along with Terry and Margaret from Frankston.

Bob asked that his sincere thanks be extended to all the people who travelled so far to lend a hand, with special thanks to Geoff Payne for the work he put into the log book holders which have turned out to be great and very practical. The boys from Parks Victoria, Enzo and Mac, were as always most supportive.



The "boys" from ParksVic with some of the willing workers at Madison's Huts, Bogong High Plains (near Basalt Quarry). Photo: Bob Johnstone

Bob's team would have liked to do more, but the weather was against them all weekend.

Our HMOs rely heavily on committed volunteers to help with maintaining the huts and we thank them one and all.

## AREA 11 DAVIES PLAIN

### HMO RICHARD HUBBARD

Gibson's or Pinnabar Hut was originally built in the 1950s for the Gibsons. In 1991 it was lined and a new chimney was added. It was one of the huts that escaped the 2003 fires, but in late 2004 or early 2005 some careless campers had a fire that was too big and the end wall of the hut was severely damaged.



There was also a lot of graffiti to be cleaned up.



Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January was the first maintenance day. Richard and Sandra left home at 5:30 am and started work at about 7:30 am. Sandra spent the day painting while Richard stripped the end wall inside and out.

John Williams arrived about 10:00 to help with the re-building. On the inside the cement sheet above and to the left of the fireplace was replaced with strips cut from the remains of the cement sheet removed when the fire box was repacked and the outside boards that were intact were left in place. With the boards removed above firebox and to the right of the fire box, two studs and the lintel above the fire place were replaced.



To help reduce the chance of a fire like this happening again four sheets of old corrugated iron were placed behind the chimney extending up under the eaves.



Almost finished - note the new logbook holder on the wall right in the above photo.

For the next trip - painting of the cupboard and the door will complete the inside to get rid of the remaining graffiti and re-nailing the roof.

Gibson's Hut looks good.

*Photos: Richard Hubbard*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF HMO RICHARD HUBBARD ...

This is the story of one day as told by Michael Paton, a friend of Richards who accompanied him and John Williams on a grand tour of Area 11.

*"Initiated by a need to inspect the huts in his area Richard Hubbard, HMO Davies Plain Area, accompanied by John Williams and Michael Paton visited Dogman's, Davies Plain, Buckwong, Brophys, Gibson's Mt Pinnibar, Wheelers Creek, Flying Swagman and Mt Ceres Spur Ski huts in a whirlwind one day trip on 17 February.*

*Planning involved selecting a time when the March flies were on holiday and avoiding the roads the timber trucks were using.*

*Richard suggested taking the direct route from the starting point Corryong to Geehi which was over the Geehi Walls and which suited Michael as Major Clewes Hut was on the way and Michael had last travelled the walls in a 1939 Ford Prefect back in the early 1950's which brought back memories.*

*A passing glance at the rebuilt Old Geehi Hut and through Tom Groggin to the Dogmans Hut on the banks of the Murray River, which was in good condition.*

*Davies Plain hut, pictured below in its picturesque setting was in excellent condition. The condition of the countryside was varied. Regrowth under the fire affected woollybutts was prolific and there were patches of woollybutts which the fire had missed or had just slightly scorched. Snow gums had sprouted again and Richard was pleased to see a stand of Ormeo gum (peculiar to the area) had not been burnt.*



*Charlie Creek hut in its attractive setting was burnt so there was little to see. A new galvanised iron hut has been erected next to the burnt Buckwong hut.*

*Leaving the Buckwong Track the Mt Hope Road saw the speedo climb as we travelled east to*

*inspect Brophy's Hut a new prefabricated wooden framed iron hut. The fires had burnt a corner of the roof and embers had dropped to the floor burning a hole so it had been close to destruction.*

*Mt Anderson was the next stop to admire the view with an even better view from the open top of Mt Pinnabar. The day was perfect and Jagungal, Main Range, Mt Pilot, The Cobberas, Mt Bogong and the Bogong High Plains were all clearly visible.*

*The Shady Creek Lower and Cattleman's Creek tracks were used to get to Wheelers Creek Hut where Richard compiled a job list for a future work party. He obtained a couple of volunteers who were camped there and were regular visitors to the hut and were keen to see it maintained.*

*The Six Mile Ridge track provided an uphill challenge to get to the Ski Hut, pictured below, on Mt Ceres Spur and the Range Rover's cooling system was put under considerable pressure (literally).*



*The Dunstan logging road provided a smooth ride back to Corryong where we had time to climb Mt Elliot to see the Flying Swagman's hut which has almost collapsed but it was possible to walk inside the main 'hangar'. Rehabilitation may be possible.*

*Approximately 270 kms. of extremely scenic country were covered in 11 hours over some rough tracks and 10 huts inspected – a tribute to Richard's driving skills and knowledge of the area and huts.*

*John entertained the group with his intimate knowledge of the history of the huts and mines and stories of his long distance walks in the alpine areas of Victoria and NSW.*

*A memorable and enjoyable day for Richard, John and Michael, although the Range Rover may not have agreed!"*

*Photos: Richard Hubbard*



## CHRISTMAS BBQ

On Sunday 18 December 2005 a group of members gathered at the

Sommerton Road Picnic Area near Woodlands Historic Park on the outskirts of Melbourne for a BBQ lunch and end-of-year get-together.



*The picnic Photo: Stephen Paterson*

After lunch the group went to the Woodlands Homestead, which has a fascinating history and the following is an excerpt from the Parks Victoria website.

*“Emigrating from Ireland with his family to seek a healthier climate, William Pomeroy Greene, a former Royal Navy officer, moved into the newly erected Woodlands Homestead on 9 June 1843. The historic Woodlands Homestead is a rare example of an early prefabricated building. It was designed in Britain, probably for export to India. Its association with early pioneering families make it significant to the early settlement of the Port Phillip District. It is surrounded by gardens that have now been restored. Magnolias at the Homestead are the oldest recorded garden plants in Victoria. Woodlands Homestead and its outbuildings and gardens were extensively restored in 1983 and 1984.”*



*At the door to Woodlands*

*Photo: Stephen Paterson*

After our guided tour of the Homestead the “Friends” give us the good oil on the work they do at Woodlands, which includes regular dramatised versions of Woodland’s history.



*Woodlands Dining Room*

*Photo: Mike Shaw*

For further information about this park and historic homestead see the Parks Victoria website [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au) and go directly to Woodlands Historic Park or contact the Friends Group on [fowhp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fowhp@yahoo.com.au).

## PHOTO WEEKEND

A small group of enthusiastic photographers spent the Labour Day long-weekend photographing huts, here is our newest Committee Member Anne Sedgley’s account of the weekend:

*“On Saturday 11 March, 20-25 VHCHA members gathered at Moscow Villa campsite in Far East Gippsland, up in the timber country east of Swift’s Creek, for a wide-ranging and lively Committee meeting. I was honoured to be installed as VHCHA’s Heritage Advisor.*

*After the meeting a long procession of 4WDs snaked around the high country tracks to visit and photograph two cattlemen’s huts.*



*Commins Hut*

*Photo: Anne Sedgley*

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*The first, Commins Hut, has had considerable renovation since I surveyed it in 2004. Some new struts inside and uprights supporting the chimney have prevented it from collapsing, but the use of rough concrete to cement poles to the ground is regrettable.*



*John Sedgley and Murphy's Hut*  
Photo: Anne Sedgley

*Murphy's Hut and surrounding grasslands glowed golden in the late afternoon light. Many photos were taken, but there was only one tripod on the go.*

*That night was very convivial around the little stoves and campfire; finally, to the tents, but my father John slept in his army valise (canvas swag) for the first time since WWII.*

*Sunday was very hot, with a roaring north wind. People dispersed, and 5 of us drove to Woodhouse Logging Camp, two timber huts with a resting bus behind them.*

*The young eucalyptus foliage here was especially beautiful. Finally David, John and I photographed Strobbridges Huts, west of Swift's Creek. Five hut sites and seven huts in two days – a great weekend. Meeting everybody was the real highlight!"*

## 2007 HUTS CALENDAR

Would you like your photos considered for inclusion in the 2007 huts calendar – see the enclosed flyer for all the details.



## MERCHANDISE

Credit card facilities (Bankcard, MasterCard and Visacard) are now available.

Committee members in charge of our merchandise are Greg Love and Lee Magnussen. All items for sale are of high quality and incorporate the VHCHA logo.



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, and delivery of those sizes not in stock may take up to 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
2006 Calendar	\$10 (incl. P&H)	

## CONTACTING US

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