



Echo from the Mountains

Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc – A0043804Y

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COMMITTEE MEETS AT DINNER PLAIN

On Sunday 28 May the Committee and HMOs met at the Crystal Creek Lodge in Dinner Plain for a breakfast meeting prior to the commencement of Day 2 of the High Country Huts Conference (see page 2 for a report on the conference).

A good turnout at 8.00am with Fiona Magnussen, David Oldfield, Paula Tomsett, Sue Manneken, Lee Magnussen, Mike Shaw, Ken & Vicky Birch, Bob Johnstone, Brad Cooksey, Richard Hubbard, David Sisson, Enzo Brotto – Parks Victoria Bright, Fleur Smith - Parks Victoria Mansfield, Wayne McCallum - Parks Victoria Heyfield, Colleen Nagle – Parks Victoria Omeo, and Glen Digby – DSE Swifts Creek attending and apologies from Greg Love, Mick Vanderzalm, Ted Stabb – DSE Wodonga, and Damian Crozier.

The Committee was delighted to report that behind the scenes actions with respect to Wire Plain Hut seem to have worked, it has been reported that the Mt Hotham RMB have reconsidered their position and decided that Wire Plain hut will be secured for the winter and checked for structural integrity in the Spring with a view to retaining it as a tourism asset.

Your Committee...

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

* These Committee members are also HMOs.

THE AGM Sat. 11th Nov. 2006

The fourth annual general meeting of the VHCHA will be held on Saturday 11 November 2006.

Where: Keppels Hotel
Murchison Street Marysville
What time: 2.00pm
AGM Dinner: 6.30pm – Keppels Hotel Bistro

MORE AGM DETAILS IN NEXT NEWSLETTER.

Membership Fees Due

Membership renewals are due 30 June 2006. For the VHCHA to continue to repair, maintain and save our Alpine huts we need your continued support, please renew now and order your 2007 calendar/s at the same time for the special members price of \$8.00 incl P&H. See back page for details.

CHANGED ADDRESS?

Planning a move or change of address? You are! Then don't miss the next issue of *Echo from the Mountains*...let our Secretary David Oldfield know as soon as possible so that we can update our records. See back page for David's contact details.

NEWSLETTER PRINT IMPROVEMENT

As our newsletter grows in size it is only appropriate that the quality also improves from a photocopied publication to this edition which has been printed direct from a computer file.

ADVERTISING - Currently the guidelines for the newsletter as adopted by the VHCHA in May 2004 allows advertising of forthcoming events of like minded and/or member organisations at no charge, to be reviewed as the organisation and the size of the newsletter expands.

Recent requests for commercial advertising will be referred to the Committee meeting in September for policy formulation. If you have strong views either for or against paid advertising please send them to the Newsletter Editor – see back page for contact details.

HIGH COUNTRY HUTS CONFERENCE DINNER PLAIN Sat. 27th & Sun. 28th May

The High Country Huts Conference was organised by Parks Victoria in partnership with the VHCHA and Australian Alps National Parks on a theme of "working together to get the job done".

Members of the VHCHA were invited to attend as were many other organisations including DSE officers and Friends groups that are involved in the maintenance and care of huts. Approx. 40 people gathered in the Alpine Village of Dinner Plain where much of the architecture reflects the basic elements of the huts of the high country.

The main items for discussion were the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Parks Victoria and the VHCHA and the Parks Victoria Draft Alpine District High Country Huts Management Guidelines.

The Conference started on Saturday morning with a presentation by Peter Jenkins, Parks Victoria Planner, on the MOU and Management Guidelines. Such wonders as the HAP, HAS and HMP (##) were also explained in an attempt to clarify and demystify the processes for getting approvals to work on high country huts.



*Field Inspection No. 1 - DIY Hut Maintenance Plan - CRB Hut Dinner Plain.
Photo: Courtesy of Parks Victoria*

- Briefly...

HAP: Heritage Action Plan is required for significant buildings and places.

HAS: Heritage Action Statement sets direction for management of significant buildings and places.

HMP: Heritage Maintenance Plan – guide to daily, monthly, yearly maintenance of significant buildings and places.

Saturday evening the conference delegates enjoyed an excellent meal at the Dinner Plain Hotel, after which our guest speaker Barry Hazeldine gave a wonderful presentation on the works done in the past by the North East Freemasons Task Force on Wallace's, Weston's, Dibbin's and Roper's Huts.

While it was a sad reminder of the loss of Roper's it was most gratifying to hear that the hut is to be replaced and that Ian Roper, who attended the conference with his wife Belinda, will be on the committee to plan the works. Ian & Belinda are also our newest members and we welcome them to the VHCHA.



*Field Trip No. 2 - Huts in the landscape - discussing hut management issues at JB Plain Hut.
Photo: Courtesy of Parks Victoria*

HERITAGE MATTERS

Continuing our series on the State Heritage Register and huts.

To nominate a hut for the State Register, download the nomination guidelines and the form from the Heritage Victoria website or ring them on 9637 9475, to have the forms sent out.

To see if a hut is on a Council's Planning Scheme, or to discuss it with someone, ring that Council's Heritage Officer (if there is one), or Heritage Adviser, or the Planning Officer.

For the criteria for places going on the Heritage Register and how to nominate a place do to the HV website

<http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/page.asp?ID=67>.

Guidelines for Nominators to the Vic. Heritage Register are on

<http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/pages/pdfs/brochures/guidelines.pdf>



HUTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

From lunchtime on Friday 28th to Sunday 30th April 2006 (concluding with lunch) a practical workshop about hut maintenance and maintenance planning was held at the Currango Homestead in the Kosciuszko National Park.

The workshop was funded by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and was attended by VHCHA members Bob Johnstone, Brad Cooksey, Anne Sedgley, Fiona & Lee Magnussen, Ralph & Nancy Moran, Jerry Gregg, Diedre Shaw and Wayne McCallum.



*Some adze work on timber post preparation.
Photo: Courtesy of Fiona Magnussen.*

Whilst the conference was about the skills associated with hut maintenance it also highlighted huts in the landscape – the landscape around a hut that is an integral part of its story and history including prior indigenous activity.



*And a nice spot to stop and have a chat.
Photo: Courtesy of Fiona Magnussen.*

The nights were cold at Currango but the generosity of those present was warm and the workshop provided a great opportunity to network, take in some field trips to cottages, homesteads and station outbuildings (they call these huts in NSW), and learn some practical skills.

The VHCHA will also be conducting practical skills workshops and training programs in the future.

HUTS MAINTENANCE

Huts Maintenance Coordinator: POSITION VACANT	
Area **	Huts Maintenance Officer
1 & 3: East Gippsland & Dargo	Damian Crozier Ph: 03 5152 3147 motley70@ozemail.com.au
2: Nunniong	HMO Wanted
4 & 5: Licola & Baw Baw	Mick Vanderzalm Ph: 0429 024 445 mickv@net-tech.com.au
6: Marysville	HMO Wanted
7: Howqua	Chris Clarke Ph: 03 5776 2308 clarkes@mansfield.net.au
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
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	

** 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.

HMO ACTIVITIES

Area 1 & 3 HMO Damien Crozier has been doing minor repairs with another VHCHA member on the Seldom Seen Logging Hut, a priority project for DSE Bairnsdale. He will have a report with pictures on this project for the next issue of *Echo from the Mountains*

Area 7 - We welcome Chris Clarke as HMO for the Howqua Area.

Area 8 HMO Andy Kass is off with the CFA 4WD Club (a corporate member of the VHCHA) to carry out some minor maintenance on the Humffray River shelter over the Queen's Birthday weekend. See Andy's report on the next page on his Easter Reconnaissance Mission during which the maintenance work at Humffray River was identified.

AREA 8 BARRY MOUNTAINS HMO - ANDY KASS

Easter 2006, Huts Reconnaissance Mission.

"This trip was the second of a series of trips to investigate the condition of the huts in the Barry Mountains area. The trip started in some pretty poor weather conditions. There were only two participants on the trip being Paul Burke and HMO Andy Kass. As we both attended the committee meeting on the Thursday evening, it was decided to meet up in Yea on Friday morning and begin the trip with a visit to Dandongadale Hut before the weather got real bad.

After morning tea at Mansfield we headed through Whitfield, on to Dandongadale then up the Abbeyyard Track before turning right onto the Dandongadale Buffalo Divide Track. The showers were very persistent and certain parts of the track were already a little greasy.

The rain didn't hinder the burn-off on the left side of the track. Some of the hollow trees were burning well providing both a challenge to drive around as well as a ready made fire for lunch in the rain.

Paul decided it was a good idea to cook a jaffle in this log in the middle of the track....



When we got to the top of McCreedy track we stopped for some decision making. The track looked steepish and slippery in the rain. What will it look like if the predicted snow arrives while we are down at the Dandongadale Hut (below)?



The gamble was taken and we proceeded to descend. We found the hut in the valley at the end of the track after a few small but slippery creek crossings. It was already in use by a family of campers who allowed us to take photos and write the report. They were a bit at a loss when advised it was also our responsibility to sample all unopened bottles of alcohol found in the huts. After finding and returning a bracelet lost by one of the campers on their previous trip, we decided to get out of the valley before we were trapped for the weekend.

After scrambling up the hill we made our way towards Abbeyyard for the night. After lots of light showers during the day, we were presented with a 10 minute heavy downpour to signify the end of rain for a while.

Saturday morning we headed off to assess the remains of West Humffray Hut, the rebuilt Riley's Creek Hut, the deteriorating Humffray River shelter as well as Guys Hut on Mt Sarah. We also inspected the site of the Selwyn Hut but missed out on the Shower Block Hut due to it being late in the day. We made camp once again near Abbeyyard close to an unattended campsite. The rain had held off for most of the day however we did get a light sprinkling of snow at Guys Hut.



Riley's Creek Hut



Humffray River Shelter

In the morning as we packed up, two motorbike riders arrived at the unattended campsite. When asked if they got lost yesterday they answered with a reserved "Yes"

They spent the night out in the freezing cold because they took a track which looked OK on their map but was now a very overgrown walking track. Night fell on them after several kilometres of lifting their bikes over fallen trees and rocks etc. They were packed up immediately to head for home.

We decided to head home via Cobbler and King River hut.



King River

As the sun was shining and the tracks were getting drier, travel was a bit speedier than on the previous two days. That was until the traffic jam at The Staircase

Someone was making repairs on the side of the track and about five other vehicles had to park nearby to assist. As well as this, the vehicle in front of us was working hard at not getting hung up on the rocks. A troopy we thought was coming up the track was getting ready to winch the vehicle in front of us down the hill. All ended well and no winch was required. The Stairs are getting challenging again due to all the traffic they have been receiving.

A pleasant weekend was had despite a bit of bad weather at the start.

As we were without our partners, Paul tried to pick up a deer he was chasing up the road. See photograph below.



I managed to pick up a mouse that loves Helga's Bread. Any suggestions for his/her removal will be welcome. The Nissan is beginning to smell like a rat house.

There will be more trips planned to visit the remaining huts and perform ongoing maintenance, so I am sure there will be plenty of opportunities to get out into the Barry Ranges area.



Andy! Paul! Where are you???"

Story and photographs by Andy Kass.

FRY'S HUT STAGE 1

Stage 1 of the Fry's Hut Restoration was completed over the ANZAC Day weekend and the following is an account of how it came about and the works done. Thank you to Parks Victoria and Ken & Vicky Birch (Fry's Hut Co-ordinators, VHCHA) for contribution this story.

Fry's Hut is one of the iconic huts of Victoria's High Country. It is a very popular destination for Visitors to the area and has appeared on many calendars, postcards and paintings, even a biscuit tin. If the walls of the hut could talk they could share many stories about the rich and diverse history of the area since the hut was built over fifty years ago.



Photo: Courtesy of Parks Victoria

The hut is heritage listed and is of state significance. Fred Fry, the builder of the hut was born and bred in Mansfield in the late 1890's. He was a highly experienced bushman is regarded as a legend in the area. He worked and lived in the area for many years, initially for the Forest Commission then later the Lands Department, often taking guided fishing tours until his death in 1971. Fred Fry and his hut featured as the character of Billy Slim in Neville Shute's book 'The Far Country'.

The hut was starting to show its years with much wear and tear becoming apparent and was in need of some tender loving care to preserve its character and keep it safe for people to visit. A funding grant for hut restoration was provided to the VHCHA from the High Country Initiatives package which is worth a total of \$60,000 over three years. Part of this funding is being used to restore Fry's Hut. Work is expected to be completed during 2007. A donation of plumbing materials from Simon Whalen of Reece Pty. Ltd, Mansfield greatly assisted the project to get extra work completed.

The ANZAC day weekend was the first of several planned volunteer working bees that will be required to fully restore the hut. Earth works were supervised by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, a representative from the Taungurung people and James Hackel, Parks Victoria Indigenous Heritage

Officer, to protect and record any aboriginal artefacts found during works.

Over four days volunteers and Parks Victoria staff joined forces to restore the hut, under the guidance of expert craftsman Bob Johnstone, a traditional heritage builder and VHCHA Huts Maintenance Officer (Area 9B Bogong). Chris Smith, Parks Victoria Heritage Officer was also on site to lend assistance and ensure the work was sympathetic with the original design.

The aim of this restoration was to retain as much of the existing original fabric of the building in accordance with the Burra Charter. *(There will be a story about the Burra Charter in the September issue of Echo from the Mountains. Ed)*

Works included substantial drainage works conducted by Parks Victoria rangers to reduce further decay to the wooden foundations of the hut.



Photo: Courtesy of Parks Victoria

Park Victoria Ranger Fleur Smith who is the project coordinator said that *"it would not have been possible to get the work done without the able and skilled assistance from volunteers from the VHCHA, Victorian Range Rover Club, North East Freemasons Task Force, Friends of Howqua Hills Historic Area and the CFA 4WD Club. Their efforts focussed on replacing 3 support posts on the north wall, 2 bottom plates along north wall, 2 six-pane windows and some wall slabs. Other jobs completed were fireplace restoration and weatherproofing and new split wall slabs on the north wall"*.



*Timber post preparation by James Finlay.
Photo: Courtesy of Ken Birch*

Chris Fry who is Fred Fry's grand nephew, made a welcome but unexpected visit to the working bee with his wife Cathy and son, Cory. He was pleasantly surprised to see the restoration works in progress.



*Removing floor & securing roof.
Photo: Courtesy of Ken Birch*

"I'd like to hope that Fred Fry himself would have approved of the restoration work that was done on the weekend to this genuine high country hut" said Parks Victoria Ranger In Charge, Andrew Markwick.

Since the 2003 alpine fires, a genuine spirit of cooperation has evolved as Parks Victoria, local Friends groups, the Victorian High Country Huts Association, the Mansfield Shire and private industry alike has shared an aim to maximising the profile and potential and protection of special places in the Mansfield High Country such as Fry's Hut.

"Just as so many of us hold on to special memories in photo albums, scrap books and boxes tucked away, a place like Fry's Hut is where Victoria's precious memories are kept alive" enthused Mr Markwick.

Members of the VHCHA who participated in the work on Fry's Huts were David Oldfield, Terry & Margaret Foulds, Bob Johnstone, Rod Hanscous, James Findlay, Geoff Slater, Paul Beggs, John Brandwood, Ray & Ann Sparks, Reuben Smith, Paul Burke, Lloyd ,Shanna & Ben Hetrick, Ken & Vicky Birch, John Wyeth, Barry Hazeldine, Bruce Dodson, Brad Cooksey, Andy Kass and Geoff Payne.

Parks Victoria Team members were Andrew Markwick, Chris Smith, Fleur Smith and Trevor Larner.

Our thanks also to the CFA 4WD Club, Range Rover Club Of Australia (Vic), Members of the Freemasons North Eastern Task Force and the Friends of Howqua River.

The working bee ended with the unveiling of the interpretative information display for the hut by Ken Birch and Chris Smith attended by Chris Fry and the volunteer workforce.

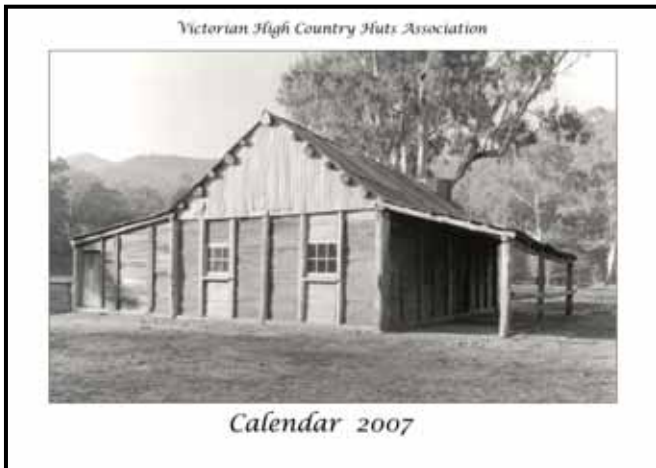


Photo: Courtesy of Parks Victoria

A great team effort – but its not over yet. Still to come: restore rear wall in November 2006 and repair the roof and fireplace exterior wall and chimney in March 2007.

The restored Fry's Hut features on the cover the VHCHA 2007 Calendar.

2007 CALENDAR



The VHCHA 2007 calendar features photographs of huts from each of the Huts Maintenance Areas - Suggan Buggan School House, Woodhouse Logging Camp, Lankey Plain Hut, Moroka Hut, Stagg's Hut, Keppel's Hut, Fry's Hut, King River Hut, McNamara's Hut - Dinner Plain, Cope Hut, Kennedy's Hut, and Gibson's Hut.

The photographers are all VHCHA members and each person who submitted a photograph is represented in the calendar. We thank those members for their contribution - Patricia Morrisey, Bill Statton, Bruce Unmack, David Oldfield, Andy Kass, Keith Oxenbould, Brad Cooksey, and Richard Hubbard.

The special member's price of \$8.00 including postage and handling will apply if ordering when paying for your 2006-2007 membership renewal.

The cost after the AGM is \$10 including \$2.00 for P & H and orders will be able to be placed through our website.

HUT PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

CAMMS TOP PLACE

A HUT ON THE UPPER WENTWORTH RIVER NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF DANE & MURDERING SPUR TRACKS

IF YOU HAVE OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS PHOTOGRAPHS OF THIS HUT PLEASE CONTACT FIONA MAGNUSSEN
Email: fiona.magnussen@bigpond.com
Ph: 0427 596 554

MERCHANDISE

Credit card facilities (MasterCard and Visacard) are 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 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 (Limited)	\$10 (incl. P&H)	

CONTACTING US

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