



# Echo from the Mountains

Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc - A0043804Y

A Quarterly Newsletter Volume 17 Number 3 September 2019

## Greetings From The President

We are well into spring, and the maintenance season is coming up fast. We have some great projects happening once the park gates are opened after the long winter. I must send a big thank you to all our Huts Maintenance Officers and their teams of people they have banded together for all the works planned.

The 2020 calendar is well on its way. Our team of editors are working hard to have it ready in November, hopefully by the AGM if all the stars align.

The AGM is not that far off, check out those details within this edition of the newsletter. We hope to see you there.

Allen



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## AGM - Invitation to All Corryong 9th November 2019 2pm - Ski Hut /Lind Lodge

This year the Annual General Meeting will be held in Northern Victoria on Saturday 9th November at Ski Hut (aka Lind Lodge) in the Davies Plain Region (Area 12).

The Colac Colac Caravan Park will be our base and also our fallback plan if the weather is inclement.

For those interested, we will meet at the Corryong Courthouse Hotel at 12 noon for lunch. It is in the main street.

Please RSVP to Secretary Tim Davies preferably by Email: [secretary@huts victoria.org.au](mailto:secretary@huts victoria.org.au) or 0438 595 533.

We will depart from the Hotel at 1.00 pm or thereabouts for the AGM, travelling in convoy for the AGM at Ski Hut at 2.00pm. Everyone will be responsible for getting themselves to and from Ski Hut. It is an easy 2WD route.

In the event that the location of the AGM has to be changed due to inclement weather it will be re-located to the Colac Colac Caravan Park. This will be advised at lunch. Alternatively ring the Secretary if in any doubt about the possible location.

After the AGM we will use the remainder of the afternoon to pay a visit to some of the nearby huts.

We will break with tradition this year and instead of having a presenter at the meeting, our own Corryong local Richard Hubbard, HMO for the Davies Plain area, will present the history of the huts as we visit them. This will make for a shorter meeting and more time to spend with Richard at these fabulous huts.

*This is an opportunity not to be missed.*

Accommodation is available at the Colac Colac Caravan Park. Mention the Victorian High Country Huts Association for a 10% discount when making a booking. Powered and unpowered sites are available and there is a limited number of cabins ranging from \$90 - \$150 per night. Their phone number is 02 6076 1520.

There are also motels available in Corryong.



*Ski Hut aka Lind Lodge where we will hold the AGM on 9th September.*

*Photo: Sharyn McGregor*

## Step On Up - A Call for Committee Members

It is a universal truth of volunteer organisations that filling committees is always a challenge.

Our Committee has been exceptionally successful at building relationships with both Government and private stakeholders, promoting what we do and getting the physical jobs done over the last 16 years.

Some of our Committee members have been part of this hard working team for a number of years and are looking for a break.

If you are eager to get more involved with the running of the Association and feel that you can offer some time and skills, please consider nominating for a position on the committee. All positions are routinely declared open at the AGM but we are particularly keen to find a new VP and general committee members.

A love of our mountain huts is why you became a member. The reward of being a member of this Committee is to be part of the group that makes it all happen.

Please consider nominating for a committee position. If you think you are able to assist on the committee we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you prior to the AGM, please contact either President Allen or Secretary Tim via phone or email. You can find their contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

## Directions to Ski Hut

Head west along the Murray Valley Hwy from Corryong. Just past the Colac Colac Caravan Park, turn left after you go over the Narial Creek.

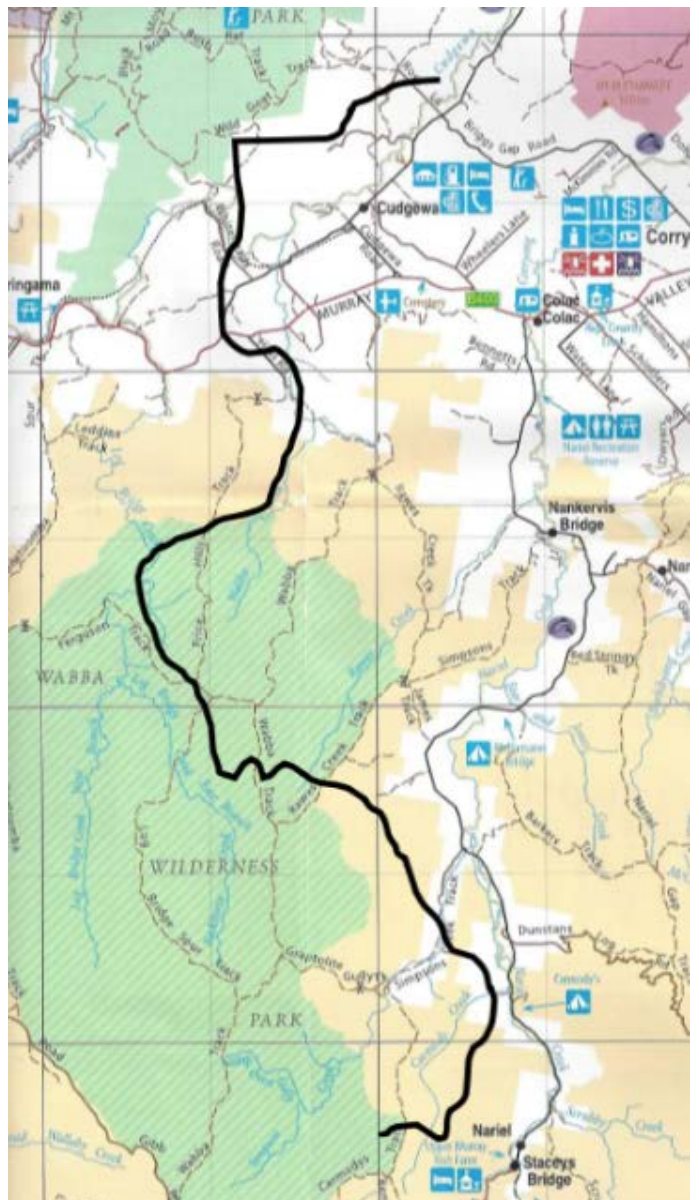
Head South down the Benambra Corryong Rd, approximately 20 km.

Turn left onto the Dunstans Logging Track. It is a good dirt road.

Follow this road for about 23 km.

Turn right at sign post to Ski Hut.

Go past Mrs Ceres Spur Track and around the corner is Ski Hut.



*See you at the AGM! It would be delightful to meet some new members.*

*"There are no strangers here, only friends we haven't met yet!"*

## Recollections of Henry Miller and Miller's Hut by Campbell Adam

I am the grandson of Henry Miller. Henry was of Scottish descent and was born in Tinamba, Victoria in 1869. My mother Mavis was his second daughter.

In the early 1900s Henry bought land at Upper Maffra West and built a house, which he named "Bunyule". The land comprised flats on the banks of the Macalister River and hill country on the slopes of the Great Dividing Range. He ran sheep and cattle on the hill country and, when irrigation water became available from the Glenmaggie Weir in the 1920s, he commenced dairy farming on the river flats. Soon after buying the Upper Maffra West land, Henry took up a lease of high country around Mt Wellington, and he would drive cattle up for fattening after the winter snow had thawed and drive them down for sale before the next winter snow. He and his colleagues cut a cattle track from Golden Point up Purgatory Spur and the Razorback to the high country. This track, known as Miller's track, was used for the next fifty years but I am told that it is now overgrown and difficult to follow. The group also built Miller's Hut near Mt Wellington in 1916, to provide shelter.

I have no recollection of Henry Miller (who was known as Dah) as I was only three when he died in 1939 from injuries received from a kick by a horse. A photograph of him with me on his knee is all I have to remember him.



*Henry Miller with grandson Campbell Adam on his knee, taken in 1936*

Henry's son, my Uncle Rex, took over all the farming operations.

Our family lived in Adelaide, and we travelled to Victoria each Christmas to visit relations on my father's side in Melbourne, and then travel on to Gippsland to see

grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins on my mother's side. Travel was not allowed during the Second World War, and my first memories are from the time after the War when I was ten. Our visits to Bunyule coincided with the summer trips of Uncle Rex to "the Mount" as it was called, to check on the cattle. I remember watching him saddling up the riding and pack horses and loading supplies for the visit to the high country to check on the cattle, a trip that took about two weeks..

The mountain cattle work ended in the late 1950s when the leases for the high country were not renewed for environmental reasons. Uncle Rex did not approve of this decision because, amongst other reasons, he believed that it would increase the risks from bush fires, which has proved to be the case.

Uncle Rex continued with dairy farming and limited cattle operations until he retired in the early 1960s, and he sold the property several years later.

On 22 January 1993 a group of six of Henry Miller's descendants camped overnight at Macfarlanes Saddle on the Moroka Road, and on the next day walked to Miller's Hut, with some of the group continuing on to the Sentinels to look down on Lake Tali Karng far below.



*Descendants of Henry Miller outside Miller's Hut, taken in 1993. From left: Campbell Adam; Bob Lewis, husband of Jennifer Lewis; Jennifer Lewis (nee Pursell), granddaughter of Henry Miller, Son of Bob and Jennifer Lewis; Jill Breadon (nee Sinclair), niece of Campbell Adam. Photograph by Campbell's son Peter.*

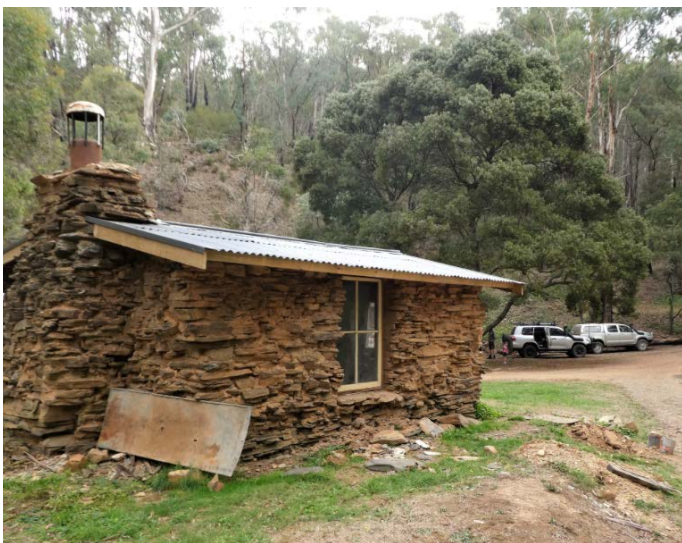


*Campbell Adams inside Miller's Hut*

## Donnelly Creek Hut to Hut Cleanup

Huts spanning 160 years of history built in the area along Donnelly Creek between Aberfeldy and Mt Useful were our mission on this fine weekend. The weather played in our favour. We bathed in the warmth of the sunshine all weekend while the expected rains were never in sight. Early on Saturday 6th April we met our crew at McDonalds in Moe, before heading toward our first hut near Aberfeldy. We set off along the tracks enjoying the views over the dam and taking note of the scorched treetops in the distance from the recent bushfires.

It wasn't long before we reached our first destination; the historic hut at Codes Flat. This beautiful old hut is one of my favourites and rare due to its stone construction. On past visits it looked poorly and was deteriorating due to weather and time not doing it any favours. Recently this has changed, as it became a special interest project of the new lease holder's family and friends. It is exciting to see a new roof has been put on with slightly wider eaves that will help to protect the stonework in the future. The stonework has also gained attention with some repointing and damage now fixed. The chimney has been repaired and a new chimney top constructed in place of the previous flu. Everyone enjoyed the tour around the hut and the bit of history I could share with them. Thought to date back as far as the 1860s, it is known to have been an old telegraph station and horse & coach stop. Passengers would stay in the old iron huts nearby while the horses rested as it was a hard journey into this part of the high country. Alterations were made to the stone hut just after WW2 by the person living in it, enclosing a doorway and making it a window, the result of this can still be seen today in the side stone wall. The wooden huts nearby were built in the 1960s when the New Dawn Mine was in operation. This stone hut is a public asset and the collection of huts around it tell a story of hard times and history in the Victorian High Country.



*Codes Flat Hut*

After passing old mining sites, the Toombon cemetery and old pub ruins we reached Junction Hut. This is one of three old mining huts that were rebuilt in this area in 2015 after the fires. Still in great condition, luckily there was very little work to do for this hut as it was full of swags and

other equipment from campers staying in and around it over the weekend. The original Junction Huts were built in the 1930s and lived in by gold fossickers during the depression. The lease was held by the Walshe family for a long time while they made regular visits back to the area. After the first huts became dilapidated, the next generation of the Walshe family in 1964 built the Junction Hut that was widely known but sadly burnt down in the 2013 fires.

After a few river crossings we reached Jorgensens hut. Still in good condition being one of the newer rebuilds, but in need of a good clean, our crew eagerly set to work with brooms, mops, rags and elbow grease. Everyone took on a project - cleaning the ash and debris from the inside fireplace; using a mild degreaser and cleaning the BBQ splatter from the outside walls and then washing with soapy water; multiple brooms swept inside and out of the hut; cobweb removal and window cleaning inside and out. Rubbish was picked up from the surrounding area and removed. A new broom, dust pan and brush were replaced in the hut. This hut was originally built in the 1950s as part of a mining lease that continued into the 1990s. The hut became a bush shelter for different families and groups who frequented this area on camping holidays. After being lost in the 2013 fires, it was rebuilt on the same footprint and the memory of the old hut lives on in this new one. The Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Victoria have recently taken on the caretaker roll of this hut and this working bee was the first of many to look after it.



*Ian Gould and Suzanne Ryan cleaning the fireplace at Jorgensen's Hut*

We continued, winding our way along Donnelly Creek, in and out of a few more river crossings and into O'Tooles camping area where we checked on the previous works to fix the shelter. Standing strong it was then on to Goonans hut, another one of the newer huts that replaced an old mining hut after the fires. We already knew that we had to replace a door handle, which was noted on a previous trip. The boys set to work fitting the new one while the rest of us chatted to the families camped around the hut. The campers were really appreciative of the work done and promised to make sure the hut was clean when they left the next day.

## Hut to Hut Cleanup Cont:

The original hut here was built by Russell Hughes and his sons about 1980 as part of their mining claim and always kept stocked with food and wood for a fire for themselves or as refuge for any others needing shelter in this remote area. In 1991 the hut and claim was sold to Bill Goonan whose family went on to use the hut for many years.



*Sharyn and Andy with Ian, Suzanne, Andrew, Emma, Bill and Shane from TLCCV at Jorgensen's Hut*

Before long we were back on the tracks, past Lloyds Hut and O'Sullivan's Hotel built on small parcels of private land nearby. Just on the other side of the river crossing we pulled up at Store Point Hut and did a quick clean-up of cobwebs and swept the floor, taking note of a couple of things that need doing by the hut's caretakers, the Pajero 4WD Club that will be forwarded on for one of their trips. This hut was also originally built on a mining lease around 1975 with a second hut slightly further up the hill that was built a couple of years prior. The height of the river between them determined which hut was used, not knowing if they could cross the river due to the small bridge regularly being swept away and having to be rebuilt. This hut was in ruin and about to be demolished when members of the Pajero 4wd Club stepped forward to save the hut and with the help of DELWP rangers and the VHCHA, it was reconstructed. The Pajero 4WD Club and the VHCHA repaired this hut after the 2013 fires skimmed it and left it heat affected, but sadly the top hut was destroyed and lost forever.

We climbed out of the valley and up to our final destination. Half the convoy parted ways with us here and went home after their exciting day trip in the high country. The other half of the convoy decided to enjoy happy hour with Andy and myself around our campfire and pitch camp for the evening. The next morning was spent sharing the location of an old logging dugout and powder magazine in the bush before heading home via Licola. Overall, it was a most enjoyable and relaxing weekend with a lot achieved in a short amount of time. On behalf of Andy, the acting Huts Maintenance Officer Area 4 for the VHCHA and myself, we would like to thank the Toyota Land Cruiser Club participants who joined us over the weekend and helped clean up all the huts along Donnelly Creek.

*Article and photos: Andy and Sharyn McGregor*

## Feeling the Love on Mt Hotham

Joyce Brockhoff Hut has long been recognised by some of the regulars at Mount Hotham as a delightful refuge to sit and eat a packed lunch, take a break from the weather or simply have a breather and admire the view.

The hut was built for the Australian Womens Ski Club as a refuge cabin located between the summits of Mt Loch and Mt Hotham, in memory of Joyce Brockhoff - a pioneer and foundation member of AWSC and champion Australian skier through the 1930s.

After Brockhoff passed away in May 1947 a permissive occupancy licence was granted by the Lands Department which allowed the construction of a day shelter between the Orchard and Mary's Slide, reputedly Brockhoff's favourite skiing area.

The hut was designed by Geelong architects Buchan Laird & Buchan, and was one of the first built in the Mount Hotham area. It is constructed from locally quarried stone, and features fabulous picture windows. It officially opened in 1949.



*The plaque on the newly painted door*

After years of deterioration the hut was declared dangerous in the 1990s. In 1997 the building underwent extensive renovation, roof repairs and expansion to include the tiered deck. The funds for works were donated by a number of the Hotham Ski Clubs and the Mount Hotham Tow Co.



*Snow sports enthusiasts enjoying their refreshments on the deck in the sun*

## Feeling the Love cont:

Over recent years the hut, whilst not exactly neglected, has been looking a bit unloved. Only occasionally has the deck, been used for Mount Hotham Resort event barbecues.

This snow season has seen an investment in rejuvenating the hut with a new door, interior paint, repointing of the stonework, resealing the windows and fitting out the kitchenette so that the hut can operate as a licensed cafe.

On a recent ski trip I dropped in after hearing about the works and was delighted to see the place buzzing.



Chatting with one of the new managers, Jamie, (*pictured above pouring great coffee*) he told me the cafe has been doing fast trade through the snow season. Several people told me that they had never visited this not-quite hidden beauty despite spending years on the mountain



*Those picture windows are perfect for enjoying the view through the snow gums and across the valley*

Jamie has been just as busy sharing his history knowledge as serving great coffee and light meals.

There are water damaged old black and white photos, that have hung beside the fireplace in the hut for decades, that Jamie is looking to replace. If anyone has copies of these photos that they are willing to have copied, please contact me at [editor@hutsvictoria.org.au](mailto:editor@hutsvictoria.org.au).

Article and photos: Sue Paterson

Ref: Graeme Butler 2005

## Magnificent Manna

Casting a shadow over the popular and iconic Fry's Hut and camping ground is one of the oldest specimens of Manna Gum known. This is possibly one of the more photographed trees in Victoria due to its location.

This magnificent gum boasts a circumference of 9.71 m, the height is unknown. It is thought that this tree is in excess of 300 years old but it could be older as they do thrive and grow quicker beside a healthy river. This particular gum is located beside the very pretty Howqua River on Fry's Flat.

The tree is however in decline with numerous old age related problems such as rot, wood borer and excess limb loss. The tree is being monitored by Parks and any dangerous or dying limbs are being removed to keep the tree healthy and safe.



Article and photo: Shez Tedford

## Welcome Chris Milgate - HMO

We extend a hearty welcome to our newest Huts Maintenance Officer, from all the Team.

Chris Milgate has been appointed to take on Area 3 - Licola. Wayne Peterken has been acting in the position and will now be free to concentrate on his role as Huts Maintenance Coordinator.

Chris lives in Werribee and works for a Fire Protection Company as a contract and project manager. He is already familiar with the area and keen to get involved with all stakeholders.

Welcome!

## Huts Members Meet and Greet

On Saturday 3rd August the VHCHA Committee held a Meet and Greet at QPO in Kew.

This was an informal and relaxed coffee morning giving members of our Association the chance to meet with committee members face to face and to find out how to become involved.

This was also a fantastic opportunity for members to meet other members, to share stories, and chat about which huts they have visited and or been involved with.

Among our visitors we had representatives from the Idlers Group who have been involved with caretaking and restoring some of the precious huts for many years. We also got to meet a couple with a direct connection to McMichael's Hut.

On behalf of the Association, thank you to everyone who came along.

*Words and photo: Shez Tedford*



Welcome

## Welcome New Members

It is always a joy to welcome new members to our Association. We hope you enjoy your involvement in whichever form that may take, from getting down and dirty on a work party, or reading our newsletters and knowing that your membership fee goes towards preserving a part of our Alpine Heritage.

A hearty welcome to:

David Diamond	Leanne Hickman
Steve Bills	Andrew Harding
Bronwyn Tulloh	Scott Chapple
Rick Porteous	Colin Snowden

## Your Donations Hard at Work

Donations from individuals and organisations make an enormous difference to our ability to work on huts. We are masters at recycling however there are always some materials that need to be procured and all donations go directly towards hut projects.

We gratefully acknowledge the following for their support:

Ross Dyson  
 Pal McKenzie  
 Kellie Doering  
 Terry Torrison  
 David Chalkley  
 Raymond Thomas  
 Deirdre Shaw  
 Scott Chapple  
 Alan Hinds  
 Bev Blamey

Thank  
 you

## HMO Contact List

Huts Maintenance Coordinator	
hmc@hutsvictoria.org.au	
Area	Huts Maintenance Officer
1 East Gippsland	hmo1@hutsvictoria.com
2 Dargo	hmo2@hutsvictoria.org.au
3 Licola	hmo3@hutsvictoria.org.au
4 Baw Baw	hmo4@hutsvictoria.org.au
5 Marysville	hmo5@hutsvictoria.org.au
6 Buller	hmo6@hutsvictoria.org.au
7 Howqua	hmo7@hutsvictoria.org.au
8 Barry Mountains	hmo8@hutsvictoria.org.au
9 Hotham	hmo9@hutsvictoria.org.au
10 Bogong	hmo10@hutsvictoria.org.au
11 Dartmouth	hmo11@hutsvictoria.org.au
12 Davies Plain	hmo12@hutsvictoria.org.au
<p>Area names are general geographic names only and do not reflect the extent or number of huts in each area.</p> <p>Existing Hut Maintenance Areas remain unchanged, however your committee has reviewed and re-defined all areas so that there is now a more even distribution of huts within each area.</p> <p>Changes to areas have been minor, however it may take some time for our hut maintenance officers to become familiar with changes. During the next few months we ask that all enquiries be directed <b>firstly to our Hut Maintenance Coordinator</b> at <a href="mailto:hmc@hutsvictoria.org.au">hmc@hutsvictoria.org.au</a>, Wayne will respond or redirect enquiries to the appropriate area on your behalf.</p>	

### FACEBOOK FOLLOWING

If you're on Facebook and not yet following us, you're missing out!  
Or page is currently being enjoyed by over 40,000 people!

The albums continue to fill with photos old and new, contributed from far and wide.

You can have your photos added to the galleries too!

<https://www.facebook.com/hutsvic>



### Contacting us

Visit our **WEB site** : [WWW.hutsvictoria.org.au](http://WWW.hutsvictoria.org.au)

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**Newsletter Contributions:**

Please send stories preferably by email as a **"Word document" (doc or docx)**. When sending photographs please don't include them in the text document but attached them as a separate .jpg or .pdf file, to

[editor@hutsvictoria.org.au](mailto:editor@hutsvictoria.org.au).