



Echo from the Mountains

Victorian High Country Huts Association Inc - A0043804Y

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 19 Number 1 January 2021

President's Message

The exciting news is that we are having our Annual General Meeting at last!

After working through options leading up to our usual November gathering, and taking up the option of deferring the AGM for 3 months with the hope we will all be in a better position with Covid-19 restrictions, we finally have a date and a location. So the AGM will be held in a couple of weeks in Bairnsdale. You should have received your formal notification by email or post but can find the details within the newsletter.

We have made some progress with hut projects; reports coming soon from our HMO's will detail the progress they are making. There are rebuild and restoration projects in the pipeline.

2021 should turn out to be very productive, with a number of projects well in the planning stage, and some waiting for funding and approvals.

Allen Skilton
VHCHA President

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Glen Arte Timber Workers Hut - lost to last summer's fires.
Photo: Stephen Schmelzle

AGM Reminder

The VHCHA committee is pleased to invite you to our Annual General Meeting to be held in Bairnsdale on 13th February 2021. This AGM was delayed due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and would have traditionally been held in November 2020.

Everyone should have received their invitation to the AGM and documents via email or mail.

Please RSVP using the links in your email as soon as possible or contact our Secretary Tim Davies at secretary@hutsvictoria.org.au.

The details are as follows:

Date : Saturday 13th February 2021

Time : 2pm

Location : The Hall, Clifton Waters Retirement Village

3 Douglas Drive

Wy Yung VIC 3875

The hall has capacity for up to 40 attendees under the Covid Safety Protocols currently in place. Should more people than this wish to attend we may need to limit access to members only.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM and reconnecting in person with friends, both old and new.

Make it a Weekend Away

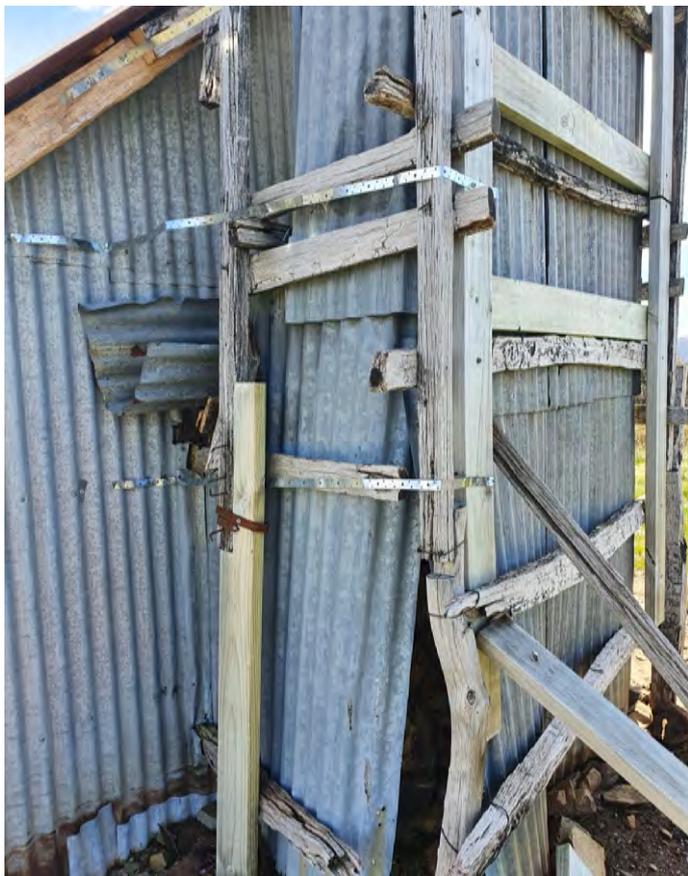
There is plenty of variety of accommodation options in Bairnsdale and the surrounding area. There are multiple caravan parks, motels and a free camp in Mt Taylor State Forest.

Come down and make a weekend of it. The area, as many others, was badly affected by last summer's horrendous fire season. With the mostly mild season we have had so far in 2021, everything is lush and green, and businesses are open and welcoming. School holidays are over and it is a beautiful place to visit.

As someone famous once said... "Do yourself a favour!"

Spargo's Hut Preservation

On the weekend of 14 -15th November 2020, Lachie Gales, a number of his regular crew of hut builders and a couple of VHCHA ring-ins made a big step forward on the conservation & repair of Spargo's Hut, hidden in plain sight at Golden Point, across Swindlers Creek at Mt Hotham. They began the preliminary work, preparing the timbers required for the chimney rebuild and other beams to support the heritage listed hut.



Spargo's Hut Chimney showing the urgent need for work. Photo: Lachie Gales.



Rotted timber under the roofline: Photo Lachie Gales.

It seems like forever since the VHCHA has conducted any physical work. The group was small but extremely productive. The weekend's work turned a pile of fire killed snowgum logs into building timbers circa 1928 style. Axes and adzes shaped a very specific list of timbers, drawn from a detailed management plan and an onsite inspection. A chainsaw or two might have been involved as well!



The "before" photo - snowgum logs ready to be trimmed.



Jimmy Findlay turning a raw log into a beam prior to dressing.



Mark & Liz Grech making a great team.

It was an outstanding effort by those involved. The experienced adze workers coached the newcomers in the finer skills of using an adze and other tools to trim and dress the timbers. Before long everyone was working flat out trimming the various lengths of posts and beams.



Trimming a bendy snowgum into a strong straight beam.



VHCHA President Allen Skilton on the tools.

We were particularly conscious of containing our mess; we created lots and lots of sawdust! 1200 litres in fact... swept and put into 240 litre wheelie bins for transport to the Mt Hotham green waste recycling centre where it will be composted.

Trying to arrange a group of workers under Covid-safe conditions was no mean feat for everyone involved. Rather than the usual camping accommodation, the hutbuilders were put up in very comfortable ski lodges on the mountain, where Covid safe protocols were easier to manage.

All through the weekend Jason Nightingale from Mt Hotham Resort Management gave us fabulous support, making sure we had everything we needed and arranging both lunches and dinners to be provided by the General Store. The food was great!



Will Ford bundling up precious cargo

On Sunday morning the last few beams were completed. In a case of great timing, a helicopter required by the resort for other maintenance tasks during the following week had some spare capacity. So after preparing all the timbers, they were bundled ready to lift across the valley to be stored in Spargo's Hut for safe keeping until the team regroup in March for the next phase.



*The heli uplifting one of the loads across the valley.
Photo: Jason Nightingale (MHRMB)*



The conservation and repair works will mean at least two weekends of work parties on site. The format will be a “Walk and Work”, along the lines of how Westons Hut was rebuilt.

This time though accommodation will be a bit more refined, based around Eiger Lodge at Mt Hotham. We will drive the three kilometres from Mt Loch Carpark to the Ski lift at the “Orchard” and then walk the three kilometres in to Golden Point. We will be working with Mt Hotham RMB to fly in much of the heavier equipment we need.

A massive thank you Lachie Gales for his professional approach to the myriad of challenges that 2020 has thrown at this project.

Article: Sue Paterson, Allen Skilton & Lachie Gales.

Uncredited photos: Sue Paterson

The logs and timber safely stowed in Spargo's Hut awaiting the next workparty. Photo: Jason Nightingale (MHRMB)



The Crew L-R: (Standing) Lachie Gales, Graham Gales, Paul Schirmer, Jim Crebbin, Mark Grech, Pat O’Donohue, Jason Nightingale (Mt Hotham Resort Management) Trevor Turnbull, Rob Humphrey, Ray Glendenning, Stephen Paterson, Allen Skilton, Will Ford, Jimmy Findlay (front, kneeling), Liz Grech, Sue Paterson, David Schirmer, Rob Parsons

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.

We extend a heartfelt welcome to:

Neville Spargo	Ben Spargo
Nic Grocott	Jock Pickford
Noel Lees	Ben Day
Scott Meadows	Peter Johnson
Scott Chapman	James Dunne
Roger Bullen	Alicia Crossley
Peter Pritchard	David Dwyer
Michael Lepp	Peter Hepworth
Daniel Norman	Krissie Piskorz
Regan Oxford	Simon Gunn
Ralph Christie	

Donations Make a Difference!

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to send us a donation. We have had many donations come through in recent months and they all contribute to the work we do to maintain and restore our wonderful huts.

We gratefully acknowledge the following for their support:

David Oldfield	Jayden Stephens
Forte Stambanis	Geoff Davison
Kevin McDonald	Nigel Bryer
Bev Blamey	Richard Jenkins
Michael Cooke	Ronald Connley
John Blamey	Geoffrey Paton
Bernie Sambell	Deidre Shaw
Paul McKenzie	Trevor Barkla
David Hutchinson	Brian Slee
Phil Battern	Graeme Munro
Greg Pelly	David Chalkley
Geoff Giles	John Anderson
Ryan Jemmeson	Lenka Juricova
Merrienne Rosanove	Beth Aulich
Richard Dalton	Peter Hepworth
Peter Pritchard	David Cain
Alan Hinds	

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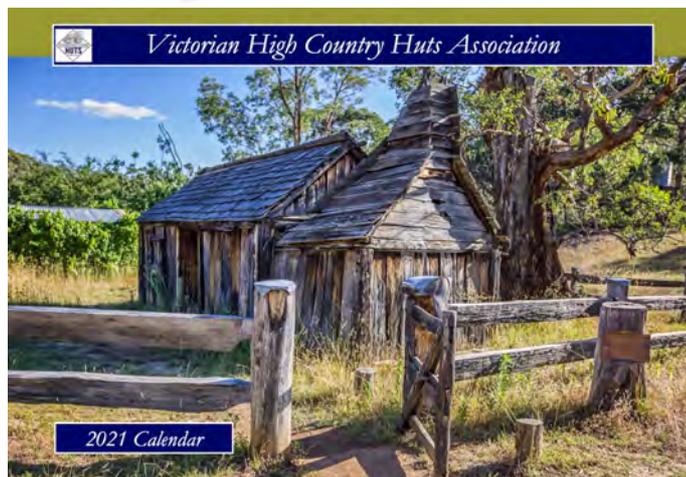
Calendars Are Still Available

This year's Victorian High Country Huts Association Calendar is exceptional. If for some reason you have hesitated to place an order for the collectable calendar, there are still some copies available through the Website shop. Don't wait too long...

Place your orders for delivery anywhere in Australia at
<https://hutsvictoria.org.au/shop/>

We also have beautiful books worthy of sitting on any coffee table, stubby holders, caps, badges and stickers.

All merchandise helps support the work we do preserving and rebuilding our fabulous huts.



HMO Contact List

Huts Maintenance Coordinator Wayne Peterken hmc@hutsvictoria.org.au	
Area	Huts Maintenance Officer
1 East Gippsland	hmo1@hutsvictoria.com Shannon Peters
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<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 firstly to our Hut Maintenance Coordinator at hmc@hutsvictoria.org.au, Wayne will respond or redirect enquiries to the appropriate area on your behalf.</p>	

DONATIONS

We appreciate that there is a great deal of financial stress in the community right now. If you are able, and wish to, you can make a donation or purchase via our online store.

We will need as much as possible in the kitty for rebuilding our lost huts.

The website is

<https://www.hutsvictoria.org.au/shop>

(to make a donation just select multiples of \$5 to make the total you wish to donate).

Contacting us

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Newsletter Contributions:

It's always exciting to receive a member contribution. Do you have a favourite hut story to share? Please send stories preferably by email. When sending photographs please don't include them in the text document but attach them as a separate .jpg or .pdf file, to editor@hutsvictoria.org.au.