The official newsletter of the MCAV

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Dates for the diary

This year, we are laying out our MCAV Board Meeting dates early so that you have plenty of notice to come along.

The dates are as follows:

MCAV BOARD MEET-INGS:

July 27, 11am @ Traralgon Vineyard in Traralgon pending Covid 19 restrictions lifting

MCAV AGM:

September 28, 11am @ a location to be confirmed.

Other dates:

Agriculture Victoria is running a free seminar on Autumn grazing management, and how to help your pastures recover after drought and bushfire.

It will take place at 7.30pm on May 13.

To register, contact Tess McDougall on tess.mcdougall@agriculture.vic

A word from the President, Bruce McCormack:

Hello all and welcome to another edition of The Yarner. Last edition all I did was talk about the bushfires and their devastating impact on all—hard to believe that just a fewmonths later we are all concerned with Covid 19 and its impact.

We had hoped to have an update on what was happening with our next Get Together, whether it would be scheduled for 2020 or in 2021. Covid has scuttled our plans once again, and we are not confident yet to make a decision either way. We will let you know as soon as anything concrete is decided.

Special thanks to John Andrews who has helped us so much post Get Together, sorting the masses of paper-work.

In other news, the MCAV provided a submission to the Bushfire Commission, which was emailed to members and is available on our website. I'd like to thank Graeme Stoney who spent hours working on the submission, going back over old documents and researching many papers. The result is a detailed submission that does him credit. There is a more detailed story on both our submission, and that made by Harry Treasure in the 1940s, later in The Yarner.

As you know, a few of us attended some meetings with DELWP and hunting representatives in regards to changes to the permissions between hunters and Grazing License holders. The meeting was to discuss changes being made by Minister Lily D'Ambrosio that will mean hunters in areas licensed under the Land Act will no longer be required to notify MCAV leaseholders of their intention to be out shooting. This was a move we did not agree with or support.

We were successful in stalling the timeframe of the changes to give graziers more notice, and in a further update to the situation, DELWP have agreed to pay for some signs for those affected by the changes. As president, one of the things I want to work on is building a stronger repoire with the public. It's great that we have members like you all, but in order to get our message out to a bigger audience we need to be out and about. I want people to know who we are, and what we stand for. I also want us to attend more public events to connect with people. We had booked in to go to the Man



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THE MOUNTAIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

Cheers Chain

When times are tough, the best thing we can do is stick together.

That's why the MCAV put together a 'Cheers Chain', a little video made up of contributed videos from our members and supporters.

Put together, it looks as though everyone is passing a beer along to president Bruce McCormack.

It's only a small thing, but it is our way of keeping our members connected in these times of isolation.

You can watch the video on our Facebook/ Instagram page, and its also available on our website home page.



Pictured here is president of the MCAV, Bruce McCormack, saying "cheers to keep-

Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria April / May 2020

HE YARNER

From Snowy River Festival, and were excited to be taking part for the first time. Unfortunately these guys had to cancel as well and have already come out publicly saying they will not re schedule until 2021-but we still hope to take part then.

Lastly, I'd just like to thanks all of those who continue to support the MCAV in ways big and small. Everyone is busy, but you all find time to help out, respond to emails when you can or to voice your opinion. Please don't hesitate to give me a call if there is something we

> can help out with, or if you have an idea for the MCAV.

Hope to see you sooner rather than later,



This cracking photo of Bruce comes from the archives of the Turner family. Bruce is pictured here at a MCAV protest in Melbourne. We aren't sure what year, but judging by the lack of grey in his hair it was a while ago!

Do you have information about William (Bill) Spargo?

The MCAV has been contacted by Stephen Whiteside, who is putting together a book on the life of Bill Spargo.

Stephen is looking for anyone that might have any information, photos or even good yarns that he could include.

"Dear MCAV members-

I am trying to find an article entitled 'Huts of the Bogong High Plains', by Ruth Lawrence. It was published in Voice of the Mountains No. 16, 1993.

I am writing a book about the life of William Benjamin (Bill) Spargo, and believe this article may contain important relevant information.

I live in Melbourne, where I work as a doctor (GP). I have skied at Hotham since childhood. I also spend a good deal of time bushwalking through the mountains in the summer, and cross country skiing in the winter.

I first heard of Spargo's Hut as a child, and first visited it in 1982.

I was stunned to see a mountain hut so crammed with personal possessions. It looked as though a whole family had lived there, not just a man.

In 1987 I decided to try to find out more about Bill Spargo and Evelyn Piper, the English widow who eventually married him. As you probably know, Spargo discovered a rich gold reef, which he named the Red Robin, in 1940.

I travelled far and wide through country Victoria with a little tape recorder, interviewing anybody I could find who knew one or both of them. Sadly, most of these people are no longer with us.

In 1988 I successfully nominated Spargo's Hut on Golden Spur for registration/protection with Heritage Victoria.





I put the book aside for many years to pursue other activities, but have returned to it in the last few years. It is almost finished now. I didn't interview many cattlemen, but did spend an enjoyable day at the home of Charlie McNamara. Vic Attridge was also very helpful.

I doubt if there would be anybody alive now who would have much reliable information to offer, but you never know. Any information is worth receiving and considering.'

If you have any information, please email Stephen direct at <u>swhiteside@netspace.net.au</u> or contact the MCAV for his phone number.



MCAV Board & People you can contact:

President: Bruce **McCormack**

Vice President: Ben Treasure

Secretary: Ken Heywood

Past President: Graeme Stoney

Interim Treasurer/ Associate Member: John Andrews

Special Projects Officer: Chris Commins

North East Branch reps: Lyric Anderson & Bruce Treasure

Mansfield Branch reps: Cass & Jack **McCormack**

Omeo Branch reps: Simon Turner & Darcy Fitzgerald

Gippsland Branch reps: Chris Hodge & Chris Cooper

Office Manager: Rhyll McCormack

Get Together Coordinator: Cass McCormack

Email:



Mountain Cattlemen call for a return to traditional forest management

RETURNING cattle to the Alpine areas of Victoria and an increase in 'cool burns' are being recommended by the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV) as a means to reduce bushfire fuel in the High Country.

Making their submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangement (the Bushfire Royal Commission), the MCAV has come up with six recommendations they want implemented into future fire management strategies

They not only include returning cattle to graze increased areas of the High Country – the groups champion cause – but also a change in the way residents are able to access their properties post- bushfire and the implementation of backburning programs based on traditional aboriginal techniques.

"It is clear that cattle grazing is one of the most effective tools to reduce bushfire fuel loads in some areas of the High country," MCAV president, Bruce McCormack, said.

"So it will come as no surprise that one of our recommendations includes this – but what the general public may not realise is that controlled burns are not carried out beyond a certain altitude, so in genuine 'high' country one of the only methods of fuel reduction is Alpine grazing."

The MCAV's submission, which is available on the group's website, details the on-the-ground experience garnered by cattlemen across generations.

"Our submission and recommendations come not from book learning and sitting behind a desk, but from more than 160 years of our families living and working in the forest," Mr McCormack said.



The MCAV have recommended Victor Steffensen, author of Fire Country, be invited to speak to the Bushfire Royal Commission.

What sets the MCAVs submission apart is the group is not focused just on returning cattle, but in incorporating a combined approach to the management of the entire Victorian High Country.

"Cattlemen learnt many of our fire management practices from Indigenous Australians," Mr McCormack said.

"It has been proven that Indigenous Australians used to burn the country regularly, and that is why the early explorers noted that the forests were "open and park like".

"We want the Alpine and State Forest areas to be in the best condition possible, and that comes from combining a number of strategies to get the best result."

The MCAV has suggested to the Royal Commission that Indigenous fire practitioner, Victor Steffensen, and historian Professor Bill Gammage, be invited to explain the positive effect cultural burning has on the health of the forests.

Former MCAV president, Graeme Stoney, undertook much of the research required for the group's submission - including a detailed look at past Bushfire Royal Commissions.

"In 1939 Judge Leonard Stretton led an inquiry into the Black Friday bushfires, and much of the current thinking is still based on what he found at the time," Mr Stoney said.

"It has become clear in recent times that much of what Stretton found was incorrect, such as that lightning starts few if any bushfires - but his report has been held up as something for the authorities and conser-Want to know more ? vation groups to follow ever since.

"As a group we have been constantly calling for a better system based on common sense and practical strategies to reduce fuel loads and therefore the intensity of bushfires," Mr Stoney said.

On page 7 of this edition of The Yarner, we feature Harry Treasure's presentation, made to Stretton in 1948.



Plans released for High Country Hall of Fame and Heritage Centre

DETAILED plans have been released for a High Country Hall of Fame (HCHF), a new business venture proposed by Merrijig Mountain Cattleman Charlie Lovick.

Proposed to be built on Mr Lovick's Merrijig property, the HCHF will be built to resemble a traditional bushman's hut – with reclaimed timbers and local materials used throughout.

Situated on the banks of the Delatite River, Mr Lovick is confident his Hall of Fame will become a destination in itself— a place where the Cattlemen and their history will be celebrated alongside other local legends.

"This will be like nothing Australia has ever seen," Mr Lovick said.

"I've visited all over the country, looked at all the museums, the entertainment centres and the halls of fame and I've been able to take the best elements of each and put them together under one roof."

Mr Lovick's vision is for a Hall of Fame that will feature legends from across the North East - think Ned Kelly and the Man From Snowy River— while in another section of his heritage centre there will be historical events covered and MCAV families celebrated.

"I'm talking things that people are interested in - local history, but also from across our region," Mr Lovick said.

"Local indigenous history, our native flora and fauna, the gold rush, pioneers, settlers, the timber industry – there will be a space for everything."

Mr Lovick plans for each community group to have access to their own 'stand', meaning the details of each display will be curated by those who know it best.

"I don't want to tell the story of our indigenous past, I want them to tell it," he said. "They know it best, after all."

Along with historical displays, Mr Lovick has plans to create a number of small feature films – to run on a loop in the HCHF – using his knowledge as a Mountain Cattlemen and as the Master of Horse in the Man From Snowy River movies.



A proposed High Country Hall of Fame, to be based at Merrijig, would heavily feature the MCAV in its displays. "People say Snowy River was so long ago, no one cares anymore," he said. "But Craig's Hut is the second most visited icon in the State – why do you think that is?

"Ask any local trail ride company and they'll tell you, people are as interested today as they ever were in Snowy River, and I was there for both movies – I owned 'the horse' himself, and that's what one of the movies will be about."

¹ There are plans for a state of the art educational facility, with interactive displays and touch screen technology.

A cafe and conference centre will be included, a booking facility for local tour operators, information on things to do in the local area as will

display 'stands' for new and emerging groups.

"I want this to be for the whole community," Mr Lovick said. "I'm just providing a place for it to be set up, but its about bringing people to Merrijig."

Outside, Mr Lovick intends to have working demonstrations of historical farming, an animal nursery, pony rides, children's playground, free barbeques, picnic areas and parking for buses and at least 30 cars.

Although his economic model predicts employment for three initially, Mr Lovick expects the popularity of the HCHF to mean he will be able to employ up to 10 locals within 12 months of operation.

"I know this country, and I know how to tell a good story," he said. "I want to preserve our Mansfield history, and our history of the MCAV, but also make it interesting for those who aren't from here.

"My plan for the High Country History Hub is that people will literally get a snapshot of everything in one location, from local food to where to stay, what to do and where to go."



Get to know the MCAVs favourite photographer, Rohan Rogers.

The MCAV is lucky enough to have the support of a wide variety of people, many of whom work tirelessly behind the scenes, Rohan Rogers is one of these people. You may not know Rohan himself, but there is no doubt you will recognise some of his fantastic photography; Here, Rohan talks about how he became involved:



Photographer Rohan Rogers

Growing up I didn't get the opportunity to attend the Cattlemen's Get Together for many reasons, the earliest I recall going was in the early 90's with some friends from Buchan. Then not getting a chance for many years until going to Licola with my Brother in 2013—but I have been a reasonably regular visitor since then.

I was extremely happy when, in 2017, the Cattleman's was held in Buchan, on the farm I grew up on, now owned by my brother Dale Rogers.

I don't think I had ever seen ten people standing around together on the property there, then I watched the crowds rolling in, in their thousands! It was an amazing weekend.

It was this weekend that brought me a lot closer to the MCAV, and the people in it rather than just the event.

I believe this is also where I was recognised as someone who was genuinely interested in the organisation, and my wish to help as best I can through my photography.

I created a poster of the Buchan event, which was auctioned off the following year at Omeo.

I was amazed that my work would be interesting enough for someone to bid on it, with Danny Phegan becoming the proud owner.

Over the last couple of years the opportunity I've been afforded in becoming an official photographer for the MCAV has brought me great pride. I get to be a part of a great weekend and document people's achievements (and some misad-ventures), both on and off the field.

The heritage and history of the Cattleman's I find fascinating. The hardships and trials that have been faced over the generations, the ingenuity born of necessity, and the sheer grit and determination needed just to carry on, sometimes for years, sometimes for mere hours that feel like a lifetime.

These men, women, and children which were once so well recognised in the Australian culture are becoming more and more pushed aside and scorned by people who neither know, nor understand their importance, both in our history, our present and our future.

Through my photography I hope that not only can you enjoy and appreciate some of the lasting memories that are made at the Cattleman's Get Together, but I also hope to be able to share these to a wider audience so that they may become more interested, engaged, and understanding of the people in the bush that can offer so much to this country.

If you see me at the Cattleman's, come and say 'G'day'. I enjoy catching up with familiar faces, meeting new people, and hearing your stories.

If you have anything you'd like photographed, whether it is something really small and detailed, an item or place that is significant for you or your family, or large sweeping landscapes of your property, and anything in between and beyond, feel free to contact me.



One of Rohan's classic Get Together images



A classic bush hut







Rohan's business is called Blowfly Hill Photography. He can be contacted by phone on 0430 003 544 or on email at:

info@blowflyhillphotography.com



Snowy River-38 years on

IT was the movie that made the MCAV a household name, and on March 20 it was the 38th anniversary of The Man From Snowy River premier in Mansfield.

Unveiled to much local fanfare at the Mansfield Cinema, now the site of the Mansfield Foodworks complex, the movie grossed about \$17.2 million at the Australian box office, equivalent to more than \$62m in 2020.

It was the third highest-grossing Australian film between 1964 and 2009, second only to Crocodile Dundee (1986) and Babe (1992), and has long been credited as putting Mansfield on the map.

More than anything, the movie helped launch the romantic image of a Mountain Cattlemen, first penned by Banjo Patterson, into the main stream public.

Suddenly everyone in Australia wanted to wear an akubra, visit the High Country and don an oilskin.

Starring a host of MCAV riders and crew, the movie went on to spawn a sequel in the late 1980s with the home of the main character, Craig's Hut, now one of Australia's most recognised tourist destinations.

According to the book 'Film Induced Tourism', by Sue Beeton, the original Snowy River saw a 10 fold increase in horse related tourism operators in the region, with as many as 30 operators at its peak.

Although he is now better known for his role as a Frank Sinatra crooner, the man himself Tom Burlinson has been quoted as saying the movie still continues to impact his career almost four decades later.

"The Man from Snowy River is why some people come to my shows," he said.

"They love it and want me to sign their DVD, or an old photograph from way back when the movie was first released.

"It was a fantastic career opportunity as a young actor, and it was hugely successful, much more than we ever imagined when we were making it.

Up until recently, Tom still returned to the Mansfield Shire as part of an annual 'Snowy River' trail ride with the Lovick family, and was also part of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Get Together at Buttercup.

"I don't get on a horse all that often, but I did find during my preparation with that movie that I had a natural ability with horses and on horseback," Mr Burlinson said.



_ "I'm not as good a er as I was made look in that film,



Left: A poster released in Mansfield at the Man From Snowy River II premier and right, a magazine cover following the Buttercup Get To-





43rd edition of the Voice of the Mountains out now

Each year, the Mountain Cattlemen's puts out an annual magazine known as the Voice of the Mountains, or VOM for short.

It is compiled by long time editor Debbie Squires, who spends hours putting together a range of articles that include photos, historical documents, stories and much more.

This year, the women of the Treasure family feature on the front cover—with board member Lyric Anderson and her daughter Rhythm front and centre. Alt-

hough the VOM points out "they're not all Cattlemen, women get the job done too" it is worth noting that some years ago the MCAV considered

changing their Cattle"men" to something more inclusive—but it was a resounding no from all concerned, as it was felt the name was not necessarily gender specific but rather a term that had evolved to mean so much more than a gender role.



Let's avoid a National Disaster - Extracts from Harry Treasure's presentation to the 1946 Stretton Enquiry

I am a grazier and work in conjunction with my sons on the Dargo High Plains. I have been there following this pursuit all my life. We rent about 100,000 acres of rough mountainous country from the Crown, 5,000 acres of which we have fenced into nine paddocks with good substantial wire fences, erected under permission from the Lands Department. We have stable, garage, nine lots of stock yards, huts for camping and two dwelling houses.

From the seventies until the year 1918 I do not remember a bad bush fire.

Then the ridges and gullies were quite open and comparatively clear underneath the growing timber. Grass was everywhere from the rivers to the mountain tops. There were miners, diggers, prospectors, and stockmen all through the hills, and bush fires were very common, but they never killed any timber. The prospectors lit fires to clean up the country so that they may find reefs, while others seemed to start fires in the rough places for the purpose of cleaning it up. Restrictions on burning did not seem to be enforced until about the year 1910. It was impossible for a fire to burn far or fierce, and no growing timber was ever destroyed.

During the year 1918, after a period of little or no fires, we had a very bad fire during mid-summer, fanned by a north-west wind. This fire was travelling easily 30 miles a day, and it burned a lot of our fences about the Dargo Plains and killed a lot of good woollybutt timber; but fortunately the cattle seemed to escape.

During the summer of 1926 we had another bad fire, which came from we don't know where, and fanned by a north-west wind. This fire was going through the air in leaps of from five to eight miles by pieces of burning bark driven in the wind. It killed a lot more of the wollybutt timber, along with a fair amount of snow gums. It burned more fences, but very few cattle were caught in it.

The next and most disastrous fire that I ever knew or heard of was during January of 1939, after a period of 13 years in which was accumulated a great amount of debris, such as dry grass, leaves, bark, fallen timber, undergrowth, etc. This fire almost cleaned up the balance of the woolybutt timber, including the young saplings that had grown after the 1926 fire. It also killed a large percentage of snow gum timber, and scarcely left a green leaf on any tree in its path. It destroyed considerably over 1000 head of cattle belonging to my sons and myself. It burned the greater part of our fences and it was with great difficulty that we saved the homestead, through the strenuous efforts of eight men. This fire travelled at from 50 to 80 miles in one day. Apart from the great loss of timber air and lighting up many miles ahead which will take from 80 to 100 years to grow up again, the mountain country through which this fire spread is practically ruined from a grazing point of view, as wherever the timber was killed the seedlings and suckers have grown so densely that it is impossible to ride through a lot of it, and cattle will not stay on it.

I wish to point out that the woollybutt and mountain ash timber will, after being killed, only grow from seed -it never suckers. After a fire the young seedlings come up in millions and if a second fire takes the young saplings before they are old enough to flower and shed more seed, the timber would be finished for all time. At the present moment the country burned by the 1939 fire is covered with millions of seedlings, which are from eight to fifteen feet high and it would be most disastrous if another, fierce summer fire took them now.



If debris is hoarded up through the bush for a number of years we are only making a cane for our own backs, and paving the way for a National Destruction.

A light fire, however, would protect them; I would suggest that for the high mountainous country - that judicious burning be resorted to.

For instance, during the autumn and spring (mostly in the autumn) that many patches and breaks be burned; and tills to be done by the grazier. I firmly believe that it will be impossible to prevent fires altogether.

They will start, and if by no other cause lightning will start them. I can honestly state that I know of a dozen different fires started by lightning, four of which were in my paddocks. If debris is hoarded up through the bush for a number of years we are only making a cane for our own backs, and paving the way for a national destruction, namely, our forest timber.

Upskilling the next generation of farmers - MCAV members encouraged to apply for \$10,000 farming grant

YOUNG farmers from across Victoria are being encouraged to take advantage of an opportunity to expand their skills, knowledge and agricultural expertise through a new schola\$10,000 scholarship program.

Earlier this month Minister for Agriculture, Jaclyn Symes, launched this year's Upskill and Invest Young Farmers Scholarships, which allows successful applicants to access study and training as well as to invest in on-farm initiatives and further professional development.

The program offers scholarships of up to \$10,000 to support training and study in areas such as business and risk management, genetics and pasture management development.

Once recipients complete their studies, they will receive further funding of up to \$5,000 to invest in putting their new skills into practice in fields such as professional development and business planning, or to invest in on-farm practices, equipment and technology.

"The future success of our agriculture sector rests with our young farmers – they bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the table that are based on lived experience and real passion for the sector," Ms Symes said.

"The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of Victoria's farmers and food producers and supporting the work young farmers are doing will help us meet the growing demand for Victoria's high-quality produce from right around the world."

Applications for this year's round of scholarships are now open to farmers aged 35 or under who have been working in farm businesses for at least three days a week for the past three months, with at least two years total experience onfarm.

To find out more about the program and to apply for a scholarship, visit vic.gov.au/youngfarmers.

Deer cull program to kick off in May

TWO separate attempts to control deer numbers in the North East will be carried out by Parks Victoria this month.

From May 14 - 20, and again from May 25 - 30, contractors will be shooting on the Howitt and Wellingotn Plains as they try to curb an ever growing deer problem.

In a letter addressed to key stakeholders, Alpine National Park Deer Control Parks Victoria said that endangered Alpine Peatlands were at risk of being destroyed.

"Lightning strikes on 28 February 2019 started bushfires in the Alpine National Park burning around 114,000ha, which included areas of endangered alpine peatlands," the letter reads.



Australia By Chris Long

When the shearing sheds are silent and the stock camps fallen quiet

When the gidgee coals no longer glow across the outback night

And the bush is forced to hang a sign, 'gone broke and won't be back'

And spirits fear to find a way beyond the beaten track

When harvesters stand derelict upon the wind-swept plains And brave hearts pin their hopes no more on chance of loving rains When a hundred outback settlements are ghost towns overnight When we've lost the drive and heart we had to once more see us right

When 'Pioneer' means a stereo and 'Digger' some backhoe And the 'Outback' is behind the house, there's nowhere else to go And 'Anzac' is a biscuit brand and probably foreign owned And education really means brainwashed and neatly cloned

When you have to bake a loaf of bread to make a decent crust And our heritage once enshrined in gold is crumbling to dust And old folk pay their camping fees on land for which they fought And fishing is a great escape; this is until you're caught

When you see our kids with Yankee caps and resentment in their eyes

And the soaring crime and hopeless hearts is no longer a surprise When the name of RM Williams is a yuppie clothing brand Not a product of our heritage that grew up off the land

When offering a hand makes people think you'll amputate And two dogs meeting in the street is what you call a 'Mate' When 'Political Correctness' has replaced all common sense When you're forced to see it their way, there's no sitting on the fence

Yes, one day you might find yourself an outcast in this land Perhaps your heart will tell you then, 'I should have made a stand' Just go and ask the farmers that should remove all doubt Then join the swelling ranks who say, 'Don't sell Australia out'

"Many of these peatlands have now burnt three times in the past 21 years: Peatlands can recover from fire but during the recovery period physical disturbance to soils/peat and regenerating vegetation as well as disturbance to hydrology need to be limited as they can seriously impede recovery.

"Deer pose a threat to the recovery of the alpine peatlands in the recently burnt areas by means of trampling, wallowing and grazing."

Two individual contractors will work from late afternoon until around midnight, shooting in the area on foot.