

Kosciuszko Huts Association Inc.

NEWSLETTER

WWW.KHUTS.ORG

NO: 194 WINTER 2022



Foremans Hut - Photo : Bill Euston

(Insert : Foremans Hut, circa 1940 - Photo : Frank Leyden)

**CELEBRATING 50 years of caring for, and preserving,
the mountain huts and homesteads of Kosciuszko
and Namadgi - 1971 - 2020**

Annual General Meeting The KHA held its annual general meeting on 14 May 2022 in Jindabyne at the Rydges Horizons, Snowy Mountains.

Members heard from president Simon Buckpitt on the association's achievements over the past year which included advocating to rebuild huts lost in the 2020 bushfires, redesign of the association's website and development of members' heritage skills.

Staff from NSW National Parks attended the event and delivered presentations on the progress of hut rebuilds in the Snowy Mountains.



Of particular interest to AGM attendees were the design elements and technology being used in new huts to reduce the risk of losing them to bushfires in the future.



400 +
Memberships



75 +
Huts

KHA Positions 2022–2023

Committee:

Office Bearers	Name	Email	Phone
President	Simon Buckpitt	president@khuts.org	0403 917 633
Vice President	Jonathan Wills	vicepresident@khuts.org	
Secretary	Patsy Sheather	secretary@khuts.org	0411 409 835
Treasurer	Bob Anderson	treasurer@khuts.org	0412 020 150
Membership	Pip Brown	membership@khuts.org	0431 956 426
HMO Support	Alan Pottie	hmosupport@khuts.org	
HMO Jagungal	Simon Plum	hmojagungal@khuts.org	0415 159 910
HMO Tantangara	Peter Charker	hmotantangara@khuts.org	0449 663 769
HMO Snowy	Marion Plum	hmosnowy@khuts.org	0411 407 441
HMO Namadgi	Jean Hammond	hmonamadgi@khuts.org	0413 372 476
Newsletter	Pauline Downing	communications@khuts.org	0421 313 992
Huts History	Stefan De Montis	history@khuts.org	0412 957 761
Ordinary Members	Name	Email	Phone
Committee	Jodie Lane	committee@khuts.org	
Committee	Graham Cummings	committee@khuts.org	
Committee	Colin Howie	howiecolin19@gmail.com	0419 248 565
Committee	Callum Wills	committee@khuts.org	

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We held our Annual General Meeting on Saturday the 14th of May, 2022. Thankyou to all those who attended. Whilst meetings are never the highlight of anyone's lives, the AGM is the best face-to face opportunity we have to discuss highlights and progress against our goals.

I covered off in some detail what we have achieved and what we are looking at doing in the future. I examined these with respect to the following:

- The provision volunteer support to the Parks Services for the Conservation of Huts.
- Maintaining traditional knowledge and skills
- Researching and documenting history and heritage
- Raising public awareness
- Advocacy for the huts

I consider these five things the pillars of KHA. They embody our objectives in a succinct outcome focussed way. I will endeavour to elaborate on each of these pillars in subsequent Newsletters.

In 2018 the Committee developed a 5 Year Strategy which detailed specific activities to be pursued with respect to meeting KHA objectives. Suffice to say bushfires and Covid were big disrupters to this 5 Year Strategy. I also spoke about what we have learnt from this plan and the need for the new committee to review our immediate operating and longer-term plans in light of lessons learnt.

We received an excellent update from NSW NPWS on the progress of the hut reconstructions in NSW. This was a great precursor to the HMO updates.

I spoke about the post-fire issues in the ACT. We need to continue to advocate for reconstruction as the most appropriate way to respect the heritage and community valunes. Since the AGM more information has come to light through Freedom of Information and it does not shine a positive light on the ACT Government. Again, a matter you will see more about from me in the future. In my view, this single issue is the thing the Association needs to focus on the most over the next few years.

A new Committee was elected and all positions were filled.

After the meeting, many adjourned to the Jindabyne Bowling Club for dinner. More than anything I enjoyed the dinner because it was there that I had the opportunity to catch up with friends, both old and new.

Simon Buckpit President

Membership Fees are due July 1st

HAVE you CHECKED your MEMBERSHIP STATUS???

Contact Pip Brown
membership@khuts.org

**Kosciusko Huts Association
GPO Box 2509
Canberra ACT 2601**

Instructions for the above can be found under the 'RENEW' menu item on the website.

For other information etc about KHA check these sites:

Website KHuts.org

<https://www.facebook.com/KosciuskoHutsAssociation/><https://www.instagram.com/p/BvkV3MphnSZ/?hl=en>

IMPORTANT: Membership Renewals

Please assist your volunteer membership team by renewing your membership by one of our preferred methods below.

Our preferred method is to have all members renew by Visa/Mastercard through our website. You can use either a credit card or debit card. This method is fully automatic, secure and requires zero volunteer effort.

Card payment, online please go to: www.khuts.org and *LOGIN*, then click on *RENEW*. If you cannot pay by card, then please make a direct deposit into the KHA *NEW* Beyond Bank account.

Account Name: KHA Inc

BSB: 325185

Account: 03848796

Reference: (your name)

If you have paid by bank transfer, please register your payment on our website, *LOGIN* then click *RENEW*, click *Renew for one year*, click *Register a Direct Deposit Payment*.

Cheers, Bob Anderson - KHA Treasurer

KHA (formed in 1971) provides volunteer support to the NSW and ACT Government to preserve the 'settlement era' vernacular architecture of the northern Australian Alps as part of the continuum of total landscape management.

We are one of only a few organisations in Australia dedicated to the preservation of traditional Australian bush building skills. We research and document history associated with these vernacular structures and conduct public information sessions in conjunction with the various parks services and other bodies to raise awareness of this history. We are acknowledged on both the NSW NPWS and ACT PCS Volunteering websites and we have a demonstrated track record of performance.

Cover: **Foremans Hut** is famous for the brick chimney that remains prominent today, beside the Snowy River Crossing below Charlottes Pass. **Also known as** Wallaces

Brief History Foremans was built in the 1920s by Mr Blyton for Dr Foreman of Wagga Wagga. It was later used by Wallace for grazing.

HMO Marion Plum accepts the commemorative plaque (pictured) presented to KHA by Illawarra Alpine Club



Jonathon Mandl coordinator for IAW presenting the plaque. Behind me is the Ranger for the area, Campbell Young, who was instrumental in the logistics side of things, liaising with Gaylene and myself to “nut out” the best way to hold this type of event in a wilderness area that wasn't a work party as such. He then worked with Tristan Ricketson, who replaced Pam O'Brien as Southern Ranges Branch Manager, to supply 3 NPWS vehicles with drivers on the Saturday to take members into Cascade and then on to Tin Mines huts. This was a full 8-9 hr day for them all. I was fortunate enough to be able to accompany them.

The celebrations were held over 4 days at Easter with some club members hiking and cycling into the huts and staying overnight at Teddys and Cascade huts.

Pat and Sue Edmonson (seated in the photo) have set such an amazing example of dedication, resilience and hard work over the 50 years for both IAC and KHA. Having 4 generations involved in the caretaking of the huts is proof in itself of the love and family togetherness, it's quite inspiring.

The base for the club was at the Bingarra Centre, Jindabyne. The event finished with afternoon tea and a roast dinner on the Sunday followed by speeches and presentations. I was proud to be a part of it and to represent KHA.

IAC-KHA-NPWS 50th Celebration (Illawarra Alpine Club IAC)

A couple of points – the IAC- KHA-NPWS 50th celebration was a success with four generations of Edmondsons and 4 generations of Charkers attending together with three generations of Langs (representing four generations over the 50 years), and the three generations of Irvines were represented by Narelle and Karen Irvine.

Marion Plumb spoke well on behalf of KHA as did Rob Gibbs representing NPWS.

Pat and Sue were given the credit they deserve for the inspiration they have provided to many in supporting respect for the bush, the huts and the heritage of these sites.

Some walked and camped at Dead Horse Gap (DHG) - Teddys (Friday night) and Cascades (Sat night).

Others walked and camped at Tin Mines and hitched back to Cascades before walking out.



A special NPWS vehicle transported a group of mature veterans to Cascades and Tin Mines on Saturday.

All visitors to Cascades were served billy tea and home made cookies on arrival with a story or three thrown in.

Illawarra Alpine Club KHA NPWS 50th Celebration

At about 11:00 on the 23rd October 1952 Constable McPherson of the Jindabyne Police received a report from a stockman that Charlie Carter had been found dead at the Tin Mines on 22 October 1952.

Charlie Carter's Hut sits nearby Tin Mines Hut like a little brother. Carter's is the last remaining of seven small huts built for the Tin Mines syndicate, and it is now named for the eccentric character who took up residence after the syndicate left.

Charlie was found dead in the hut in 1953, Constable Bruce Lang of Jindabyne retrieved the body and started off to Jindabyne in heavy rain, the rivers in flood. Charlie's body, in rigor mortis, slipped from the horse and floated down the frigid waters! Bruce jumped in, fetched the body and the story has been shared a thousand times since.

Constable Bruce Lang was one of what is now four generation families who, with KHA and National Parks and Wildlife Services, have cared for the bush and huts of the high country for 50 years.

He was the first generation of Langs, who along with Edmonsons, (Pat and Sue) and Charkers (Frank and Olwyn) celebrated four generations of mad hutter members of Illawarra Alpine Club as KHA caretakers of Cascades, Teddys and Tin Mines (including Charlie Carters).

The 50th anniversary was celebrated over the Easter weekend, attended by four generations of Edmondsons and Charkers, three generations of Langs (representing Bruce) and representatives of the Irvine family (3 generations). Over 70 people attended the celebrations.

1. Niribi Mathews (Charker), Flynn and Llewyn



2. From L 2 R Murray Lang (my brother), Angus Lang, Jenny (nee Lang) Peter Charker, Tarun Charker (son) with his daughters Mabel and Briar. Bruce (Boris) Lang in spirit.

3. Peter and Jenny Charker



Charlie Carters Hut 2022

Peter Charker
HMO Tantangara

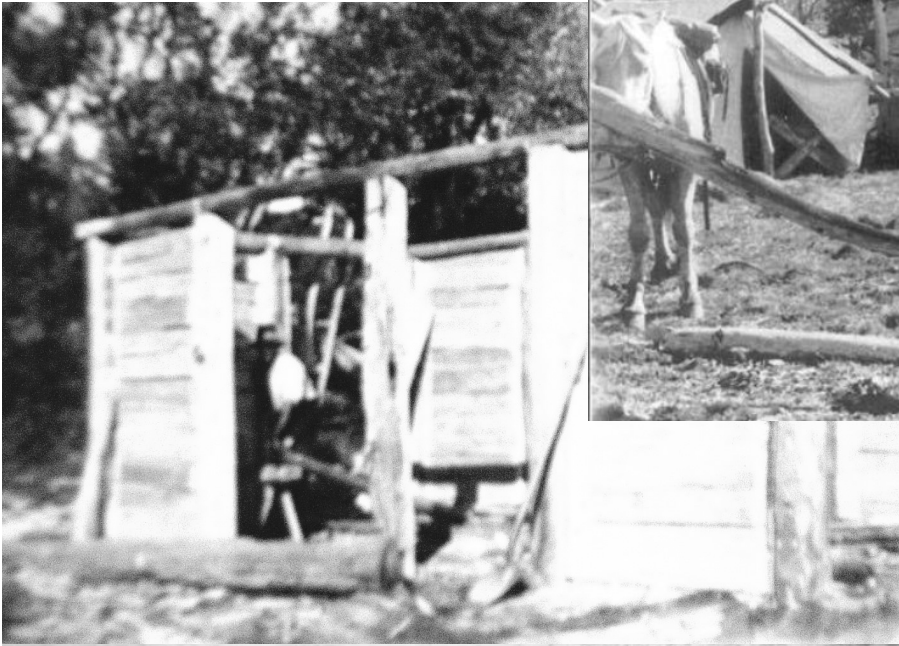
Continued from prev. page

On Sunday night, Pat recalled the story of how the IAC came to take care of the huts. It had always been a club that was not only keen on skiing, but also on the mountains and the bush. So when stories were heard of the sorry state of the huts IAC applied to adopt Cascades and Tin Mines Hut. KHA was born about the same time.

For fifty years, on many Easter weekends, working parties have kept the huts going. Tin Mines, Cascades and Teddys are a testament to IAC, KHA and NPWS working together – it is a good feeling.



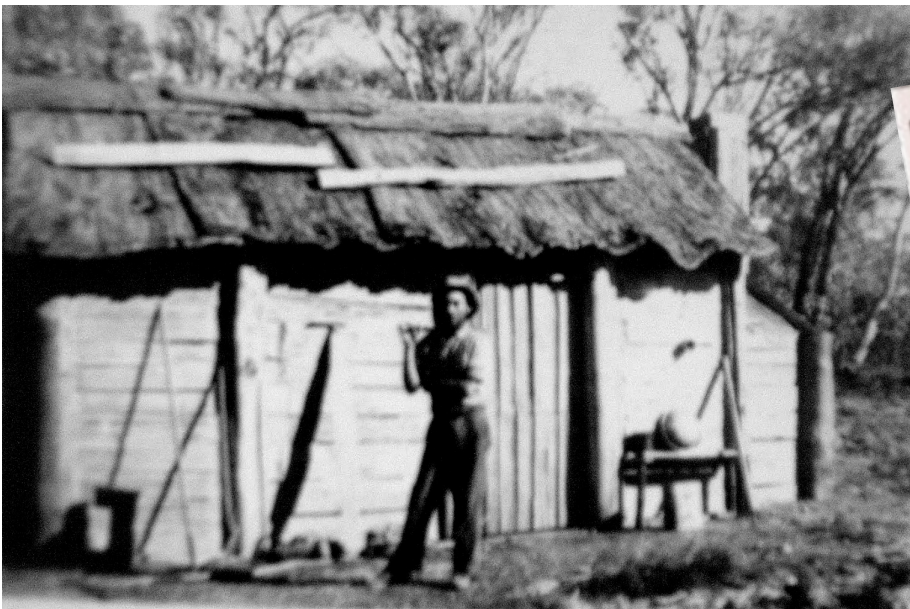
CASCADE HUT circa 1938



This photo essay is compiled with images donated to Graham Scully by Ken Nankervis. It shows the building of the stockman's hut in 1938, in particular the unique way of transporting the roofing bark by pack horse.

It was built for the Nankervis family by Rob Benson and has been cared for by the Illawarra Alpine Club - the Club celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year of caring for several huts. i.e. the Tin Hut Complex, Cascade, Stockwhip...

Teddies, Cascade, Tin Mines and
Charlie Carters



SAWYERS REST HOUSE RISES FROM THE ASHES

Rebuilding 11 of the huts lost in the 2020 Bushfires is underway

The efforts of firefighters saved many huts in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) from the catastrophic 2020 bushfires, but unfortunately [11 historic huts were burnt \(Delaney's, Sawyers, Four Mile, Happys, Brooks, Round Mountain, Bradley/O'Briens, Vickerys, & 2 Linesman huts\)](#) and one hut was damaged (Harveys). After an [extensive assessment process, the decision has been made to rebuild these huts.](#)



Ranger Megan Bowden has taken on the role of Project Officer, and with carpenter Roger Rosenbloom and field officer Peter Dow they will lead the rebuilding of these important heritage assets.

Rebuilding of the first hut, The Rest House at Sawyers Hill is almost complete. NPWS officers & volunteers have reconstructed the board and batten hut on the Snowy Mountains Highway near Kiandra despite some challenging mountain weather. Known to anyone who has made the drive from Tumut to Cooma, the original Rest House was built in 1910 to provide shelter for coach travellers who used the old Kiandra Road. The mailman Henry Bolton used to change from his horse to skis at The Rest House when delivering the mail to Kiandra in winter. Weather pending, The Rest House should be finished sometime in June and efforts will turn to preparations for the other huts.

Following the fires, NPWS officers assessed and recorded fire damage, preserved original features where possible, including chimneys, walls and beams and consulted with groups such as the Kosciuszko Huts Association and descendants of the hut builders.

A plan was developed and agreed in consultation with Kosciuszko Huts Association caretaker groups and families associated with the huts. Throughout the project NPWS will enlist the aid of staff, contractors and volunteers, tradespeople and artisans trained in traditional construction techniques. This will enable continuation of heritage building skills where appropriate such as splitting slabs with a maul and froe and log cabin construction which can also be taught to the next generation to help keep these skills alive.

Volunteers wishing to assist please contact srhutsrebuild@environment.nsw.gov.au

Newly built SAWYERS HUT under its inaugural snow fall



Hi Graham & Deidre

How are you, The challenges of rebuilding in the mountains, the guys pulled out yesterday, hope to go back on Thursday & wash down chimney bricks when it will be a balmy -3 to 2 degrees (it currently feels like -4) & need a couple of fine days end of next week to finish roof (fingers crossed). Have moved into a Tumut shed where we will start transporting logs/timber for prefabrication of Vickery's & Bradleys.

Megan Bowden

KHA AGM May 14th 2022

NPWS Garry McDougall works report.

Seamans Hut

External rockwork on the whole of the hut needed repointing, it was a huge job, very time consuming, and was mostly completed.

Rear wall rafter ends were rotten and were replaced with steel ends, evidently looks great.

Whites River Hut

Pot belly stove removed replaced by new Kalora wood fire.

Disappointment Spur Hut

Pot belly stove from WR hut was installed, along with an opening window. CGI sheeting replaced rotting weatherboard cladding on front wall to weatherproof the hut. Salvaged weatherboards used to replace rotten ones on rear wall until new weatherboards can be sourced.

Schlink Hilton Hut

Replacement of the western wall window. New Kalora wood fire on site, yet to be installed.

Tin and Mawsons Huts

A new Kalora wood fire is onsite at both huts, yet to be installed. Also some materials are there for future works at Mawsons which involves installing a floor in the woodshed area.

O'Keefes Hut – new Kalora wood fire installed.

FUTURE PLANNED WORKS

Valentines Hut

Major works required.

Schlink Hilton Hut

Replace fascias and external cladding, possibly replace some windows.

O'Keefes Hut

Replace back step.

Kidmans Hut

Door frame, a chimney support and latch all need replacing.

Pretty Plain Hut

Door needs replacing.

Boobee Hut

Needs 2 broken window panes replaced, Garry hopes to get to that before winter.

HMO Snowy AGM May 2022 Report

Marion Plum

Caretakers conducted work parties consisting of regular maintenance and minor repairs at the following huts.

Daveys Hut - Disappointment Spur Hut

Horse Camp Hut - Kidmans Hut

Schlink Hilton Hut

Disappointment Spur and Schlink Huts had extra work done by NPWS staff.

Bullocks Hut complex has had treatment for Rising damp which is now completed.

Stables are almost finished following major reconstruction works.

NPWS Ranger Henri is liaising with Heritage consultants regarding future major works on the other buildings.

We will call for volunteers once we know how we can help, and when. It's a beautiful site on the banks of the Thredbo River and easy to get to.

LETTERS and EMAILS

From Bill Euston

Hi Pauline,
Another great issue!
I love it.

will get it printed out so I can
read it again and again. . . . !

But! whoops! Someone has put
summer & winter pics of Albina
Hut with the caption "Rawson's
Hut" on it?? Someone missed this
LOL !

Never mind, maybe no one will
notice? Only the Oldies?
Maybe a correction in the next
monthly?

still hoping to get to the AGM,
just crossed fingers at the
moment.

Cheers Bill

**** * Double OOPS! Bill. It may have been
me. I will have to check and confess!**

Editor

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## **DONATIONS Many Thanks**

Jeffrey Neilson

Caroline Wren

Steve Drummond

Justin White

Natalie Riordan

And to

**Geoff Giles - *Special Thanks***

## NEW MEMBERS - Welcome!

| First Name | Last Name | Subscribed |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Ela        | Majocho   | 30/5/2022  |
| Mark       | Grundy    | 30/5/2022  |
| Rob        | Mahood    | 28/5/2022  |
| Ben        | Jordan    | 25/5/2022  |
| Brian      | Combridge | 16/5/2022  |
| Jodie      | Lane      | 5/5/2022   |
| Callum     | Wills     | 5/5/2022   |
| Conrad     | Gibb      | 4/5/2022   |
| Thomas     | Moer      | 3/5/2022   |
| Peter      | Kohlhagen | 1/5/2022   |
| Nathan     | Brown     | 1/5/2022   |
| Simon      | Spinetti  | 1/5/2022   |
| Peter      | Bathgate  | 27/4/2022  |
| David      | Chitty    | 16/4/2022  |
| Alex       | Motyka    | 1/4/2022   |
| Doug       | Cross     | 27/3/2022  |
| Joachim    | Berger    | 22/3/2022  |

**From the Editor:** This edition is jam packed  
with stuff and stories about huts from rebirth to  
remembrance of huts lost, from reminisces to  
hopes. As you can see it took me to page 11 to  
find a place to squish in an Editorial.

Thank you the HMOs and caretakers who wrote  
their stories of their return to their hut after a  
long lock down  
caused by the  
pandemic COVID  
in its various  
guises - The  
Christmas edition  
is coming up in  
December and I  
need more, more,  
more please.

Pauline





**PAUL ROBERT DELANEY -  
ANTARCTIC MEDAL  
RECIPIENT 1997**

Paul made an outstanding contribution to the Australian Antarctic Program over four winters; serving with ANARE at Mawson station in 1979 and 1996, and Davis station in 1989 and 1993.



In 1996, in addition to his official duties as winter works foreman, Paul conducted a weekly Weddell seal inspection of the Mawson environs, noting numbers, sex and locations of seals. Paul was

**Paul Delaney** called in to see his windows safely installed in the Rest House & discuss Delaneys # 3 rebuild plans/program

*MEGAN BOWDEN PERS COMM GRAHAM SCULLY*

**Khuts.org Delaneys Hut** Located on the side of the Snowy Highway between Adaminaby and Tumut. It is readily accessible by car, but the turnoff after Sawyers Hill is not so evident. The hut was destroyed again in the January 2020 bushfires. The family name is confirmed, spelt Delaney. This hut was rebuilt after it was destroyed in the 2003 fires.

**Brief History** Delaneys was built in 1910 by James (Jim) Thomas Delaney for grazing his cattle from Buckenderra Station. James Thomas was the son of James Delaney of Buckenderry Station (its earlier name). Tom Bolton, the Kiandra mailman, often left his horse here, and went on to Kiandra over snow, using snowshoes.

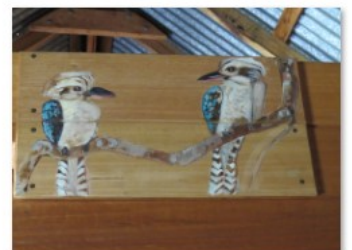
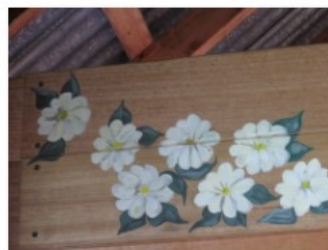
The hut was burnt down in the January 2003 fires, and the NPWS removed the materials and chimney "for safety reasons". The Hut Conservation Report of May 2005 recommended the hut be re-built under the new Burra Charter guidelines. The hut was successfully rebuilt in 2007, the first of six to be completed.

also the tide gauge monitor and carried out extensive ice surveys during winter. In addition, he was actively involved with the construction of a new penguin hide for research work at Béchervaise Island near Mawson station.

In 1993 at Davis Station, Paul was appointed Deputy Station Leader and Maintenance Carpenter, and was given the arduous task of constructing an ablution block in temperatures of minus 28C, completing the project on time to accommodate the 60 incoming summer expeditioners.

**<https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/australia-in-antarctica/australian-antarctic-medal/recipient/paul-robert-delaney>**

These beautiful hand painted decorations and the elegant dining chairs were consumed in the fire



## A Mountaineer's Wish

To ride those hills and valleys  
Where once I used to roam

And camp beneath the Sallies  
The place I call my home.

To ascend upon those ranges  
With their beauty rich and rare  
Where there's no fear of danger  
Around the hills of the Old Grey Mare

To hear again those stories  
Told by me good old mates  
Just to see again those glories  
Before they lock the gates

If moon or sun shines from above  
Or maybe a cloudy sky  
This is nature's home I love  
The place I wish to die

And as I breathe my last farewell  
If gone to heaven or down to hell  
Bury me deep so my bones will keep  
On a windy ridge to create no smell

Where the snow will snow  
And the wind will blow  
Where the dingoes howl quite clearly  
Midst the hills I love so dearly

Where the water runs like fountains  
And the wilderness to save  
To be buried in those mountains  
In a mountain lover's grave.

Jack Bolton 1992



I met Jack Bolton (John Harold Bolton) in the early 1990s. Over the next several years, he called us '*The Snowy Plain Mob*'. We are the caretakers of Daveys Hut where Jack spent a lot of his younger years as a stockman, and trapper. We spent a lot of time with Jack who enjoyed telling the yarns and stories of his youth and I enjoyed listening to them.

Jack was born Dec 25th 1914 on Snowy Plain. He was one of those old fashioned gentle men. His stories and poems that I recorded reflect his skills as a poet and permission was granted to use them by his sister Connie Williams (Bolton).

I read this poem at his funeral in All Saints Church Berridale. Jack was buried 25 years ago at in the far top corner of Gegeджерick Cemetery near Berridale. Jack's wife predeceased him by many years and lies beside him.

When his casket was lowered, with flowers atop (possums just LOVE fresh flowers), we witnessed a tradition of the high country locals. The men of the family shed their warm jackets and, shovels in hand, proceeded to cover over his grave.

Each man was particular in this respect ... then the most amazing closure, it snowed. His resting place has a magic view over the valley below it.

*Pauline Downing 2022*



# Disappointment Hut Work Party

March 11-13, 2022 -Chris, Kim, Nick & Mary

The current caretakers of this hut, along with superb “behind the scenes” support from KNP and KHA carried out significant hut maintenance over 3 days in March.

Four KHA members arrived on the Friday and got straight into the proposed re-alignment of the existing sleeping platforms.

This was the final(?) stage of adapting the hut to complement the re-installation of a small woodstove (the old Whites River one) and a functioning window from the KNP depot at Waste Point.

Thanks once again to the extremely dedicated and talented KNP carpenters; we walked into a work site of high-quality renovations beyond our resources.

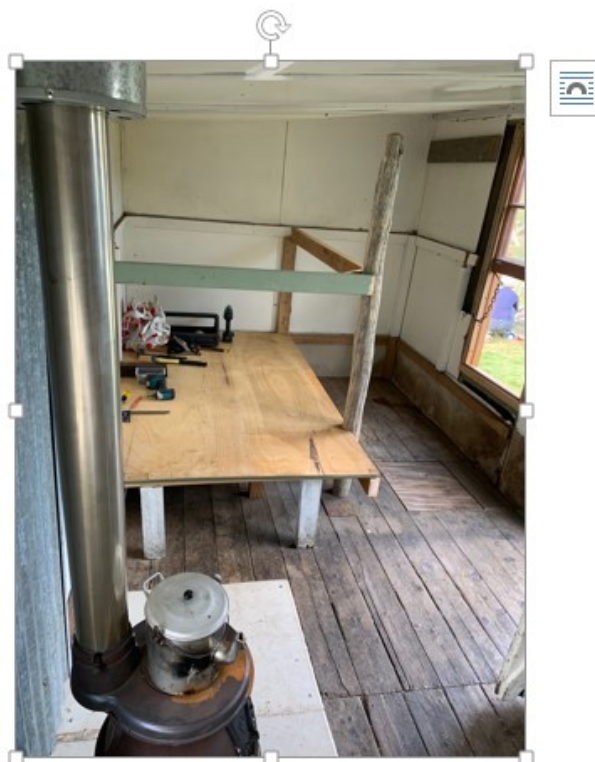
We removed the entire platform structure, secured floorboards and measured up with the aim of maximising, floorspace, sleeping space and stove side access (the hut is only 5m x 2.4).

Three days later we were in awe of what had been achieved. The hut had been transformed back to its early days as a shelter (with help from old photos) to reset from the weather, shelter when in need, or just sit back in silence and connect.

The hut can still sleep 4 with the top bunk for the agile! Excellent tent sites surround the hut also. Along with a precious undercover wood pile, the hut also has a small kitchen corner and various historical info.

We have returned since to enjoy its charms. Like many huts, it is a historic shelter that can be “brought back” with the support of passionate people and resources.

Drop in when you seek something different, you won't be disappointed.



*Well into construction on day 2*



*The “updated” floorplan.*

\*Footnote-There is NO toilet at this shelter. Visitors need to have a waste disposal plan

# Disappointment Hut

Recladding in progress by NPWS

Photos: Chris Smart



Kim with legs up with Mary in background

Below: Kim at pot belly.



Photo: Gary McDougall NPWS



WOW!!! Valentines never looked so good!



## Valentine Hut - Work Party Report 2022

After the unusually wet summer, simply making it to Valentine for our annual hut work party was an achievement in itself.

We typically arrange for our work party to occur in mid-December but we had to delay until mid-March.

An ideal weekend greeted us as we ventured in along Schlink fire trail, leaving a vehicle at the Valentine FT so we only needed to take 2 4WDs in. The wet summer had not quite extended into the Alps it seemed, as the track was in great condition and not wet. Our core group of my wife Susan and myself, my mother Marion (HMO for the Snowy region) and our 3 kids were joined on this occasion by KHA members Dave, Tim, Madonna and Kylie.

The summer had been kind to the hut, as the lack of sun was certainly kinder on our little red weatherboard hut. Most work parties at the former Snowy Hydro abode revolve around patch painting the exterior weatherboards. It will be due for a complete repaint in the next couple of years, but it is due for some significant work by the amazing NPWS crew to lift the SW corner and hence the removal of some boards is highly likely.

Over the course of the next 3 days, we sanded and painted the weatherboards that needed it. Repainted the door, cleaned out and restocked the firewood store, sugar-soaped the internal walls – also due next time around for a repaint – repaired the putty on the S and NW windows, cleared out drainage routes and removed a fire pit that was placed too close to the hut. We don't need another hut to rebuild, particularly through the poor decisions of a few to light fires very close to them.

Our kids took it upon themselves to repaint the 'love heart' onto the toilet seat, as the last one had been replaced after being damaged.

Overall, the hut was in wonderful condition. Well looked after by visitors – which, gauging from the log book, are growing in number each year, especially with Covid-related restrictions largely being removed. We offered home-cooked delights to the intrepid travellers passing through on foot and bike, which were gladly received and spent an enjoyable night with a couple of kind gentlemen who challenged our kids with Pokémon trivia. Thanks also to Geoff, an AAWT walker who kindly dropped off a new logbook at Grey Mare Hut for us.

Valentine is one of the most recognisable huts in the KNP and it is a privilege to be able to assist in maintaining it so it can endure for the years to come.

### **HMO Simon Plum, his sons (volunteers of the future) and HMO Marion Plum (Granny)**



## Bullocks Hut Upgrade

Marion Plum

Hi Pauline,

I called in at Bullocks Hut on Monday 28th March and there was Shane, the NPWS carpenter for the Snowy Region, busy trimming a log with an adze!



The stables were suffering from quite a lot of rot as can be seen in the photo, hence an almost complete rebuild is required. The gates have been salvaged and all of the cladding.

Cheers, Marion



## **Bullocks Hut/Bundilla Precinct Works**

**April 2022**

Works done to date and planned.

The four Mountain Ash support poles and the gate rest at the front of the stables building have been replaced. These poles were sourced from flood debris at Leatherbarrel Creek.

Sections of the timber framing were unable to be salvaged due to water ingress and also replaced with timber from the same flood debris and some from a supplier in Pambula.

Roofing sheets are being replaced with longer lengths of sheeting to move water away from the building. These will be installed shortly once the ordered sheeting arrives. These will be fixed with original or like for like screws.

A new flashing is being installed following consultation with Heritage to prevent water ingress into the timber frame.

The small concrete wall in the stables has been repaired including the corner which had fallen away, following the Engineers report produced by Barnson.

*Note: All the new timber and iron that has been used to replace the old has, and will be stamped with month/year to show replacement.*

Prior to winter, some make-safe works will be completed on the accommodation building, attempting to stabilize the chimney and the Eastern wall blockwork.

The Salt Poulitice needs to be applied to the walls to finish the damp course proofing. This will most likely commence after winter, prior to paint removal, re-pointing the walls and fixing the chimney.

Colour scheme is currently under discussion as it is preferred to have it returned to it's original colours.

**B**

## Frank and Jacks

On 21 February '22 we were allowed to do some maintenance on Frank and Jacks in terms of cleaning and minor repairs. Initially, we were going to conduct a work party at the site but this was overturned. Hence, with the Parks' permission, we were able to go in and undertake minor repairs, make an assessment and also do some cleaning. Given the track conditions vehicle access was limited. On my previous trip out to the hut, which was in January, my vehicle and a NP vehicle had to be winched out, and this was 200 metres from the hut ... and then another NP vehicle winched out, in the same area on a later day. We were fortunate to be able to drive close to the hut this time given there was still water around. The causeway down from Ready Cut had a good current which I had walked across the first time. There is a small section that has broken away so walking through and feeling where a vehicle like mine should go was necessary.

David and I worked continuously for two solid days tackling the jobs. We conducted an assessment under the building after opening up the fire netting. What we found were 5 out of 24 stumps blackened by fire but all were solid. This was on the eastern side of the building. During the fires this hut had the sprinkler system protecting it, otherwise it would have been totally destroyed. We found an additional two stumps required replacement as water affected their base on the southern side. There was one smaller stump that was broken on the eastern side that was not taking any weight.

All the weeds round the perimeter under the building were removed.

On my initial assessment one of the tasks was to repair the fire netting that had come away from the building on the northern side. A new piece was added and time spent sewing it completely together. Tedious but effective.

The toilet was in a disgusting state from bird excrement which covered the floor, toilet and walls. Lot of scrubbing on my behalf and she came up good.

Fire netting was then placed under the eaves which were open to the environment on the eastern, southern and western sides. On the northern side we need to replace the guttering and the fascia as this has deteriorated.

The bottom step had rotted away and was replaced with the same materials as the others.

The interior of the building was where we concentrated our time. The floor boards were scrubbed in all three areas, cutting through the built-up grime and revealing the original colouring. This took two days of scrubbing. We are planning to re-scrub and then seal at a later date when we can do all the requirements for the building. The original table was repaired using the original pieces and then cleaned. Fireplace and all the wood that was stored in the building was cut to shorter lengths and placed on a small pallet to protect the floor. The windows were cleaned and sealed as they were previously. The stumps that were in the main section that had a slab section lying across them were removed out to the enclosed verandah. There was evidence that the

larger one was used for cutting wood on it. In its place we made a low seating area with the slab.

We left a broom, dust pan, brush, rake and a bucket.

I managed to cut the long grass despite the wheel on the lawnmower breaking off half way through; around the entire building and to the toilet. I have raised concerns about the lack of clearance around the huts especially with the weeds and the undergrowth following the fires.

I have raised all the additional work with ACTNP and I am hoping that before the end of this year we will be able to complete all the necessary work including the tank stand.

A new water tank will be installed following Parks having been asked to undertake this as a safe work project and if there are any issues then it does not fall on me or KHA. The responsibility rests with Parks if the work is not done according to heritage standards. The other two sites were Hospital Creek and Waterholes that have work required. Brett said no work on the huts till Spring so that was all we were allowed to do and that is why I did not request help for cleaning.

**Jean Hammond,  
HMO Namadgi**



## **‘No, I don’t think eating Fats will quench my Thirst’**

**Trip Report Derschkos Hut Maintenance Jan 31 – Feb 3 2022  
by Nyrie Dodd -Robyn C, Rick C, John L, Colin R, and Nyrie D**

Getting this trip actually started was a huge achievement! National Parks decided on aerial culling of ferals at the exact same dates, and it took some artful negotiating by Robyn C to be allowed into the Park at all. At risk of being shot at from helicopters, we agreed to not leave the immediate vicinity of Derschkos Hut, so no interesting side trips were to be made in the Jagungal Wilderness area. Some prospective trip members decided it wasn’t worth it and cancelled. Others had trouble getting leave from work and didn’t make it.

The more stubborn of us wove a web of emails, phone calls and messages – packed our solar panels, power tools and battery chargers, rearranged medical appointments and medications, and drove determinedly into the summer thunderstorms. Carpooling meant that I squeezed myself into the rear seat of Rick and Robyn’s 4WD campervan and promptly fell asleep. I did wake up after Adaminaby to take in the post-apocalyptic fire grounds - burnt huts, burnt trees and an explosion of wildflowers and grasses.

We headed off the bitumen with the two 4WD vehicles in convoy, through the locked gate, and cruised around the Round Mountain. Drawn magnetically towards the ancient rocky mass of Jagungal, we rumbled down a long spur and across a couple of creeks to arrive at the cute-as-a button Derschkos Hut. The track was much improved from previous trips with truckloads of gravel and rocks having been laid in the boggy areas. I was delighted to see stands of snow gum and alpine heath unburnt, although there was plenty of dead wood still standing from the fires of 2003.

The hut itself is totally modern by Kosci hut standards as it was built in the 1950s for hydrologists employed by the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Management was handed over to NPWS forty years later in the 1990s. Rick and Robyn Counsel are the current Caretakers, through the Kosciusko Huts Association. Robyn has been involved in its care for many years since she was inspired on a mountain bike trip in the 1990s. I had never heard of Derschkos prior to last year, but I could definitely see how you could instantly develop an attachment! Due to COVID, Derschkos Hut had not had a maintenance trip in 3 years, so there was plenty to do.

We unpacked to discover who had forgotten what – from gas bottles to head torches, breakfast and lunch food, and there were even a missing sleeping bag and mat.....After communally redistributing what we had brought in, we settled into the delightfully cosy nook that is the locality of Derschkos. I put my tent up on the

nearby saddle with a perfect view of the valley towards Jagungal, and the wildflowers at my door.

The next 2 days we worked like Cinderellas – sanding, painting, nailing, removing empty swallow’s nests, cutting firewood, marking the water point for winter, washing and scrubbing the interior of the hut, hunting for the roof leak, and so on. The hut absolutely gleamed. Luckily it’s not a big building and we were done before I got housemaid’s knee.

Every morning tea Robyn produced cakes or cookies and every afternoon she conjured cold beers and delicious cheese plates. I began to want my own campervan!!

We played a very long card game and also entertained many opinions about whether or not the metabolism of fats by the human body eventually produces water. Perusing the hut log book, there were many compliments to the hut custodians, and a huge variety of visitors, from solo walkers or mountain bikers to high school groups and skiers. In one year, more than 100 parties had made an entry in the book.

The swallows that we didn’t see at all by day somehow convened a noisy protest at the hut every night regarding the missing nest, and so I was pleased to be able to sleep through all that by camping on the ridge.

By the fourth day, I was starting to go feral – picking alpine mint for tea, scoping out congregations of murnong (yam daisy) and trying to engage the ever present mountain in conversation. Others were keenly trying out various gadgets including a battery powered hot shower, and the GPS capability of the mini Inreach. We packed up and convoyed back via a delightful scenic drive, taking in nearly all the huts along the Swampy Plains River, some fabulous fishing spots, a power station or two, and also the very fascinating Major Clews Hut. Robyn checked in with NPWS in Khancoban, and we spent our final night in Jindabyne pooling our remaining foods for a truly delicious feast. As always, I left the Snowy Mountains with my mind full of plans to come back – going to Derschkos Hut over winter is now a high priority; its gonna be one heck of a ski trip, and there won’t be flies!

### Summary

I highly recommend this trip for workaholics, solar gadget geeks, problem solvers and wildflower enthusiasts. Stay away if gun-totin’ helicopters, or the lack of a sleeping bag, doesn’t make you burst out laughing. Also don’t come if you always win at cards!

**Nyrie Dodd**



Derschkos Hut Work Party - Jan/Feb 2022



## Kosciuszko huts to rise again

**Matthew Higgins**

The bushfires of early 2020 that tore through parts of Kosciuszko National Park destroyed several historic huts. In January of that year, I wrote in this column about the places lost. Well, the good news is that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has agreed to rebuild a large number of the lost buildings.

Prior to the 2003 fires which burned many huts, the NPWS policy was not to allow rebuilds. However a cultural heritage review found that lost places still have social significance for the community. Besides, fire has been a part of the mountain story for ages and many historic huts have been rebuilt in their lifetimes anyway, due to fire or decay or other reasons.

Perhaps the happiest element of the recent decision will be the rebuild of Four Mile Hut near Kiandra. Built by gold miner Bob Hughes in 1937, its slab walls had sections of flattened kerosene tins too, and nails with hand-cut leather washers. Miners' huts are rare in Kosciuszko and so the building had particular heritage value. The building was tiny but a welcome refuge in blizzards, and known to many ski-tourers and bushwalkers who had used it for decades. The beautiful four-pane window allowed a lovely view out to neighbouring snowgums and the Four Mile Creek valley.

The hut is included in my 2009 YouTube doco, *High Stakes: Snowy Mountains Winter*.

One person who felt the hut's loss keenly was Canberra's Klaus Hueneke, whose books (especially *Huts of the High Country*) have been cherished reading for many. His howls of despair when the hut was destroyed are now matched by hoots of joy.

It will be an interesting and worthwhile challenge to recreate the rustic sense of place that previously pervaded that little hut at Four

Mile Creek.

Also in the Kiandra area stood Sawyers Rest House. Built in the early 1900s, it was vital shelter for those brave souls venturing to Kiandra, especially early skiers who had to leave the horse-drawn coach at around that point and take to their skis to get to the snowed-in town. Over the years it became a landmark on the Snowy Mountains Highway, visited by many. My 1960s childhood memories of the place revolve around Dad barbecuing chops in the outside fireplace, after having scooped out the snow from it!

Vandalism and bushfire took their toll on Sawyers, to the extent that when rebuilt after the 2003 fires there was little if any original material in the building. But the site retains value in the landscape and so the Rest House will be re-erected.

Similarly, grazing huts not far from Kiandra like Delaneys (originally built in the 1910s) and Brooks (1940s) were both rebuilt following the 2003 fires but sadly were lost again in 2020. The Delaneys rebuild following 2003 saw input from Delaney descendants and this reconnection with mountain families has been a feature of other post-2003 rebuilds like Patons Hut near Tooma Dam, and no doubt will be seen again over the next few years as the new rebuild program proceeds. The huts and their renewal have been a point of reconciliation between the NPWS and former grazing families.

Grazing was the major historical theme in the mountains after the arrival of European settlers and so the majority of huts relate to the summer running of stock. Happys Hut, built in the 1920s by Bill McLachlan at Happy Jacks Plain, Bradley and O'Briens Hut beyond Cabramurra built in the 1940s and Round Mountain built in the 1930s were all grazing huts providing much-needed shelter for stockmen. All are on the rebuild list.

>>>

Mountain author Elyne Mitchell rode to Round Mountain in the 1940s and recorded her experiences in one chapter of her classic book *Speak to the Earth*, a work which helped set Elyne on her path as being one of our most significant Snowy Mountains writers. She was with her sister Eve and mountain stockman Errol Scammell. The autumn cattle muster was under way at Round Mountain and the hut and environs were busy with men and horses.

All the huts have seen substantial recreational use by national park visitors for many decades. In fact many have been used by park visitors for longer than their original purpose. So, that recreational theme in the mountains' history is recognised in the decision to rebuild burnt structures.

The Snowy Scheme also saw many huts built in the mountains for shelter for Snowy workers. Original places like Cootapatamba Hut and Horse Camp luckily still survive, but the two Linesmans Huts on Fifteen Mile Spur were lost in 2020 and so rebuild work will take place there (though whether both huts will be reconstructed is as yet undecided).

One hut badly damaged in the fires was Tantangara (also known as Harveys or Palfreys) built for Kiandra Chalet Hotel owner Harvey Palfrey in the 1960s as a day-skiing shelter for his guests. Repair work will be undertaken there.

Another hut to rise phoenix-like in the park will be Vickerys, built by Jack Vickery in 1945.

Leader of the rebuild program is long-serving NPWS officer Megan Bowden, who oversaw the post-2003 program and was closely involved with the building of Burrungubugge Hut by volunteers of the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) in the 1990s, which was a rare policy change by NPWS in allowing a new hut to be built.

Traditional wood skills will be used where relevant, keeping those old skills alive. Alongside NPWS staff and contractors, KHA volunteers will once again be part of the teams continuing the story of our Snowy Mountains huts.

**Matthew Higgins is an historian who has written several books about the mountains, including *Bold Horizon* and *Seeing Through Snow*.**

*The original Delaneys Hut, photographed by Dorothy Brown in 1977.*

**Picture: Matthew Higgins collection  
[history@canberratimes.com.au](mailto:history@canberratimes.com.au)**



The National Library of Australia holds interview by **Matthew Higgins** ... you can find them at: [https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?](https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?lookfor=matthew+higgins&type=author&limit%5B%5D=&submit=Find&limit%5B%5D=format%3AAudio)

**lookfor=matthew+higgins&type=author&limit%5B%5D=&submit=Find&limit%5B%5D=format%3AAudio**

**Also news from Klaus Hueneke** ... interviews soon to be uploaded by NLA.

Good news from Rhys Cardew of the National Library.

The interviews for which there are cassette or reel to reel tapes will go online sometime soon. I don't quite understand how it all works or how people can listen to them. Time will tell.


With David's current digitising of all the transcripts (2800 pages in 4 volumes) we will soon have digital and oral versions.

He has done Vol 1. This is quite momentous for me - reward for things done years ago - and sharing it with the community.

People like Robbie Kilpinen, cross country ski champion (eg K to K) of the 1960s and 70s who spoke with a difficult accent, can soon be orally deciphered at your leisure or read from a screen. All in an armchair at home.

Wow, so this is what the electronic age is all about.

Klaus




Zoe, Ben and Klaus, photo Abi

Klaus has been exploring the Kosciuszko high country on skis and on foot with a camera and a pen since the 1960s. This has resulted in a dozen books about the area's natural and cultural history as well as unique character. His major work, *Huts of the High Country*, published in 1982, has found more than 14,000 owners.

Of all the eighty huts that are still left, Four Mile became the apple of his eye. Rather than a chronological history in the third person, Klaus has made the hut the speaker and observer of all the things that have happened to her. Major events include her birth in 1937, the passing of thousands of sheep, battles between dingos and wombats and several hut restorations. Visitors have included amorous lovers, mountain poets, singers of renown, keen skiers, lost bush-walkers, wayward robbers, dingo trappers and people seeking the tranquility of the hills. One visitor, impressed by the Spartan life style and philosophy of Bob Hughes, the hut's builder, compared him to Henry Thoreau, the American philosopher. The story finishes with the catastrophic fires of 2019/20 and the huts spirited conviction that she will be rebuilt.

Jacket photo: Alan Levy  
People in photo: Adam Lilley, Trish Woods, Karel Pelikan  
Jacket Layout: Luci Caldwell




Inside Four Mile Hut, 2019, author photo

Where does the social life of Australia's high country occur? Ski-tourers and alpine walkers, striving for shelter and ahead of dusk or bad weather, can be profoundly unchatty; and tents are mostly poor places for conversation. It is inside the high country's huts that society flourishes. (I think Klaus must have got most of his conversations off a fly on a hut's rafters.)

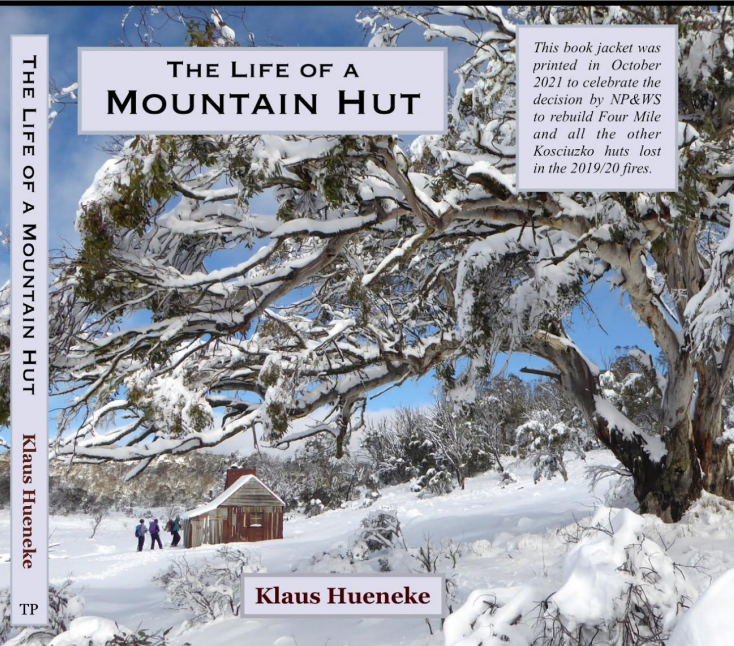
As a photographer, he knows that the narrowest aperture can give the greatest depth of field; and he has brilliantly chosen the narrow peephole of a single hut - ironically, one that burnt down in 2020 before he had completed its story - and must surely be re-built now to sample, across the decades, the vast saga of mountain folk and mountain stories.

A triumph!  
*Mark O'Connor, poet, author of Tilting at Snowgums*

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THE LIFE OF A MOUNTAIN HUT

Klaus Hueneke

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**THE LIFE OF A MOUNTAIN HUT**

Klaus Hueneke

This book jacket was printed in October 2021 to celebrate the decision by NP&WS to rebuild Four Mile and all the other Kosciuszko huts lost in the 2019/20 fires.

\$30.00 plus postage, available from [WWW.tabletoppressbooks.com](http://WWW.tabletoppressbooks.com).

## Celebrating the Australian Alps

**Klaus Hueneke**

I celebrate Nature, God, The Force - call it what you will - for creating the mountains and the Great Dividing Range millions of years ago. Without that almighty upthrust and the carving down that followed we would not have so many different habitats and such a rich diversity of animals and plants.

I celebrate the big picture. On a clear winter's day I've stood on Australia's highest point and spied snow covered Mt Bogong, 120 kilometres or more to the south. On another day I've done the reverse and seen Mt Kosciuszko from Mt Nelse, even further away. The snow was creamy-white not Fab-white as might be expected.

There are many stunning vistas but the Great Alpine Road between Mt St Bernhard and Mt Hotham has some of the best. The view over distant masses as well as frighteningly close abysses, changes every hundred metres. I either slow to a first gear crawl to have time to take it in or race through to stop falling off the edge. One winter I did it in a Schneegestöber (snow storm) and found myself on the wrong side of the road.

I celebrate the detail. On the Bogong High Plains it was delicate sun-loving mountain gentian and bunches of alpine celery hidden amongst large clumps of alpine mint bush. On the upper Snowy I've wandered amongst mountain plum pine sprawled over granite boulders, through mountain pepper with its fresh, and hot, red shoots as well as trigger plants poised to trap a tasty morsel.

I celebrate snow and ice, those matter-out-of-place phenomena in this parched, sunburnt continent. Whilst working at a ski lodge, a big fall of snow covered all the windows. To let in some light I dug sky tubes through the snow bank. Some of the snow melted and created metre long icicles in the sky tubes. Oversize kaleidoscopes presented a continually changing play of light and colour.

During a ski tour to Mt Jagungal we were marooned at Mackays Hut by a metre of new snow. It touched down softly during the night,

cocooning trees, fence posts and the hut in a fairy-tale layer of superdown. All we could hear was our heartbeats and a muffled thump in the distance. Next morning the forest was littered with splintered limbs. Getting out, we took turns to make tracks in heavy, claggy snow.

On a walk up Mt Carruthers I was able to crawl through an icy tunnel. The creek had melted the snow from underneath leaving a vault of small arches within big arches. Here and there a pillar of snow touched the ground. Shades of yellow, green and purple light refracted through the snow creating an ethereal world. Icy cold drips brought me back to reality and into sunshine.

On Round Mountain we created our own vault to sleep in. Using a swordfish snow saw and our skis as rails to get rid of blocks of snow, we dug straight into a large cornice and hollowed out a chamber big enough for a small kitchen and three people. By late afternoon fog rolled in, leaving us stranded in wet woolly gossamer on the side of a cloud.

I celebrate the special places, which Aborigines, if they had been there, might have considered sacred. They are places where, after walking for some time, I have an overwhelming sense of wanting to be very quiet, sink at the knees, lie down and watch the clouds go by. I have felt these vibrations amongst the snowgums near Ropers Hut, on a saddle of the Grey Mare Range, whilst climbing Mt Gingera, near McAlister Springs, on a flat below the Cobberas and on the gentle slopes of Mt Speculation. Quiet meditation is usually followed by pitching camp, making a fire and boiling the billy.

I celebrate the wild animals. Skiing near Kiandra I accidentally stopped on a wombat pad. The wombat came through, didn't like me being on his patch, bared his teeth, growled at me and kept coming. In imminent danger of being butted, perhaps even rolled, I made way and let him through. Near the Bulls Peaks River we came across an echidna doing it tough on the snow. It had no hope of digging in and holding fast like a limpet on a rock and could be picked up by an exposed pink leg. My brother did.

>>>

I celebrate the freedom of the birds. Near Mt Fainter a small cloud of little ravens lifted off a rocky knob and like a gathering wave rose into the blue sky. Then at a certain high point the wave broke and they fell back to earth. As they settled another flock about the same size took off from a different outcrop. They also rose and fell, rose and fell, and finally came to rest.

Occasionally a bird would bank slightly and the sun would glint off its blue-black wings. Some, perhaps the Jonathon Seagulls of the tribe, would fly so close that I could hear the wind in their sails. Then with a sonic whoosh, whoosh, they'd shoot upwards into the blue yonder only to be re-absorbed by the main flock a moment later.

I revere snowgums, the tough muscular Rodin's able to endure winter fury and summer heat. During a blizzard branches bend right over to become a pendulum of snow, ice and foliage on which only so much can cling. Many branches break, leaving in summer upside down crowns which Douglas Stewart called spider gums. And so they are.

Beyond The Bluff near Mt Howitt, there is a magnificent old snowgum with many branches. Its spiraling, flexing arms rise out of a large bulbous lignotuber, which, if one were to dig deep, is probably fed by roots as convoluted and sinuous as the branches. The eight arms splay out in all directions, some almost touching the ground, to form a dome, perhaps 30 metres across. Others call it King Billy, to me it is the Shiva tree.

I celebrate the clarity of the night sky. Some night's stars hang as close as ballroom chandeliers. In late summer Orion slowly dips away to the northwest, the Southern Cross creeps along overhead and Scorpio climbs into view to the southeast. Orion's star-studded belt is a dead give away and the twinkling Pleiades may just be visible in the northwest. By the middle of winter Scorpio has unleashed its tail and is directly overhead.

I celebrate, but try and avoid, the agony and the ecstasy of crossing icy rivers. Wading the flooded Tooma River on a long ski tour my companion, Ted Winter, chose to wade in

boots, trousers and all whilst I disrobed below the navel. At first the water was knee deep, then it rose to more delicate parts and finally stopped just under my chest. On the other side Ted took off for Wheelers Hut whilst I pulled socks and trousers over frozen stumps. I found him half an hour later wrapped around a welcoming fire still with all his clothes on but with steam rising. 'Would you like a cup of tea?' Would I ever.

I am in awe of cornices, the standing waves of the high tops. Small ones are safe for a run, jump and land in soft snow; big ones may mean a ride into oblivion. The ones on the Kerries were fun; the one on Mt Nelse was serious. Skiing across below I stayed well clear. Large and small chunks had broken off and snowballed down the steep slope. The large chunks could have taken me with them, whilst the small ones had etched delicate patterns of filigree into the pristine surface. Danger and beauty lay side by side.

I've been captivated and brain altered by mountain huts. The ones made of logs or slabs stand out; Pretty Plain with its enormous hip roof; cute Four Mile with metal strips nailed over the cracks, Kennedy's looking down the peaceful Mitta Mitta River; Wheelers built by a man with one arm; Coolamine Cheese House with its grass insulation; old Wallaces with numerous initials carved into body and hand-worn tables and stools. I've used them to get warm, cook a meal, dry out wet clothes, recover from exhaustion, sing a song with friends, scribble notes for a book and pass on the lore of the high country.

I celebrate my companions. John Marsh invited me on a ski tour to Mt Tabletop and to get me up early would bring a cup of tea. Ted Winter taught me the value of a packet of dates especially when skiing at night. Graham Scully always asked me a simple, caring thing - how are you feeling? Neil Wilson loved a full body wash using a billy and a face washer, even in a crowded mountain hut. For twenty years we moved through the landscape as one. Winter and summer. When he died part of me died too.

>>>

I respect the writers and poets who have gone before me. David Campbell wrote of 'ice-trees burning' - perhaps the most evocative phrase yet written. Mark O'Connor was taken by the 'pubic-shaped fold in the hills', the place suitable for a mountain hut. Ted Winter loved Jagungal, just 'say it as you will which means a king sized hill' and Alan Andrews wrote of 'the day the mountain fell'. Elyne Mitchell was smitten for life. Tor Holth wrote about the cattlemen just in the nick of time.

I celebrate the photographers who opened my eyes. Charles Kerry took his cumbersome plate camera to the Hotel Kosciusko and the Kiandra snowshoe carnival. Helmut Gritscher juxtaposed ski instructors at play and dead snowgums in a blizzard. Colin Totterdell spent hours on hands and knees capturing the world of flowers whilst Harry Nankin stepped right back and brought us photos of range upon range. Mike Edmondson and Ross Dunstan waited patiently for the five minutes of purple light at sunset.

I celebrate all the old timers I've interviewed. Cecil Piper spoke of the hush before the dawn. Selby Alley told the story of 12 warm men, 17 frozen dogs below the floorboards, 11 shivering horses and 1200 sheep at Mawsons Hut. Tom Taylor kept pebbles in his pocket for counting stock. Whenever another hundred had gone through a gate he transferred a pebble to the other pocket. Bill Hughes, the miner's son from Kiandra, led a group of Sydney doctors on the first winter journey from Kiandra to Kosciusko.

I celebrate the men and women who built the Kiewa and Snowy Mountains Scheme and provide me with power to cook breakfast and dinner. They built the Alpine Way and the roads across the high plains that we enjoy today. They created the dams that supply the water for the food we eat.

## **If I was a Mountain Hut**

Klaus Hueneke

If I was a mountain hut I would  
be warmed by the morning sun,  
be protected from icy westerly winds,

be close to a gurgling mountain stream  
and have a view across a snowgrass plain.

If I was a mountain hut people would  
renew my scarred and tired old skin,  
replace my worn out, tottering legs,  
leave some food for me to eat,  
replenish my wood supply,  
build a fire to keep me warm and  
tell me stories, tall and true.

If I was a mountain hut I would never  
have to move house,  
pay rent, get a divorce,  
be in a traffic jam,  
put my clothes away,  
or have to wash the dishes.

If I was a mountain hut I would hear  
wombats scratching and scuffling under my floor,  
swallows building and tending their nests,  
the wind swishing in nearby snowgums,  
currawongs composing melodious tunes,  
snow settling like a butterfly kiss and  
later sliding off with an oooompphh.

If I was a mountain hut I would be famous in  
peoples minds and memories,  
their photographs and archives,  
their videos, movies and books,  
and their sacred management plans.

If I was a mountain hut I could  
meditate all day and night,  
sleep whenever I like,  
be silent if I wish and  
never write another damned word.



Rebuilding, photo Bob Moon

**Pretty Plain Hut** is an iconic log cabin in one of the remotest parts of the park. Located on a beautiful river plain beside the Bulls Head Creek it was destroyed in the 2003 bushfires and rebuilt in 2010.

**Ian Frakes Collection**

Since the rebuild, KHA has conducted several annual workparties to undertake inspections of the structure, minor repairs and scheduled maintenance. Over the last few years the caretakers have put several layers of decking coating to help shed any water and protect the logs from UV light. Similarly the window and door frames with linseed oil inside and out. The last work party in 2022 also made temporary repairs to the toilet

and repaired the hut front door latch after several log book reports of the hut found with the door open.



2016 Doug Pittard applying linseed oil and turps, Photo KHA



Pretty Plain opening ceremony, Photo KHA



Simon Spinetti and Doug Pittard laying the floor slabs, photo KHA.



Lovely hot cup of tea during workparty at Pretty Plain Hut, photo KHA

**2019 - Work party applying first layer of decking coating,**

**Photo: Emma Perrin**



## Searching for an ancient foot pad across the high country Klaus Hueneke

Robert Green is a man of vision, passion and gutsy determination. Some years ago after many years bushwalking and writing the book 'Exploring the Jagungal Wilderness', he set his sights on finding the oldest and easiest route across the mountains between the Snowy/Eucumbene Rivers and the Tooma/Murray. Easiest in terms of terrain, low mountain passes, bush density and rivers to cross. Easiest for hunters and gatherers, gold miners who flocked to Kiandra, stockmen seeking green pastures, and perhaps some bullockies and timber getters. He scoured numerous old maps, consulted most relevant writings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gathered a small group to help with the quest. I became a disciple.

He'd established most of the route including the upper Gungahlin River, Crooks Racecourse, parts of fire trails called Grey Mare and Hellhole, and the area near today's Tooma Dam. It was the bit between Wolseley Gap on the Cabramurra to Khancoban Road and Greg Greg near Tooma that eluded him. This was part of the rugged western faces of the Great Dividing Range with their straight light-seeking trees, abundant undergrowth, cliff-lined ravines and precipitous slopes. It was country rarely visited by bushwalkers, mountain bikers or even hardy horse riders. Only the highly mechanised Snowy Scheme had penetrated it with powerlines and access tracks. In places one dropped a thousand metres in a few kilometres.

An old map of Travelling Stock Routes (TSR's) was Robert's lynch pin. It showed two tracks, the Link and the Whisky Flat. Along the way was Cooininnie, a forest enclosed inn of two or three huts where miners of the 1860s could get a meal, a stiff drink and a nights rest. Whisky was popular currency, it ran through their veins. The Link Track was still there but the Whisky Flat was not - not on the ground, but just traceable on 1960s aerial photos. It seemed to be about six kilometres. At the bottom it met wild and scenic Wolumla Creek, The Greg Greg Fire Trail and a paddock called The Square. The big question was, could it be found, followed and walked?

After a toes-freezing night camped at Clover Flat, we drove down towards Khancoban and the Upper Murray until we reached The Link Track. It was partly overgrown but still benched into the hillside and very visible - no need to follow on foot. Next came the straight as a die Power Line Track. This looked familiar. Slowly, by degrees, my brain dragged in some memories of being there in the 1960s when I was a teacher at Yanco Agricultural High School and a senior student, Barry Paton, had invited me to come and stay at the family farm just nearby. His father

had driven us along here in his Land Rover. Uncanny how life takes us back to certain beginnings sometimes and then invites us to see things in a new light. This memory trace was 57 years old.

After a car shuffle (with the help of Graham and Geoff), we met Colin Findlay, a member of an old grazing family whose uncle Harry I'd interviewed years before. Harry knew Wingy Wheeler who built a sturdy slab hut near The Dargals. On nonchalant, seemingly disinterested but sweaty horses, Colin and a lady from Khancoban wanted to show us the beginning of the old track. It was a meeting of east and west, old and new, country and city, all in the quest to discover a historic route

As a long time recorder and writer of high country life, I found it riveting and richly symbolic. My camera felt the same. We found Cooininnie Flat but no sign of the huts or any fences. The main talk was about a thriving marijuana plantation from years ago. The guys got caught just as the plants were maturing. I wanted to find some seedlings but the party moved on inhaling only the aroma of eucalyptus and bracken.

After settling on where the track might have started, we, four of us - Robert (age 77), John (going on 80), Stephen (a whipper snapper at 61) and I (going on 78) - plunged into untrammelled, uncharted forest to see what we could see and hopefully come out at the right place. The alternative was a cold night out without tents, not enough water and maybe a most embarrassing search party. In all the drama of worrying about my abilities, a long winding drive, meeting many new faces and going into unknown country, I'd forgotten my day pack, parka, extra food and walking sticks - not a great start for someone who once knew all about it. I must have had enormous trust in Robert and thought it was a walk in the park. Walk in the park? Fool me. >>>



Robert Green with Colin Findlay and one of his horses working out the best route. Colin's uncle was Harry Findlay whom I interviewed in the 1980s and who is featured in my People book. Near an old shanty called Cooininnie

It was hard - climbing over fallen logs, pushing through thick regrowth, brushing away spider webs, tripping into wombat holes and slipping on scree down precipitous slopes, to name a few. Robert did the leading and direction finding and Stephen the co-ordinates reading while John and I wagged the tail, told silly stories or made rude remarks about what the bloody hell we were doing there. When they'd plunged out of sight, which was far too often, we'd cooee, or if we weren't heard, make a louder Coo i ninnie... That word soon took on another meaning - we sure were the Ninnies. Twice we descended too soon and had to crawl a couple of hundred metres out of cliff-lined gullies. Robert didn't get any Brownies for that.

Then, almost near the end, we finally hit a benched in track. Hooray at last. 'This was not made by nature, this is where they drove all those hooved animals up the hill. We really have been on some kind of track. Core blimey.'



Photos by Stephen Joske By late afternoon we were down at the waiting cars and a refreshing face wash at cool, clear Welumba Creek. Thanks Robert.

Was it worth it? Yes. It's one thing to pore over maps at a pub or read about it in the comforts of home but quite another to be out there amongst swaying trees, flowering everlastings, fresh wombat tracks, occasional deer scats and the sound of lyrebirds and mountain currawongs. As Paddy Pallin used to say 'it's the trips you do that count'.



This one counted double because we also found the end of the lowest and easiest route across the high country, one that may have been used for thousands of years. **Klaus Hueneke**

Stephen showing Robert on what is left of the track.

The benching is just on his right.

**The rebuilding of 10 huts destroyed by the 2019-2020 fires** provides an exciting new opportunity to include in the interpretation of their significance a description which acknowledges *connections* and how each fits into a broader cultural landscape approach.

The huts sit in an historical context, markers of uses past and present, with connections to Aboriginal people past and present, their sites, tracks and routes, early explorers, the grazing era including the political decision to break up large leases to service smaller landholders, mining, forestry, recreation, the SMA and the people and families who built and currently use and care for them.

My personal connection with Aboriginal and European sites in the Snowy Plain area began 34 years ago when Henry Willis and I hired a boat at Jindabyne and travelled up to where the stock route to the high country emerged from the lake. The lake level was quite low when we arrived. As we pulled the boat up the bank we noticed a large collection of stone flakes of an Aboriginal tool making site. From there we followed the stock route to Broadhead's Kalkite water powered timber mill with its two piles of chimney stones, water race, blacksmith's forge, and the graves of two Broadhead children.

On following visits to Botherum and Snowy Plains I came to know of many homestead ruins, more graves, stories of drownings, stories about characters such as Charlie Carter, Dick Eames, Italian fossickers carrying carpet on their backs to Diggers Creek from the Hotel Kosciuszko ... stockyards, gold mining sites, another Aboriginal toolmaking site as well as axe grinding grooves in the bed of the Gungarlin.

A vast spiderweb of tracks and routes connects huts and associated sites to these activities. These tracks and routes are important elements of the history of KNP and the huts are markers of uses past and present. Park users can become travellers in time. Part of each journey can be about not only our connecting with the places we visit but also about our memories and connections associated with each place.

Graham Scully

# Corroboree frogs return home

14 March 2022

One hundred critically endangered southern corroboree frogs have been reintroduced to their native habitat at Kosciuszko National Park.



Minister for Environment James Griffin said the release is part of the NSW Government's *Saving our Species* program, which is backed by a \$175 million commitment over 10 years

'Before this NSW Government intervention, a deadly fungal disease was rapidly wiping out corroboree frogs, and it's estimated that as few as 30 remained in the wild,' Mr Griffin said.

'These 100 corroboree frogs have been reintroduced to a purpose-built field enclosure at Kosciuszko National Park that protects them from the disease, while allowing them to grow and thrive into the future.

'This is conservation in action, and it's working. Our *Savings our Species* programs like this one are part of the biggest conservation commitment in NSW history, aimed at protecting and conserving our threatened plants and animals.'

Southern corroboree frogs are critically endangered because of the amphibian chytrid fungus, drought and habitat degradation from invasive species.

The frogs were badly affected in the 2019–20 bushfires, and the field enclosures have been fitted with irrigation systems for fire-proofing, as well as remote cameras for monitoring.

The project is a partnership between the NSW Government's *Saving our*

*Species* program, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Taronga Conservation Society Australia and Zoos Victoria.

Taronga Conservation Society Australia Herpetofauna Unit Supervisor, Michael McFadden, said its successful breeding program has an insurance population of about 400 of the frogs.

'Corroboree frogs' biology is adapted for cold alpine climates, so the terrariums where they are bred are kept refrigerated to match seasonal temperature variation in their natural habitat,' Mr McFadden said.

'Timing the release of these frogs is crucial for their survival, allowing them sufficient time to acclimatise and prepare for hibernation ahead of winter.'

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## The dog squad sniffing out the critically endangered Baw Baw frog

By [Rachel Carbonell](#), National Regional Reporting Team

READ MORE -

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-10/frog-detection-dog-program/9848392>



Uda and Rubble had to brave the snow at Mount Baw Baw. (Supplied: Luke Edwards, Zoos Victoria)

## Tracking paddles of platypuses in the Blue Mountains

23 March 2022

Platypus DNA has been detected at 29 sites in the Blue Mountains, thanks to a ground-breaking detection technique funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.



Federal Minister for the Environment Sussan Ley said the use of environmental DNA tracking was vital in supporting the recovery of the elusive platypus after the Black Summer bushfires.

'If we want to best support the recovery of species like the platypus, we need coordinated action on the ground that includes monitoring and research across the entire the range of the animal,' Minister Ley said.

'Using cutting-edge eDNA technology will help us understand more about the platypus – simply locating this iconic native species will help remove one of biggest obstacles we have faced in supporting its recovery after the fires.

'It may be improving water quality by fixing soil erosion or removing sediment and debris from rivers to help them feed, but if we know where the platypus live, we can deliver the right support to the right location.'

Minister for Environment James Griffin said that until recently, tracking teams would need to spend hours beside waterways waiting for the elusive mammals to appear.

'What we're doing now is using high-tech DNA science to build a snapshot of how platypuses are faring, particularly after the recent devastating bushfires in the Blue Mountains,' Mr Griffin said.

'So far, we've discovered platypus DNA at 29 of the 67 national parks sites sampled, including in some waterways we didn't previously know they lived in.'

As they swim, platypuses shed small traces of skin cells or body secretion into waterways, which

can be detected via environmental DNA testing of water samples.

More sampling will take place in autumn, when breeding females emerge from their burrows with their puggles and take to the water.

'These mammals can face threats of habitat loss, predation by feral animals and they can drown if they become tangled in fishing lines or yabby traps,' Mr Griffin said.

'I want to make sure we're doing all we can to protect the species, which is why this research is so important. It's helping us ensure precious platypus habitat is being conserved and protected now and into the future.'

So far, platypuses have been detected in the Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Kanangra-Boyd, Nattai, Mount Royal, Turon, Marrangaroo and Bangadilly national parks and Upper Nepean State Conservation Area.

The project is being delivered by the NSW Government, supported by \$23,000 from the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery for Wildlife and their Habitats fund.

**NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service** <naturescapes@engage.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au



Professor Mackey said Tasmania's change in forest management should be followed by other Australian states to cut emissions. (ABC News: Gregor Salmon)

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-03/tas-carbon-negative-emission-levels-credited-to-stopping-logging/101032008>

**Tasmania goes into carbon negative, with researchers saying native forests must be preserved**

Tasmania has become one of the first parts of the world to become not just carbon neutral but carbon negative by reducing logging, researchers say.