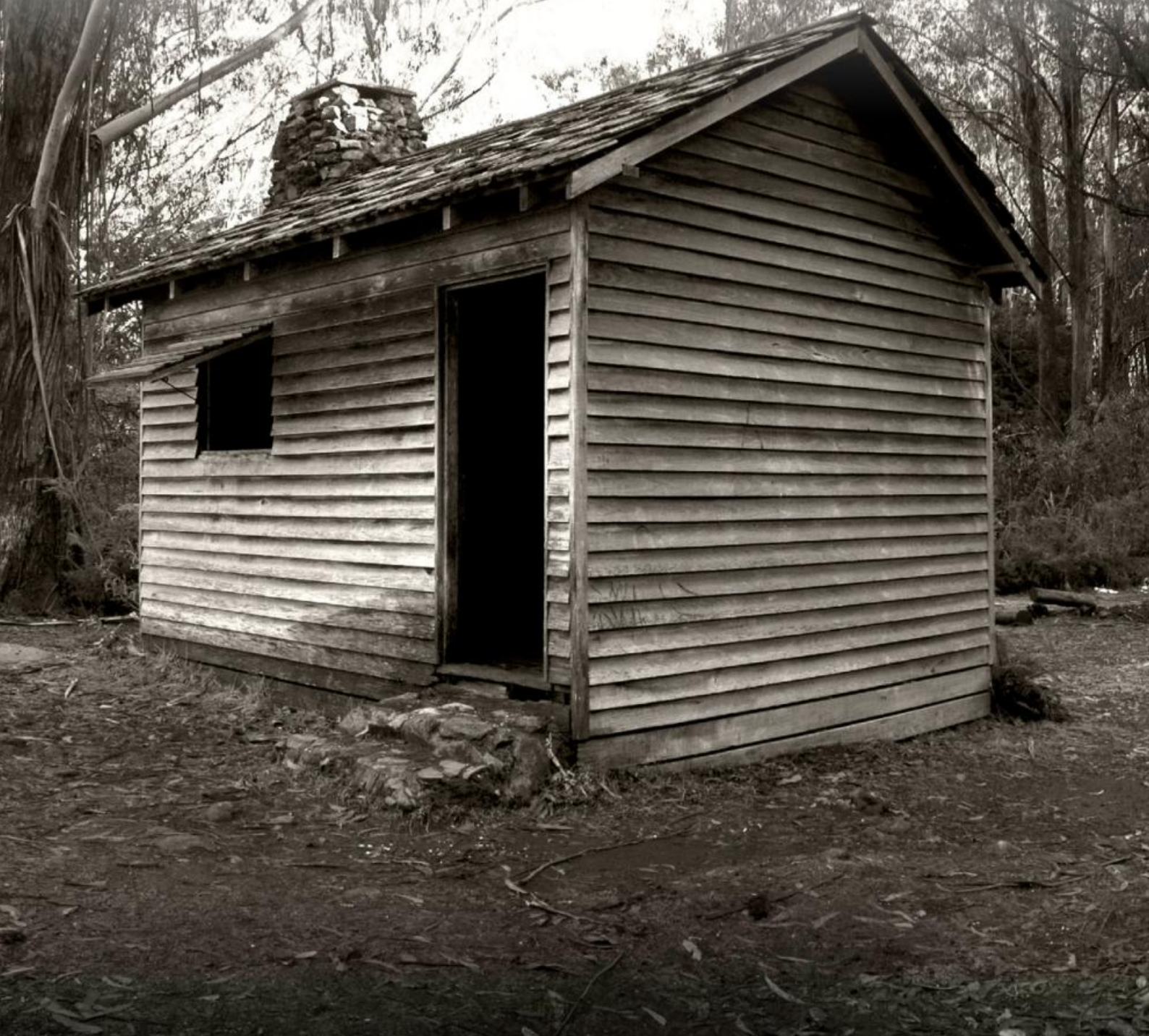


MARYSVILLE KEPPEL



HUT



**HERITAGE
STRUCTURE
SERIES**

**MARYSVILLE
KEPPEL HUT**

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INTRODUCTION

Name: Keppel Hut
First built: 1939
First built by: Frank & Maurice Keppel
Construction: Wood with rock chimney
Purpose: Cattlemen's hut

Located 1280 metres above sea level, it was one of a number of huts built by the Keppel family. First built in 1939, it was rebuilt after being accidentally burnt down in 1883 and rebuilt again after being destroyed during the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfire.



There have been numerous cattlemen's huts built in the Marysville State Forest during the early days of the district. These were usually basic structures built to accommodate cattlemen working in the bush for prolonged periods of time.

Early grazing licences were issued by the Lands Department and the first licences for the Marysville Central Highlands were issued to John and Jerry Keppel in 1885. Cattlemen's huts such as Whitehouse Creek Hut and the Wild Cat Creek Hut (built by the Keppel family) were established specifically for accommodation. Another family who obtained early grazing licences for the area was the Finlay family.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION



These rudimentary structures served as places of refuge for the early workers who often spent considerable periods of time isolated in the High Country.

Keppel Hut was a small hut originally built in 1939 after the 1939 bushfires destroyed the surrounding area. It was primarily used as a cattlemen's hut. At the time, the Keppels had a distinctive branding method where they cut the dewlap under the neck of the cattle in such a way that it left a distinctive highly visible hanging flap.

Keppel Hut was later destroyed by an accidental fire 1983, however the large rock chimney survived and was reused during the reconstruction of the hut by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). It was rebuilt in conjunction with the local Gould's Sawmill, local historians and some hut lovers. The new hut had a weatherboard exterior, tall rock chimney made from local stone and rock steps. The door, windows and floor were wooden and an open fireplace dominated the southern end of the inside. On the eastern side of the hut was a bench for food preparation and on the western side were bunks. A visitor book was available for visitors to sign, though many opted to sign the walls and any other available surface they could find. This made for a decorative collage of signatures. A collection of items left by visitors littered the inside of the hut and included tinned foodstuffs which acted as emergency rations in winter. The stockyard, then located in front of the hut, included a gravity fed water system for stock.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

The hut and cattle yards were again destroyed by fire during the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfire. The large rock chimney again survived and was central to the rebuilding effort by the DSE during 2010. This time the stockyards (also completely destroyed by the bushfire) were rebuilt 150 metres south of the hut in a more accessible area. It again included a gravity fed watering system.

Keppel Hut is 1280 metres above sea level and accessing the site involves a 35 minute drive from Marysville along Lady Talbot Drive, then a further ten minute drive along the Keppel Track (4WD only). Seasonal road closures apply for Keppel Track. If the gate is closed, you can walk to the hut in around 30 minutes.

A camping area has been established beside the hut and includes picnic tables, toilet, fire pit and an area where water can be drawn from the small creek. Interpretative signage at the entrance to the site explains the history of the hut and area. The site is often used by 4WD clubs, cross-country skiers, horse riders, bush walkers, mountain bike riders, walking groups, photographers, artists and adventurous tourists. The hut is located near the Bicentennial Trail, Australia's longest trekking route at a length of 5330 kilometres.

Keppel Hut was named after the Keppel family, who were early pioneers in the Marysville area, once owned the Keppel Hotel and grazed cattle in the Central Highlands for nearly 80 years. Their tenure in the Marysville Central Highlands ended in 1963 when grazing licences for them and others were not renewed. At the time of the licences expiring, licences were held by the Findlay, Nicholas and Barnewall families.

This hut was one of numerous historic structures lost locally during the Black Saturday Bushfires of February 2009. Other hut losses included the Cambarville Village, Federation Link Road, Fifteen Mile, Nissen and the Whisky Creek Huts. Today the site is managed by DELWP (Department of Environment, Lands, Water and Primary Industry) and is a highly significant heritage tourism attraction.



TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

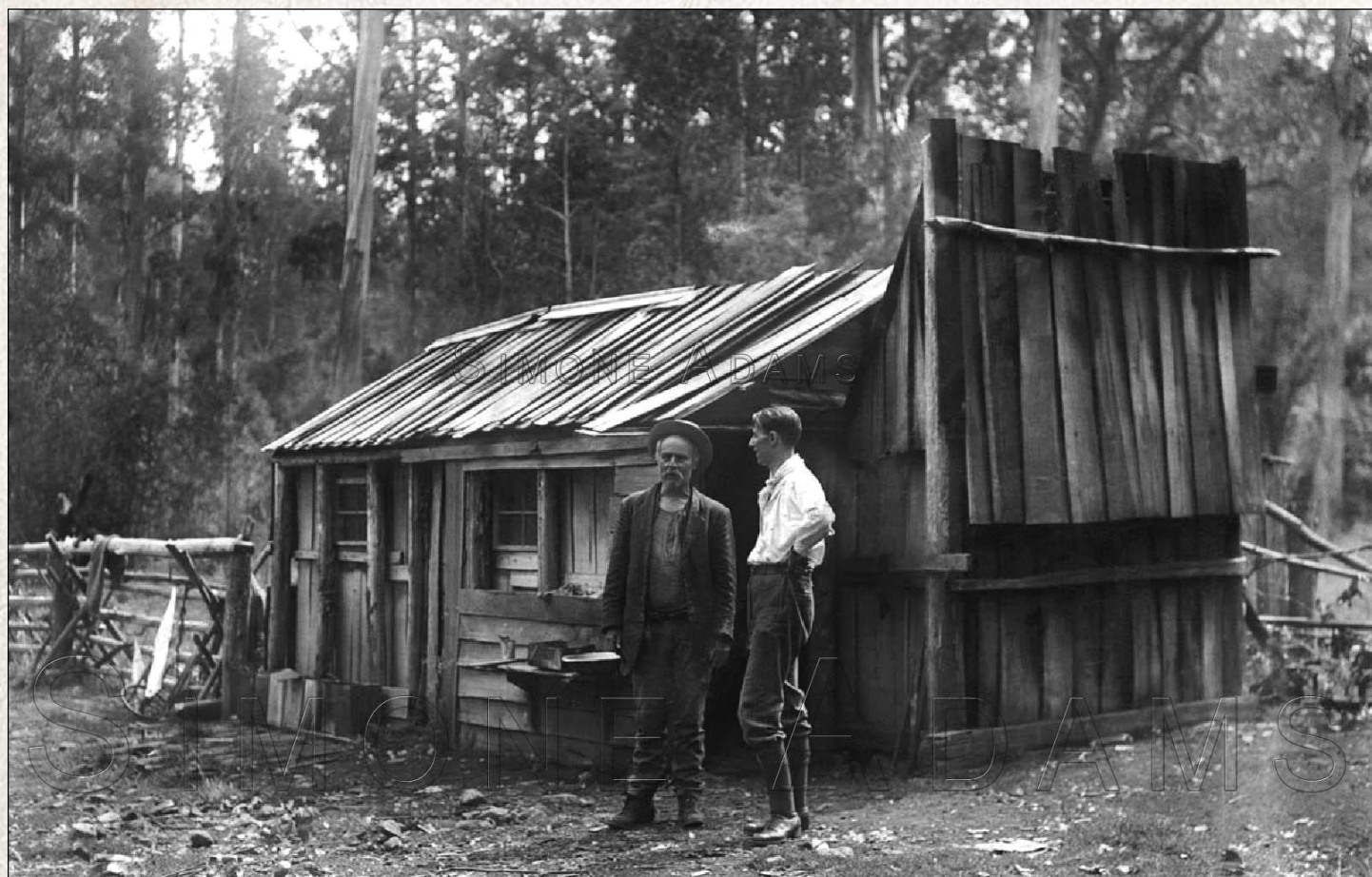
- 1885** Jerry and John Keppel applied for and received a licence (the first to be ever issued by the Lands Department) to graze the area to the northeast of Marysville (by the then Lands Department). Grazing of Cattle and Sheep was allowed during the summer months and they were withdrawn to warmer lower areas during the colder months. Other families applied for licences, including John Findlay of Rubicon, who knew the Keppel family well.
- 1939** The first hut at the site of the current Keppel Hut was built by the Keppel brothers Maurice and Francis after the 1939 bushfires devastated the area. It was one of a number of huts built in the alpine area around Marysville to support cattle grazing by the Keppels.
- 1963** Maurice Keppel died. Maurice had worked with his brother Francis to graze the area around Marysville.
- 1963** Alpine grazing was phased out around Marysville by April 1963.
- 1983** Keppel Hut was accidentally burnt down. The large stone chimney survived and was reused during the rebuild.
- 1985** Keppel Hut was rebuilt by the DSE, who received help from the local Gould's Sawmill group, local historians and some Alpine Hut lovers.
- 9 February 2009** Keppel Hut was burnt to the ground during the Black Saturday Bushfire. The chimney again survived, stockyards were totally destroyed and barely recognisable as even having been there.
- January 2010** Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.
- 2010** Keppel Hut and the cattle yards were rebuilt by the then Department of Sustainability and Energy (DSE) and re-opened to the public. The cattle yards were replaced and relocated 150 metres south of the hut.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Frank Keppel (right) with John Findlay at one of the other Keppel huts

The rear of this photograph read:

'Mr Gleeson. Stockman's via Marysville. John Findlay & Nicholas boys camped while mustering sheep'

Courtesy Simone Adams 2010

Marian Rennie told us in 2011 how Frank and Maurice Keppel from Marysville would graze their cattle around Marysville and as far down as Acheron. Once a year they would move their cattle to the Melbourne Newmarket Yards, after first taking them through Flinders Street. Later, when the train came to Alexandra, the boys would instead move the cattle to Alexandra, stopping overnight at the Rennie Property at Acheron, before moving the stock to the Alexandra train station stockyards the following morning. They would bring around 1,000 Herefords over the Breakaway Bridge where someone would then camp at the bridge to stop cattle crossing back during the night. Marion told us how during the night all you could hear was the noisy cattle. She explained how Claire Keppel was an amazing horsewoman and was known to ride beside children and pick them up in one arm before returning them to their rightful spot. (Marian Rennie, 8 November 2011).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



One of the other Huts built by the Keppel Family circa 1934. It is similar in size and design to the current Keppel Hut.

Source: Federation of
Victorian Walking Clubs
Courtesy State Library
Victoria

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Inside Keppel Hut in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Inside Keppel Hut in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Entrance from the carpark area to the hut in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

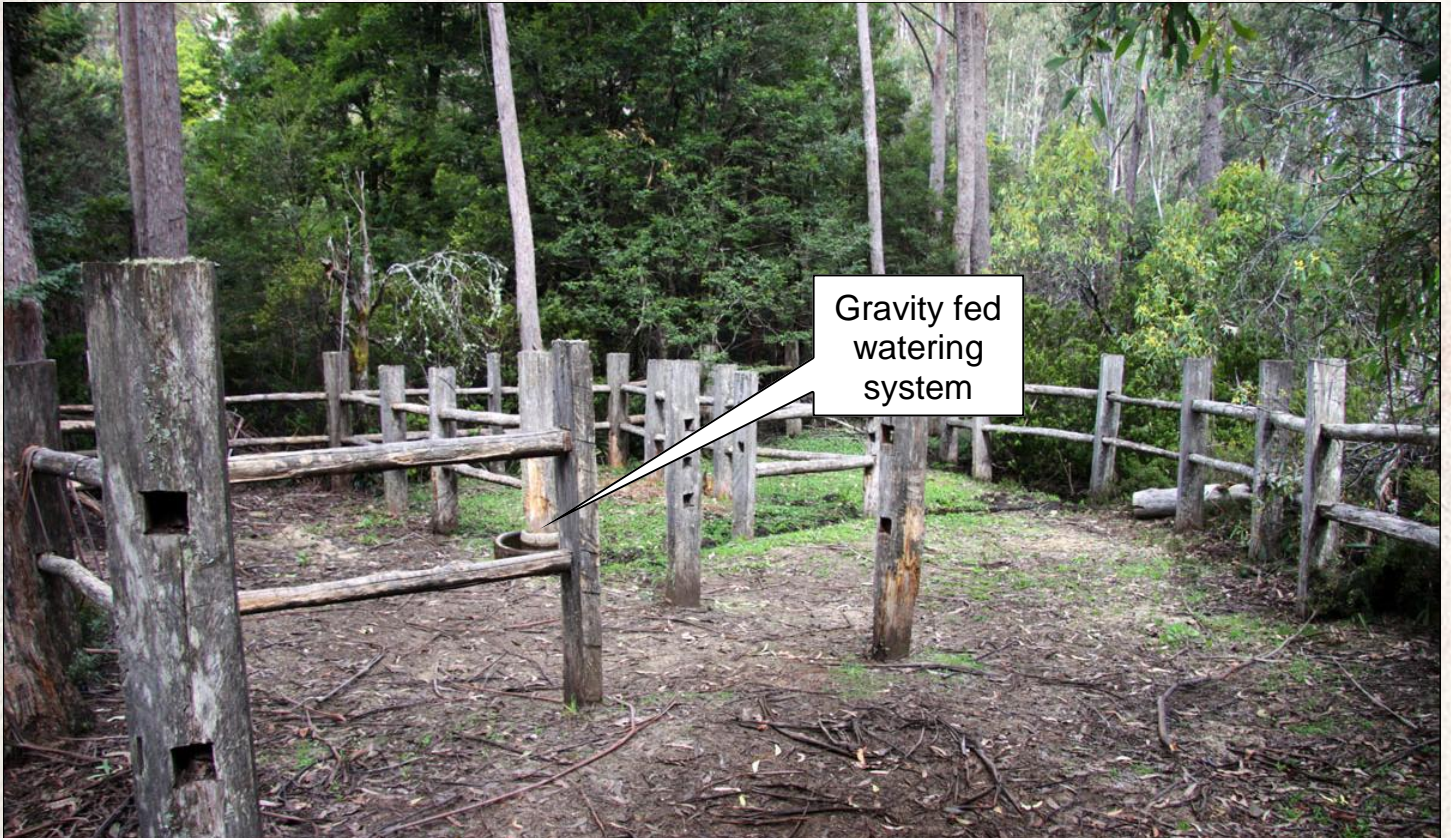
GALLERY



The creek just down from the hut which also fed the stockyard's watering system in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



The former stockyards were originally located at the front of the hut and included a continuous gravity fed watering system. Pictured here in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



The fireplace was made from local granite in 2008



Granite steps in 2008



Entering from the car park in 2008



Local Ruins near Keppel Hut (GPS: S37.51211, E145.87226) in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in 2008

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



The re-construction phase of the replacement Hut in 2010

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



The re-construction phase of the replacement Hut in 2010

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

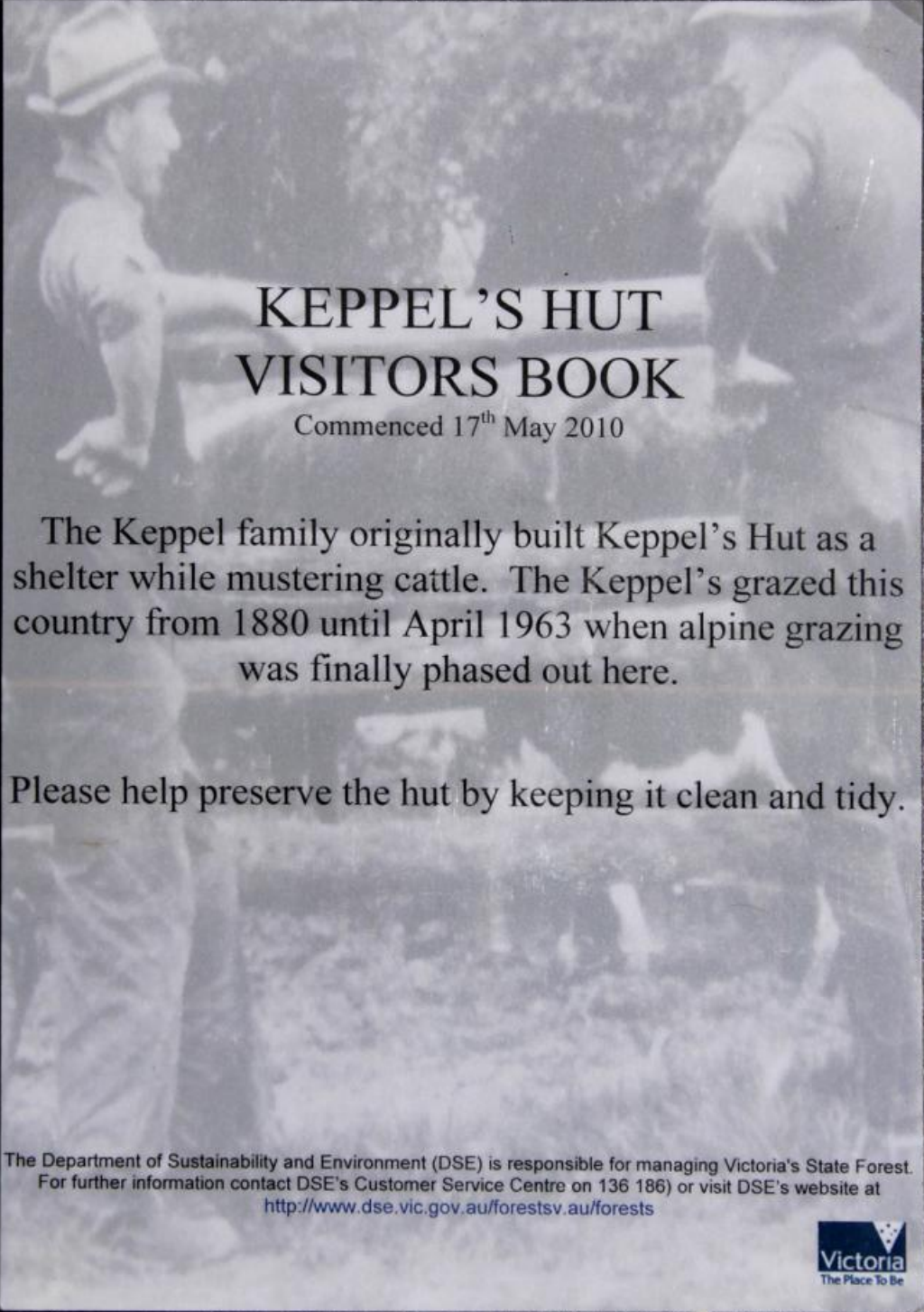
GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY




**KEPPEL'S HUT
VISITORS BOOK**
Commenced 17th May 2010

The Keppel family originally built Keppel's Hut as a shelter while mustering cattle. The Keppel's grazed this country from 1880 until April 1963 when alpine grazing was finally phased out here.

Please help preserve the hut by keeping it clean and tidy.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DSE's Customer Service Centre on 136 186) or visit DSE's website at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/forestsv.au/forests>



Keppel Hut logbook in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY

29 / 08 / 2010

The snow was up to our knees and higher, it was sweetly warm when walking and shivering cold when stopped. The walk to this hut seemed like ages. But once we turned around the corner and saw the warm wooden hut it was so nice, we set up our tents and just chilled. We made a snow cave and un-dug the picnic table. We were just packing up to leave now and we all really enjoyed our stay at the Keppel's hut.

23rd Boys brigade. diamond valley.

29 Aug 2010

Skied in from gate
Deep snow!

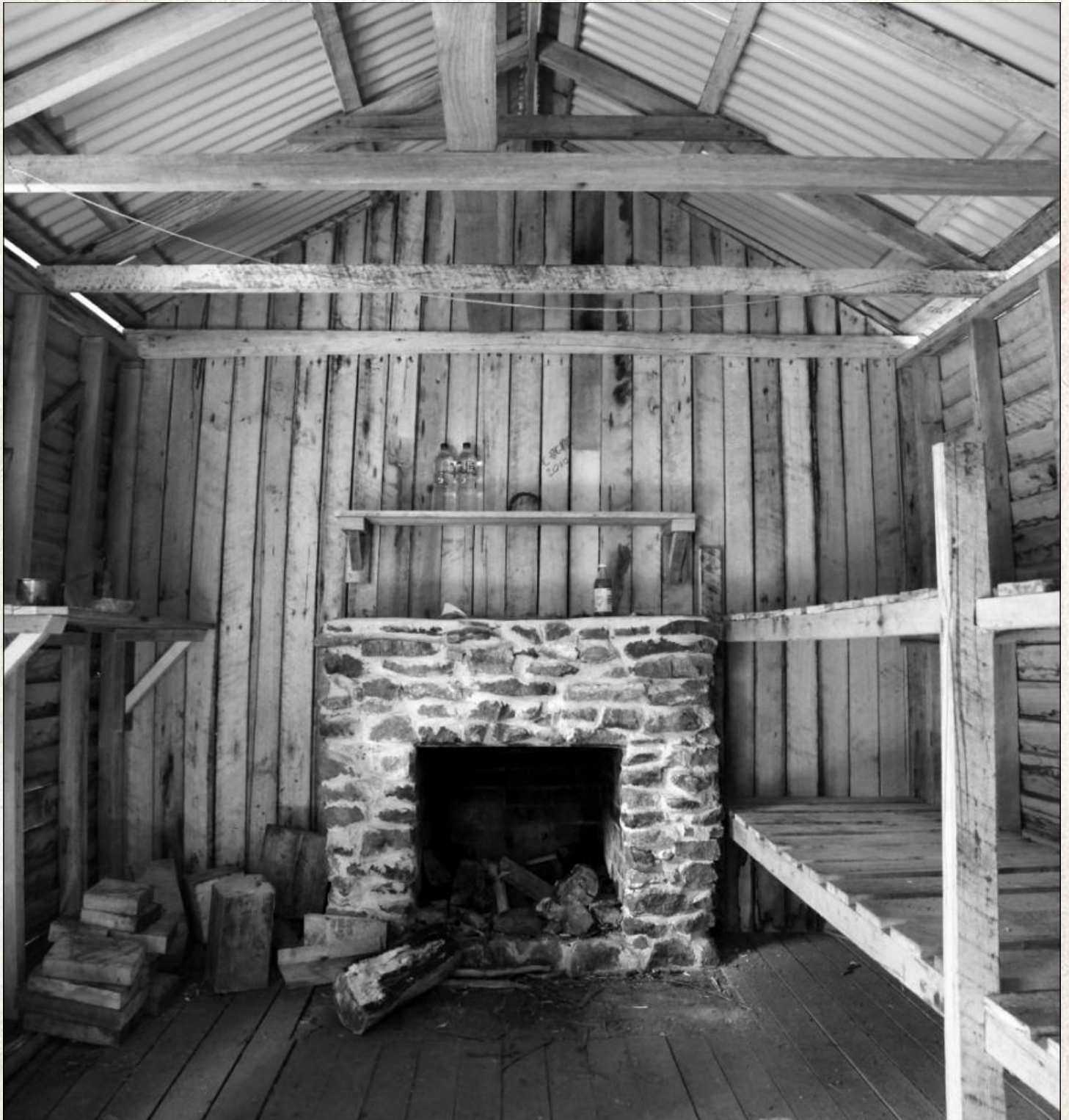
Hans and Harrison Tah

29/8/10 Steve Chancellor & Heather Billing
Surrey Hills VIC.

Walked from gate: 1 hour
Deep snow - Luckily others
have walked today before us.
Awesome scenery, pristine
white snow on black burnt trees!

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021

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Keppel Hut in April 2021

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GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in April 2021

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut toilet in April 2021

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Keppel Hut in March 2024

Copyright © Kathie Maynes

NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

A HIKE FOR THE ADVENTUROUS.

Marysville to Lake Mountain (4800 ft.).

It is something of an achievement for walkers to do the trip to Lake Mountain, one of the highest points in the beautiful Marysville district, and reached along a track that has not long been pioneered by walkers. Members of the Melbourne Walking Club regard the trip as one of the finest; it taxes the muscles and bushcraft of the young walker, and the view from the top is something not one Victorian in a thousand has seen.

Mr. J. K. Jensen, of the Walking Club, recommends getting on to the track which goes off between Marysville and Buxton. From Marysville, take the road to Buxton for 5½ miles, when a lane is reached which leads eventually to a farm house. But before that, a track leads to the right—Keppel's track, which is the starting point for the mountain.

half-way up. Fallen trees may test your bushcraft here, and several tracks will be encountered; but keep to those which lead upwards and "you can't go wrong."

The track soon bears to the right and around the slope of a mountain for a mile, when a grassy flat is reached. In the centre is a large stringy bark tree with a deep gash, meant for a blaze. Do not go beyond that tree. Leave it on your right; turn north and descend to the gully along a north-easterly track. Three streams flowing westward are crossed: at the fourth stream—you will know it by a log which forms a step—look a few feet upstream till you see a broader track hitting the creek. This is the one you take to Lake Mountain later. But about 150 yards from this stream over the spur is a yard, then Keppel's hut, near a stream

behind. Climb the fence and there is the track going towards the rising sun. In half a mile a small hut is passed; here a track goes to the left to Sugarloaf Mountain; the one on the right to Lake Mountain. In another three-quarters of a mile another track goes to the left; leave it also, taking the right path again,

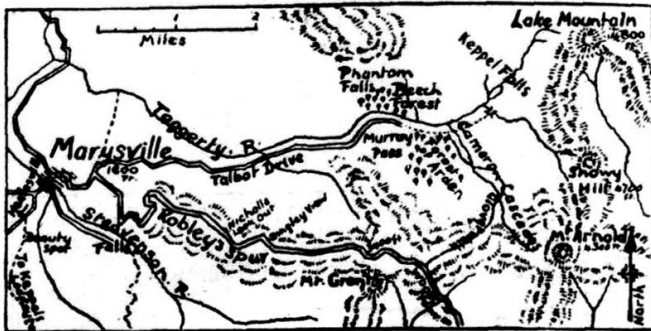
take the left-hand track through a yard (this is not the one near the hut). The track soon becomes faint, but keep upstream with the stream on the left. Keep a lookout for a bridge, cross it, and a plain track is reached when you join one coming in on the left.

The creek is now on your right for some



A group of beautiful snow gums on the track to Lake Mountain.

(Courtesy J. K. Jensen.)



Keppel's track from Marysville to Lake Mountain.

This lane may also be reached from Tyrone, further along the Buxton-road by crossing the paddock opposite, and following the track to Keppel's, which runs diagonally to the right through a gully. Near the cowyard a creek is crossed by a log, the first sign that you have left bridges, hard roads and other luxuries

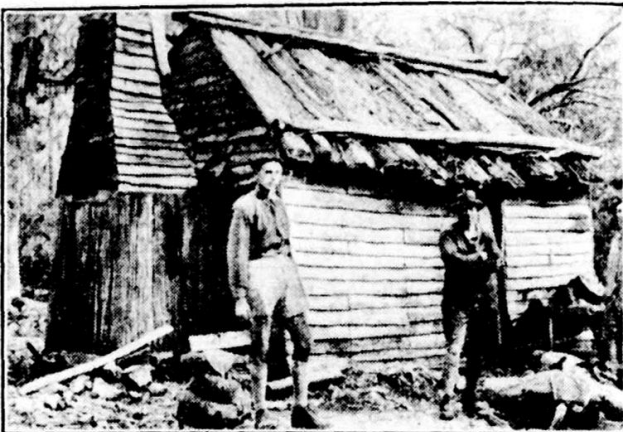
We are thirteen miles from Tyrone, and it is time for a camp.

In the morning follow the track south, with the yard on the right; neglect the first track off to the right and also next to the left; if you are on the correct track the fourth stream mentioned in the previous paragraph is reached. Cross it and

which, however, soon decides to bear to the left to cross the creek. The direction is now north-east and the climb begins. In a mile and a half, you are thankful to be on a fairly flat ridge. From the south side there are glorious views of the Acheron and Taggerty Valleys, with Mount Gordon between. Donna Buang and the range to Ben Cairn should also be visible. The track then crosses the ridge, but do not be tempted by any faint tracks leading into the gully. Keep near the top. A mile and a half along the ridge a rough cattle mustering yard is passed on your left, and the track then goes easterly. South of the track here, is an old cattlemen's camp, with water nearby. This is 5½ miles from Tyrone, and it should be time for lunch and the billy.

Another yard is passed at one mile and a half. Three flowing creeks will be crossed in the next mile; the last flows down the side of the steep rise you have climbed. The ridge then leads north-easterly, but the track swings easterly

distance; pass the first hill on the left, but take time to climb to the top of the next for the view. After returning to the track there is another rise to climb, on top of which is a morass. It gives a fine view of the Taggerty Valley on the right. A turn to the left is made, and the first snow gums are passed. Another morass is crossed, and a stream followed down for half a mile, with the morass on the right. There are some side tracks here, but keep close to the morass, which later broadens out into a large pool. Another small morass soon, but don't let the big one get away from your right. The track descends again, bearing between east and south, and brings you out into a grove of slender gums, some of which are blazed. A yard has been built here. Nearby is the main track to the Woods' Point-road. Half a mile further, in a group of stringy bark trees, with large blazes, are notice boards with pointers to Lake Mountain and Echo Flat, which you left 2½ miles back. Lunch is recommended now, and then take the easterly climb straight up to Lake Mountain.



Swags down after reaching Keppel's hut on Lake Mountain.

(Courtesy J. K. Jensen.)

The Age
Friday 10 November 1933
Courtesy National Library Australia

eSPLASH
MEDIA
ARTICLES

ARTICLES FROM THE eSPLASH eMAGAZINE

KEPPEL HUT

MARYSVILLE STATE FOREST - PUBLISHED ESPLASH145 25 MARCH 2016



A secluded Bush Hut

Keppel Hut is a gorgeous looking bush hut, located in the Central Highlands, Marysville State Park. Burnt down during the Black Saturday Bushfires of 2009, it was fully restored and is extremely beautiful.







A small rock path over the creek



The inside of the hut is in excellent condition



Memories of Keppel Hut in 2007



My wife and I visited Keppel Hut prior to the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires and we have fond memories of the trip. We attempted the trip with our two wheel drive and eventually had to leave it parked along the track which became too rocky and wet. We instead enjoyed an easy half hour walk along the road through pristine Australian Bush to the hut. Once we arrived, we were both amazed at the hut's beauty and the setting's tranquility.

Returning after the fires with locals and Artworkz photographers John and Maureen Norbury, I was reminded again of the beauty of the area. The hut had been rebuilt and looked fantastic. The surroundings are in keeping with the previous hut, however facilities have been improved. John and Maureen were visiting the hut for the first time and were amazed at its lovely and historic appeal. This is a 4WD destination only, but you can walk the last section of track to the hut site.

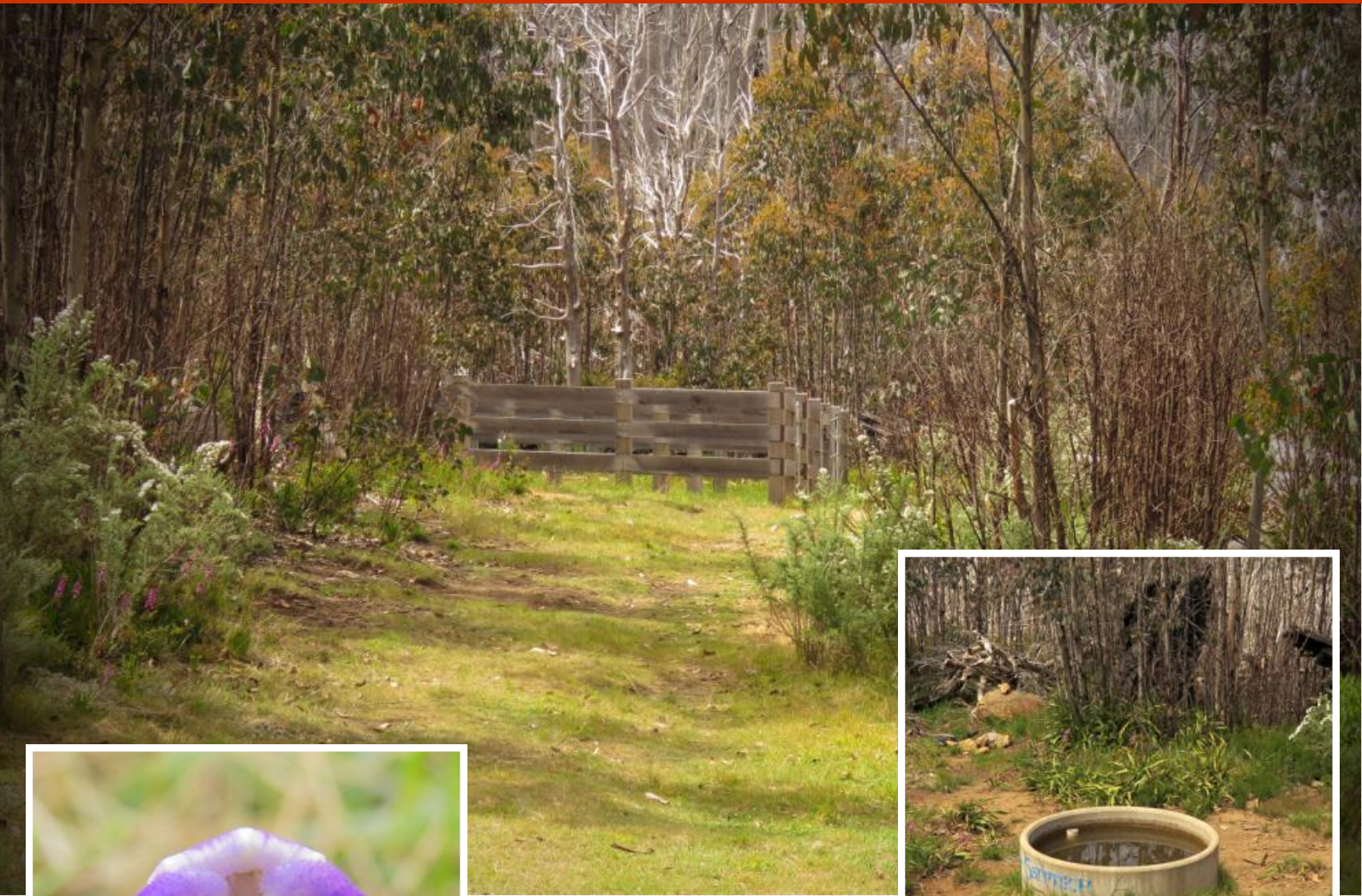


Keppel Hut 2008



Photographs taken during a visit to Keppel Hut 2008 by my wife and I before it was destroyed on Black Saturday 2009.

As can be seen, the hut was beautiful back then. However we can report that the new hut is aging beautifully and has already developed its own special character.





Another view of Keppel Hut returning from the newer stockyards



MORNING
31/10/15

My father David and I almost destroyed our Subaru on a highly unnecessary 4x4 track to get to this hut. We were amazed to find this highly maintained hut. It was also great to see all the snow in the morning! (only joking). Thanks to everyone before us and good luck to everyone after. Tom



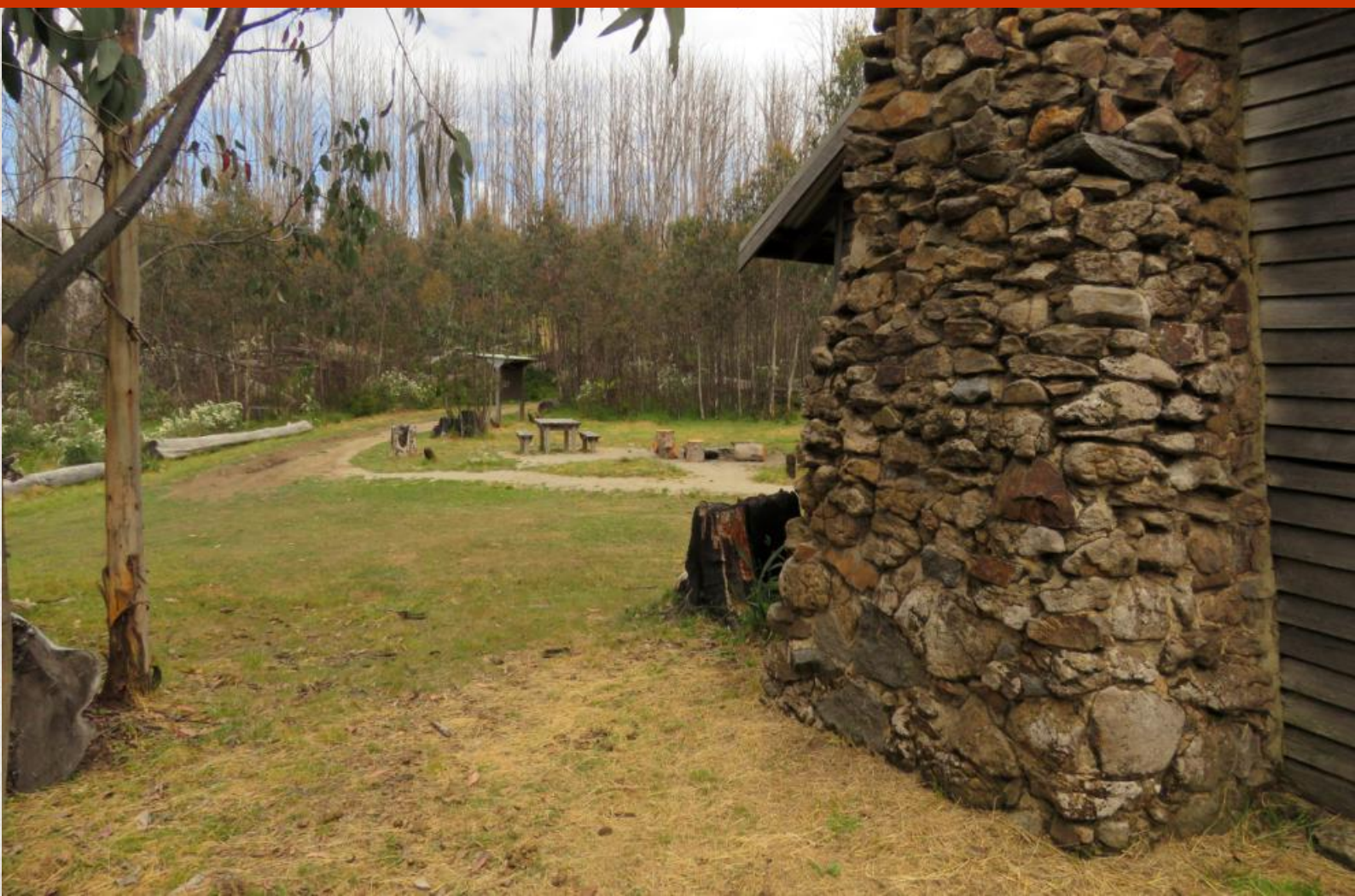


A wood shed located beside Keppel Hut is well stocked with tools









(Bottom) John & Maureen Norbury were first time visitors to the hut



Heading to Marysville



After spending some time at Keppel Hut, it was time to head for Marysville and some well deserved lunch and coffee. We slowly travelled along Lady Talbot Drive, stopping to take in a few other special locations along the track. The Taggerty River Bridge at the carpark of the 'Meeting of the Waters' walk was our first stop. This offers some great views with very little walking. We talked of walking to the Meeting of the Waters, though this would have to wait for another day. Our second stop was to take in the fantastic view of Keppel Falls from Lady Talbot Drive. It looked amazing and was well worth the stop.

We headed for Marysville and enjoyed a bite to eat and drink before driving home. The trip was fantastic and extremely enjoyable. Travelling with friends is always great, though doing so through pristine Australian Bush to amazing locations such as Keppel Hut is all the better. Everyone enjoyed the trip and lots of photographs record the great trip.



Artworkz

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