

MANSEFIELD

CRAIG'S

HUT



MT STIRLING



**HERITAGE
HUT
SERIES**

CRAIG'S HUT

CONTRIBUTORS

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
The Age

Anthony Dykes
George Evans
Kate Fletcher
Paul Fletcher
Allan Layton
Leisa Lees
Kathie Maynes
Kelly Petersen
Shez Tedford
David & Debbie Hibbert

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

TIMELINE

GALLERY

REPORTS

MEDIA RELEASE

ESPLASH

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Name: Craig's Hut
First built: 1981 as a movie set
Location: Clear Hill, Mt Stirling
Burnt: 11 December 2006
Rebuilt: 2008

Craig's Hut was originally built in 1981 as a set for the Australian Movie *The Man from Snowy River*. Today it is Australia's most photographed and visited hut, attracting in excess of 80,000 visitors each year.



Craig's Hut in January 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2004

The Hut Movie Set

Located at Clear Hills on Mt Stirling, Craig's Hut was first built in late 1981 as an alpine cattlemen's hut set for the highly acclaimed Australian movie production of *The Man from Snowy River* - released on 5 November 1982. The movie starred Australian actors Jack Thompson, Tom Burlinson and Sigrid Thornton and American actor Kirk Douglas and was based on the poem *The Man from Snowy River* penned by poet Banjo Patterson. The set consisted of four walls held up by props and wires and a rudimentary roof.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

In 1986 the movie *Cool Change* also used the hut as a prop during filming. The movie was directed by George T. Miller, the same director of *The Man from Snowy River*. It starred actors Jon Blake and Lisa Armytage.

In 1987 the set was rebuilt for the movie sequel *The Man from Snowy River II*, in which the cast reprised their roles. The movie was officially released on 15 April 1988 and was again well received by Australian audiences.

During the filming of the sequel, a Timber Tramway Fowler engine was transported from the Alexandra Timber and Tramway Museum at Alexandra and used during the filming of certain scenes. However all footage of the engine was removed during the editing phase, with only the whistle being heard in the movie.

Craig's Hut in 2004
Copyright © George Evans 2004



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION



Craig's Hut Fence in 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2004

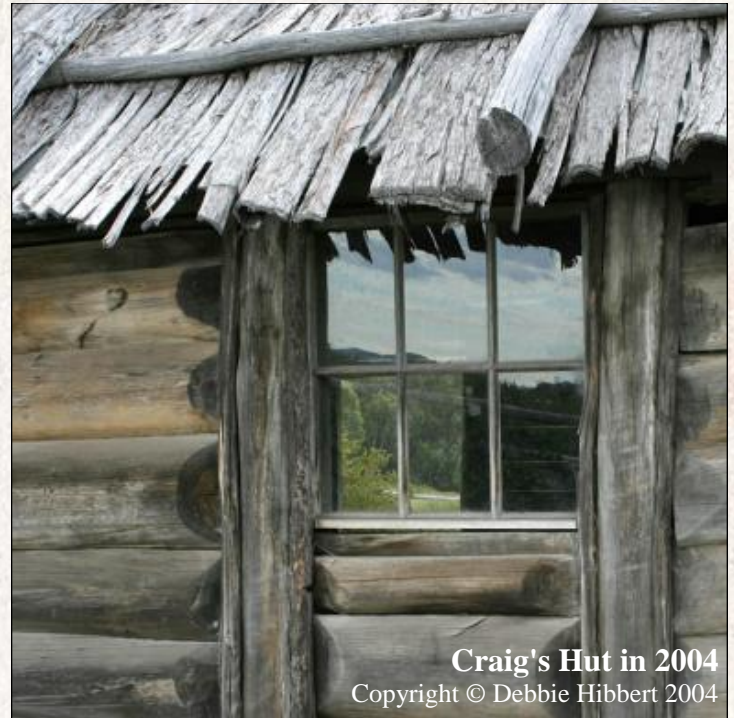
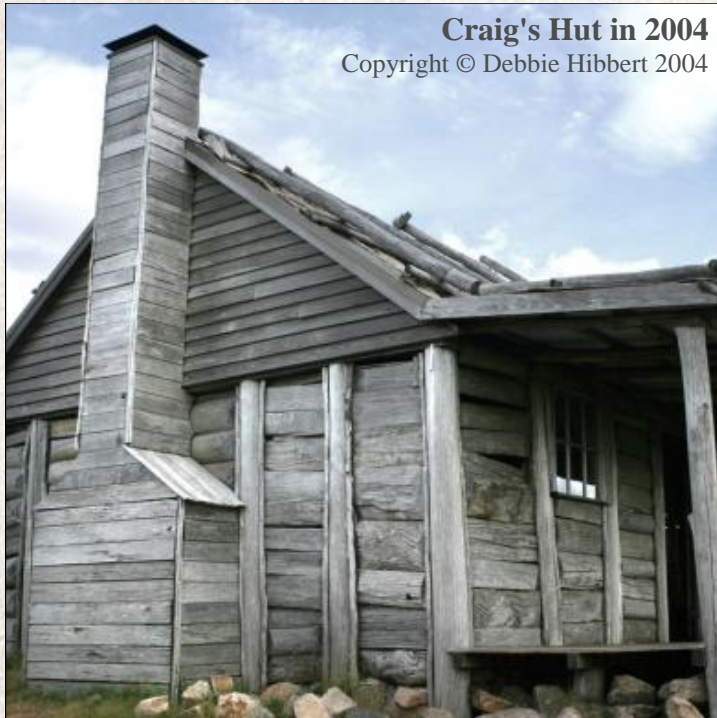
As the engine was being transported back to Alexandra, the engine fell from its trailer and was damaged. An insurance settlement of \$9,000 allowed for the complete restoration of the damaged engine, which continues to operate today at the museum.

Tourism

After the release of the initial *The Man from Snowy River* movie, visitors from around Australia and the world travelled to the Mansfield area to visit the hut. While at Mansfield many also visited the homestead movie set (located near Merrijig). Interest in the area rose again after the 1986 release of the movie *Cool Change* and peaked again after the 1988 release of the sequel *The Man from Snowy Rover II*.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION



By late 1991 there was a strong local interest in having the hut set removed and replaced with an official High Country alpine hut. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources approved of the plan and worked with the Victorian Association of 4WD Clubs, the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club over the following two years to make the dream into a reality.

In 1993 the set was dismantled and a new structurally sound alpine hut was built in its place. Volunteer labour for the construction included from 4WD clubs as well as Army personnel. Preparation works conducted in the lead up to the final build were done by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club.

The hut was officially unveiled and opened on 4 April 1993 by the Hon. Mark Birrell, Minister for *Conservation and Environment*. The event was attended by over 500 people as well as the media. At this time the spelling of Craig's Hut still included an apostrophe (Craig's Hut) as can be witnessed on the dedication plaque unveiled by the Minister, still present at the site. However some signage now refers to the hut as Craigs Hut. While this is consistent with the current trend to remove the apostrophe, Craig's Hut was generally recognised as being the official name.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Black Tie

In 1994 a Black Tie event was held at Craig's Hut to raise funds for the upkeep of the hut. The event was run by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club with assistance from the CFA 4WD Club and with further assistance from the local community. The first event was a great success attracting over 90 guests in attendance. The guest list included parliamentarians, off-road and tourism operators, and local dignitaries amongst many others.

The night was seen as such a success that it became an annual event. The aim of the dinner was to promote the High Country and to raise money for the ongoing maintenance of Craig's Hut.

The dinner grew in popularity each year, however it was decided that the 2002 event would be the final Black Tie Dinner at the hut. This was due to the complex logistics of putting on the event in such an isolated area and the difficulty in attracting sponsorship.



The yearly evening event required marquees, catering, drinks, music and entertainment, erection of a wooden dance floor, supplying toilets, water, power, standby first aid, fire services and transportation for all equipment and guests to the hut. The final event cost was \$200 per head, yet even at that price it was still very popular and well attended.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Trees near Craig's Hut in 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2004



Paved Floor

On the weekend of the 22-24 February 2002 a working bee was conducted by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club to excavate and remove 16 cubic metres of soil before laying a base for pavers and paving the inside of the hut with old bricks. A paving pattern designed by an architect with the head of a horse was earmarked for the centre of the hut floor, but it was not within the scope of the volunteers laying the pavers and therefore was not attempted. A wooden step was also installed during the weekend.

A follow-up working bee was then held by the same groups on 17 May 2003 and the paving was finished, repairs were made to the fence, and sub drainage works were completed to stop water undermining the floor and structure.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Burnt remains of Craig's Hut on 28 February 2007

Photograph © Shez Tedford 2017



Fire

On 11 December 2006 the iconic hut was burnt to the ground by a bushfire during the 2006/07 fire season. This season became known as one of the most extensive on record, with fires burning for over 69 days and destroying over 1 million hectares of land. They caused extensive damage to the High Country which impacted tourism for many years.

As a result of the destruction, Victorian Premier Steve Bracks pledged to have the iconic hut rebuilt. In his Press Release dated 31 January 2007, Mr Bracks stated:

'Craig's Hut was a key marketing image for Victoria in Australia and overseas and was central to recovery of the region's tourism industry.'

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Rebuild criticised

The hut was subsequently rebuilt with money from the State Government and re-opened to the public in January 2008. The nine week rebuild was very successful, however contractor Craig Ogier was publically criticised for his version of the hut. Criticism came from sources including Leslie Binns, the creative director who built the original hut, as well as Mansfield local cattle farmer and film producer Geoff Burrowes, who was quoted by Jason Dowling of the Sunday Age as saying:

'There is a huge difference in the profile, there is a difference in the treatment. The roof is completely different. It's a tin roof. We had a bark roof.'

Mr Ogier defended himself by explaining how the hut was rebuilt using tried and tested traditional skills and techniques and using suitable timbers such as ironbark and redgum, that could last over 100 years. He went on to explain how the design and specifications were provided by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and that he was directed not to place bark on the roof, as the bark on the roof of the previous hut was considered to have been a contributing factor in the previous hut catching fire. As a direct result of the furore, the Tourism Minister Mr Tim Holding, cancelled his attendance at the hut for the official opening ceremony to avoid conflict.

Today

Craig's Hut has aged perfectly and is now a stand-out feature of the Victorian High Country. It remains the most photographed hut in Victoria, in front of other well visited huts such as Mount Terrible Hut, Wallace Hut and Upper Jamieson Hut. In 2017 Google Map Reviews rated the site as 4.8 out of a top score of 5, indicating just how popular the site is with travellers.

Craig's Hut is located 60 km from Mansfield (one and a half hours drive) and 19 km from Telephone Box Junction (30 minutes drive). The road from Telephone Box Junction is on good grade gravel road. The last 1.7 km of the trip to the hut requires a 4WD, but a formed walking track is available for those wishing to walk the last section. The track from the carpark area to the hut is of hard grade and extremely steep in places.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

The site has a large carpark area and access to the hut is now restricted to foot traffic only. Shaded and unshaded picnic tables are available near the carpark, including one undercover table. A drop toilet is located at the carpark with non-drinkable tank water available outside the toilet building, however this is empty during the warmer months.

Seasonal road closures apply when accessing Craig's Hut from Mansfield via the Circuit Road. For other access options consult the Park Note below, purchase a 4x4 map of the area or call DELWP.

Google Maps can be used to direct you to the site, but you are advised to cache the area in the Google Maps App prior to leaving home.

The Google Map Guide button below can be used below to launch Google Maps at the site. From here you can get directions to the hut. In 2017 visitors successfully used cached Google Maps on a smart phone to attend the site from Mansfield.

While there is limited mobile reception for some carriers at the hut, it cannot be relied upon. Always let someone know of your travel plans.

A little known fact is that in 1920, a silent black and white movie called *The Man from Snowy River* was filmed in Australia. It was based on the poem of the same name penned by Banjo Patterson. Today the movie is considered lost, as no known copies of the movie are known to exist.



TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



TIMELINE

- 1981** **The Craig's Hut movie set was first built** for the movie *The Man from Snowy River*. The hut consisted of four realistic walls, supported by internal stays and wires, and a roof. A homestead movie set was also built near Merrijig. Like the hit, it was a basic shell, with all internal filming scenes done elsewhere. Of note is that the fireplace and chimney, normally seen on the north end of the hut, was actually built on the southern end of the hut originally and can be seen there in the movie.
- 5 November 1982** The movie *The Man from Snowy River* was officially released. The hut became known as Craig's Hut after the character Jim Craig played by Tom Burlinson. The movie was based on the poem *The Man from Snowy River* by Banjo Patterson. It was directed by George T. Miller and produced by Geoff Burrowes, Michael Edgley and Simon Wincer. The screenplay was by John Dixon.
- November 1982** After the movie was released on 9 November 1892, the hut and homestead sites attracted a **constant flow of visitors** wishing to see the sets. This quickly developed into a tourism opportunity for the Mansfield area.
- 10 April 1986** The movie *Cool Change*, filmed in the High Country and including scenes of Craig's Hut, was officially released. The movie Director was George T. Miller, the same director of *The Man from Snowy River*. The Producer was Geoff Burrowes, the same Producer of *The Man from Snowy River*. The movie starred Jon Blake and Lisa Armytage.
- 1987** The **Craig's Hut movie set was rebuilt** for the filming of the sequel *The Man from Snowy River II*.
- 1987** A Timber Tramway **Fowler engine from the Alexandra Timber and Tramway Museum** was used in the filming of 1988 sequel *The Man from Snowy River II*. However all footage of the engine was removed at the editing stage, with only the whistle being

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



TIMELINE

heard in the movie. On its return back to Alexandra, the engine fell from its trailer and was damaged. An insurance settlement of \$9,000 allowed for the complete restoration of the damaged engine, which continues to make up a part of the museum's collection to this day.

15 April 1888

The sequel *The Man from Snowy River II* was officially released.

1990s

By the 1990s, the hut was being called a **Tourism Icon** for the area.

Late 1991

The Victorian Association of 4WD Clubs (the Association) advised its members that the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club was **seeking assistance in a total rebuild of Craig's Hut**. The association worked with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources who supported the rebuild.

1992-1993

Various members of the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club conducted working bees to **prepare the Craig's Hut site for a total rebuild**.

February 1993

Major works conducted to rebuild Craig's Hut were coordinated by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club, and included Army personnel.

4 April 1993

Craig's Hut was officially re-opened to the public after being rebuilt. It was dedicated by the Hon, Mark Birrell, Minister for *Conservation and Environment*. Works to have the hut rebuilt were coordinated by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club, the CFA 4WD Club and the *Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*. The event was attended by over 500 people and the media.

1994

The first Black Tie event was held at Craig's Hut to help raise funds for the hut's upkeep. The event was run by members of the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club with help from the CFA 4WD Club.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



TIMELINE

The initial event attracted over 90 guests, including parliamentarians, off-road and tourism operators, local dignitaries, and other interested parties.

1995

The Black Tie event was formalised as a co-operative fundraising venture. The aim of the dinner was to promote the High Country and raise money for the ongoing maintenance of Craig's Hut. The dinner grew in popularity each year.

8 December 2001

A **working bee** was conducted by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club. Works included substantial repairs to the fence and gate.

2002

The Black Tie event ceased due to the complex logistics and difficulty in attracting sponsorship. This was even though the \$200 per head evening was extremely popular. The night required marquees, catering, drinks, music and entertainment, erection of a wooden dance floor, supplying toilets, water, power, standby first aid, fire services and transport for all equipment and guests to the hut.

22-24 Feb 2002

A **Working bee** was conducted by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club. Works included: excavating and removing 16 cubic metres of soil, laying a base and **paving the inside of the hut with bricks**, as well as installing a wooden step. A paving pattern designed by an architect with a horse head earmarked for the centre of the hut floor was not within the scope of the volunteers and was therefore not attempted.

1 June 2002

A **working bee** was conducted by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club. Works included repairs to the fence as well as substantial works to stop water undermining the floor and structure.

17 May 2003

A **working bee** was conducted by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club and the CFA 4WD Club. Works included the **completion of**

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

laying the brick pavers in the interior of the hut, repairs to the fence and sub drainage works to stop water undermining the floor and structure. The work team included Artworkz Team Member Allan Layton. Allan sourced the second-hand bricks for the floor from Melbourne.

2004

A proposed movie sequel to *The Man from Snowy River* - titled *Clancy of the Overflow* - was shelved indefinitely after the minimum investment was not met. The movie was to be directed by Simon Wincer who was the co-producer of *The Man from Snowy River*. The music was to have been composed by Bruce Rowland who composed the music for both *The Man from Snowy River* and *The Man from Snowy River II*.

11 December 2006

Craig's Hut burnt down as a result of bushfire.

31 January 2007

Premier Steve Bracks announced they would rebuild the hut.

February 2008

Craig's Hut was rebuilt by builder Craig Ogier over a nine week period using new timber. He was later criticised for his work as reported by *The Age* on 3 February 2008. According to the article, a sum of \$300,000 had been set aside for the project, though the builder claimed he was not paid anything close to that amount.

28 January 2017

Craig's Hut was added to the Artworkz *Local Huts* tourism eBook.

29 January 2017

Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.

3-4 February 2017

Artworks conducted a photoshoot of Craig's Hut.

23 June 2017

This factsheet was published in eSplash176.

PHOTO
GALLERY

A BASIC COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

1993



Craig's Hut plaque highlighting the 1993 rebuild

CRAIG'S HUT
REBUILT 1993

Co-ordinated by Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Opened by

THE HON. MARK BIRRELL
Minister for Conservation and Environment
4 April 1993

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001 with the old pot belly stove

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2001



Craig's Hut working bee on 8 December 2001

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2002



Craig's Hut working bee to lay the floor on 23 February 2002

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2002



Craig's Hut working bee on 1 June 2002

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2002



**Craig's Hut working bee
on 1 June 2002**

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2002



Craig's Hut working bee 1 June 2002

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2002



Craig's Hut working bee 1 June 2002

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2002



Craig's Hut working bee 1 June 2002

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2002



**Allan Layton's volunteer's name badge from the final Black Tie event
held at Craig's Hut in 2002**

Photograph © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2003



Craig's Hut on 17 May 2003

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2003



Craig's Hut on 17 May 2003

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2003



Craig's Hut on 17 May 2003

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2003



Craig's Hut on 17 May 2003

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2003



Craig's Hut on 17 May 2003

Copyright © Allan Layton 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2004



Craig's Hut on 26 January 2004

Copyright © George Evans 2004

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2004



All in one day at Craig's Hut - 26 January 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2004



Craig's Hut on 26 January 2004

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2004



Craig's Hut on 26 January 2004

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2004



Craig's Hut roof on 26 January 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014



Craig's Hut wall on 26 January 2004
Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2004



Craig's Hut fence on 26 January 2004

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2004



The Indian's face visible behind Craig's Hut on 26 January 2004

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2014

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2007



Ruins of Craig's Hut photographed on 28 February 2007

**The floor bricks visible here were laid by members of the CFA 4WD,
including our very own Artworkz team member - Allan Layton.**

Copyright © Shez Tedford

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2007



Ruins of Craig's Hut photographed in January 2007

**The floor bricks visible here were laid by members of the CFA 4WD,
including our very own Artworkz team member - Allan Layton.**

Copyright © Paul Fletcher 2007

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2011



Craig's Hut in April 2011

Copyright © Paul Fletcher 2007

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2011



Craig's Hut in April 2011

Copyright © Anthony Dykes 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2015



Craig's Hut in snow in July 2015 from a helicopter

Copyright © Shez Tedford 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2015



Craig's Hut in snow in August 2015

Copyright © Kate Fletcher 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2015



The enclosed fireplace inside Craig's Hut in August 2015. A cover (seen later in this gallery) is placed over the fireplace for the summer months. This more modern fireplace replaced the old pot belly stove visible in an image earlier in this factsheet in 2001.

Copyright © Kate Fletcher 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



WOMIN DJEKA

Womin djeka gundee Taungurung biik gee gup-dun

Welcome to Taungurung country the first

buk gee gumung-birm ba ngarrak-birm.

people of the rivers and mountains.

Bambuga goorrnee Munyl year o Taungurung buk

Long time ago in this joyful place

yanon Inon gundee gee yurbot biik goorrnee gee

Taungurung people travelled to the high

ngumi-yak-gorreen.

country in the summer.

TAUNGURUNG CLANS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Craig's Hut in January 2017

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Craig's Hut in January 2017

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017

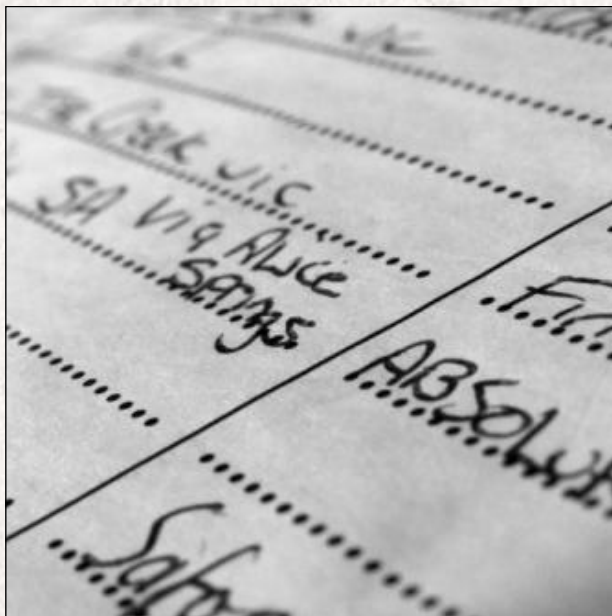
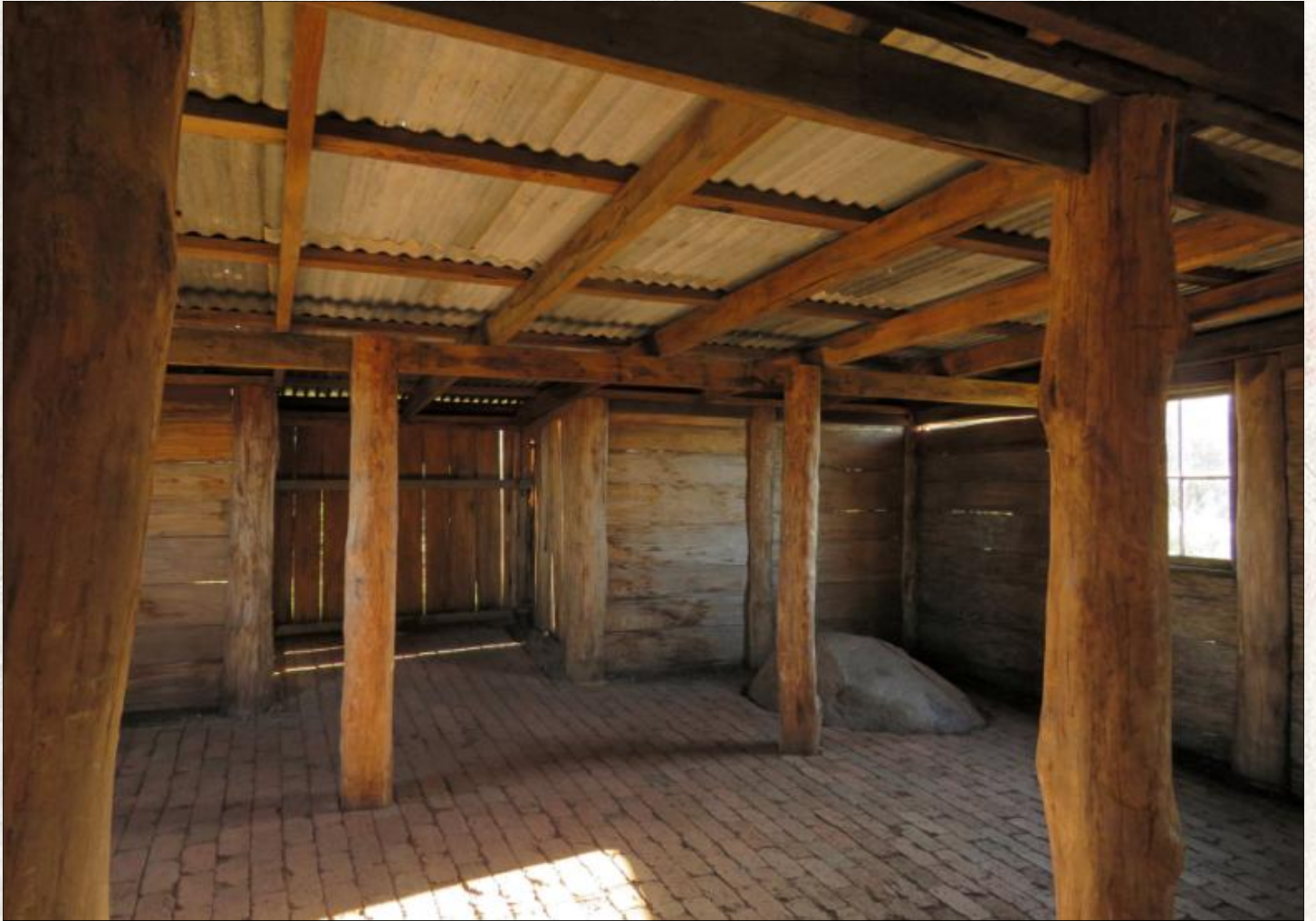


Craig's Hut in January 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Craig's Hut
in January
2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



The brick floor at Craig's Hut in January 2017. It was constructed by volunteers in 2002/03 from second-hand bricks sourced from Melbourne.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017

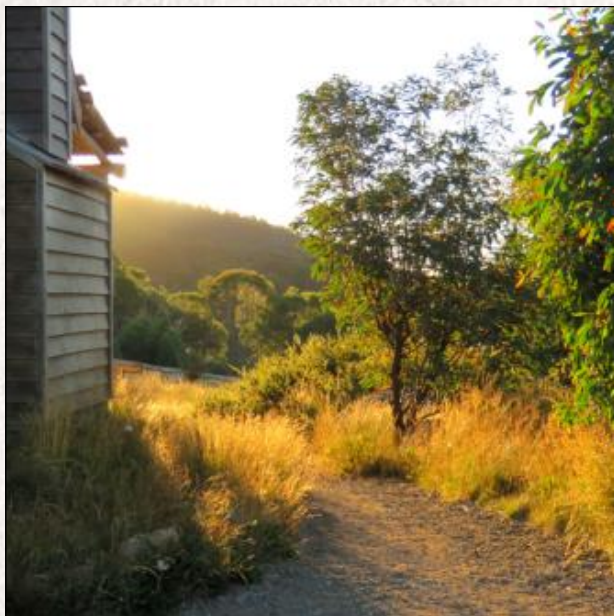


Sunrise over Craig's Hut in January 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



**Early light
on Craig's
Hut in
January
2017**

**(Left)
Shooting an
early
morning
scene**

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Craig's Hut in January 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



Craig's Hut in January 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



Craig's Hut in January 2017

(Left) A picture of the moon taken from the hut



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Doorway and roof at Craig's Hut in January 2017

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Door and windows at Craig's Hut in January 2017

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



Craig's Hut in January 2017



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017

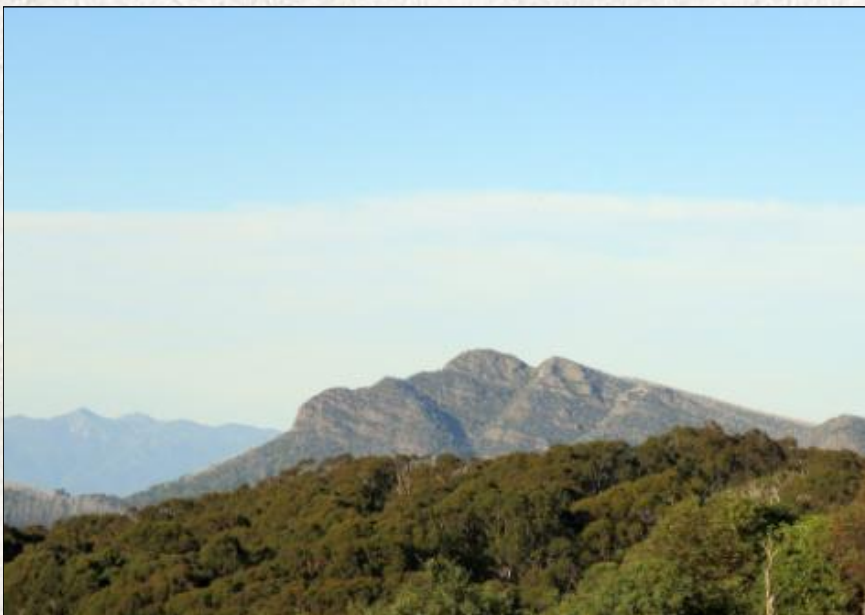


A picnic table and fire pit near the Craig's Hut carpark area in January 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2017



**The Indian Head as seen from
Craig's Hut in January 2017**

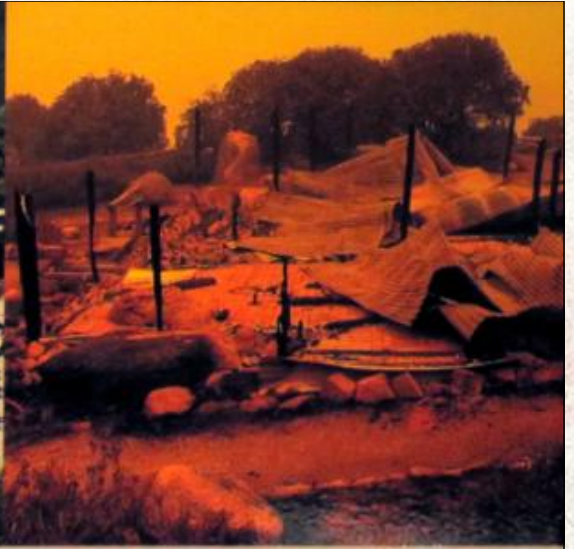
(Left) Copyright © Debbie Hibbert 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



The previous hut in 2003 - courtesy of Peter Lewis



Craig's Hut remains after the 2006 Bush Fire - courtesy of DGL

The Craig's Hut building was originally built as a temporary replica cattleman's hut, created for the film, 'The Man from Snowy River.' This popular hiking and 4WD landmark has been rebuilt 2 times – Originally constructed as a film set in 1981, the Hut soon fell into disrepair, resulting in a reconstruction project by volunteers, co-ordinated by the Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club.' The project was completed and Craig's Hut was re-opened as a visitor site in 1993.

In December 2006 Craig's Hut was completely destroyed by bushfire. The hut was again rebuilt in 2007/8 by the Department of Sustainability & Environment and the Mansfield Shire Council and funded by the State Government as part of the Bushfire Recovery Programme.

The hut is sited at a clearing on Clear Hills, overlooking the magnificent panorama of Mt Cobbler and the Alpine Ranges, east of Mount Stirling. This area is often under snow cover for up to 3 or 4 months of the year, accessible only by helicopter or skiers or snowshoe walkers.

Today, Craig's Hut acts as a visual link to the pioneers of the High Country and the heritage of its Cattlemen's Huts, and also serves as a temporary safe refuge from snowstorms for bushwalkers and skiers over winter.

Craig's Hut

Signage inside Craig's Hut in January 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



Razor Back Hut - courtesy of Dawn Cooper Photography

Over the years many huts have been built throughout Victoria, serving a variety of purposes. Each has stood as a monument of our history, from the humble dwellings of our pioneers, to the evening retreat after a hard days work.

Cattlemen established shelters in the High Country, driving their herds to the alpine grasses and leaving the legacy of the huts they built as a 'make shift' shelter. These rustic buildings afforded some comfort when the day's mustering was done. When blizzards raged and the snow blanketed the landscape, they saved many a life.

Others have been safe havens for those in need or a resting place after trekking some of Australia's most majestic terrain - each one has been a welcomed sight, no matter how small, how primitive or for what reason - *Victorian High Country Huts Association*.

Many of the Huts can be accessed by car, with some accessible on foot, horseback and bicycle:

Razorback Hut, King Hut, Bluff Spur Hut, GGS Hut, Howqua Hut, Bindaree Hut and Tomahawk Hut are located on or around Mt Stirling, within easy reach from Craig's Hut. Fry's Hut on the Howqua River and the Upper Jamieson Hut are also in the area and well worth a visit. There are many other genuine cattlemen's huts scattered around the Victorian High Country.

Why Huts

Signage inside Craig's Hut in January 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

2017



Scene from 'Man From Snowy River'



Image courtesy of Dean Cooper Photography

'The Man from Snowy River' is one of Australia's most iconic poems written by one of Australia's most famous poets, Andrew Barton (Banjo) Paterson. Craig's Hut, was built for the movie 'The Man from Snowy River,' where the main fictional character of the movie, Jim Craig lived. Although not a 'true' example of a cattleman's hut, its location was chosen for the magnificent scenic backdrop of Mt Cobbler and relative ease of access to the site.

Banjo Paterson's poem and the 'Man from Snowy River' movies celebrate the spectacular scenery of the High Country, as well as the skills and characters of early mountain cattlemen of the district. The movies, which include 'The Man from Snowy River 1' (1982) & 2 (1987), as well as the movie 'Cool Change' in 1984, became internationally and locally acclaimed.

The original character in 'The Man from Snowy River' is thought to have been based on a combination of characters from the district. In essence, it is a story of the High Country culture and its pioneers.

*THERE was movement at
the station, for the word had
passed around
That the colt from old
Regret had got away,
And had joined the wild
bush horses - he was worth a
thousand pound,
So all the cracks had
gathered to the fray.
All the tried and noted
riders from the stations near
and far
Had mustered at the
homestead overnight,
For the bushmen love hard
riding where the wild bush
horses are,
And the stock-horse snuffs
the battle with delight.*

The Man from Snowy River - Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson

At the Movies

**Internal signage in January 2017
and the poem 'The Man from Snowy
River' by Banjo Patterson.**
(Click INFO button for more)



HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2021



Craig's Hut in February 2021

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2021



Craig's Hut in February 2021

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert

HISTORIC FACTSHEET



2021



Craig's Hut in February 2021

Copyright © Debbie Hibbert

REPORTS

RELATING TO CRAIG'S HUT

22-24 FEBRUARY 2002

17 MAY 2003

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

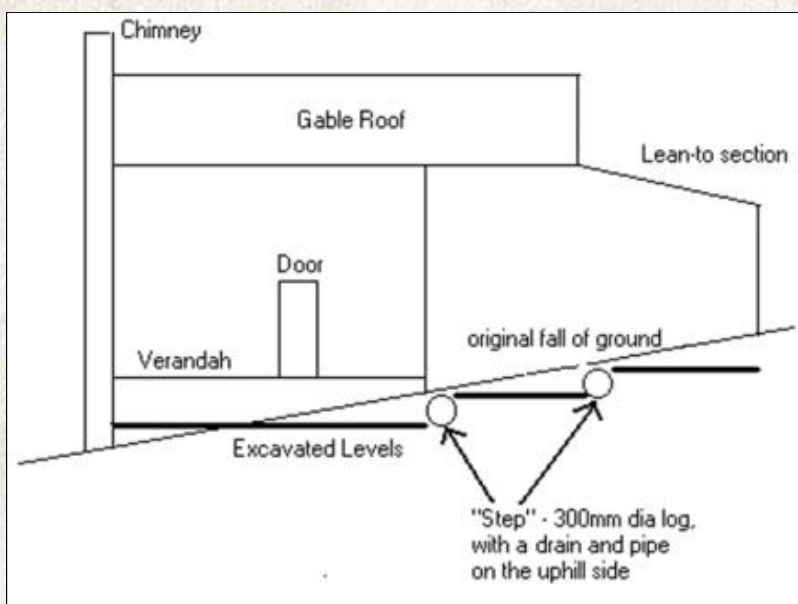
CRAIG'S HUT WORKING BEE 22–24/02/02 LAYING THE BRICK FLOOR

The working bee was not very well attended, however as it worked out, it wasn't too bad – at least we weren't tripping over one another.

Neil and Chris from Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club arrived bright and early Friday morning, and were soon joined by their President Dave. They spent all day shooting levels and preparing the first section by excavating and removing 16 cubic metres of soil, installing a wooden step (to separate the lower floor level from the middle level) complete with sub-surface drain, and compacting a good layer of 'roadbase' material in readiness for the sand base.

Getting the wooden 'step' in was a pretty good feat for the three of them, as we found out – we had to put in a second one on the Saturday.

Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club were joined on Saturday by Graeme Linaker (early) and Allan Layton ('gentleman's hours' – 9 am) of the CFA 4WD Club.



The next step was to install a treated pine plinth around the perimeter of the lower level, as something to lay the bricks up to, and hold them in place. The top of the plinth and the top of the bricks, were to finish up level with the concrete hearth of the fireplace. Hence the need to remove the soil the previous day and to install the brick floor in three levels, with about 300 mm step between each level, as the old earthen floor had a severe slope to it.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

Then a good layer of sand to lay the bricks on – this is where it got tricky, although the others (especially Neil and Chris) were very experienced at building 'things', none of us had ever laid a brick floor before! Plenty of sand went down, then it was decided to screed off one corner to the required level and to start laying bricks in a triangular pattern from the corner, that is, a few bricks along two walls from a corner, and increasing ever outwards, screeding the sand further and further as we went. Each brick was tapped up against its mates and down firm against the sand base.

'Wrong!' said a curious tourist. The hut was of course open to visitors (although we weren't letting them inside at that stage, they could still look through the doorway).

We were stunned, another big-mouth, know-it-all, tourist!

'You should screed it all off first, then put down one full row of bricks, square them up, then another row, square them up, and work from the bricks you've already laid, not by squatting on the sand'.

Hmmmm! He might have something this tourist.

'Hop out of the way and I'll show you.'

Now this sounds promising.

'More sand guys, probably another three barrow loads by the look of it.'

And away he went, on his knees, screeding like he's done this before.

'I do this for a living, I'm a paving contractor.'

He saved us heaps of time. He screeded off the lower level in double-quick time (this also being the largest area to be done), and once the bricks themselves started to go down it turned out to be fairly simple – by following his simple instructions, although I reckon that we still took longer than he would have done.

Unfortunately, even the offered bribe of unlimited drinks couldn't hold him. I heard later that his fellow horse riders were extremely surprised when he rejoined them, as he had yellow sand all down the front of his strides and all over his boots!

By the end of Saturday the lower level was complete. Bricks down, sand swept between them, and tamped down with the 'whacker'.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

The roadbase material was also laid on the middle level and wet down, then 'whacked' also, to allow it to firm overnight ready for the Sunday.



Left: View from the upper level, towards the lower levels with the bricks stacked on the middle level, and the wooden step between the middle and upper levels and the loose gravel drain.

Right: Partly completed brick paving on the lower floor (note the beautifully screeded sand to the right of the bricks).



Left: View from the middle level, at the now completed lower level, with loose sand scattered over the bricks, to be swept into the *cracks*.

Right: View from the middle level, looking towards the upper level – roadbase on middle level in foreground, awaiting its covering of sand and bricks.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

The day finished tolerably early (6pm) – unlike the Friday night when the boys worked late, by the aid of lights and the generator.

This was necessary as Pioneer Concrete were holding a corporate night at the hut – just like the Black-Tie Dinners of yesteryear, monstrous marquee, fully catered and waited, wining and dining, with a band, even down to the drinks table awaiting the 120 guests at the gate to the Hut. They had to work for their dinner though – the three coaches deposited them at the start of the walking trail on the Circuit road, and they had to walk to the Hut.

I left on Saturday evening (late to arrive, early to leave)! The rest settled down to hot showers and their own dinner; no white suited Chefs for them.

On Sunday, they were at it again. Dave had to leave mid-morning and Graeme was intending to be out-of-there about mid-day, but he felt guilty about leaving only two of them to do it, so he stayed. Passing tourists (motorcyclists) were prevailed upon to pass bricks into the workers (as their 'entry fee' to the Hut) thus helping somewhat.

By departure on Sunday the middle level of the floor was also complete, leaving only the upper level (and probably smallest of the three) to be attacked.

Unfortunately there aren't enough bricks left over, to finish the job. So the word's out, we're looking for about another 300 olde-worlde hand-made bricks (to match the ones that we've been using, which were liberated by Rod Hanscomb sometime ago and transported to Mansfield from Melbourne by a convoy of CFA 4WD Club members).

A further working bee will then be necessary to complete the job, and to install the underground drains immediately outside the hut, to drain away both the surface run-off, but also the run-off from the roof, to prevent the water getting under the brick floor, and from rotting the bottom row of wood-slabs that make up the walls.

Trip Report by © Allan Layton

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

CFA 4WD Club

Craig's Hut Working Bee – Saturday 17 May 2003

Subtitled: The Brick Floor Is Complete!

Attendees: Rod Hanscomb, 60 series Cruiser
Graeme Linaker, 60 series Cruiser
Andy Kass, 60 series Cruiser
Andrew Oldroyd, 42 series Cruiser, and Chas
Clayton Bryant, Maverick
Allan Layton, Defender
Dave and Neil (Mansfield Alpine 4WD Club) in Neil's Jackaroo

Rod, Graeme and Allan met at Mansfield about 1800 hrs on the Friday and contacted the local friendly garden supplies operator, who promptly dispatched a guy to open the depot and load us with a good (very good) cubic metre of packing sand. This was shared amongst Rod and Graeme's trailers and the back of Allan's ute, which already carried the extra 180 bricks we were taking in case we ran short.

Whilst we had a counter tea, Andy spotted the parked cars and joined us. We were going to luxuriate the night away at Helen and Brian's lodge near Sawmill Settlement. (Thanks Helen and Brian, hope your Canadian holiday is going well). Andrew was going to camp at the hut and Clayton was coming up early Saturday to meet us, as were the Mansfield guys.

Anyway, as we convoyed our way past the Merrijig pub, a plaintive voice was heard on UHF ch14. 'Is that the CFA 4WD Club'. It was Andrew calling. 'Where are you going, where's the lodge?' So he and his mate Chas also joined us for the night. I don't know what attraction kept them away from the hut and the mountain. Maybe it was the warm fire, the soft bed, the hot and cold running water, the cooking facilities, or the clean dunny. Who knows? It could have been all or none of the above. It might have been our company, although I doubt it.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

We headed off towards the mountain about 0745 hrs Saturday; being joined by Clayton (after a three hour drive) just as we were loading up to leave the lodge.

The local guys arrived at the hut shortly after us, just after we completed unloading, and surveying the repairs that would be needed for the fencing. Dave and Neil had all the bricklaying gear – the dumpy level, screeds, brick cutting saw, generator, water pump, plus all the usual carpentry tools. Whilst they got organised, Graeme and Allan took the Defender off into the bush looking for fence posts. The others started unbolting broken rails (and recovering the bridge spikes and bolts) and digging out the rotten posts.



Andrew and Rod, fencing (left) and Neil, Andy & Dave (background) flooring.

Things started in earnest around 1000 hrs. Two teams – one inside the hut working on the floor and the other working on the fence. Allan alternated between teams. Just as one team would catch onto the fact that he wasn't actually doing anything, he'd head off and repeat the performance with the other team. Most successfully too, if I must say so myself.

The 'inside' team removed a wall panel on the back of the hut to give access and allow in some extra light. Levels were shot. Soil dug out and removed. The timber retaining frame (to stop the edges of the brick floor migrating outwards) was laid around the

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WORKING BEE

inside of the shed posts. Gravel and road base material was brought in, and the motorised 'whacker' got into action. Then the packing sand was laid on top and screeded off. The laying of bricks proceeded with suitable haste.



Clayton takes a break (left) and Chas works on

Meanwhile Allan and Graeme and a few others were off finding fence rails this time. After they returned, it was time for Dave and Allan to take the ute with the 200 litre plastic drum and pump down to the creek. Upon their return the pump was hooked up to the cutting saw, and bricks were cut to size to fit around the rock, the internal hut posts, and the obligatory $\frac{1}{2}$ bricks needed in each of the long runs.

It was obvious early on that we didn't have quite enough of the hand-made bricks that Rod had originally scrounged for us (about 2,300 of 'em), so we deliberately used the rougher looking ones of the wire-cut ones (the 180 that Allan carried up last night), again, that Rod had scrounged for us. These were used in the little alcove at the remote end of the hut, where it's a little darker and they're not so obvious. They were also laid with a different pattern, rather than trying to get them to blend, as being machine made and newer they were actually a little bigger than the old well-worn ones.

Meanwhile, the fence work was proceeding. The more they looked, the more they found to do. Expert at scrounging, they used broken long rails, to cut down to make suitable

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

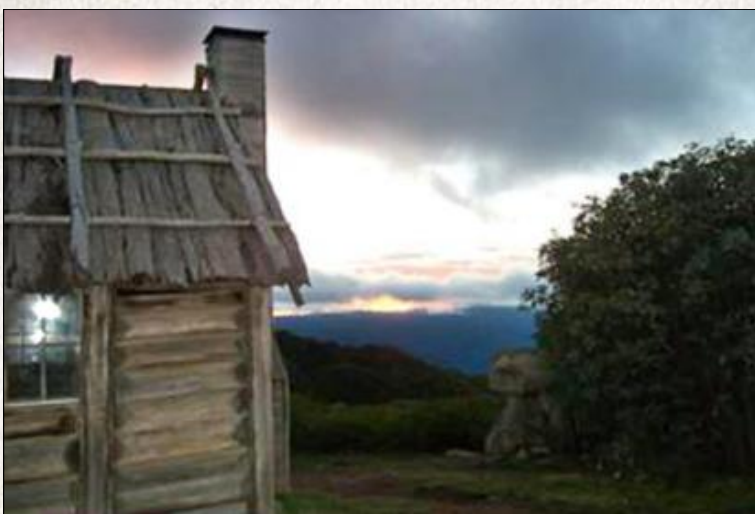
WORKING BEE

short rails, to avoid the need to go looking in the bush for more timber. Bridge spikes were straightened and reused. A long length of reo was cut into suitable lengths and then sharpened on an angle grinder to make additional nails.

At last the floor was done. The bricks are down. A last bash around with the 'whacker', with plenty of sand being swept into the cracks between the bricks. Back and forth for about half an hour. Looks good guys.

Time to pack up. The shadows are getting long. The temperature's dropping and Neil is on a 'promise' back at Mansfield (or so we suspect) such was the haste with which we cleaned up and packed up. The wall panel was re-erected, the area cleaned up, the tin re-erected around the bottom of the hut (several sheets had been removed to get the wall panel out), the realn drains re-established, the leftover sand and gravel and the soil were graded out. Timber scraps were cut into suitable lengths for the potbelly stove and stacked in the hut ready for any skiers needing refuge during the winter.

A final look over, everything clean, neat and tidy, and off we went. A red sunset, and we needed the headlights to get out.



Now for a celebratory beer and a feed at Merrijig pub, then home. Wrong. The pub was packed. Head to Mansfield. Watered and fed, and goodbye.

Thanks everyone, it's great to see the floor complete. It's now just over two years since we first liberated the bricks in Melbourne, and commenced carting them to Mansfield. Since that time we've had a number of members

involved in the project, plus the usual maintenance activities, and a big thank-you to each and everyone of you.

Trip Report by © Allan Layton

MEDIA
RELEASE

HUT TO BE REBUILT

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

Wednesday, 31 January 2007

CRAIG'S HUT THE CENTREPIECE OF \$4M TOURISM RECOVERY PACKAGE

The State Government will rebuild the iconic Craig's Hut, as part of a \$4 million funding package to assist in the recovery of tourism in bushfire-affected areas of North East Victoria and Gippsland.

Premier Steve Bracks was joined by Tourism Minister Tim Holding today to announce the Bushfire Taskforce rescue package.

Craig's Hut is a replica of a high country cattleman's hut built in 1983 [*sic*] as a set for the movie *The Man from Snowy River*. It was destroyed by fire on December 11 last year.

Mr Bracks said Craig's Hut was a key marketing image for Victoria in Australia and overseas and was central to recovery of the region's tourism industry. Encouraging tourists to come back to regions devastated by bushfire is an important way we can help local communities and businesses get back on their feet quickly, Mr Bracks said.

Craig's Hut attracts about 80,000 visitors a year. Not only will we work with local community groups and councils to rebuild this iconic hut to its former glory, local access tracks will also be repaired and walking trails upgraded.

We are sending a clear message that Gippsland and North East Victoria are open for business, Mr Bracks said.

Mr Holding said although the bushfire season was by no means over, it was important to start the recovery process as soon as possible. Tourism is the lifeblood of many towns in these regions, and the impact of such devastating fires on tourism-reliant businesses cannot be underestimated, Mr Holding said.

As with the earlier Grampians fires, a key element of the Taskforce package will be tourism recovery. We will work with local communities to ensure tourism recovery is sustainable and long-term.

Mr Holding said the tourism promotion package would fund events, marketing and public relations activity, industry development and administration across Gippsland and North East Victoria over an 18 month period.

We want to see visitors return to Gippsland and North East Victoria to enjoy the great events, food and wine, adventure activities and natural attractions the area has to offer, Mr Holding said.

The funding package will see the North East region receive \$1.95 million towards recovery over 18 months. The Gippsland region will receive \$1.75 million. The Craig's Hut project is estimated at \$300,000.

ESPLASH
MEDIA
ARTICLES

ARTICLES IN THE ESPLASH EMAGAZINE

CRAIG'S HUT

MT STIRLING - 3 FEBRAURY 2017 - PUBLISHED 23 JULY 2017

MANAGED BY: PARKS VICTORIA
MINISTERS: LILIANA (LILY) D'AMBROSIO MLA
LUKE DONELLAN MLA

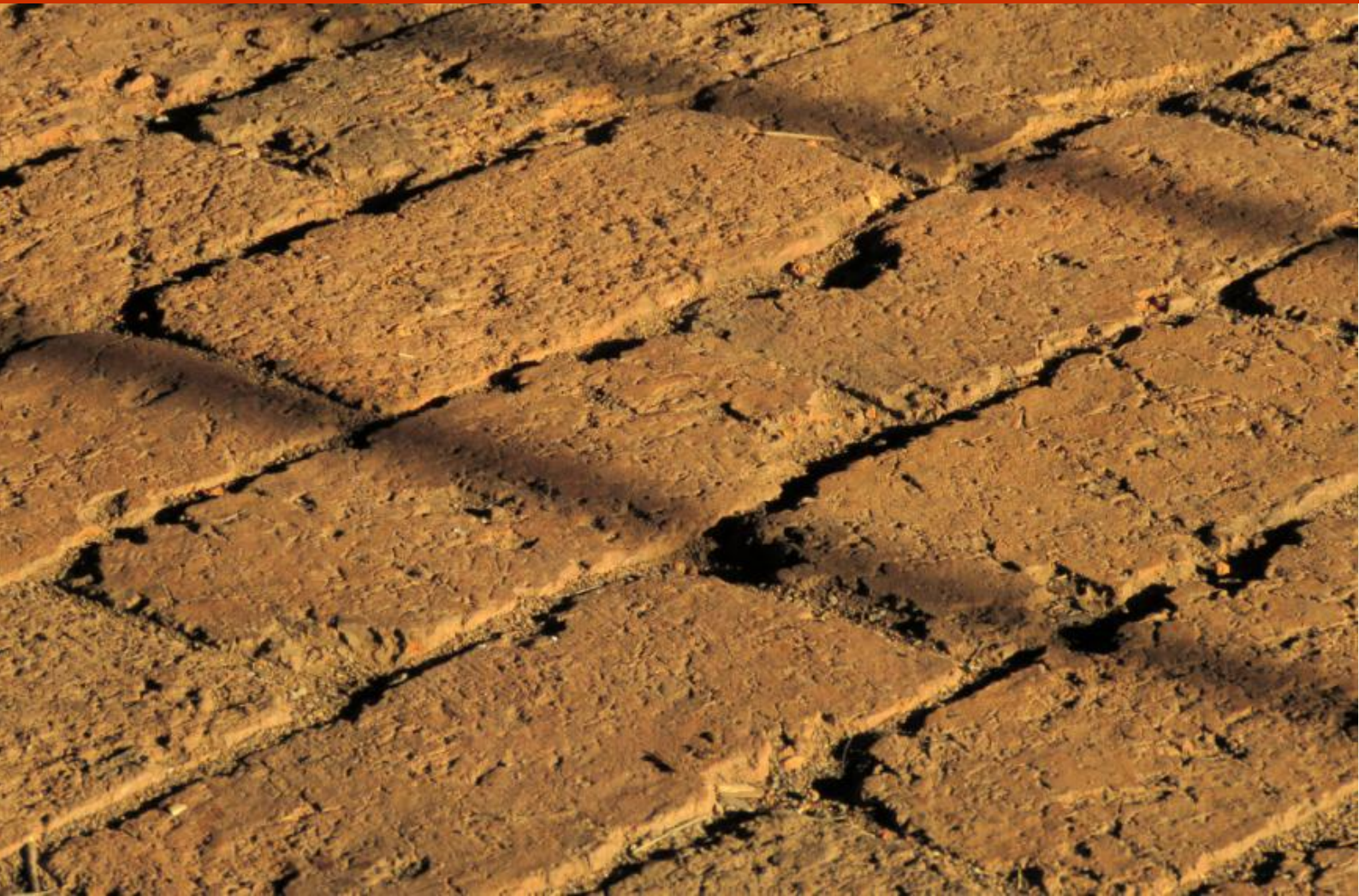
Photographs © Debbie Hibbert 2017

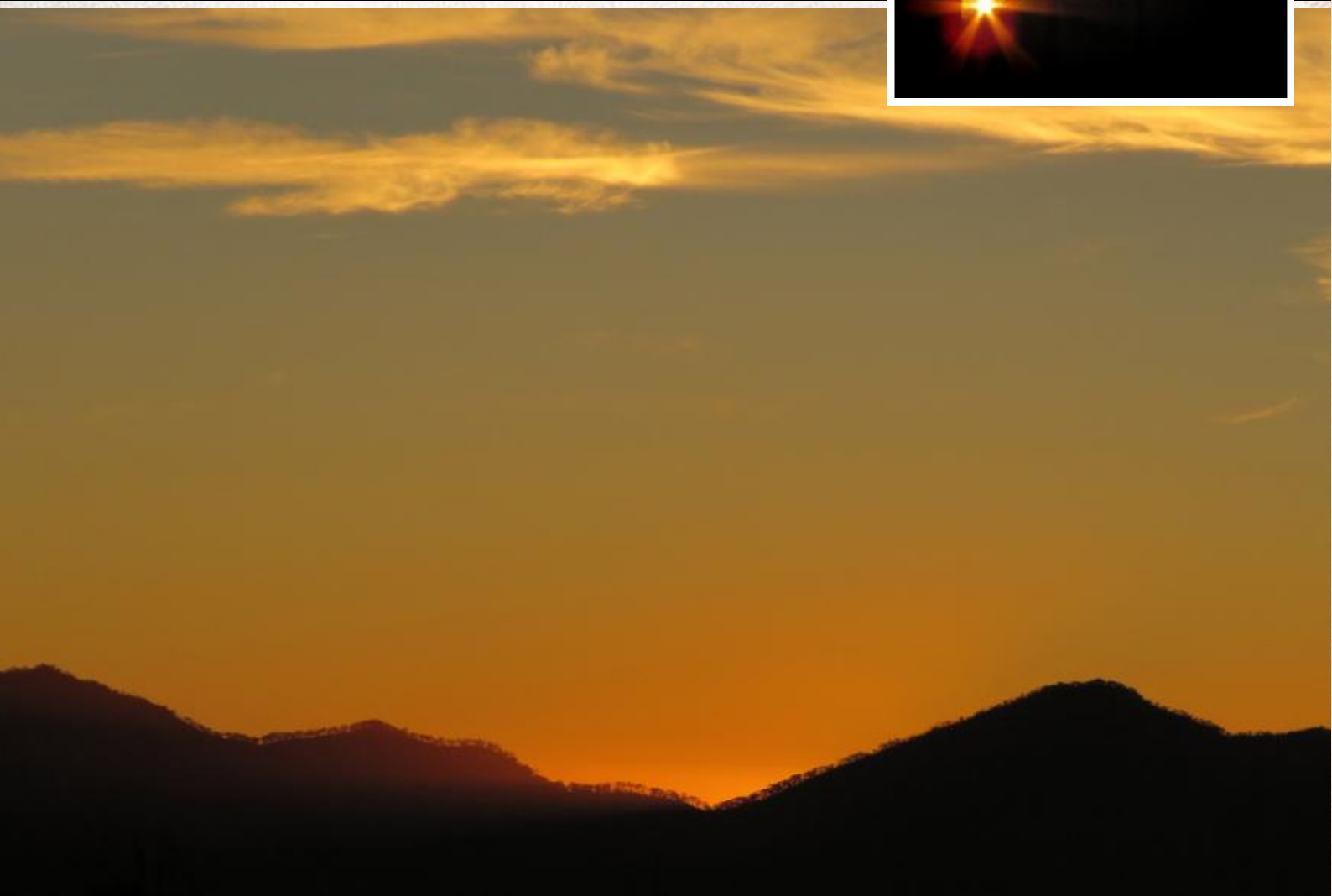
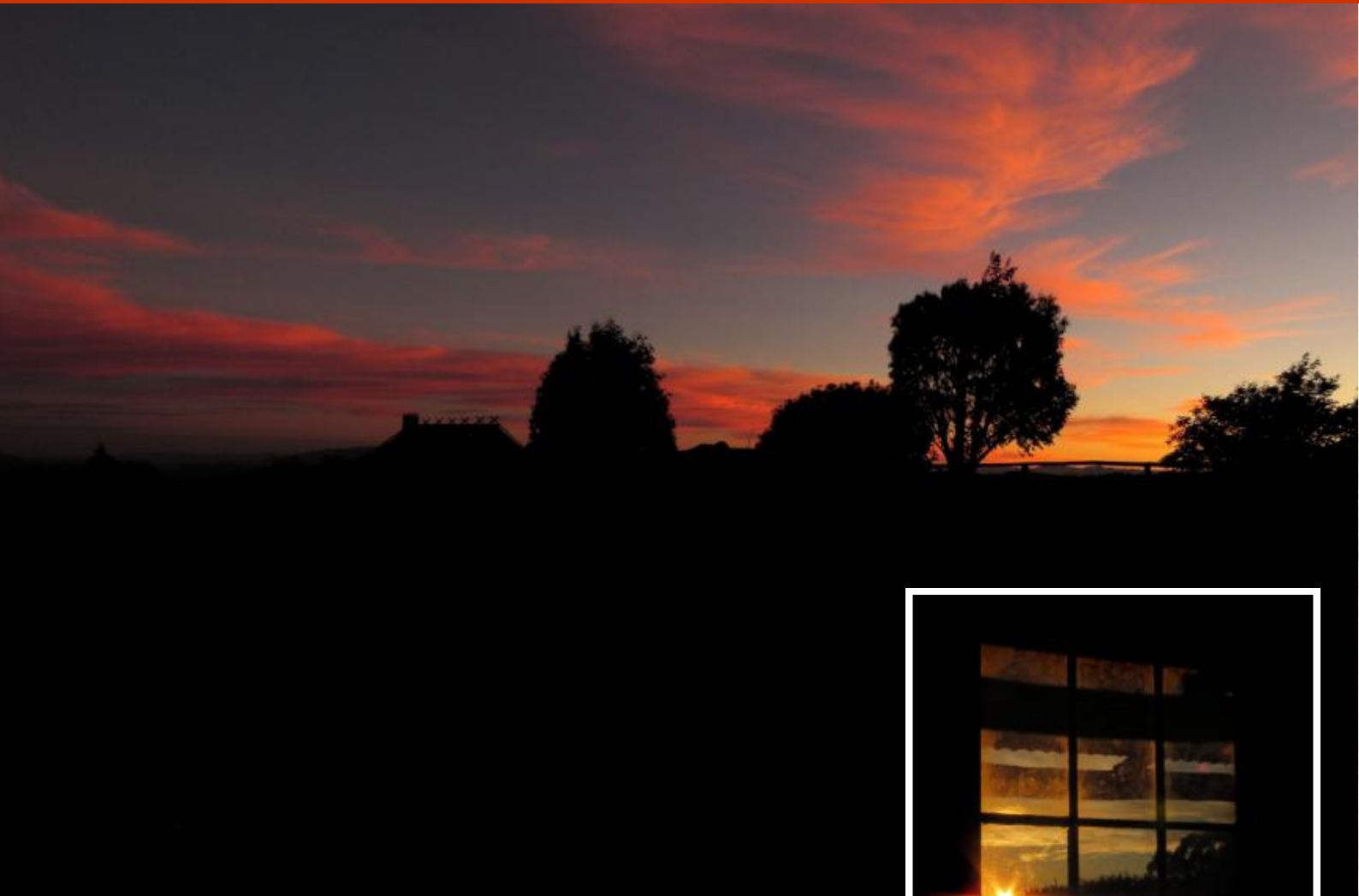


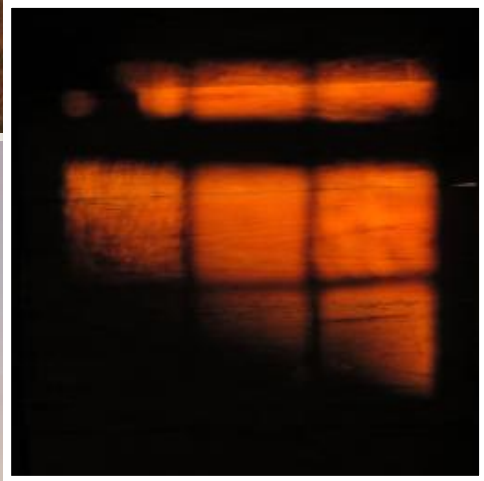
Australia's most visited hut

We took to our car one Friday afternoon after work and headed for Mt Stirling. We camped at Craig's Hut and had the hut all to ourselves the entire time we were there. This hut is amazing any time of day.







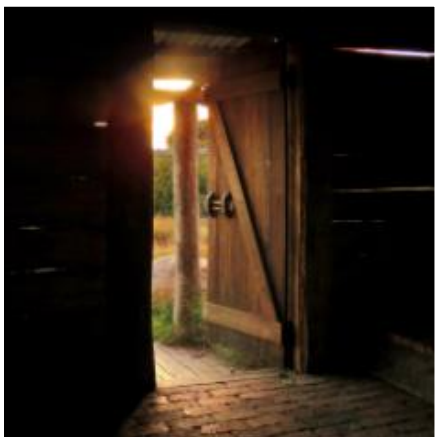


Located at Clear Hills on Mt Stirling, Craig's Hut was first built in late 1981 as an alpine cattlemen's hut set for the highly acclaimed Australian movie production of *The Man from Snowy River* - released on 5 November 1982. The movie starred Australian actors Jack Thompson, Tom Burlinson and Sigrid Thornton and American actor Kirk Douglas and was based on the poem *The Man from Snowy River* penned by poet Banjo Patterson. The set consisted of four walls held up by props and wires, and a rudimentary roof.

In 1986 the movie *Cool Change* was filmed in the High Country and included scenes from the site. The movie was directed was George T. Miller, the same director of *The Man from Snowy River*. It starred actors Jon Blake and Lisa Armytage. In 1987 the set was rebuilt for the movie sequel *The Man from Snowy River II*, which saw the actors roles reprised. The movie was officially released on 15 April 1988 and again was received well by the Australian audience.

In 1993 the set was dismantled and a new structurally sound alpine hut was built in its place by volunteer labour. It was officially opened on 4 April 1993 at an event that attracted over 500 people plus media.

The hut was burnt by fire in December 2006, rebuilt by January 2008 and opened again to the public. Today it is one of Central Victoria's most successful tourism attractions.





CRAIG'S HUT

REBUILT 1993

CO-ORDINATED BY MANSFIELD ALPINE 4WD CLUB

WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

OPENED BY

THE HON. MARK BIRRELL

MINISTER FOR CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

4 APRIL, 1993.



Artworkz

Serving the Community

