



**TRAWOOL VALLEY RABBITER'S HUT HISTORY
BY COLIN SMITH**

The Smith family bought Greenslopes" 60 years ago – in March 1949. Dudley & Jean Smith bought the property to farm with their sons Murray and Colin who in 1945 had returned from World War 2. In 1949 there were masses of rabbits and had been for many years prior to this in the hill country.

Murray and Colin's Rabbits' Hut
1950s

edge to do just that. Len, who was dark showing his aboriginal beginning, Colin, who was fair, tanned and blue eyed didn't portray any connection with the same forebears. Len to me was a very fine man, quiet, knew what he was about, didn't talk much about his days as a POW of the Japanese, captured at Ambon, but knew our country backwards. Maybe it was this knowledge which made him a man to be respected; in fact I feel he had the admiration of quite a few of our acquaintances who had come in contact with him. I know, when it came time to mix the poison we were not allowed near, evidently they had some secret formula they used.

Of course these days with 1080 things are vastly different. Nugget was here when we came, he changed hands with the property. The man who used to trap our hills, Frank Thompson, rode him and had traps and rabbits draped all over him. I rode him a couple of times and he was very good to ride round the hills. However, we were under the impression by his performance so far he was fairly quiet and tractable and nothing would upset him very much.

Our opinion soon changed, we nearly lost Len Thompson into the bargain. Len and Col. Thompson needed Nugget to pull the trail maker and carry about four half bags of carrots too. Carrying on the pack saddle was no problem but trouble occurred when Nugget was harnessed to the trail maker. I can remember Len calling out whoa- whoa and seeing Nugget flying past us down hill.

Len evidently entangled in the reins, which were long light rope, taking strides half a mile long trying to free himself and at the same time trying to control Nugget. Luckily he freed himself saving a very nasty situation indeed. Nugget won the day that time and we had to borrow Nellie from the Urquhart's next door and use Nugget as a pack horse for the rest of the operation. I can remember thinking at the time what a large quantity of carrots we were using.

As it turned out a few years later with aircraft coming to the fore for a lot of these operations. The twenty or so bags we used then for the whole operation over three thousand acres wouldn't cover the first free feed in more modern times with aircraft and hand feeding with a total cover each free feed.

**WELCOME TO ISSUE 27
LOST DOG**

Patsy, Doug McLean's old dog is missing, last seen at the Caveat Church. Black & white kelpie/border collie cross, deaf and much loved. Please ring 57904387 with an news. We weren't going to have TGN this week but Doug's dog needs to be found so here we are.

From memory to poison my 1200 acres using total coverage by hand and no trailing I used nearly five tons of carrot, quite a heap really some eighty bags. More on this subject later if I can get around to it. Getting back to Len and Col Thompson, their whole aim in poisoning in those days was the recovery of the skins which in those days were worth quite a deal of money, used in the felting trade, hats for the Army was one important use for the skins. My very good friend Nobby or Tick Clark was a regular visitor in those days and at this time he had an MG and I would pick up the dead rabbits, the MG was close to the ground so I was able to lean out and reach the dead ones out of the car and throw them in the back, fortunately for him this method was limited to one paddock as all the other country was too steep and rocky. To be confronted with a heap of just on 900 carcasses to skin was a bit forbidding as at this stage our expertise in rabbit skinning was very much in its infancy.

Six or seven of us including the Thompson Bros. and four or five novices managed to peel the hides off all the victims before they started to smell too much, although those at the bottom of the heap were on the "nose" by the time we got to them. Since those days I have skinned a great many rabbits and today it takes a lot of persuasion to kid me into skinning a bunny for the house. Quite amazing really how quickly 900 carcasses disappeared once they had been skinned, foxes and Crows I guess.

Until 1080 came on the scene we never really had great success with poisoning, mainly I think, from what we have learnt from aerial baiting, feeding on each successive day was too quick to allow the shy feeders to come to the bait. I seem to be dwelling a bit on the rabbit but for a long time was the thing which took most of our efforts and resources trying to overcome this pest which had taken control of all our hill country particularly granite hills where there was plenty of cover.

Colin Smith (now living in Melbourne) paints a clear picture of the European introduced rabbits mediating relationships between some local indigenous men and new farmers such as the Smith family just after the WW2.

It also demonstrates how these business relationships were sadly displaced as soon as young white men such as Colin and his brother Murray assumed control of farms after WW2 and identified efficiencies such as aerial distribution of rabbit bait.

This extract is part of Colin Smith's written memoirs. By Fiona Smith

"I was talking about having professional poisoners in for the rabbits this brings to mind a couple of things, a personality of a man and I suppose the personality of a horse. Not really the one thing but they did meet on passing as the saying goes. The man, Len Thompson, part Aboriginal, the horse a light Draught called Nugget. Len and his brother Colin had gained a reputation in the district as experts in the field of poisoning rabbits, in fact in those days were exceptional as they practiced winter poisoning quite successfully. It seemed to be difficult to poison when the grass was green but these two seemed to have the knowl-



Community What's On Calendar—September/October 2009

Fortnight beg 31st August	Terip Terip mowing roster Helen McKenzie George and Trish Uden Around Clubhouse and all 4 courts
8th September	The Seymour U3A Melting Pot talk on may be of interest to our readers. The talk will be introduced with an explanation of how education today is not (or should not be) the same as when most adults went to school and what that means for the community. It will also explain the economic importance of education in the community and why this project is not just of interest to people with kids. It has the potential to not only be a short term stimulus to the local economy (it is, after all, a multi-million dollar project), but it could also change the commercial fortunes of the place if it is done well. It will be a very interesting talk, particularly for anyone with an interest in education. Education is such an important issue to involve the whole community in. Regards, John Thompson
Thursday 10th	Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative meeting 7.30pm Ruffy Hall
Friday 11th September	'Drinks on the Deck' at Highlands Community Hall from 6.30pm. Bring food to share for a meal together and catch up with friends old and new. Gold coin donation to cover power.
Saturday 12th September	OLD TIME DANCE at the Ruffy Hall at 8 PM Music supplied by the popular CD Admittance \$7.50 Please bring a plate of goodies to share Enquiries: Ph. 57 90 4318
Sunday, 13th September	Ramble around Ruffy at 10am Join Sam Strong and the Ruffy Sunday Walk Group up to Wallaby Gully to look at the amazing array of wildflowers, including orchids. Meet at 10am at the Ruffy Hall for a carpool trip to the Reserve on Upton Road where we do a short few hours wander/wonder in time for a warming coffee or other beverage at the Ruffy Store. For more information, please contact Neil Doran on digit-downs@westnet.com.au, or Sam on 0429 127
SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER	GOULBURN OPTIONS DISABILITY SERVICES are having an OPEN DAY on AT 260 DELATITE ROAD SEYMOUR from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. with CAR BOOT SALES AT \$10 PER SITE, B.B.Q. & DEVONSHIRE TEA, BOOMERANG THROWING & SALES. FOR ENQUIRIES RING DEBBIE ON 57923192. COME ALONG AND FIND OUT WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.
Saturday, 19th September	Seymour Bushland Park in Bloom at 2pm In early August, the Seymour Bushland Park put on its best ever display of Nodding Greenhood Orchids, and from now on we can expect Sun Orchids, (Blue or salmon in colour) Golden Moth The park will host a Guided Nature Walk and picnic with respected field naturalists Dr Peter Mitchell and Barbara Moss, who will be on hand to answer all your questions. Please come along and learn more about your park, no experience necessary! PH 57990693 or email Seymour Bushland Park at seymourbushlandpark@gmail.com for more
13th-19th Sep	WHITEHEADS CREEK- TARCOMBE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TRUCK ROSTER Richard Waugh Gary Richards Wes Jeffery Ned Jeffery
Sunday 20th September.	White Hart Hotel Longwood [In the Dining Room, we're looking forward to our second food & wine event of the year called Three . Each course of the three courses will feature three different foods on the plate, with each course matched to three outstanding local wines from Antcliff's Chase, Delatite and Maygars Hill. Wine tasting and discussions with the three winemakers will follow after the lunch. Price is \$55 per person including wines and bookings are essential so call early to avoid disappointment: 03-5798-5203
Thursday 24th September	Secret Men's Business at the Caveat Church on the last Thursday of every month. Come along at 5.30pm and enjoy a snag and a chat by the fire. Everyone is welcome.
Friday 25th September	Broken Boosey Biodiversity Celebration Day 2009 Come along and learn about some of the threatened fauna conservation and habitat restoration projects that have been happening in and around the Boosey Creek in the Tungamah area. A range of interesting presentations will take place in the morning session and participants will then go for a walk to see some of the habitat works that have occurred along the Boosey Creek in Tungamah in the afternoon. COME ALONG FOR A FREE ROAST LUNCH! Please RSVP by Wednesday 16th September to Jim Castles 58 201 141, 0427 053 700 or email jimc@gbcmav.ic.gov.au Time: 9.30am - 3.00pm Location: Tungamah Football Club Rooms
Saturday 26th September	AFL Grand Final and the Ruffy Store's 7th Birthday. Celebrate with the Grand Final on the biggish screen and be our guest for a birthday BBQ after the footy.
Sunday, 27th September	Earlston Woodland Wander 11am This will be a walk and talk led by Doug Robinson at the Trust for Nature's Earlston Woodland property located on the corner of Nalinga Dookie Rd and Paynters Rd, Earlston, 13km north of Violet Town. Entry via Paynters Rd about 1km from the corner. This 142 ha property contains Box Ironbark and Alluvial Terraces Herb-rich Woodland with an intact understorey of peas, wattles, heath, lilies and orchids. There are also large areas of open grassland with many associated daisies and ground flora. Doug will talk about the plants that are present and how the quality of the vegetation on the property has changed in the 4 years since Trust for Nature has owned it. For more information, please contact Shelagh Curmi on 0407 521 154 or shelaghc@tfn.org.au.
Saturday 10th October	White Hart Hotel Longwood [white.hart@bigpond.com] 7.45pm - White Goat - the crazy Kiwis are back with more great country rock - listen at www.whitegoatband.com T: 03-5798-5203 E: white.hart@bigpond.com

Classifieds & Community Notices

SENIORS FESTIVAL PROGRAM NOW OUT

THE 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival offers an opportunity to get involved more than ever before.

"There are a range of fantastic activities and events being held this year including a performance by Jamie Redfern at Broadford on October 9," Mr Hardman said.

"The play, 'Four Funerals in One Day' – a touching comedy about the end of life but the start of understanding – will be performed at the Yea Shire Hall on Monday 5th October."

Now in its 27th year, Victorian Seniors Festival will run from October 4 to 11 and include more than 1000 free and low cost events across metropolitan Melbourne and regional and rural Victoria.

All Victorian Seniors Card holders with travel free on regional bus services and the metropolitan public transport network from October 4 to 11.

Seniors card holder can also take advantage of free travel on V/Line rail and coach services on October 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 October.

The 2009 Victorian Seniors Festival Events Program lists all the major events in metropolitan Melbourne and is now available at all Coles and Bi Lo supermarkets, local councils, libraries and neighbourhood houses.

For more details about the program phone 1800 136 762 or visit the Office of Senior Victorians website www.seniors.vic.gov.au.

HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB

My apologies to the above. They DO still meet - at Jan Sporry's (opposite Caveat Church) on 2nd Monday of the month at 11a.m. Take your lunch - all welcome.

HELLO SCRIBBLERS

Howdy all,
Just checking ... we haven't run the Scribblers group for a bit.
Can I have a show of hands - who would be interested in running a monthly discussion of writing? It'd be a bottle of wine, some nibbles, reading some of our own writing, giving feedback, sharing ideas, doing some exercises. Low hassle quotient.

Please forward this to any one in the area you think might be up for it.

Cheers,

Adam <adam@consonant.com.au>

FARMREADY

FarmReady Round 2 of the FarmReady Industry Grants now open

FarmReady is calling for applications from agriculture, fishing and forestry industry organisations, natural resource management (NRM) groups and primary producer groups aiming to increase their industries' self reliance and preparedness to adapt to climate change and climate variability.

Guidelines and application forms for the FarmReady Industry Grants are available at www.daff.gov.au/farmingfuture.

FarmReady also assists eligible farmers, fishers, foresters and Indigenous land managers throughout Australia to attend approved training courses. Information about the FarmReady Reimbursement Grants can be found at www.farmready.gov.au.

HOW COMMUNITY HEALTH CAN HELP YOU

Community Health Services around Australia focus on the health and well-being of the communities they serve. In the Murrindindi Shire, community health services are provided by Yea Hospital (for the western side of the shire) and Alexandra Hospital (for the east side), with additional services from Mitchell Community Health.

Services are available to members of the public at reasonable cost, and include dietetics; occupational therapy; women's health; diabetes and asthma support; personal support and counselling; drug, alcohol and gambling help; family violence support; exercise groups.

Research shows that our mental health and physical health are related. So looking after ourselves mentally / emotionally is important – not just so we feel good about living but so we have a better chance of being physically well.

Recent events have put a strain on the mental health of many Murrindindi Shire residents. Community Health is committed to playing a part in supporting local communities to heal and recover. Community Health is working with other organisations and individuals in the recovery effort.

For more information or to make an appointment to see one of the Community Health workers, phone one of the numbers below.

Community Health at Yea Hospital – phone 5736 0410 and at Alexandra Hospital – phone 5772 0800

IN MEMORY OF ALL GOOD DOGS

Remember, if a dog was the teacher you would learn things like:
When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.

Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.

Allow the experience of fresh air and wind in your face to be pure ecstasy. Take naps.

Stretch before rising.

Run, romp and play daily.

Thrive on attention and let people touch you.

Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.

On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.

On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.

When you are happy, dance around and wag your entire body.

Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.

Be loyal.

Never pretend to be something you're not.

If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.

When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.

Enjoy every moment of every day.

AFTER THE FIRES BUSHLAND IN SPRING

Three wildflower walks will be held in Mitchell Shire in Spring to see what has recovered and what has appeared after the fires. Fires cause destruction but they also trigger a renewal with many plants surviving or germinating from seeds buried in the ground. The walks will be an opportunity to discuss how we can help this renewal process.

Wandong, Sunday 4th October 10-12am, 315 South Mountain Road, Heathcote Junction with guest speaker, ecologist Graeme Lorimer

Clonbinane, Saturday 10th October 10-12 am, 695B Spur Road, Clonbinane, led by local naturalists

Reedy Creek and Strath Creek, Sunday 11th October 10-12, 360 Murchison Spur Road, Reedy Creek with guest speaker, ecologist Graeme Lorimer

RSVP appreciated – contact Peter Mitchell on 5784 0622 or 0409 432 498

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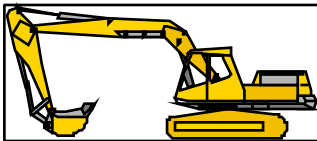
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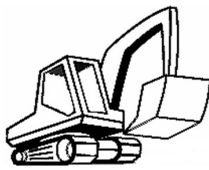
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