

CONVERSATIONS

A Lifetime of Sheep, Shearing and Sharing

Spending time with Stan Artridge is like taking a post-war history lesson while sitting in a warm bath. This elder statesman of the Tablelands has an aura that both relaxes and engages you as he recounts from behind sparkling blue eyes a life that has seen both deprivation and success.

Born to the family's Creightons Creek property in 1931 and educated at Creightons Creek school, Wangaratta Tech and Euroa High School, Stan came home to manage the family dairy farm at the age of 15.

As a child he had created his own toy sheep farm using lemons & quinces with tooth picks for legs and at that early age he designed a rotational grazing system for his toy farm that he was to bring to real life many years later when he bought his own farm at Ruffy.

Stan has been on his Ruffy property for 60 years but the original Creightons Creek farm was first selected by his grandfather and remains in the family under daughter Cathy's ownership and management. As a youngster, Stan was taught to crutch sheep by his uncle Bill Hartley that started a lifetime association with the sheep and wool industry as a shearer, wool classer and teacher.

Stan spent 15 years working the sheds from central Queensland down to the NSW border as well as working locally and mentoring his son Peter who went on to represent Australia in

the International Shearing Championships. Stan is proud that his grandson Caleb is also a 'gun' shearer who like his father and grandfather before him can regularly shear upward of 300 sheep in a day.

He's worked for the Sunbeam Company teaching shearers in Iran, he's seen enormous advances in farming and technology but Stan says that the single biggest influence on his approach to farming was the time he spent monitoring an early fertiliser trial by the Dept of Agriculture on a plot at Ruffy's Strathearn.

Stan says that experience gave him an insight to pasture improvement that has seen him take stocking rates from the previous average of 1 sheep/acre to 6/acre and effectively run 2000 sheep on his 320 acre property.

By combining pasture management with his dedication to small paddocks and rotational grazing (he has 60 paddocks on 320 acres) he says with a wry smile *"..it has only taken me 60 years to get to about where I want to be."*

At the age of 86 Stan still has vivid memories of the fun the community used to have swimming, diving and boating at the Boathole and he says that these days he's energised by seeing the number of visitors who've discovered our wonderful little village and fill the street on weekends with their motorbikes and classic cars.

You'd be forgiven for assuming that Stan would be a bit 'old school' and when it comes to ethics & values you'd be right, but don't think that technology has passed him by. Stan spends time on the internet and uses his iPad to access Facebook, he's also recently taken delivery of a Drone that he's using for aerial mapping of his property and for scaring the white cockatoos.

Every community has leaders; some are visible and vocal but Stan Artridge is the quintessential quiet achiever who leads by example and is a moderating influence in changing and challenging times.

By Don Cook



Stan takes delivery of the latest sheep handling gear



Technology at his fingertips—Stan's new Drone

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Classifieds and Community Notices

FARMING & ENVIRONMENT



Dung Beetles - 2017 Summer Survey – Part 2

In Granite News Issue 3, we listed the equipment that you will need to complete your Dung Beetle Survey.

Here's what you need to do next:

1/ With the bucket and shovel/trowel in hand, go to an area where there is plenty of one to two-day old cow dung (not too old and not too fresh – ‘Goldilocks poo, so to speak, just right).

2/ Approach dung pads quickly and quietly. Beetles are very sensitive to vibration and will quickly bury themselves if they detect you approaching.

3/ If possible, locate a dung pad that shows sign of dung beetle activity (soil castes around the pad, cracks in the crust).

4/ Using the shovel/trowel, scoop up some or all of the pad, along with a little of soil from beneath the pad.

Place this dung-soil sample in the bucket.



5/ Gently agitate the mix with the shovel (with a washing machine action) to break up the dung and soil, which allows the beetles to float to the surface. Repeat the process with a few more dung pads (four to six pads is a good number), until you have up to 40 or 50 beetles in the plastic container.

[Sacrificing this many beetles won't impact on their numbers.]

6/ After a few minutes, when most of the beetles have floated to the surface, scoop off up to a few dozen individuals (making sure you get about 10 of each of the different-looking sorts) and put them in the ice cream container and put the lid on!

7/ Transfer the beetles you've collected into the tin/cup and pour very hot/boiling water over them, which kills them almost instantly. Decant the water and let the beetles dry out a bit, then tip the dead beetles into a paper bag (if you have lots), or into an envelope. This way they'll dry out, rather than rot. Alternately, instead of killing them with boiling water, place the bag with the beetles in the freezer overnight.

8/ Place dead beetles into a solid paper/cardboard container (matchbox or larger), include a label with the collector's name, date & location.

Then contact your local Landcare coordinator to arrange identification.

If you have questions about any of this don't hesitate to give me a call or email.

Regards, Janet Hagen, Hughes Creek Catchment Collaborative.
5790 4268 hughescreek2@gmail.com

PLATYPUS CASUALTY



“I have received advice regarding the first known platypus casualty for 2017.

An opera house net with a badly decomposed body of a Platypus was found by a recreational angler in early February 2017 on the Murrindindi River near Yea. It appears the net had been in the water during higher river flows and was exposed with receding water levels. This death highlights the dangers of opera house yabby nets to animals such as platypus, water rats & turtles. We need to spread the message that the use or possession of opera house nets is prohibited in, on or next to all Victorian public waters.

Opera House nets can only be used in private inland waters such as farm dams where a maximum of 3 nets applies. The recreational angler who found this platypus was good enough to contact **DELWP's Customer Call Centre (136 186)** and report the discovery.

While it is distressing to find these opera house nets in our public waterways, it is terrific that this was reported.

If you see something, say something!”

Kirsten Hogan - Goulburn Broken Waterwatch Co-ordinator



OPERA HOUSE
NET

Shire of Strathbogrie's "Let's Talk we are Listening" Tour Comes to Ruffy Tuesday Feb 28th 5-7pm at the Ruffy Hall

Every Shire Councillor will be here and all local residents should try to attend.

It's a chance for you to air your views (in a mature & respectful manner) about the things you believe the Shire needs to be address to effectively support its citizens now and in the future.

Roads and Rates are always items of vigorous discussion, especially given the 3rd world condition our local roads, but there are sure to be many others, for example:

Encouraging & Managing Population Growth, Rural Zoning, Planning & Building Permits, Neighbourhood Safer Places, Roadside Signage in Charming Rural Villages, just to name a few..

Your community needs you to come along and have your say.

COMMUNITY "WHAT'S ON" CALENDAR — FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017



W/C Sunday Feb 26th Highlands/Caveat.....Driver: Alistair Lade Radio: Ron Halicki
Ruffy.....3rd Lieutenant Peter Saglietti's Team

Thursday 23rd February 5:30pm **SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS** Old Caveat Church, Caveat-Dropmore Rd, Caveat
Come along and have a casual chat with other local blokes.
BBQ Tea Provided (Gold Coin) BYO Drinks



Friday 24th February From 10am **REMEDIAL HEALTH MASSAGE** at Tablelands Community Centre, Ruffy
Deep tissue massage— Sports massage— Relaxation massage NST – Bowen Therapy
Bookings need to be placed directly with Kristy a week prior to Ruffy sessions.
Contact Kristy 0409 999957

Friday 24th February 7:30pm **HCCC LANDCARE** at Tablelands Community Centre Ruffy
Monthly Landcare meeting to discuss and promote essential and innovative environmental management issues that affect every landholder. All welcome
Contact Mel Bronca 0417 126975

Saturday 25th February 9am **HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY HALL—Working Bee** at Highlands Hall
Come along, bring your gardening tools, enjoy the company & together we can get the grounds spic & span again. The morning will finish at 12 noon with a simple lunch.
Contact Judy Cameron 5796 9247 or Judy Reid 5796 9358



Saturday 25th February 11:00am **HIGHLANDS vs RUFFY ANNUAL CRICKET MATCH** at the MCG (Molesworth)
The traditional challenge match is on again. Send us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses....they're guaranteed to get a game! Lunch at the Pub
Contact Scott McKay or David Sleigh scottmckay@activ8.net.au or slsl22@bigpond.com

Sunday 26th February 9am—1pm **NAGAMBIE FARMERS MARKET** on centre median strip High St Nagambie
Experience a true accredited farmers' market in the picturesque lakeside town of Nagambie. **Further details Contact** nagambiefarmersmarket.com.au

Saturday 4th March Doors Open 7:30pm **RUFFARTZ — "A SEASON of SATURDAYS"** Ruffy Hall, Nolans Rd., Ruffy
Sonidos Flamenco Tomas Arroquero brings us a flamenco feast: male & female flamenco dancers, singer and guitar accompaniment. BYO drinks and nibbles.
Book early to ensure your seat. Tickets \$25. Season Tickets 4 shows for \$75.
Contact Kym 0409 172 595 ruffartztickets@gmail.com

Friday 10th March 6:30pm **'DRINKS ON THE DECK'** at Highlands Community Hall
Bring food to share for a meal together and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome, especially new faces. Gold coin donation. **Contact Judy 5796 9247**



Monday 13th March 9am—2pm **SEYMOUR LIONS CLUB LABOUR DAY MARKET** Goulburn Park, Seymour
A wide range of stalls , exhibitors and entertainment for young and old including an animal farm, balloon artist and carnival rides. The local car club have a wonderful display for you to enjoy. **Stalls can still be obtained by contacting Brenda 0427 234 474**

Sunday 26th March 2017 10:30am **HIGHLANDS RAMBLERS** meet at the Highlands Hall
Andrew Shaw is planning to take us from the corner of Highlands Road & Spaniak Road to Lades Road through forest fire tracks past several old huts.
All welcome. Bring a carry lunch & a water bottle. **Contact Judy Reid 5796 9358**

