



PEOPLE AND PLACES

A IS FOR ALPACA

Alpacas are a favourite enterprise for small acreage and hobby farmers and a look around our local district will attest to their appeal.

In asking around I was surprised at how little is known about Alpacas - their origins, their benefits and why they seem so popular.

So here goes with Alpacas 101.

Firstly the Alpaca is a cousin of the Llama and were domesticated In South America between 6-7000 years ago and in this period there were an estimated 50 million on that continent alone.

After the Spanish conquest of South America the herds were apparently dispersed, so today there is an estimated four million Alpacas spread all around the globe.

One of their benefits is that they are efficient grazers and even do well under hard conditions.

The important contribution is their fleece which is lightweight, thermally efficient, with lustre and a silky handle.

At a time when 'natural' is coveted in a chemical conscious world going natural has given them a market niche although they do compete with other fibres like cashmere and mohair.

Another bonus is the natural fleece colours of white, fawn, browns, greys and even black.

There is also a small but expanding market for Alpaca meat which is apparently sweet and low in fat (anyone for an Alpaca steak?).

Many small breeders are successful by planning a herd with high quality genetics and then selling them for good prices while even the cull wethers from a herd can also sell soundly.

I have been quoted a price range of \$400 to 500 at the lower end for wethers and breeding animals with sound genetics from \$3000 and much higher.

Alpaca generally perform well on small blocks on urban fringes a feature being that they are soft footed so they don't cause erosion of soils.

Also they are exceptionally clean animals as they use common latrines so they effectively manage their own surroundings and the paddock environment.

They usually need minimal husbandry and just an annual shearing.

They also have an enquiring, engaging and inquisitive personality not surprising since they are herd animals and like company.

This allows them to be easily trained and they interact well with most people although I know one local grower who got rid of one animal that had a predisposition to kick!

It was explained to me that Alpacas are like cats – they will come up and see what you are doing or if you have anything interesting.

Failing that they just leave you alone!

Alpacas also do well in all types of terrain from climatic zones judged as dry sheep country to lush pasture.

A major management issue apparently is just to ensure they don't get too fat.

It seems most Alpaca farmers start out with just a couple of pregnant females and breed up from there on even a small holding.

I have been reading about one grower who began with two wethers on a 0.4 ha block and now has 180 on a larger 80 ha property.

One of the continuous challenges is to improve the genetics, particularly the fleece quality especially since it is said that the Alpacas of 500 years ago had better fleece characteristics than those of today.

The Alpaca farmer community has a strong social focus and readily shares information while the Australian Alpaca Association is a strong promoter of them as an enterprise.

Have a look at the website www.alpaca.asn.au if you'd like some more information.

By John Kennedy



Just in case you were wondering what a large number of fox tails all together looked like, here it is!
Thanks Simone for the photo!

WELCOME TO ISSUE 23

Please send any news to me at mirandayorston@bigpond.com or ring 57969261.

If you would like to receive The Granite News by email www.highlands.org.au and just **subscribe, it is as easy as that!**

NOTES FROM HIGHLANDS PRIMARY

STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Will : For excellent nightly reading and for great organisation with his Home Learning. Well done!

ENDURING "WESTERN" AT FILM SOCIETY SCREENING

Murrindindi Film Society's presentation on Friday 17th August at Yea Shire Chambers will be the 1948 western classic Red River, directed by Howard Hawks and starring John Wayne and Montgomery Clift. Doors open at 6.45 p.m. and screening in digital format will commence at 7.00 p.m.

Rated fifth "best western" movie ever by the American Film Institute, it is a fictionalised account of the first cattle drive along the legendary Chisholm Trail from Texas to Kansas in 1866. As well as spectacular scenery and western action, there is a strong dramatic theme throughout the film when Wayne, as a tyrannical trail boss, clashes bitterly with his more sensitive adopted son, played by Montgomery Clift, in his first film role. Their differences, together with the alienation of the other men, escalate to violent conflict. Based on a novel by Borden Chase, originally serialised in the Saturday Evening Post, the film graphically portrays the dangers and hardships encountered along this epic journey.

Guests of members and prospective new members will be welcomed free of charge. All enquiries to Jill Dwyer, 5797 2480 or jill.dwyer@bigpond.com.

COMMUNITY WHAT'S ON CALENDAR - AUGUST 2012

Week beg 19th August	Terip Terip Recreation Reserve Mowing Roster Tim & Cindy Hayes Marcus Hill
Week beg 19th August	WHITEHEADS CREEK -TARCOMBE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TRUCK ROSTER Mark Stokes Kate Coulson
Wednesday 15th August	Invitation... COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION Early Education and Care in Yea 2.30pm – 3.30pm Proposed Yea Children's Centre (next to Maternal Child Health Nurse) The Early Education and Care Centre for Yea and District's 0-5 year olds is progressing towards the operational stage. The Yea Preschool Members/community/association will be meeting shortly for a Special General Meeting to formally decide the governance model for the centre. In the lead up to this, the proposed Cluster Manager, Uniting Care, is holding Information Sessions to inform the community about options and next steps. If you are a Preschool user, a potential childcare user, someone who cares for children or an interested community member, then you are welcome to attend this information session. Childcare will be provided, but please RSVP with numbers of children requiring care for the session. RSVP Bridget Clarke 5736 0479
Thursday 16th August	THE 4TH LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT 2pm at Euroa Library -a fascinating talk by Dr David Holloway, military historian and author of Endure and Fight: a detailed history of the 4th Light Horse Regiment, AIF, 1914-1919 Gallipoli, Sinai and Palestine, France and Belgium. David's book is regarded as one of the most comprehensive unit histories ever written. In November 2011 Shrine of Remembrance Trustees awarded the Shrine of Remembrance Medal to Dr Holloway. Copies of the book will be available to purchase on the day. Afternoon tea will be served.
Friday 17th August	HAPPY HOUR at the Ruffy Hall from 6.30pm onwards. Enjoy a warm dinner on a cold winter's evening in the company of some locals. Bring along a casserole or a sweet to share and of course BYO drinks. For inquires contact Henry Noye on 5790 4246.
August 18 and 19	EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA "The First Grader" 140 mins (PG Drama/Mystery/ Science Fiction). The true story of an 84 year old Kenyan villager, Maruge, (an ex Mau Mau freedom fighter) who insisted on his right to a free education as offered by the government. This is a man's struggle to learn to read and write. When Maruge turns up at school he is turned away but his determination finally wins the teacher over. Filmed in Kenya, this is a charming movie but it also provides us with an insight into what happened during the Kenya-British struggle of the 1950's.
Saturday 18th August	EUROA'S FARMERS' MARKET Celebrity Chef Matthew Wilkinson will be cooking up a feast with ingredients sourced at the market. Matt produced his first book titled 'Mr Wilkinson's Favourite Vegetables' in March and is the owner/operator of the acclaimed Pope Joan Cafe, Nicholson Street, Brunswick East which just won Best Food Cafe for the Age Good Food Guide. Matt is the Patron of Victorian Farmers Markets and thoroughly supports the concept of sustainable, organic, seasonal availability and simple, local, and healthy eating. Matthew will cook recipes from his gorgeous book. Signed copies of the book will be available.
Monday 20th August	ALEXANDRA LIBRARY an essential part of your community! Vintage Readers - grey power book discussion group 2 - 4pm
Monday 20th August	TERIP TERIP TENNIS CLUB Annual Meeting at the Terip Rec. @ 7.30pm We encourage all past, present and interested players to attend.
Tuesday 21st August	'SHARING HERITAGE IN KULIN COUNTRY' 1-2pm Alexandra Library Jim Poulter, is the author of several books on Aboriginal culture and heritage that are strongly endorsed by Aboriginal Elders. Jim's forebears settled in the Yarra Valley in 1840 and established close relationships with the Kulin people. Jim's grandfather and great uncle grew up immersed in aboriginal culture and in 1851 both boys were taken on walkabout to Hanging Rock, where they participated in the last ever male initiation ceremony at the Rock. In 'Sharing Heritage in Kulin Country' Jim explains totemic rules, the key Aboriginal concepts of Spirit, Flesh, and Skin and the sophisticated thought systems that govern Aboriginal religion and society. Join us for a stimulating talk and a chat with Jim afterwards.
25 and 26 August	EUROA COMMUNITY CINEMA "Ted" 140 mins (PG Comedy / Fantasy) You can't say we don't bring all the interesting movies to town. You will either love this or hate it – but come and make up your own mind. It has rated extremely well – and it is fantasy after all. The jokes are raunchy, in appalling taste, there's drug use, toilet humour, pop culture – the works(according to Margaret Pomeranz) and she still gave it 3.5 stars..... I rest my case! This is called a couple of hours of fun which could leave you laughing all the way home. We don't make them; we just screen them - for your entertainment!
Saturday 25th August	RUFFARTZ 'Season of Saturdays' at the Ruffy Hall. The third show for the year is a splendidly choreographed show where the audience experiences elegant illusion to the classical serenades of Mozart, Rossini and Saint-Saëns. Elio Simonetti and his wonderful assistant Eva Salleh perform all manner of magic and sleight of hand manoeuvres. They create an on stage experience that is artistic, inventive, impeccably routined and irresistibly entertaining. Doors open 7.30 pm for an 8.00 pm start. For tickets (\$25.00) ring Glen on 5790 4318.
Sunday 26th August	HIGHLAND RAMBLERS Join us for another of Andrew's magical mystery tours to hidden wonders of the Highlands. See two eagles or your money back. Meet at the Highlands hall 10.30 am. More details: Andrew 0427 969 297

Classifieds & Community Notices

ROGAINING CROSS COUNTRY NAVIGATION

**Avenel - Strathbogie Ranges
22-23 September 2012**

Beginners and experienced rogainers, hikers and walkers are invited to enter the Spring rogaine. Teams will have a choice to participate in a 6hr event or the 24hr Victorian Rogaining Champion-ships.

Rogaining is the team sport of long distance cross-country navigation. The championship rogaine is of 24 hours duration, but this event will also offer a 6 hour alternative. Teamwork, physical activity, endurance, competition, self-reliance, and an appreciation of the natural environment are features of the sport. Rogaining involves route planning and navigation between check-points using a map and compass.

Rogaining events cater for all ages and abilities, giving competitors the freedom to choose their own pace. Some will take it slow and soak in the beautiful countryside, others will participate at a more rapid pace, testing their navigation and endurance.

Rogaining provides:

- physical exercise leading to a more healthy community
- communal awareness of the need to care for the natural environment
- development of self-reliance and leadership skills in outdoor settings
- easy access under safe conditions to bushwalking areas in various parts of the world.

The Strathbogie granite plateau is the birthplace of Rogaining – as the site of the first Victorian Rogaining Championships in 1976 and many more since. vra.rogaine.asn.au for event details, registration, insurance policy and more information about the sport.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORY- LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SERVICES SOUGHT

The Hughes Creek Catchment Land-care group is currently compiling a list of local businesses and services to be recorded in a directory specifically for the catchment area. The directory will be aimed at new landholders in particular, to give a helping hand when moving to the area with details of local services that may be available, but not so widely known.

It is free to list your business or service and all advertisers in the Granite News will automatically be included. Please email any details to Simone Ulstrup at hughes.creek1@gmail.com

A FERAL FEAST- RABBIT WITH TOMATOES AND CAMELISED ONIONS

Noticed all those rabbits basking in the winter sun, grazing on all that lovely greenery? Here is a fantastic recipe to try that is very simple yet very tasty (taken from Rosa's Farm: Country Cooking). It was also suggested that if the potatoes are left out and the rabbit is taken off the bone after cooking that this also makes a beautiful pasta sauce.

2 Rabbits
½ Cup Olive Oil
2 Large onions, sliced
8 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 sprig of Rosemary
250 ml Chicken stock
3 Potatoes. Peeled and cut into quarters

Cut the rabbit into pieces, discarding the rib cage.

Heat half the olive oil add rabbit and brown, seasoning with salt and pepper as you go. Set aside.

Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan that will fit the rabbit. Add the onion and cook over a medium heat until caramelised. Add the tomatoes and cook for 5mins, season again then add the rabbit, rosemary and stock. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for 30 mins, stirring occasionally.

Add the potato to the pan and cook for a further 30 mins. Cook until the rabbit is falling off the bone, which can sometime take a little longer.

TAKING CARE OF THE FUTURE

Photography competition
2012 theme
Seniors for the Environment

Entry is FREE and open to all age groups. That means that we are looking for photos that celebrate seniors taking an active role creating a more sustainable environment, now and for future generations. It could be anything from recycling, gardening, alternative energy, transport to tree planting, conservation activities and campaigning. Supporting this year's event are two key groups; COTA Vic and Australian Conservation Foundation Entries open August 1st and close 31st

For more information on the competition, visit www.evergreenfaces.com.au or call 03 9413 9900 or email faces@evergreenfaces.com.au

HIGHLAND RAMBLERS-JULY

Considering how threatening the weather looked, we had a good turnout for the July walk. Andrew decided against his original route of Mt Concord, as the views would have been obscured by mist.

Instead we had a gentle stroll from near Old Soldiers Rd down to the pine plantation. The first part of the walk was through bush, but when we came out into the open the view across the valley was quite stunning. We were looking straight across the Molesworth cutting to the line of hills which included Rantin Robin Rocks and Mt Concord, which was briefly in sunshine.

We stopped at several sites of old logging operations – rusting machinery, sawmill sites, loading ramps. The logging in those days was selective, leaving the majority of the trees untouched. Somewhere out there is another sawmill site, standing beside a lone tree fern that we were unable to locate.

Next month, weather permitting, we'll try for Mount Concord.

WANTED

Orphaned lamb Parts or complete Everhot wood stove consider any condition Ph 0430 455 336 E mail address is caveat50@bigpond.com
Thanks Ray Smith

FOR SALE

Second Hand kitchen (no appliances) dismantled and available for pickup from Ghin Ghin Road Whiteheads Creek via Seymour 3660.

See www.ebay.com.au second hand kitchen section or email bhnh@bigpond.net.au for photos and details

FOX AND WILD DOG COLLECTION SCHEDULE AUGUST 2012

Next round of collection points will be open as follows:
Benalla: Wednesday 15th August 10;30 -12;30 FOX ONLY
Broadford: Thursday 16th August 10;30-12;30 FOX ONLY
Mansfield: Wednesday 15th August 2;30-4;30 FOX AND WILD DOG
For terms and conditions please visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au

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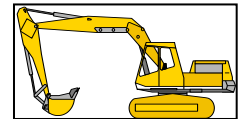
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