



Fry's Hut Working Bee Day Trip.

Dates	22 April 2006
Event Organiser	Andy Kass

Attendances	Andy K , Paul B, John B, Rod H and his brother-in-law Geoff*.
Visitors *	

The trip was planned for the club to see how other organizations work with Parks and the DSE on a large scale project. The participating members were also willing to offer any assistance for the duration of their stay. I chose to stay the Saturday night to help out on the Sunday.



The drive to Mansfield was a foggy and cold one. As most of the attendees advised they weren't sure if they could make it or not, the original meeting point of Yarra Glen was removed from the agenda. There were rumors of possibly meeting at Mansfield around 9 am. After a few calls on the radio, I heard familiar voices and the party gathered for a hearty breakfast at a café in town.

Following breakfast we made the short drive to Fry's Hut to find most of the northern wall had already been removed. Some of this work was done before the local Parks Ranger was on-site which did not impress her much at all. She had planned on a briefing to cover worksafe requirements and task outlines before any work was to commence.



The planned works included replacing main posts, beams and some slabs on the northern wall, leveling the earth following the previous week's drainage works, repairing leaks in the roof and erecting an interpretive sign. We assisted by transporting some logs from the nearby depot which Jim promptly split and shaped by hand into slabs for the wall. Some logs were also used as posts and some as main supports under the wall. Lloyd squared some logs with his portable jig that converted his chain saw into a saw mill. The work performed by these guys was fascinating to watch. Most of the club members headed for home around 4pm after a day of learning





some old world timber skills and providing assistance where they could.

There were plenty of hands helping out on the weekend including people from the Landrover 4WD Club, people from the Albury Masonic Lodge, as well as some Parks Rangers. As evening fell we enjoyed a wonderful assortment of roast meats and vegies as well as a few drinks and great conversation. The following day we continued with the work. As most of the wall was removed on the Saturday we spent Sunday replacing the

rotted timbers with new ones. When I left late in the day, more than half of the wall had been replaced. Only a few slabs and 1 window remained to finish off the wall.

When working with Parks and DSE there are certain requirements to do with OHS issues which must be met. Similar to the CFA, they are responsible for all volunteers under their care and they have rules which need to be followed. To maintain consistency, we had a heritage advisor present, ensuring Fred's Fry's workmanship wasn't compromised. We also had an unexpected visit from Fred's grand nephew and family who stayed for the unveiling of the sign.



The weekend was a success. The hut was well on the way to having the planned works finished,

some great timber work skills were witnessed, a better understanding of how to work with parks and DSE was gained and some great people were met along the way.

Always a good location
 An early 2003 forest archaeological survey mapped the legend of Victoria. The results showed evidence of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation across the Victorian Alps. Many hut sites, just like this one, revealed evidence of visits and occupation by Aboriginal peoples over many generations. Respect the continuing connections between Aboriginal people and their ancestors; protect the heritage now and for future generations of Australians.

The 2002 tree revealed evidence of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation in the Australian Alps.

Fry's Hut — building with style

Fred Fry — he really was a legend
 Solitary and reserved, Fred Fry lived on this site for many years until his death in 1971. Fred and his uncle Jim worked as carriers, driving drays and packhorses up and down the mountains with supplies for other mountain dwellers.

Fred's legendary status comes from his exceptional skills as a bush carpenter. He built several huts along the Howqua River most with drop slab walls and log rafters providing large roomy huts.

Getting into the bush
 Bushwalkers, campers and horse riders enjoy visiting this place, and others like it across the Victorian Alps.

It is great to camp near the hut and enjoy the tranquil Howqua River as it flows past.

Care for the Alps — leave no trace

- Camp outside the hut. Never rely on existing sites, plan for every situation. Leave places before you get wet and back.
- Use fuel stoves for cooking and reduce your use of firewood. Burn areas are designated but close only.
- Make all fires outside the hut. Keep fires small and within existing fireplaces. Never leave a fire unattended and ensure it is hot before leaving.
- Carry it in, carry it out... wherever it is. Leave the hut clean and secure, check the fire is out, rubbish forwarded and close door and window securely.
- Huts are for temporary shelter only, not for accommodation, so their special values are easily destroyed.
- Respect heritage places — they are a link to memories of people and the past. Leave all artefacts and structures unaltered.

A welcome site
 Built by the Storey family, with help from other locals, this hut provided secure shelter for graziers over many years.

Over the years many have relied on the shelter provided by Victoria's high country huts. Most were built for summer grazing and some were built at mining sites. Others were purpose built as shearing and bushwalking became more popular in the Alps.

Fred Fry's bushcraft skills were well known. Here he is riding on his own unique flying fox.

Fry's hut was probably built in the 1940s — it shows Fred's distinctive building style.

There is a long history of bushwalking in the Victorian Alps.

HUTS
 Parks VICTORIA

Report By:
 Andy Kass