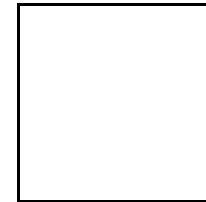


**HUTS AND HOMESTEADS
OF
NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK
~
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**



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DEMANDERING HUT / CURTIS REFUGE

The Cotter family, one of the earliest of the grazing families in what is now the ACT, built Demanding Hut.

Pronounced “Dee-**mon**-dering”, this hut takes its name from the family property. Cotter took up the Demanding Run for grazing from James Booth in 1860.

In the early 1940s Jack Cotter decided to build a hut for shelter. It is the only hut in Namadgi National Park where bullocks were used during construction. A bullock team dragged the felled peppermint eucalyptus (the only straight timber available nearby) to the site for the stumps, corner posts and some of the framework.

This delightful cabin is just a short walk off the fire trail to Horse Gully Hut in the Naas Valley. Two square steel tanks were encased in the stone fireplace which has a metal flue. Some modifications to the original fireplace have been carried out to ensure safety.

One of the hut’s real delights, apart from its cool setting in the forest, is the water tank. A long drink of cool water on a summer walk is so refreshing if you don’t look too carefully into your mug. You may find aquatic wildlife in larval stages - don’t forget to boil or sterilise the water.

Of interest is what appears to be erosion under the hut. When the hut was used for grazing support, salt, a supplement for stock, was stored there for many years. Native animals also crave this substance and, as a result of these animals scratching away at the salt impregnated soil, the stumps have become undermined.

The name Curtis Refuge, as the hut is often called, comes from later owners of the property, after Cotter’s occupation.

Access: Walk or cycle via Naas Valley Fire Trail from Mt. Clear Campground



Significant Losses by Fire: Mt. Franklin Ski Chalet (1937 - 2003, Canberra Alpine Club) - destroyed by bush fire



Rendezvous Creek Hut (1950 - 2003) - destroyed by fire, cause unknown



Mt. Tennent Homestead (1892 - 2003) - destroyed by bush fire

REFERENCES:

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Remembering Lost Places, R. Kaufman 2006
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Namadgi Sites, M. Higgins for KHA 1994
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Brayshaws Conservation Plan
KHA Website
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KHA Huts List 1997, Charles Warner

Image: the ruin of Sam Abouds Hut



Sites and ruins in Namadgi National Park

(Reference: KHA Website www.kosciuskohuts.org.au)

Abouds Hut Barretts Boboyan Homestead Booths Station (McNamaras)
Alex Brayshaws Hut Edward Brayshaws Jim Brayshaws Reg Brayshaws
Thomas Brayshaws Tom Brayshaws Colquhons Chalkers Garrett Cotters House
Norman and Esme Curtis' House De Salis Hut
Dunns Flat Hut Frank Dwyers Hut Ginnini Club Hut Image: Derelict fuel stove at Mt. Tennent Homestead (before fire)
Gregory House Hines Hut John Lennanes Hut
Lone Pine (Lonesome Pine) Homestead
McKeahnies Hut Andy McMahons Hut
Dan McMahons Hut Patrick McLaughlins Hut
Paddy Moores Hut Mt. Franklin Chalet
Mt. Clear Homestead Mt. Corree Fire Tower (rebuilt) Ernie Oldfields Joseph Oldfields House
David Peres Hut Potters Rowleys Orroral RMC Duntroon Lodge Tom Rowels Hut
Rowley Robinsons Hut Jack Rustins Hut
Miss Rustins Hut Slalom Hut Sinclairs Hut
Paddy Smiths Hut Spottswood or Stockyard Creek Hut The Bog Hut Tin Dish School Tower Ridge
Upper Cotter Gauging Station Jim Westermans Hut
Woodfields Hut ...



BENDORA HUT

There is conjecture about when this hut was built however it's believed to be some time in the 1940s.

The hut has been mounted on high timber supports and has a timber frame clad with corrugated iron topped by a skillion roof. The fireplace is sited on the long wall, an unusual positioning, which was used also in Rowleys Orroral and Rendezvous Creek (both since destroyed by fire).

Its main purpose was shelter for employees of the former Forestry and Timber Bureau who established the nearby arboretum. Originally there were partitioned sleeping quarters in gabled extensions. These were removed some years ago, reducing the hut to manageable dimensions. The main part of the hut, as it remains today, serves as the common area and galley or kitchen. An unusual feature are the steep steps leading up to the door.

Bendora is not an Aboriginal name as first believed but is now thought to be a species of timber from New Guinea.

Image: a touch of whimsy on the wall of the hut

Access: Walk in. Bulls Head Area - No camping (water catchment)





BRANDY FLAT SHELTER

In the late 1900s, near where the Gregorys had built a hut for grazing support on Brandy Flat, a previous structure once stood. The site of that hut is situated 100 metres in front of the existing shelter hut - a handful of chimney stones and a few exotic trees remain, including some aged cherry trees that may still flower in spring.

The former ACT Parks and Conservation Service built this shelter hut in the 1980s. The walls are clad with milled weatherboard; it has a concrete floor and the roof is constructed of clip-lock steel. The chimney is an excellent example of the stonemason's art. The hut is very well used, yet kept tidy by rangers who patrol weekly.

Water is available from the catchment tank supplied by the run-off from the roof. It should be boiled or sterilised before drinking,

Image: looking towards the Gregory site from the shelter hut

Access: Walk in or cycle on fire trails off the Boboyan Road or Glendale Crossing





BRAYSHAWS HOMESTEAD

Brayshaws is situated 37kms southeast of Tharwa on the Boboyan Road.

David (Davey) Brayshaw was one of fourteen children born to William and Flora (nee Crawford). In 1903 Davey's elder brother, Edward Brayshaw, built this two-roomed slab dwelling as a condition of lease. Its roof was originally clad with unusually large shingles and had a galvanised iron ridge cap. The roof shingles were later covered with corrugated iron. It's worth noting that the timbers used in the roof frame vary from bush saplings to dressed Oregon timber.

Over the intervening years this building has been changed and adapted to suit the needs of its occupiers. In the period between 1938-51 it was extended and renovated. The homestead's last occupiers were the Curtis family.

In 1973 the property was resumed by the government for workers' quarters.

The shearing shed / woolshed and stockyards, built in 1936 and extended in 1940, were removed in the 1970s when the property became part of the Gudgenby Nature Reserve.

Brayshaws is on a popular (unmarked) triangular day walk to Westermans Homestead and Waterhole Hut.

Image: Brayshaws without a mantle of snow

Access: Walk in a short distance off the Boboyan Road, 2kms north of the NSW / ACT border.





BULLS HEAD SHELTER

The name given to this site derived from the discovery of the remains of a bull found nearby.

Logging the forests began in the 1940s and continued until 1962 - most of the timber for the construction of homes in Canberra in the 1940s -1950s came from these Brown Barrel Eucalypt forests.

This shelter was built specifically to withstand winter weather in a place where many structures have previously existed to support catchment surveys, timber getting and road workers.

It is built of solid stone pieces covered by a flat roof of cliplock steel. Constructed in the flamboyant 1960s style of flyaway roofs and angled walls, it is a fabulous piece of architecture and a capacious, yet snug, shelter for people caught out by bad weather or heavy snow storms.

Image shows stonework construction detail

Access: The junction of Mt. Franklin Road and Bendora Road





BUSHFOLD HUTS

The four huts that comprised what are known as The Bushfold Huts had integrated names and stories.

In 1954 George Read and his son Russell built a corrugated iron hut with a skillion roof, similar to a hay shed, with a rammed earth floor. The fireplace had an unusual chimney that had originally served as a square ship's tank. Twenty litre drums were welded together to make the flue.

A later owner, Dr. Hugh Pearson, added a closed verandah that formed a shed at the northern end.

Bushfire destroyed Russell Reads Hut and damaged Bushfold Hut in January 2003. What remained was demolished and stacked nearby. Kosciuszko Huts Association petitioned the Namadgi Park Board and convinced the service that the hut was intact enough (prior to its demolition) to be rebuilt. The Board agreed to allow KHA to rebuild on the same site.

Cattle grazing was permitted here until the early 1990s.

(Photograph is pre-2003)

Access: Walking track off Apollo Road or the Australian Alps Walking Track



COTTER HOUSE / HUT

Thomas Oldfield built a slab hut (c1890) on the eastern bank of the river, about 300 metres away from where the present hut stands. The Oldfield site can be located by an ancient poplar and some exotic plantings. A crumbled granite hearth pinpoints the original building's footprint. This area was a social focus and gathering place for many stockmen and their families as they moved their stock to the snow leases.

Cotter House / Hut was constructed in 1960. The building style is typical of the era and it serves as a station for rangers patrolling the catchment of Canberra's water supply. It is kept locked and is not available for use, however water is usually available. Take care to boil or sterilise any water used for drinking or cooking.

Access: Australian Alps Walking Track / Cotter Hut Road - please remember that camping in the catchment / wilderness is by permit only.



FORESTRY HUT / ACT FORESTS HUT

This structure is a simple one-roomed, no-nonsense hut with an enclosed anteroom / verandah. Its walls and roof are clad with corrugated iron.

The chimney is a dominating feature serving a large fireplace that ensures the hut is snug.

The hut was used as a lunchroom or for shelter by the former ACT Forest Service during the period when the Boboyan Pine Forest was established and growing. The pines have since been removed and with the assistance of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group volunteers, the area has been reseeded and replanted with native plants and trees.

Slightly uphill from the hut was a large open-fronted machinery shed where a bulldozer or necessary plant and equipment was secured. With approval, members of the Kosciuszko Huts Association dismantled the machinery shed. The corrugated iron cladding and timber frame (each piece numbered and catalogued) was transported to the Glendale Works Depot in Namadji National Park where it was re-assembled, providing storage for the Association's tools and building materials.

Image show rustic stools fashioned from pine stumps - crafted by a former Park Service field officer

Access: Yankee Hat car park - Old Boboyan Road





FRANK & JACKS

Between 1954-55 brothers Frank and Jack Oldfield assisted Cecil Hopkins, a professional Queanbeyan builder, to construct this cottage. It served a dual purpose - primarily as support for their grazing enterprise, as well as providing a comfortable holiday / weekender cottage for the families to enjoy. The Oldfields furnished it with outdated pieces from the families' homes

Reminiscent of a small suburban cottage clad with painted weatherboards it sits high on brick piers, has large windows and is covered by a corrugated iron roof.

Unfortunately, within 10 years of ownership, their freehold block of 800ha was resumed to establish the Boboyan Pine Forest. The hut they built on the Dry Creek lease at Hospital Creek is the total opposite in all aspects to this cottage.

The cottage is an easy day walk or cycle ride from Yankee Hat car park and a very popular destination for walkers.

Image: poster of Holden FE model sedan mounted on the kitchen wall

Access: Yankee Hat Car Park - Old Boboyan Road





GUDGENBY HOMESTEAD

This homestead is a beautifully constructed grazier's residence and a fine example of traditional styling.

Gudgenby Run was a holding of over 15,000 acres (6070ha), gazetted in 1840. At that time it was held by Edward Severne.

Between 1840-44, Charles McKeahnie, Severne's manager, built his family a house of split slabs using local eucalyptus. The roof was clad with shingles fastened by wooden dowels and handmade nails. Stone flagging was laid in the kitchen; the living room floor had pit-sawn timber boards while the remaining rooms were left with tamped earthen floors. By the 1850s McKeahnie's family had increased and he extended the cottage by adding another two rooms. Gudgenby Run had several owners and in 1907 a new wing was added.

A later owner, Albert Bootes, demolished this homestead in 1964. He commissioned Joe Kedzia to construct a large and comfortable, double storey, brick and tile home.

Gudgenby Run is significant as being among the longest continuously occupied grazing properties in what is now the Australian Capital Territory.

The house is not open to the public. It can be sighted at a distance, from the road into Yankee Hat car park.

Image: derelict footbridge between the homestead and the Ready Cut cottage

No access: Park Service staff residence





GUDGENBY (READY CUT) COTTAGE

In the 1920s Gudgenby was still isolated and remote. Although the telephone was connected access was often cut by weather. Albert Bootes, who owned Gudgenby, decided to arrange comfortable accommodation for his family for use during the summer months.

A Hudson Ready-Cut was purchased in 1928. Bootes found the modern concept of the Ready-Cut home far more attractive than building using local materials. The company supplied and delivered construction materials complete with paint and cement, securely packed and crated. (Of note is that the largest of the Mawson Huts in the Antarctic, built in the same era and similar in design, was supplied by Hudson Ready-Cut). The cost of the kit was £900 (approx \$2,000). The design, though more suited to town or suburbia, compliments the homestead across the creek.

Albert Bootes and his sons (possibly helped by Sid Cleary) erected the timber weatherboard house, which was clad with a corrugated iron hipped roof.

It consists of three bedrooms, a living room with fireplace, kitchen, bathroom and laundry. The front verandah has a portico; a gable of battened timber and fashioned bargeboards; the rear verandah is covered by the roof and provides access to the laundry.

Image: chimney and casement window detail

No access: Visits can be arranged. Contact the Namadgi Visitors Centre





HORSE GULLY HUT

Only a few hearthstones remain of the original structure known as John Lennanes Hut. A few gnarled quince trees planted by early settlers also survive.

Sydney Roseby purchased the property of around 21,600 acres from Archibald Peden in 1917. Tom Roseby (Sydney's son) and Stan Bowerman built the present Horse Gully Hut during WWII, although it's thought that the materials may have been on site for some time.

They built a large corrugated iron hut - plain, but solid, that has some unusual features. The chimney has been made from concrete (the striations created by the formwork are still visible) with an iron flue, a feature unique to Horse Gully Hut. The second feature, a storage space, was incorporated under the floorboards to cache provisions. Look closely at the floor and you will see the parallel cuts in the boards.

School groups on a 'through route' use this hut. The long drop toilet is a surprising and welcome amenity.

Image: obverse of Horse Gully Hut

Access: Walk in or cycle on Naas Valley Fire Trail from Mt. Clear Campground





HOSPITAL CREEK

Frank and Jack Oldfield constructed a simple, one roomed corrugated iron hut on their Dry Creek Lease at Hospital Creek in 1966 after their land and cottage (Frank and Jacks) were resumed for the Boboyan Pine Forest plantation. This hut is in total contrast to the cottage they had built previously. Basic and spartan, they built it on leasehold property with the spectre of the previous resumption (see p29) fresh in their minds.

Bush poles and second-hand timbers were trucked in from Queanbeyan along with second-hand corrugated iron obtained from Naas. The hut has an earthen floor that suffered problems as water leached from the adjacent slope. A KHA work party alleviated this problem by digging a drainage ditch. The walls, skillion roof and chimney are clad with corrugated iron. At the front of the hut is a half-enclosed verandah.

It is basic in its amenity yet the hut was notable in that its furnishings, brought across from the resumed cottage, lent an air of dilapidated elegance. Wooden and metal beds, a good quality dresser, table and dining chairs were cramped into the small interior.

A kerosene refrigerator stands imposingly but incongruously beside the doorway to the hut.

Hospital Creek Hut sits on a grassy flat surrounded by granite tors that jut dramatically from the surrounding hills. It is a soft meadow on which kangaroos graze as nearby a small, deep creek meanders past. Occasionally the hut has a covering of snow.

Image shows the kerosene refrigerator under the verandah of the hut

Access: Walk or cycle on Old Boboyan Road, past Frank and Jacks Hut





LUTONS CRUTCHING SHED

A kilometre or so off the junction of the Old Boboyan Road along Sheep Station / Grassy Creek fire trail is an imposing corrugated iron building, a shed enclosed on three sides.

Noel Luton, with the help of two of his shearers, Herb Dyball and Alan Robinson, built the shed for sheep crutching* in the late 1960s. It was purpose-built for the annual task, hence the odd name.

Red gum posts were cut locally and combined with sawn alpine ash timber sourced from a mill in Adaminaby. Corrugated iron showing traces of red paint, salvaged from Luton's home property, was used whenever repairs were necessary.

In the 1980s the shed was renovated by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service for possible use as a shelter / overnight accommodation for rangers, although it was not utilised for this purpose.

Image shows the drop-log fencing, a very significant feature of this structure

Access: Walk in or cycle along the fire trails off Boboyan Road, on Sams Creek Fire Trail

* Crutching entails clipping the wool from the sheep's hindquarters to prevent dangling 'dags' (lumps of faecal matter) that could attract fly strike. Wiggling (removing wool from around the face, jowls and eyes to prevent wool blindness) and 'pizzle ringing' (removing wool from the sheath - again to prevent fly strike) were carried out. The joys of being a sheep!





MAX AND BERTS HUT

The Oldfield influence in Namadgi National Park and surrounding areas has been significant. This hut was built for grazing support in the typical post-war stockman's style - temporary with a makeshift appearance.

The frame of the hut is a combination of sawn timber and bush poles. Milled timber, the corrugated iron and wooden framed windows came from a demolished house in Tharwa that had been built of second hand materials collected from various places. Some of these materials came originally from an older Canberra building. With so many elements in its construction some interesting history could be learned "if these walls could talk..."

The walls and roof of Max and Bert Oldfields hut are unpainted corrugated iron. The skillion roof tends to dwarf the hut as the pitch is minimal which suggests the area receives little or no snowfall. The floor was left as rammed and tamped earth.

The fireplace is lined with stones and the chimney is large compared to the size of the hut, perhaps for extra warmth on freezing nights.

Access: Walk or cycle in from Naas Valley Fire Trail



NASA SPACE TRACKING STATIONS

ORRORAL VALLEY

The ACT was the preferred Australian location for NASA tracking stations as the vital facilities to support a station of this size were nearby in Canberra. The decision to establish the complex was welcomed. Operations were commenced in October 1965 to support earth-orbiting satellites. During the 1980s however, US space programs became restricted and new technologies made the stations redundant. Orroral was no longer required.

The station closed in March 1985. There were 14 main buildings on site at that time.

Access: Drive in via Orroral Road.

HONEYSUCKLE CREEK

This was the third tracking station to be established for NASA. Honeysuckle Creek supported the crew of Apollo 11 led by Commander Neil Armstrong, who set foot on the moon in July 1969.

“One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind...” Armstrong’s words were relayed to the radio telescope at Parkes, then Honeysuckle Creek took over the communications. Images of the historic landing were transmitted through the station’s radio antenna (which was later relocated to Canberra’s Deep Space Communications Centre at Tidbinbilla).

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking station supported the seven Apollo lunar landing missions. Its support of Skylab in February 1974 was the station’s swan song. By that time there were six main buildings on the complex, which was handed back to the Commonwealth Government in December 1984. During demolition contractors salvaged and recycled useable materials. What could not be re-used was buried. Foundations, some brickwork and gardens are all that remain. Interpretive signage at the site tells the story of the tracking stations.

Image: Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station in its heyday

Access: Drive in via Apollo Road near Honeysuckle Campground



ORRORAL HOMESTEAD

Situated on William Herbert's Orroral Run, the homestead is thought to have been built in the 1860s with construction possibly spread over 10 years. Built for Alexander McKeahnie, it is the oldest homestead in the park. A fine example of an early grazier's residence, Orroral Homestead ranks among the oldest homesteads in the ACT. It was extensively conserved in 1992.

This homestead consists of three rooms. The walls are clad with sturdy vertical slabs, split probably from the forest at the junction of Sawpit Creek and the Orroral River. The roof was originally laid with shingles that are now covered with corrugated iron. Full-length verandahs range down both sides.

The finely crafted chimneys at each end of the homestead, which were rebuilt during conservation, ensured cosy warmth for its occupants in this narrow, winter-sun starved valley.

The kitchen was built as an adjacent wing of the homestead as a precaution against fire. It was connected by a covered way to the main house. The floor was paved with river stones. The reconstructed chimney indicates where the kitchen was located in relation to the homestead.

Of the many outbuildings, which included a cart shed, only the shearing shed, built in 1930, survives.

Access: Heritage Trail or walk in from Orroral Road



POTTERS CHIMNEY

Charles Potter was a stonemason. He and his brother John were credited with the construction of many stone buildings in the Manaro (Monaro) region, such as banks, churches and hotels. Their work includes the Cooma Hospital.

The house he built sometime around 1879, west of Potters Hill, has disappeared. However, its chimney, crafted of local slate and clay gathered nearby, still stands as a fine example of his craft. It is set apart from other chimneys by its one surviving but distinctive warming alcove or recess that can be seen on the right hand side of the chimney.

Image: shows Chalkers Chimney in Namadgi National Park (named for Edward Brayshaw and Mary (nee Chalker)

Access: Walk in, Potters Chimney is visible south off the Naas Valley Fire Trail near the Mt. Clear Campground





PRYORS HUT / BOTANIC GARDENS HUT

In 1952, a workers shelter was built on the ridge between Mt. Gingera and Mt. Ginini in the Brindabellas. It is named for the late Lindsay Pryor but was also known as Botanic Gardens Hut. A much beloved Foundation Professor of Botany, Pryor played a vital role in the development of Canberra as a garden city.

The hut is utilitarian, but unusual, as it was professionally built for the former ACT Parks and Gardens. The stone foundations are substantial. The weatherboards are fixed vertically to facilitate the hut's survival in the extreme weather conditions that can occur, though regular, heavy winter snowfalls have diminished in recent years.

The roof was originally clad with corrugated asbestos sheeting, as were many government buildings of the era. The asbestos was replaced in the 1970s with corrugated iron. Inside the main doorway is an unlined anteroom or lobby, fitted out with a bench, for the use of workers when divesting muddy or wet gear. The chimney is double flued with one side of the fireplace opening onto the anteroom and the other to the middle room. The fireplace made the hut comfortable and warm, if it was needed as an emergency space for passers-by. Dry firewood is stored here.

The two internal rooms are lined with chipboard and the floors are laid with timber boards.

Image: Blue grass lily

Access: Walk or cycle in from the Mt. Franklin Road near Mt. Gingera





WATERHOLE HUT

Known also as Grassy Creek Hut, it was built at the outbreak of WWII by Thomas Oldfield to support grazing.

A bush timber frame was cut nearby and then clad with corrugated iron. A verandah, the end enclosed, shelters the doorway. The generous, half-timbered chimney was lined with stones that were scavenged from a derelict 1870s homestead nearby.

Over time the floorboards, which covered half of the hut, were levered up and burnt as firewood. This, together with a major drainage problem at the hut's site, turned the earth floor into a quagmire after rain making the hut dank, damp and unusable for shelter.

Conservation has restored the structure from a tumbledown ruin to a typical stockman's hut.

As you walk along the fire trail from Westermans Homestead towards Waterhole Hut take special note of the fine example of drop-log fencing along the way.

Image shows Chas Reid checking the interior of the hut before conservation

Access: Walk in or cycle along Waterhole Hut Fire Trail





WESTERMANS HOMESTEAD

Westermans, known as Lons Vale or Lonsdale, has a most appealing aspect that sets it apart. The bargeboards on the gable ends of the building are scalloped. Instead of plain, straight boards, time was taken to work one edge, giving the homestead a touch of whimsy and an elegant air, even in its saddest state of decline before conservation.

Two earlier structures, a homestead and hut were built before this homestead. The original homestead was later dismantled and rebuilt in another location.

The current homestead replaced that residence in 1916. Constructed with a sawn timber frame and clad with weatherboards, it included many of the crafted features usually found in a town cottage of the period. Finely dressed and routed panels, possibly Baltic pine, line the walls and ceiling of the main room. The kitchen walls are lathe and plaster and a solid fuel stove called a 'Beacon Light' was installed. Of note is that the stove could be dismantled, loaded onto a packhorse and transported.

The front verandah was enclosed as a sleep-out around 1935.

The fine stone chimneys, built by Thomas Westerman, had totally collapsed prior to conservation, however stonemasons reconstructed them in the 1990s when a 2½ year conservation project was undertaken in co-operation with the KHA.

A short distance to the southwest a grave holds the remains of Elizabeth Shiels (nee Westerman) who was laid to rest beside an infant sibling interred many years previously. The property was flood-bound at the time of her death, which prevented her body being transported for conventional burial.

Image: rear view of homestead

Access: Walk in or cycle along Waterhole Hut Fire Trail off Boboyan Road

