

'Holy Joe' moved up a mountain for company

Mountain Town 1875 - mid 1880's

Joe Knapping originally settled on a piece of land near the Thomson River but later in life found himself getting lonely. So he set about moving his house six kilometres up an incredibly steep hill just outside of Mountain Town.

The entire shift was done with only a hand winch. Having achieved his goal to be close to the main Walhalla and Woods Point road so he could converse with the occasional traveller.

Joe was a deeply religious person and the locals used to call him "Holy Joe". Every Sunday morning he would dress up in his best and listen to a broadcast sermon on ABC Radio. He would place a few coins in a "Collection Jar" and every few months he would purchase a postal note and send the money to Reverend Irving Benson, Methodist Church, Melbourne.



Joe was well known in the mountain districts. He was described as tall, gaunt and while found to be a little strange, was a friend to all.

He was a miner, inventive by nature and a wonderful welder. He helped many local neighbours with his ability to weld and repair broken machinery.

Source and Photos: Grahame Code, local historian.
Left: Joe's hut in a derelict state, not much remains today.
Right: Joe crossing one of the bridges he built over the Thomson River

