

HUT IN THE WILD



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1.1 Waldheim Chalet bath hut (DJ)

1. Hut as Inscape

*'And so I am cheered by the pictures I find in my reading.... The more simple the engraved house the more it fires my imagination as an inhabitant.... Its lines have force and, as a shelter, it is fortifying. It asks to be lived in simply with all the security that simplicity gives. The print house awakens a feeling for the hut in me and, through it, I re-experience the penetrating gaze of the little window.'*¹

I suspect the hut (a.k.a. the shed, the shack, the hideaway, the tree house, the bolt-hole, the cave, the grotto, the cubby, the Gypsy caravan) is an archetype and as such speaks to many of us symbolically, in the language of poetry: in metaphor, contradiction and paradox. Simplicity, separateness and ephemerality are its essence.

Rude and roughly hewn out of local and scavenged bits and pieces, the hut of dreams is not built to last, but it is, nevertheless, clean and stark inside and blended into the surrounding landscape as if it simply grew there. Seemingly autochthonous, it gives the appearance of having sprung from or melted into the surrounding landscape. Although a small space, the area indoors is neat, each of the few things there having their own place. Despite all weathers outside, the inside is always dry, with the possibility of a warming fire ever indicated by the substantial pile of wood stacked by the fireplace, which is part of a tin or stone extension on the back of the hut. The fire, once lit, becomes a huddling centre, huddling out the weather of the wild. Many a warm hour slips by whilst gazing, dreaming and drifting, into the flames and the hot red coals as they accumulate.

The hut is made for temporary respite – a rest from being on the road, refuge from the weather, time-out from the hurly-burley, a return to the womb of our fantasies, to the nest of our well-being. In conception at least, it is about fragility, the ethereal, although its earthiness can hardly be denied. Essentially, a cabin of the imagination, an inscape, it is redolent of a lost paradise regained, a gleaner's bliss. It does not have to be represented in real space or time. In *The Poetics of Space*, the philosopher, Gaston Bachelard, speaks of the significance of the engraving or the imagined image of the hut. It is worth repeating:

'And so I am cheered by the pictures I find in my reading. I go to live in the "literary prints" poets offer me. The more simple the engraved house the more it fires my imagination as an inhabitant. It does not remain a mere "representation". Its lines have force and, as a shelter, it is fortifying. It asks to be lived in simply with all the security that simplicity gives. The print

*house awakens a feeling for the hut in me and, through it, I re-experience the penetrating gaze of the little window.'*ⁱⁱ

The hut is sometimes a place of hospitality and even though the passing visitor can peer into the sepia sparseness through the windows, there is a convention that they must be invited in. Or supposing no one is there, they should behave as if they were invited in – a guest, an honoured guest to be sure, but a guest nevertheless. Tea is always available from the small friendly pot of boiling water that squats at the edge of the fireplace. A white starched tablecloth is in the drawer below. You see, the hut is an immensely civilised place – a place of courtesy and respect and impeccably good manners. In dreams, one would want to live there forever and ever, but that idea inevitably poses conundrums about clutter and mess and notions of storage and planning for the future, whereas the elemental plainness speaks of living in the now, making do and having enough. Of course at the edge of the archetype lurk the shanties of misfortune, the lean-tos of the dispossessed where transition is not an option: their essence speaks not simply of ephemerality but precariousness as well.

Many would stay ensconced within the hut for hours as from the inside out, through the panes of glass, the outside world is reduced, clarified and refocused; restructured even, via rectangles of linked meaning. The occasional lacy cobweb over the doorway, the spun circle of the intangible, hangs delicate and intact. The animals and birds, the trees and ferns and bushes, the herb fields, grassy plains and shrublands are all equals and no one species dominates, commands or exhorts. But not wanting to shut one's self away forever, like Cosimo Piovasco di Rondo, the character created by Italo Calvino in his book, *The Baron in the Trees*, the hut dweller wants to carry on observing, to view without being seen. Baron Cosimo decided at the tender age of twelve to give up life in society and henceforth live in the trees:

*'Cosimo looked at the world from up in his tree: everything, seen from there, was different.'*ⁱⁱⁱ

The hut then is a refuge from the complications and busyness of life and they are often named accordingly.^{iv} According to architect, Ann Cline in *A Hut of One's Own*.^v

'Even though no modern Western culture encourages hut dwelling, still everyone knows what "the hut" stands for. Our literature and art abound with them. Hieronymus Bosch portrays St. Anthony in a hut, immobile in the face of worldly temptations. When Lady Chatterley and Mellors finally succumb to their "natural" desires, it happens inside the gamekeeper's hut. And when Johanna Spyri's Heidi is shipped off to her grandfather she goes to his hut, high up in the Alps.'

Sweet, sacred, and profane, these stories pull the reader's imagination into the "hut dream", which Gaston Bachelard has called "the tap-root of inhabiting". In the hut, he tells us, "destitution gives access to absolute refuge."^{vi} Moreover, within these spare circumstances, nothing can be taken for granted.'

A place of solace and solitude, joy and containment, my dream hut is frequently located in the alpine forests of the Tasmanian High Country midst tarns and sphagnum mosses and spongy sedges. Set in a kind of primeval 'Garden of Eden' wildness, it is a relatively inaccessible place, remote and quiet. A hut always indicates that water is nearby – from a permanent spring or soak as well as from a rainwater tank strategically placed near a pipe and gutter through which it can most easily harvest water from the sloped roof. The familiarity of the domestic in and around the hut dances its dappled cheerfulness. The raw and the cooked so to speak, a place where the tamed and the wild exist contemporaneously, where culture/art and nature meet. Time alters and eternity beckons. As a place of passing through, the hut may also be the embodiment of memory – difficult to grasp and even harder to hold onto, flitting and flirting in shadow talk.

A visit to Waldheim Chalet,^{vii} which is set amongst the myrtles and King Billy pines at Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, was the first time I consciously experienced the archetype and I remember my heart nearly stopped still with recognition. And then the longing set in. I thought if I left it, I might lose it forever as way back then, I didn't know that it was an idea, a human memory, a place so familiar but so unattainable. The vision of the wild animals all sitting around the fire inside the hut with Gustav Weindorfer nearly sent my mind mad.^{viii} I have long built huts and follies, but that it was an important idea came to me following the dissolution of a friendship that had seriously gutted and bankrupted me. For years ever since, I have kept a photo of it covered in snow. Like the Trappers Hut on the way up into the Walls of Jerusalem, it was built from local trees with a utilitarian purpose.^{ix} Dixons Kingdom Hut on the plateau within the Walls of Jerusalem was similarly constructed and offered me, along with many other travellers before and since, protection and comfort.^x 'The wild' being cast as quintessentially the Tasmanian high country is not only my particular personal Garden of Eden: it is as well cherished by many others, including Tasmanian author, Richard Flanagan, who mid-winter, took himself to a remote reach of alpine heathlands high up in the Mount Field National Park:

'There are to be found three 70-year-old split timber huts, simply laid out inside with wood heater, table, bunks and a cold water tap fed from a nearby mountain creek. Tonight, as often is the case, I am the only inhabitant.

Fetching firewood, I hear the measured flap of birds' wings working the air above me. In a nearby tree an amber-eyed, raven-coated currawong lands,

*balances, then flies off, and its slow wing beat are lost in the eddying snowfall.
From beyond, I hear its long cry, sounding a nameless emptiness.’^{ix}*

Local historian, Ned Terry, knows that at particular times of the year, access to high country landscapes such as these is absolutely predicated on the existence of huts; Allisons Hut, for example, is nestled amongst rocks and trees at Little Split Rock which is high up in the Lakes country:

‘We were on a high plateau, with an edgeless, treeless plain pock-marked here and there by innumerable shallow pools, tarns and small lakes and intersected by a network of transparent streams, populated by tricky trout. It was God’s country. Man could only endure here comfortably for a limited time as a short term visitor who had to accept the stringent terms offered. But what glorious isolation!’^{ix}

Whenever I remember and then relocate my hut in the wild, it becomes a place of redemption for my spirit, which finds itself, more frequently these days, a bit fazed, a bit fagged out from wheelings and dealings in the modern world. Within the slow sounds of animal snufflings and birds peep-peeing, within the stillness and the changing light, my heart begins to sing. And soar. And nothing but nothing brings it down. High, high, high as a red moon. And then with wings, it whoops and chortles. It is within the idea of the hut in the wild that it re-finds its own sweet song again – the song of myself: myself as a song.

An antonym of the labyrinth, the hut represents freedom: the release of one’s self from the excesses of reasoning, from intellectual justifications which can entrap and lead one astray. Women and men dream of huts for the same reason as they build them; in the construction of them, they find a remedy for the over-complexity of the world. And that dream has been actualised by some. For example, Henry David Thoreau, an American essayist at the beginning of the nineteenth century, undertook to live alone for two years in a hut on the edges of Walden Pond in the depths of the Massachusetts forests. Since the diary of his experience was first published,^{xiii} it has been widely read and Thoreau’s asceticism and deep contemplation of the natural world have become inextricably linked to the experience of the hut. He writes:

‘For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow-storms and rainstorms...

Trying to hear what was in the wind.’^{xiv}

Thoreau’s hut still stands some 150 years on and not surprisingly, in an account of a pilgrimage made to it by novelist Philippe Djian, he speaks of his feelings of

disappointment and deception when he found that the (replica) hut had suffered the indignities of preservation and conservation and consequently, 'rather like a little doll's house...' had vanquished the myth of Walden.^{xv}

An important lesson is the issue of how we respond to old huts. It continues to raise arguments: if we 'conserve' the old huts by banning human occupation, we disenchant them; conversely, if we let them run down until they are uninhabitable, we kill them off. If, on the other hand, we change or modify the huts to suit present day conventions and fashions, we run the risk of compromising the integrity of their 'hutness' – whatever that may be.

A century after Thoreau, the author Catherine Sanchez decided to spend a few years in a hut in the Carcans Forest in southwestern France. From 1976 to 1989, she recorded the life that she and a group of artists spent in shepherds' bories they had made for themselves within a couple of kilometres of her hideaway. Also becoming an ascetic and living in harmony with the rhythms of the seasons, enjoying a deep respect for nature, silence and contemplation and bowing to the angry wind or the tempestuous ocean, biting frost or searing heat, she writes,

'Haunted, my modest habitation became a nest of visions, where imagination could develop in the constraints of daily life and be spurred on by them.'^{xvi}

Maybe too, the need to simplify, to ritualise peacefulness, comes with age. The Japanese poet, Kamo No Chomei (c.1200) explains:

'Now that I have reached the age of sixty, and my life seems about to evaporate like the dew, I have fashioned a lodging for the last leaves of my years. It is a hut where, perhaps a traveler might spend a single night; it is like the cocoon spun by an aged silkworm... It is a bare ten feet square and less than seven feet high.... I have added a lean-to on the south and a porch of bamboo. On the west I have built a shelf for holy water, and inside the hut, along the west wall, I have installed an image of Amida (Buddha).... Only in a hut built for the moment can one live without fears.'^{xvii}

For myself, I have no need of the Amida along the west wall: my inner life rarely requires a hierarchy of gods and their religious icons. The archetype itself seems to remind me of the importance of interconnectedness, being whole and being still. It is mostly enough.

In the East, there is a three thousand year old canonical tradition of huts as locations for poetic or metaphysical reflection,^{xviii} including the hut of seventeenth-century Japanese haiku poet, Matsuo Basho. In European culture, there is also a tradition of hut retreats well represented by such structures as Goethe's *Gartenhaus* in Weimar, Nietzsche's mountain convalescent dwelling at Sils Maria in the Austrian Alps,

Ludwig Wittgenstein's cabin at Skjolden in Norway, Alvar Aalto's 'Play house' at Muuratsalo and Le Corbusier's *cabanon* at Cap Martin on the French Riviera.

Although there are many differences in the way 'the hut' and 'the wild' are culturally constructed and manifested – for example, the badger box in Tasmania,^{xix} the teahouse in the formal Japanese garden, the yurt in the Mongolian Steppe grasslands, the Indian teepee of the North American Plains, the log cabin in the Canadian woods, the crofter's cottage in the Irish bogs, the *cabanon* (fishermen's hut) in the *calanques* (limestone creeks) around Marseille, the circular dry-stone shepherds' *borie* in rural France,^{xx} the adobe *hogan* of South American Indians, the German summerhouse by the lake, the Russian *dacha* by the inland sea, the *sukkah* booth celebrated in the Jewish Sukkot festival,^{xxi} the boathouse by the Venetian lagoon, the coloured beach hut in Cape Town, the Aboriginal *wurley*, *goondie* or *gunyah* – the archetype exists through time and beyond particular cultural manifestations. The post-colonial Australian bush or bark hut, the fishing or beach shack, the wattle and daub slab humpy, the alpine stone retreat are all so redolent of a particular Australian landscape for example, but universal as well.

The first settlers into the colony had a preference for bark huts. In areas where the timber was suitable, these huts, sometimes known less flatteringly as humpies, were knocked up within a few days. Trees of about four feet in diameter were regarded as being the most suitable, especially those from which sheets of bark could be stripped easily. These included stringy bark, messmate, blackbutt and box. Leaving the tree standing, the bark was chopped with an axe in horizontal zigzag patterns about eight feet apart. With a spade, the bark was then peeled off in sheets. To flatten the sheets of bark without cracking them, they were dried around a campfire with the sappy side facing the heat. Then they were laid on the ground beneath heavy logs for a day or two.

The former cattlemen's huts on the High Country in New South Wales and Victoria, constructed out of corrugated iron sheets and timber logs, were frequently located adjacent to areas of native pasture fed by a creek and just above the tree line beyond the frost hollows of the valleys. Built around an open fireplace, they offered shelter and protection against the extremes and volatility of the weather which feature so prominently in these climes. As they burn or fall down, debates rage as to their potential reconstruction, restoration and/or renovation. Those huts that survive these fraught processes are well loved by High Country bushwalkers and cross-country skiers.^{xxii}

The sedentary and semi-sedentary shelters of the many Australian Aboriginal groups prior to European settlement took multifarious forms.^{xxiii} Donald Thompson has recorded for Arnhem Land alone, 13 ethno-architectural types.^{xxiv} Little valued by the mainstream dominant culture, issues around their reconstruction, conservation and renovation have so far eluded them.

Certain mythical characters are associated with hut dwelling, people such as Robinson Crusoe, Davy Crockett, Huckleberry Finn and the Man from Snowy River, to name just a few. Some individuals – such as Edward J. Banfield after publishing his *Confessions of a Beachcomber* – acquire larger than life status. Creative genius is frequently associated with the hut as well. Many artists (like children with their various cubbies and hide-outs) are notorious for inhabiting their special places where they engaged with their creative muse. The painter, Claude Monet had a hideaway on the Ile aux Orties (Nettle Island) near his home in Giverny, France; Dylan Thomas had a writing hut made of blue planks set in a magnificent wild landscape overlooking Carmarthen Bay in western Wales; and the writer, J. D. Salinger had a hideaway at the end of a path overgrown with bushes and brambles in a pine grove clearing near his home in Cornish, New Hampshire. Inside Salinger's hideaway was little more than a wood-fired stove, the back seat of a car and a typewriter on a block of wood. Jean Cocteau owned a hut in the oyster-fishing village of Piquey on the Bassin d'Arcachon. In 1952, the architect Le Corbusier built a sixteen-square-metre pine-bark hut in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin overlooking the Mediterranean on the French Riviera; he subsequently spent two months of every year there, eventually dying whilst bathing in the bay in 1965. The Australian painter, Ian Fairweather, who was extraordinarily at home in the natural world, spent the last years of his life, living and working in a rude bark hut on Bribie Island in southwestern Queensland.^{xv}

One wonders what happened to the women? Is the hut archetype less apposite to their lives? Or is knowledge of their involvement suppressed? Maybe like Virginia Woolf, they still struggle for space - a room of their very own? Or maybe their places are still secret. In Australia at least, the writers Eleanor Dark and Kylie Tennant had their writing huts, Eleanor Dark in the garden of her Blue Mountains home 'Varuna' in Katoomba and Kylie Tennant in her paperbark forest at Crowdy Head on the NSW coast.

Or maybe women inhabit cottages rather than huts. Certainly cottages are more domesticated than huts or humpies. And rather than being places to visit on the journey, cottages are redolent of a way of being that is settled and concerned with the prosaic, the everyday, the wild having been tamed into a garden of flowering annuals and aromatic herbs. The dictates of the cottage garden are always strict and clear so that roses know that they are meant to climb decoratively over doorways, lavender bush spikes bloom endlessly, chooks and ducks wander purposively under a well hung and orderly washing line, smoke wafts drift gently from a slow-combustion stove under a mantled chimney and gingham curtains flap ever so brightly. A distant cousin of the hut, the cottage however, is of a different species.

The long-gone highly decorative huts of Mt Wellington behind Hobart provide an interesting variation, being concerned on the one hand with hospitality and

seclusion, yet on the other, being about intense competitiveness and sociability. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, small groups of friends, employees or small syndicates would walk up the mountain on weekends carrying all manner of equipment, vying with each other to find the most secluded sites to build the most elaborate and romantic structures in which to spend their leisure hours. Typically, these mountain follies were built on levelled sites beside a small stream or cascade and each boasted a chimney of local stone within a wooden structure embellished by extremely elaborate intertwined branch work.^{xxvi}

'Many of the hut groups prided themselves on their fine cuisine and their love of culture and gentle company. One of the huts reputedly contained a piano! Ladies would arrive in their fine clothes and groups would walk from one hut to another to sample the hospitality of the hut builders.'^{xxvii}

Described as a 'craze' ... in a 'most interesting and romantic time in history', most of the huts were destroyed in a fire that ravaged the area in 1912.^{xxviii}

Many of the great architectural theorists, including Vitruvius, Abbot Laugier and Quatremère de Quincy, have traced the history of architecture back to the so-called 'primitive' hut.^{xxvix} Vitruvius who lived in the first century wrote about the mystical power of huts, arguing that the discovery of fire originally gave rise to the coming together of humans, to their deliberate assembly, to social discourse between them and ultimately, to the construction of the first shelters:

'Some made them of green boughs, others dug caves on mountain sides, and some, in imitation of the nests of swallows and the way they built, made places of refuge out of mud and twigs. Next, by observing the shelters of others and adding new details to their own inceptions, they constructed better kinds of huts as time went on.'^{xxx}

Vitruvius was rediscovered in the eighteenth century when the French explorer Lafitau studied Native American habitations and theorists began re-examining the history of architecture as a way of understanding their own world. The historian and philosopher, Abbot Laugier, imagined an ideal form of the original hut that our earliest ancestors had built to protect themselves from the elements. On this myth of the first hut he based his theory of neoclassical architecture:

'Man wanted to build a dwelling that would protect him without burying him. A few branches cut down in the forest were the materials he needed for his plan. He chose four of the strongest, which he raised perpendicular to the ground and arranged in a square. Above, he placed four others diagonally, and on top of these he fixed others at a slant so that they formed a point.'

He covered this sort of roof with leaves so that neither sun nor rain could get through, and there was his home.... The little rustic hut that I have described is the model on which all the magnificent designs in the history of architecture are based. Only by recreating the simplicity of this first model can we avoid basic mistakes and attain veritable perfection.^{xxxix}

Modern architecture has continued to take account of the human need, symbolically at least, for the mobile, the ephemeral - for structures that represent the free nomadic spirit that clearly still exists in the modern psyche. In 2002, the Villa Noailles, an arts centre in Hyères on the French Riviera, invited selected designers to create a 'life module' in which it would be possible to work, rest, have friends around, and sleep in a space no larger than 20-square-metres. Interestingly, the small-scale structures that emerged were not only highly imaginative, but as well ecological and adaptable, showing a way to the future.^{xxxii}

The need to create a new kind of architecture that is in harmony with nature as well as being ecologically sustainable has increased and interesting examples are emerging. Édouard François has created a building in Montpellier on France's Mediterranean coast; it literally grows as the walls are formed of rocks planted with seeds in the crevices and held in place by wire netting. He believes that a serious re-look at huts and hideaways may lead to truly innovative designs wherein the hut or hideaway could become a metaphor for a new architectural era, one that places a premium on harmony between the interior and the exterior of a building. He thinks that whereas modernity is concerned with hygiene and abstraction, the hideaway is the complete opposite; 'they are about the night, trees, the jungle canopy, the cries of screech owls, fungi.'

Other innovative designs based on the hut include that by Swiss architect, Peter Vetsch, who 'buried' nine houses under a layer of turf, like grottoes tucked into folds in the earth. The French designers, Jean-Philippe Vassal and Jeanne Lacaton, in attempting to adapt the traditional architecture of the fishing huts in the Bassin d'Arcachon in southwestern France, built their 'Maison Latapie' in and around existing pine trees and sand dunes. The galvanised steel hut is raised on piles and six pine trees grow through the building.

Commenting on this new approach, Jean-Paul Loubes writes:^{xxxiii}

'Topographies, the direction of the wind and the rain – all this cosmic data is inscribed in this architecture. Huts like this are an extension of geography. What is particular about huts is that the gap between their inhabitants and the environment is reduced. Huts are witnesses to human genius, their capacity to develop a culture, to speak the idea they have of themselves and their place in the order of creation, and at the same time, to interpret their environment, their relationship with their surroundings, with the earth, with geography.'

It has been argued that with the increasing use of mobile phones, laptop computers and instant internet connections, it may be the case that many societies in the 21st century will increasingly become nomadic or at least encourage nomadism for some purposes: huts and hideaways might become emblematic of this new society reflecting the corresponding key concepts of escapism and cocooning.

Simplicity, having enough, clearing the space and refocusing - that is the essence of the hut archetype, so long as it is visited and re-visited and cherished. The hut inhabits our memories and haunts our dream-sleep. It is an enchanted space beyond the reach of time. The hut asks particular behaviours and attitudes of its friends and visitors, and in return, bewitches and charms us. When we choose to engage with it, we remember that it is about re-energising, creativity and new vision; we prepare for and await the muse.

REFERENCES

1. Hut as Inscape

ⁱ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, Beacon Press, reprint, Boston, 1994.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cosimo Piovasco di Rondo is the hero of the book, *The Baron in the Trees*, by Italo Calvino, Random House, New York, 1959.

^{iv} According to Matthew Newton in *Shack Life, Tasmanian Shacks and Shack Culture*, Self published, 2003, names of shacks in Tasmania include *Weebilta, Ava-rest, Owls Den, Diesels Den, Snooze-In, Bitza, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Wattles, Come In Spinner, Paradise, Early-Rise, The Tardis, Flatty Downs, Morning Glory, Camelot, Stagger-Inn, Crazy Cottage, Dugg-Inn, Sunnyville, Passing-Wind, The Tree House, This'll-Doo and Do-little*.

^v Ann Cline, *A Hut of One's Own, Life Outside the Circle of Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997, 3.

^{vi} Gaston Bachelard, op. cit., 32.

^{vii} Built in 1912 after the style of Austrian mountain chalets by Gustav Weindorfer in collaboration with his wife, Kate Weindorfer (nee Cowle), it was called 'Waldheim' meaning 'Forest Home'. Born in 1874 in Spittal, a small town on the Drau River in the mountainous province of Carinthia in Austria, Weindorfer was clearly reminded by Cradle Mountain of his childhood in the Austrian Alps. A plaque near the front door says 'This is Waldheim, where there is no time, and nothing matters.'

The land on which it was built was owned by Kate as part of a larger allotment (bought by individuals from two family groups including the Weindorfers) to protect the area from logging. At the time, Cradle Mountain was classified as Third-Class Crown land and was being logged by the Gordon Timber Company as well as by individuals. The site they chose for the dwelling was on the north-west side of the Valley near two creeks and the chalet itself was built from King Billy pine and myrtle selectively chosen by Gustav from the forest. A local splitter, Dennison, was employed to help split the logs. (Sally Schnackenberg, *Kate Weindorfer, The Woman Behind the Man and the Mountain*, Regal Publications, Launceston, 2002, 31-36.)

Interestingly, Waldheim was built in the same year as the Mount Wellington huts were destroyed by bushfires. One can only speculate as to the influence these follies in Hobart had on the design of Waldheim. As it happens, the original Waldheim hut was demolished by order of the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife in 1976 (44 years after Weindorfer's death in 1932), but a replica was quickly rebuilt when the NPWS realised that they had seriously underestimated the depth of attachment felt by many towards Waldheim and Weindorfer. The replica was rebuilt out of slabs and shingles cut from local King Billy pine (Margaret Giordano, *A Man and a Mountain, The Story of Gustav Weindorfer*, Regal Publications, Launceston Tasmania, 2004, 115).

viii In the north Tasmanian town of Sheffield, many painted murals decorate the walls of the town buildings. There is one that depicts Gustav Weindorfer sitting around the fire inside Waldheim accompanied by a circle of wild animals including kangaroos, Tasmanian devils and possums etc. It is worth noting that Jesus' birth in the stable/shed is frequently represented in nativity scenes as the baby Jesus in the manger (symbolically, the central campfire) with his parents Mary and Joseph nearby and all surrounded by various farm animals.

* According to Simon Cubitt in 'Restoring the Trappers Hut', *Wild*, 9-11, it was built in 1946 in anticipation of the winter's annual rabbit snaring (as winter fur was thicker than at other times of the year). Built by brothers, Boy (Ray) and Dick Miles along with their uncle, Alister Walters, it was sited purposefully beside a creek and amongst tall stands of Alpine Ash or White-topped Stringy Bark, although the timber for the walls and roof came from trees below. Boy Miles, a World War I gunner had been captured at the fall of Singapore and after spending arduous years in Changi Prison and working on the Burma Railway, came home in 1946 seeking the tranquillity of the forest and the solace of the mountains. The building of the hut was an important enterprise for him. The hut has undergone two major renovations since. According to the Kosciusko Huts Association ([www.kosciuskohuts.org.au/Trappers Hut](http://www.kosciuskohuts.org.au/Trappers_Hut)), Boy Miles' father, Nicholas Miles, had built a hut above the present Trappers Hut site in 1934, it being one of four huts in the area. Nicholas Miles used the huts while successfully agisting cattle for farmers based in Deloraine during the Depression. Earlier, in 1929, he had selected a plot on Dublin Plain and built his first hut there.

* Dixons Kingdom Hut is located on the southern side of the temple and surrounded by the Wailing Wall and East Wall. According to the Kosciusko Huts Association (www.kosciuskohuts.org.au/DixonsKingdom), it was built by cattleman, Reg Dixon, the sole leaseholder in the Walls of Jerusalem by the 1950s (formerly held by Charles Ritter and before him, Thomas Johnson). In contrast to the Trappers Hut, it was used in conjunction with other huts in the area over the warmer months of the year, when cattle were moved around the Walls High Country. Dixons Kingdom Hut was constructed from Pencil Pine logs dragged from the nearby forest by a draft horse. The logs were filled with turf and a split paling roof attached. The name for the hut came from Reg's wife, Elsie, who had been reading *Campbells Kingdom* by Hammond Innes and was struck by its similarities to a Canadian mountain hideaway. Reg Dixon relinquished the lease to the Crown in 1972 and the Walls of Jerusalem National Park was proclaimed in 1981. The Park was added to the Tasmanian World Heritage Area in 1989. Filmmaker (writer, director and editor) Roger Scholes instigated changes to the hut for the making of the film, *The Tale of Ruby Rose*. (This film about Henry and Ruby Rose and their adopted son Gem, a trapping family, is set in 1933 in the Tasmanian Highlands and features the actors Melita Jurisic, Chris Haywood, Rod Zuanic, Martyn Sanderson and Sheila Florance.)

In 1980, the original stone and timber chimney was dismantled and shingles were once again added over the roof following an intervening period during which corrugated iron was used. In 1998, these changes were removed and the original format of the hut restored by the Mountain Huts Preservation Society and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Interestingly, Reg Dixon returned to the hut a number of times after his lease expired, indicating perhaps that the hut held more than utilitarian values as a cattleman's shelter even for him.

xi Richard Flanagan in an essay, 'Tasmania', 2004, (<http://tasmaniantimes.com/jurassic/flanagantasmania.html>).

^{xii} The life of the shepherds and cattle drovers in this area is well described by Ned Terry in *Pioneers and their Memories of Tasmania's High Country*, Self published 2007. According to Terry (25-35), the area leased by the Allison brothers, for example, stretched from the Great Pine Tier to the Great Western Tiers on the Central Plateau (known as 'Kooparoonia Niara' by Aboriginal people who formerly inhabited it), north and west of the Great Lake and 'embracing a magnificent wilderness tract of about 10,000 acres'. Several pastoral families from the Bothwell District moved sheep and cattle in this remote country every summer and it was not unusual for there to be a combined mob of about 120,000 sheep and 2,000 cattle grazing in the Lake Country. The Allisons herded sheep and cattle there until 1954 (for a period of about 50 years) using a combination of camps and huts including Steppes Hut and Allisons Hut. Allisons Hut was

'a patchwork of corrugated iron sheets sitting fairly solidly on slabs of grey stone.... It sat in the lee of the hill called Little Split Rock that shouldered a scattering of sinewy, windblown trees and alpine scrub. The hill fell away to the open plain with a boisterous creek nearby. Fresh mountain water was bucketed from the creek if the tank was low; the creek also served for washing and chilling dips on hot days...'

The earlier smaller version probably built earlier than 1900 was reputed to be 4 miles back and probably to the west and had been dragged to its current site by a team of bullocks in the early 1920s. The pastoral activity came to an end in 1957-1958 when the Tasmanian Government prohibited access to the Lake Country by all hard-hoofed stock.

Allisons Hut is now part of the network of mountain huts cared for by the Mountain Huts Preservation Society formed in 1988 to protect and maintain those remaining. The Society's first project was the reconstruction of the Trappers Hut, which was completed in 1990 and required an estimated (by Terry, op. cit., 184) 3,800 hours of work by volunteers. The restoration of Ironstone Hut at Lake Nameless (1996), Lady Lake Hut (2004) and others followed.

^{xiii} Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or Life in the Woods* was first published in 1854.

^{xiv} Quote from *Walden*, Dent/Everyman's Library, 1968.

^{xv} Philippe Djian describes the pilgrimage in *Lent dehors*, Bernard Barrault, Paris, 1999, 90. Similarly, the now historic huts of Antarctic explorers have become tourist museums and shrines, see Tom Griffiths' chapter 'Captain Scott's Biscuit, The archaeology of return' in *Slicing the Silence, Voyaging to Antarctica*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007, 329-349.

^{xvi} Catherine Sanchez, (ed.), *En cabanes*, Opales, 1998.

^{xvii} Kamo No Chomei, *An Account of My Hut*, Banyan Press, Pawlet VT, 1976.

^{xviii} Ann Cline, *A Hut of One's Own, Life Outside the Circle of Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1997.

^{xix} According to Bruce Moore, *badger* is the Tasmanian word for 'wombat' and *badger box* refers to 'a roughly-constructed dwelling, 'Tasmanian Words' in *Australian Style*, Vol. 15, No 1, August 2007, 1.

^{xx} These dry-stone structures are called *bories* throughout most of France. According to Frank Roots

in *Cabins, Dens and Bolt-Holes*, Fitway Publishing France, 2005, 70-71: the names of the structure varies from region to region so that in the Gard region for example, they are known as *bordey*; in the Hérault region, they are known as *capitelles*; in the Dordogne *gariottes*; in Quercy caselles; in the département of Pyrénées-Orientales *orries*; in the Velay region *chibottes*; in Mâconnais *cadoles*; in Corsica *barracuns* and *paillers* etc. In Puglia in southern Italy, they are called *trullis*; in Sardinia *nuraghi* and in the Balearics, they are known as *talayots*.

^{xxi} The *sukkah* booths in the Jewish Sukkot festival (or Feast of Tabernacles) typically used four trees in their construction - the palm, the ultimate desert tree; the willow of the watercourses and a reminder of the crossing of the river Jordan; the myrtle, so typical of the mountainous regions including Bethlehem and Jericho and the lemon of the coastal plains.

^{xxii} Information about the high country huts comes from discussions with Pip Brown and Les Cormack.

^{xxiv} Paul Memmott in his *Gunyah, Goondie + Wurley The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, QLD, 2007, has documented the enormous variety of shelter forms across the continent.

^{xxiv} Thompson (in Memmott op. cit., 163-165) recorded 13 Arnhem Land types: 1. the windbreak 2. the sitting, sleeping and storage platform 3. the free-standing variety (without supporting structures) 4. the vault (supported with single, double or triple ridge poles) 5. the vaulted sleeping platform with single, double or triple ridge poles 6. the dome form with single, double or triple ridge poles and grass or paperbark cladding) 7. the tree platform 8. the horizontal shade 9. the lean-to with cladding on ridge pole 10. the pandanus mat shelter 11. the free-standing, folded-plate triangular prism form 12. the triangular prism form with ridge pole and 13. the cubic or rectilinear shelter for the dead.

^{xxv} A series of silver gelatin prints – *Fairweather Hut Series 1966* – was made by Robert Walker and published in *Ian Fairweather, An Artist of the 21st Century*, Lismore Regional Gallery, Lismore NSW, 2005.

^{xxvi} Surviving photos of some of these huts can be seen at the State Library of Tasmania, ‘Tasmanian images’ (<http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/>) and at the M.A.D. pages Huts of Mt Wellington (<http://users.bigpond.net.au/jandmgrist/Full.htm>). Images of these huts are also reproduced in the film ‘The Mountain’, Thunderbolt Productions in conjunction with Wellington Park Management Trust, Tasmania, 2007. The huts had names such as *Grass Tree Hut* (built in 1890), *Forest Hut* (built around 1902) *Fern Retreat Hut* (built in 1890), *Falls Hut* (built in 1897) *Clematis Hut* (built in the 1890s), *Cave Hut* and *Fernlea Hut*.

^{xxvii} John and Maria Grist, ‘A Listing of Some of the Recreational Hut Sites of Mount Wellington including Some Data of Current Remains (and other interesting historical sites in the area)’, September 1994 (<http://users.bigpond.net.au/jandmgrist/Full.htm>).

^{xxviii} Ibid. Whilst not all the hut sites have been rediscovered, there are several sites that have been found and there are others that remain in dispute as to their correct identity.

^{xxix} Unlike in the disciplines of anthropology and art theory, 'primitive' as a concept in architecture has only recently been examined and critiqued (for example, Adrian Forty's chapter 'Primitive: The Word and Concept' in Jo Odgers, Flora Samuel and Adam Sharr (eds), *Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture*, Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), London and New York, 2006, 3-14. Forty (i5) says that up until the nineteenth century, 'primitive' meant nothing more than 'original', and it is that meaning which has largely been retained in architecture. Furthermore, neither Vitruvius nor his successors, including Laugier, used the word; it has crept into more recent English translations of their work.

^{xxx} Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, tr. Morris Hicky Morgan, Book 2, Chapter 1.

^{xxxi} Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, (1753), tr. Wolfgang and Anni Herrmann, Hennessey and Ingalls, Los Angeles, 1977.

Stephen Cairns in 'Notes for an alternative history of the primitive hut' in Jo Odgers, Flora Samuel and Adam Sharr (eds), *Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture*, Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), London and New York, 2006, 89, argues that in Laugier's version of the primitive hut, the underpinning conceptualization of 'the primitive' implies the noble savage (rather than the cannibal) version of the primitive and that this conceptualization flourishes unproblematically in the history of architectural theory. This framing, he suggests, dilutes or dissipates critical thinking around the important questions of otherness and difference. Accordingly, because Laugier's idea of the hut is based upon speculative, non-empirical, classical 18th century anthropological and mythological traditions, his image, Cairns asserts, 'isolates the primitive hut in an open landscape, uncomplicated by anything other than the threat of bad weather' (ibid, 92). Thus Laugier, continues Cairns, like most other architectural theorists, has at the core of his ideas, a 'laundered' notion of the primitive (ibid, 94).

^{xxxii} Sonya Faure, *Hideaways, Cabins, Huts, and Tree House Escapes*, Éditions Flammarion, Paris, 2005, 114.

^{xxxiii} Jean-Paul Loubes, *La cabane, figure géopoétique de l'architecture in Cabane, Cabanons et Camperments*, Université de Provence – CNRS, Editions de Berger, 2001.