

# PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 19 Summer 2017-8

## Notes from the President

Greetings.

Probably obligatory to commence by stating the obvious – that 2017 was exceptional for the quantity, quality and longevity of the snow. As can be seen from the activities outlined below, it is going to be a busy year. For me the most important is the AASHA 2018 Conference to be held at Perisher in May 2018 with PHS as hosts (see details below).

Australian Alpine & Snowsports Historical Association (AASHA) draws together all the alpine focused historical groups. This now embraces all major ski resorts in Australia and many associates.

### History Starts today

How exciting is this? The unification of NSW Snowsports and Snowsports ACT with Ski and Snowboard Australia (SSA) gets closer. Here is a real example of how long it takes to turnaround an ocean liner like a voluntary body. When SSA was ASF, Rodney Moss, President of the Victorian Ski Association and I, in my role at NSW Ski Association, commenced lobbying to make this change in the 1980s. The VSA did accomplish this some time ago but NSW just could not muster the courage.

Another exciting development is the announcement by Perisher of an investment of \$4.2 million

in 2018-19 on a new chairlift (replacing Leichhardt T-bar) and increased snowmaking capability.

Proof positive that skiing keeps you young – Geoff Henke, that indefatigable champion of winter sport turned 90 recently.

“Anybody can champion their cause and try to make a difference, but the remarkable achievement Geoff Henke has forged through his vision, leadership and boundless energy in conceiving firstly the Australian Winter Institute and then shepherding that fledgling organisation into the Olympic Winter Institute Australia since 1998 is remarkable.”

Courtesy [www.owia.org](http://www.owia.org)

Still in the saddle and always lobbying hard.

Congratulations Geoff.

### New Committee Member – Tim Scanlon (NPWS)

As you will read separately, Dave Woods has recently left the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Dave served on the Perisher Historical Society committee for its first ten years as the National Parks and Wildlife Service's nominee. Tim Scanlon has been appointed to fill Dave's vacated position of Resorts Environmental Liaison Officer. We are delighted to welcome Tim as the NPWS nominee for their ex-officio position on the PHS committee.



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## **AASHA Conference Perisher 4-6 May 2018**

I do hope that you will consider attending the Conference and join with other lovers of Australia's alpine regions and discover a fascinating insight to the past.

An event packed with interest and held in Perisher Valley, hosted by us, the Perisher Historical Society, and supported by Corroboree Ski Lodge and Perisher/Vail.

This is the fifth gathering of the Australian Alpine & Snowsports Historical Association (AASHA). First held at Mt Buller and then Thredbo, Mt Field (TAS), Mt Hotham and next year 2018 it is our turn to host the event.

The Society's organising committee has laid out a programme covering a wide range of topics to interest all, be they local or from interstate.

The Conference is open to all and already many people have already committed to attend. Commencing on Friday evening with a Welcome Party at Corroboree Ski Lodge, Conference proper on Saturday in the Perisher Conference Room and concluding with a Guided History Tour on Sunday morning including an on-site reveal of the iconic Hotel Kosciusko.

Detailed information will be circulated shortly or call me for a chat.

## **Snow Warm Up – A Lodge Party – Saturday 12 May 2018**

PHS has enlisted Larry Adler Ski and Outdoor to hold "a Lodge Party" in their Collaroy store. Larry and Nan Adler are long-time supporters of the sport and alpine history. Plus they love a party.

Start gathering your friends and spread the word – built in atmosphere just add people. Suggested dress is Black Tie and Goggles.

## **PHS 11th Annual Dinner – June Long Weekend – Sunday night 10 June 2018**

This event is now an established fixture of the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend with presentations revealing the fascinating history of the area. This year the function will again be a Dinner to fit comfortably with other events.

Delighted to announce that 'The Life and Times of Johnny Abbottsmith' is the subject of the evening.

Johnny's extraordinary life provided the life skills and hard won experience needed to ensure that he became a person of significance in the Perisher Range, in Antarctica, and with the army, training troops in winter tactics and skiing during World War II. This life will be revealed by his children, Garry Abbottsmith and his sister Faye Pendergast, in conversation with Peter Southwell-Keely. Prepare to be amazed.

## **Hello in the Snow – Tuesday 7 August 2018**

This après ski event is fixture of the Perisher XC Week. The word is out that this is a hot event for cross-discipline activity, i.e. Alpine, XC, Racing and Social skiing. All welcome to mix with this friendly crowd at Marritz Hotel and indulge in reliving experiences of today or any day.

## **Perisher Cup – 66th Running – Saturday 15 September 2018**

Year by year the number of entries swell. The Perisher Cup

is an event with a difference – a four person team event with all competing in Giant Slalom, Cross-country and Jump (none are overly taxing). It is apparent that this multi-discipline format is a great way for people to try a new event and many competitors get a taste of skiing competitively. Last year, one Australian Olympian told me that his interest in competing was sparked by the Perisher Cup.

So, get your club stirred up and into action. Plan your team and be ready to join in the fun of the day.

Then be at the Sundeck for the prize giving and cheering.

## **Perisher Ski Patrol – 50th Anniversary**

Congratulations to all those who have contributed to the creation and longevity of this vibrant organisation. It is important for all clubs to encourage their members to volunteer for this worthy group. A very successful formal dinner marked the anniversary a few weeks ago.

## **Passing**

The Society notes with sadness the passing of Max Old and Jean Findlay.

Max was a well known identity with commercial interests in the mountains and an enthusiastic supporter of PHS, who attended all but the last PHS dinner.

Jean Findlay was known for her involvement with horses, Valhalla and introducing many to the wonders of the Main Range via horseback (see PHS Newsletter Issue 18 Winter 2017).

*Philip Woodman*

# Hello in the Snow – August 2017

## Dates for your Diary

### PHS AGM

Saturday 17 February 2018  
Conference Room NPWS  
Jindabyne 2.00 pm

### Australian Alpine & Snowsports History Association (AASHA)

#### Conference

4-6 May 2018  
Hosted by PHS

### Pre-season Lodge Party with the Adlers

Saturday 12 May 2018

### Annual Dinner

Sunday 10 June 2018

### Hello in the Snow

Tuesday 7 August 2018

### Perisher Cup

Saturday 15 September 2018

On Tuesday 8 August, nearly 70 members, friends and cross-country skiers packed into the Marritz bar for the annual mid-season catch-up co-hosted by PHS and Perisher-XC. Over drinks and delicious finger food, old friendships were renewed, new ones made, tall tales told and much good-hearted and vigorous discussion ensued.

Some veteran cross-country racers included this convivial event in their gruelling training regime for the KAC Cross-country Classic the following day. Starting with the Coffee Tour in the morning, this group then spent the afternoon lapping the Snow Gums course, joined us at Marritz for further refreshments and then skated up the slope to collect their race bibs at Alpenhof. Luckily for everyone, the KAC race was run in unusually wonderful conditions – great snow, sunshine and no wind – and they all made it to The Chalet.

Our thanks to Manager, Simone, and her staff at Marritz for another great afternoon.



## Season's Greetings to all



*Images by Kirsten Seaver @ Monaro Post*

# Dave Woods

by Philip Woodman

PHS members, especially those associated with ski clubs, may be aware that Dave Woods has recently resigned from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. After seventeen years with the Service, Dave has moved on to his own consultancy. He will provide advice on satisfying the requirements of the recently revised Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. This will enable him to get back to his real academic love – Australian flora.

Dave was there at the very beginning of the Perisher Historical Society on 29 October 2005 when Dave, Judy, Pam and I met around our dining table to form the society and was one of the four members of the Steering Committee. His enthusiasm and quiet guidance have been invaluable. Then there is the Newsletter: Dave set the standard for the layout, the quality and the content and has contributed many of the articles and photographs over the years.

The Society is very appreciative of the involvement of NPWS and is especially grateful that Dave was appointed as their ex-officio representative on the committee. Dave will continue his association with the Society in his private life.

I have no doubt that all will join with the committee in wishing Dave every success with his future endeavours.

To underscore our gratitude, messages to Dave from committee members are given below.

## **Chris Brangwin**

Dave's contribution to our committee and to skiing in Australia has been a great asset. He has always been there for the committee and to those who need help. I am just so pleased he will stay on board as a private member; this committee needs his expertise and willing contribution.

## **Ashley Blondel**

Thank you Dave, you have been an exemplar for the NPWS in often trying circumstances that says much about you personally and professionally. I am, however, very pleased to read that you will remain a member of the society, a society that owes much of its success to you. Your stewardship of the newsletter in its formative stages established the public face of the society.

## **Peter Brulisauer**

I agree Philip, Dave's done a wonderful job with the society as he did in all of his areas of work with NPWS. Thanks Dave and well done for your excellent contributions.

## **Donald Johnston**

Many thanks for your contribution to the PHS. I am very appreciative of your assistance and support in all my research projects and am glad you will still take an interest in the Society.

## **Peter Southwell-Keely**

I too would like to add my gratitude to Dave. Many thanks Dave for all your assistance, help and encouragement over the years both to me and to



the Society and in particular with the Newsletter which has always maintained a high standard thanks to you. All the best in whatever the future may bring and we look forward to a continuing involvement with the Society.

## **Judy Thomson**

Thank you so much Dave. I've very much enjoyed working with you on the newsletter and other projects. You pointed us in the right direction on so many occasions. Great that you'll still be part of PHS and that the friendship will continue.

Pam and I add our enthusiastic endorsement of the above and are grateful for the bond of friendship that has grown over the period with Dave and his family.

# Volunteer Ski Patrollers Celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

by Kirsten Seaver @ Monaro Post

Volunteer Patrollers from Perisher Ski Patrol Inc. celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Gala Dinner for 130 at Dockside in Darling Harbour on Saturday 28 October.

Guests of Honour were The Hon Nick Greiner AC, and The Hon Bronwyn Taylor MLC (representing the NSW Premier) and Commissioner Mark Gibson MSM (representing the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association) who presented the Governor General's National Service Medal to 30 Ski Patrollers for their service to community.

President Michael McAlary welcomed Peter Brulisauer (COO Perisher Resort), Michael Fearnside (General Manager Operations, Perisher Resort), Wayne Tuckwell (Ski Patrol

Director, Perisher Resort) and Peter Mowbray, President of ASPA (Australian Ski Patrollers' Association). Former President Peter Kaim, and Perisher Ski Patrol Inc. members, Dr Tom Groot, Mark Cambourn, Dr Gary Grant and Roland Flesch were also acknowledged by Mr McAlary.

Terry Chalk, who is a current, long-term Ski Patroller from Jindabyne, gave a detailed, yet humorous account of the 50-year history of Perisher Ski Patrol Inc., and the personalities who contributed to the organisation's development.

A heartfelt 'thank you' email was read out from a previous customer/patient, who in 2009 survived a heart attack whilst skiing at Perisher. He told a

poignant tale of how important and valued Volunteer Ski Patrollers are to his family, the community and skiing public.

A display showing the many variations of volunteer Ski Patrollers' uniforms was the backdrop for the dinner, along with the plaque that celebrated the opening of the Ski Patrol Headquarters by The Hon Nick Greiner on 8 July 1991. The land on which the Headquarters was built was granted by Mr Greiner to Perisher Ski Patrol Inc.

Congratulations to all those who were honoured on the night with a National Medal, and to the group as a whole on their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



*The National Medal recipients on stage at the Perisher Ski Patrol Inc. 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner  
Image by Kirsten Seaver @ Monaro Post*

# The Dares of Smiggins Retire

by Chrissi Webb

After running Snowline Ski Centre at Smiggin Holes for 43 winters, Colin and Sigrid Dare feel that it is time to get a well earned rest, retire from the ski industry and pass it on to the younger generation to drive the business forward.

Colin and Sigrid Dare got a taste for skiing as teenagers. They married in 1969, and soon after they purchased a block of land in the small, new village of Jindabyne. In 1973 Colin left his job as a diesel marine engineer in Sydney and the young couple headed for Smiggin Holes where Colin found winter work with Alan Limerick at Snowline Ski Centre.

Alan Limerick and his business partner, Dick Gilkes, opened Snowline Ski Centre in the Alpine Gate at Smiggin Holes in 1960, prior to which they ran all the ski departments in the Sydney Grace Bros stores. In 1966 they moved Snowline to the current premises which were extended in the 1990s to make the ski hire larger. Alan also built Smiggin's first T-bar ski lift where the duplex T-bar is now situated.

Colin was to join the staff of the Snowy Mountains Authority in summer, but Alan offered full time work and after two years Colin was appointed manager. "Since 1973 I've always been busy" said Colin. He recalled "1973 was a lean year - no snow, plenty of mud, and the lifts ran about eight times." Sigrid and Colin wondered what they had done but things picked up.

Snowline Ski Centre has always had a ski hire with retail as well.



Over the years the Centre has been built up to a complete ski shop which opens on the June Long Weekend and closes on the October Long Weekend. It provided employment for nine to ten staff members, depending on snow conditions. Staff in-house accommodation and a kitchen came with the employment package. Sigrid was "Mum" to all the boys, and occasionally girls were on the team.

Families and day trippers were Snowline's principal customers. With plenty of repeat business, including a third generation of kids, there was never a need to advertise. One customer, who was skiing well into his 80s, always wanted only Colin to do his skis each year. The secret of success was due to the quality of service given by the Centre's staff, believed Colin.

When the doors to the Centre closed in October, the work for "jack of all trades" Colin did not ease off as he was busy with ski repairs, maintenance and getting the boilers ready for the next winter. "Working 12 to 14 hour days 7 days a week – in winter the Snowline Ski Centre opened at 7.30 am and closed at 6 pm, and with their heads down all the way – left no time for hobbies, reading or leading a balanced life" said Colin.

Each summer the Dare family moved to their Jindabyne home. Danielle who was born in 1972 and Ben (1976) went to Jindabyne Primary School. On reaching high school, Danielle went to boarding school in Yass and Ben to Goulburn. Danielle now lives in Buderim and Ben in Cairns.

Whilst Sigrid and Colin still enjoyed the life style, they think that it is time for the younger generation to drive the business forward. This is to be done by Rhythm Sports who have purchased the business and will carry on the high standard of service that is expected at Snowline Ski Centre.

Colin and Sigrid feel the business is in the good hands of professional operators who have a well established shop in Cooma and several outlets in Japan. Rhythm Sports will employ some of the previous staff of Snowline.

In summing up their 43 years of caring for Snowline Ski Centre's customers, Colin concluded "We have had a wonderful life and we will miss our customers and friends we have made along the way. However, we will now have time to spend with our grandchildren who live in Queensland."

# Kiandra to Kosciusko

by Paul Reader

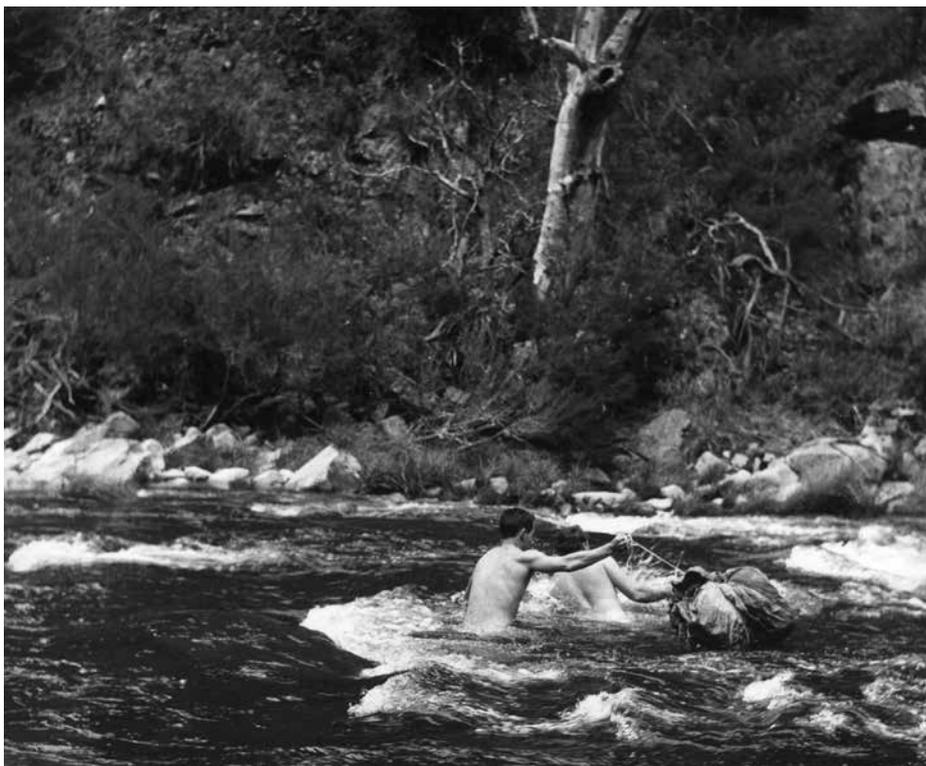
*A group led by Sir Herbert Schlink in 1927 took three days to make the first crossing between Kiandra and Kosciusko. In 1954, Paul Reader, Keith Field and Douglass Baglin attempted to replicate the trip. Through misadventure their journey took eight days and could easily have ended in tragedy. Their story was first published in the KAC Bulletin in August, 1954.*

The first party to make this crossing was led by Sir Herbert Schlink in 1927. The members of our party were Keith Field, Douglass Baglin and Paul Reader and we set out from Kiandra on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1954, departing from Kiandra Chalet at 9 am. After some very rough going we arrived at our camp No. 1 at 5.30 pm. This was the north side of Happy Jacks River, on a rock measuring 6 ft by 6 ft, the only suitable site. We were unable to erect our tent and spent our first night under the stars. The final approach to this spot was down a rock slide 1,000 ft in length and of a 70 degree angle. This was the first of a series of hazards we were to encounter. We all took nasty falls coming down, as there was no snow covering the rocks and they were balanced on one another like marbles. Doug broke his stock jumping out of the way of a minor avalanche I started 100 ft above him. Both he and Keith lost the seat out of their pants before we had negotiated half of the slide. Keith took a nasty toss at one stage and it was only that I happened

to be in front by about 20 ft and was able to grab him as he flew past that prevented what may have been a nasty fall of 100 ft or so. The evening was pleasantly fine but cold. We had no fires, and our meal was cooked by means of a small primus stove. Our packs weighed an average of 57 pounds.

July 5<sup>th</sup>. At 9.30 am we commenced our swim across Happy Jacks River. There was nothing happy about the crossing. By 9.45 am a snow storm had commenced with the temperature at 29 degrees, or 3 degrees below freezing point. We had removed our clothes for the crossing, hoping to keep them dry, as it turned out this was all to no avail. By the time we had floated all our gear across this 55 ft river, which was

running a banker, three and one half hours had passed – all this time without clothes except for a sweater between swims. At the first attempt Doug and I together, with a pack strapped between, were swept off our feet. Doug was carried 100 yds downstream before he was able to scramble out, whilst I managed to grip a rock after only being swept about 10 ft. Fortunately I had been able to keep hold of the pack and perhaps saved us from yet another nasty incident, as this pack held most of our food and fire equipment. The cold was intense and it was at this stage we all became victims of frost-bite. The balance of the day was spent erecting camp No. 2 and endeavouring to thaw out our frozen bodies by means of a meagre fire. The camp site was under an overhanging rock face of decomposing granite on a



sandy spit a foot from the river's edge. All we had, including our sleeping bags, was sodden despite our earlier efforts to keep them dry on the crossing. The cameras were the only items not wet. We spent a very cold and miserable night with snow falling throughout.

July 6<sup>th</sup>. Despite the rigorous night the sight we beheld on emerging from our tent was breathtaking. The frightening rock slide we had descended the day before was now blanketed with 18 inches of beautiful powder snow and the trees simply groaned under the weight of snow on their branches, whilst the river gurgled its silvery length through this crystal paradise with a foot of ice at its edges. It was not long afterwards our awe turned to frustration as we lashed and floundered up the side of the steepest mountain I have ever climbed. It rose from the river like a pyramid, and one only had to lean slightly back to plunge down the face. This mountain turned out to be a freak, for when at last we reached the top we were dismayed to find another joining it twice as high again. The unusual point about this first mountain was that it was joined to the second by what I was later to find out a ridge called a fishback. This freak ridge left a drop of 800 ft on either side, and was so narrow that Keith was forced to negotiate it by sitting down and passing it between his legs as one would a pole. We continued our climb, with snow still falling, till 4 pm, and then we were still a day's climb from the top. At this stage we chose a site for camp No. 3. This was

to be a foxhole between two granite rocks, perched on such an angle that one only had to trip to fall hundreds of feet down. All our equipment was still sodden, as the heat generating from our bodies melted the snow falling on our backs. Even with our tent pitched over the opening we still had insufficient room for the three of us. This necessitated having to take turns about of hourly intervals during the night. One would crawl into the hole and try to sleep against the wet moss-covered rocks, another would stoke and choke over the fire, whilst the third would sit outside the tent in the falling snow. By this stage we were so exhausted that we even slept during part of the night.

July 7<sup>th</sup>. The scene confronting us the next morning still held some of its grandeur, but we were not really in the mood to appreciate the scene, and after a hasty breakfast we commenced climbing once again. The snow stopped falling that morning, but with the gums so laden one only had to brush them, or a slight ripple of wind disturb their branches, for one to be enveloped in a cascade of white. We climbed all day and over some really terrifying rock outcrops, where every step brought down rocks. By 3 o'clock we had reached the top and stood dwarfed in the middle of a forest of huge gums, here and there splintered and twisted like matchsticks by past storms and lightning. By four, we had picked a site for camp No. 4. This was by a hollowed gum on a small knoll. We made a bed out of gum leaves spread over the surface of snow, covered

them with our ground sheets and two sleeping bags (Keith had lost his the previous day, climbing the fishback ridge), and after pitching our tent we spent a very comfortable night. Keith tried getting into the same bag as myself, but after a few embarrassing hours we gave the idea away.

July 8<sup>th</sup> dawned a cloudless sunny day. Realising we were days behind schedule, it was decided to omit a search for Boobee Hut and make the most of the good weather. Our progress was laboriously slow, and I doubt if we progressed more than two miles, though it seemed like ten. The powder snow of previous days had turned to wet, heavy slush, and as our climbing skins were already wet, it clung in thick lumps. The undergrowth kept coming through the surface and catching our bindings, so that every step had to be watched, and with each ski seeming like a ton weight, we shuffled on. This was the first day we had been able to wear skins, and similar conditions were to prevail until Mt Jagungal was reached three days later. I might add that at this stage we were completely bushed and had been since our departure from Happy Jacks River. I put this down to four main factors: (1) The surrounding mountains were unfamiliar. (2) Due to the storm we had been unable to see for more than a quarter mile over the past three days. (3) We had been forced to ignore the compass on so many occasions due to changes of course forced on us by nature that it was impossible to make the necessary corrections. (4)

Where we had crossed the river the formation of its course was so unusual over one and a half miles that it should have shown up very clearly on the map and allowed us to pinpoint our position. However, there was nothing shown which even slightly resembled its course. I am therefore forced to the reluctant conclusion that the map leaves much to be desired. (Now I really have let myself in for criticism). However, we did find many cases where trig stations were not marked. While I am dealing with this subject, I may as well bring up a rather sore point. Surely it is not asking too much of those people erecting these stations and who go to the trouble of painting them black and silver to also, with a few strokes of the brush, write either the name or at least the height of the mountain on the woodwork. This would at least assist the lost wanderer in pinpointing his position and may someday avert a tragedy, which may well occur for lack of a few seconds of extra work.

That night, rather than lose precious height by dropping into the valleys, we decided to camp on a plateau of snow. The fire we made at camp No. 5 was unusual to say the least. It started on the surface of the snow and was no larger than 18 inches in circumference. By morning it was resting on the ground three feet lower down and had melted a circle 26 ft in circumference. We were therefore able to sit in this hole with our backs against the wall with our legs stretched out to the fire. It was very pleasant, and another enjoyable evening was

experienced. From this plateau we had been able to observe Mt Jagungal for the first time, and it certainly boosted our morale.

July 9<sup>th</sup> dawned as had the 8<sup>th</sup> and we lost no time starting, determined to peel off the miles. Progress was reasonable and uneventful. We were still carrying about the same weight in our packs, as what we had lost in food consumed had been replaced by water absorbed by our sleeping bags, tent, clothes, etc., which we had been unable to dry out. We made camp No. 6 in a clump of gums, and after a hearty dinner, bedded down for the evening. We all felt anxious that the weather would not last: but others beside ourselves must have been saying a few prayers, for it continued to hold.

July 10<sup>th</sup>. Ever since Mt Jagungal had been sighted a new hope and determination to win through had sprung up, and this day we really burnt up the miles and before we fell exhausted at our next camp we must have covered close on 20 miles. During the day we passed close to both Farm Ridge Hut and O'Keefe's, but not wishing to waste time in searching for them, we pushed on. After all, we were becoming very used to sleeping in the open and rising every three hours to replenish the fire. Camp No. 7 was staked out on the western face of Jagungal. I shall always remember my mixed feelings when I first stepped onto the slope leading up to the crest. This jewel of a mountain, rising majestically out of the surrounding plain country, beckoning us on when our spirits

were low and yet never seeming to move closer. At times as distant as the Star of the East and at others the Helping Hand towards our ultimate goal. Who but those who attempt the unusual know the fear of the fight or the thrill of the conquest. Since time immemorial those who have sat back and said "What fools they are", have themselves never lived.

We were cutting timber for our fire when Nature stepped in with a paint brush and we were made witnesses to one of the most spectacular and beautiful pictures we have ever looked upon. The sun, sinking in the west, threw its reflection from the crystal snow on to the face of Jagungal, and in 20 minutes changed it to three distinct colours. First we saw a mountain bathed in a delicate pink, then blue and finally yellow. Fortunately Doug was able to catch each change in colour film. That night we slept the sleep of the contented. We were half way to Kosciusko with the hardest part over.

July 11<sup>th</sup>. Yet another perfect day. By 10.30 am we had climbed over the top and were skiing down the eastern slopes which, in my opinion, run into the finest skiing valley in New South Wales.

From Mt Jagungal we set a compass course for Alpine Hut but made a very stupid mistake by not allowing ten degrees allowance for magnetic north. Our mistake went unnoticed till it was too late and we were



in the hut area. We attempted to correct our error, but after tramping on for hours, ended at a hut which we thought was Kidmans, and lies north of Alpine. We had covered about nine miles that day. The reason progress had been so slow was because we had run out of food (except for powdered milk) and energy, and had been stopping for drinks of water far too much. On arrival at the hut it was necessary to dig ourselves in, as the snow was up to the windows. Unfortunately there was no food to be found, but we managed to find some sugar and tea, so for the first time for days we were able to have something sweet. There was a large quantity of snow in the hut which had come in through the chimney, so after clearing this out, we drew the beds up to the fire and, for the first time since we commenced the trip, we were able to sit in comfort and warmth. Doug and I puffed contentedly at pipes and it was so pleasant by the fire, each with his own thoughts, we stayed up till 1 am before turning in.

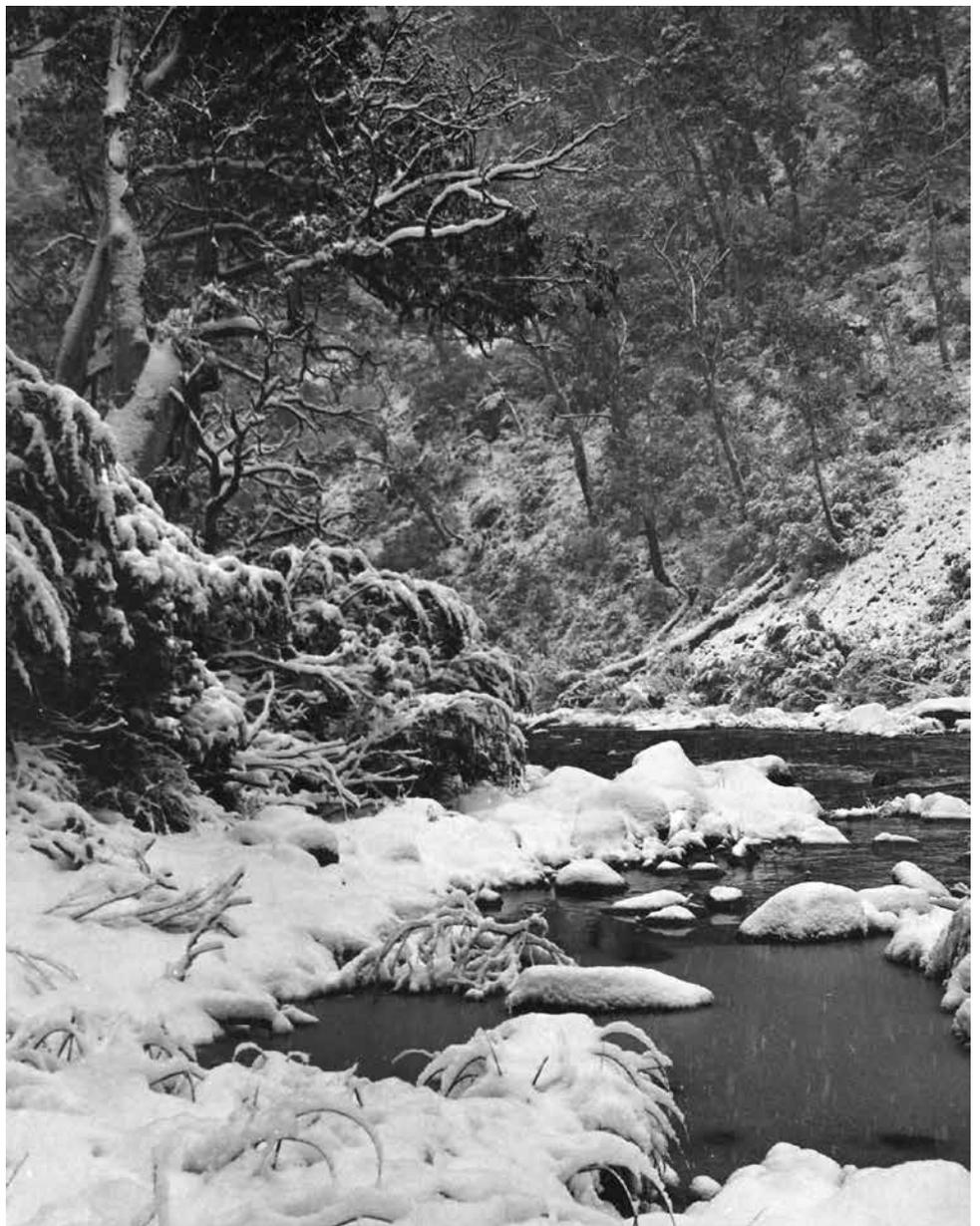
July 12<sup>th</sup>. And still the weather held. After cleaning the hut and replacing the wood used, we set a compass course for Alpine Hut. (Second sore point). Surely regular visitors to these huts could scratch the name somewhere on the building. As it turned out, instead of the hut being Kidmans, it was Tin Hut: therefore the other side of Alpine. Consequently the course we set just didn't exist and after many wasted hours searching we found Dicky Cooper Hut, which isn't the most habitable hut on the range as many "Main Range Rats" know. Had we struck a blizzard in our weakened condition we could well have perished. It is with a view to the future that I mention these points, as I said earlier, for a few seconds' work tragedies may be averted. We back-tracked from Dicky Cooper Hut (not knowing at the time that this was its name and therefore once again unable to pinpoint our position) till we came up Whites River Valley. All we could see of the hut from a distance was the radio mast.

We were tempted to ski down but the climb out of Whites is long and, wishing to save as much energy as possible, we by-passed the hut. We held a meeting on Dicky Cooper Bogong and decided we would eat a little powdered milk we had left and then press on all through the night till we eventually reached the Chalet. By 8 pm we were enveloped in a thick mist and visibility was restricted to six ft. We were then running over the Granite Peaks approaching the Rolling Grounds. At 8.30 pm, as we climbed Consett Stephen Pass, the mist lifted and to our east we noted a glow in one of the valleys. I was leading at the time and was first to see this light. Not wishing to build up false hopes in case it turned out to be just a trick of the moon on low clouds, I kept silent. About 10 minutes later Doug spied it and let out a shout. Fortunately our luck was in, and a half-mile further on we were able to pat one another's backs. We had come upon the Norwegian Camp at Guthega. Considering we were then fairly exhausted we decided rather than push on the extra miles just for the glory of saying "we made it" and then probably spend the next week in hospital, to pocket our pride and ski down the two and a half miles to the camp.

None of us will ever forget the wonderful reception we received on our arrival. The first person we met as we staggered on to the road was one of the four Australians in the camp. Unfortunately, I have forgotten his name, all I know is he used to work at the Old Hotel. We all piled into his truck and,

after receiving permission, we were driven to the residential area. Here we met the medical officer, whose name I think was Kevin Graham. Kevin went out of his way to see we received food and accommodation for the night. There were so many other kind-hearted people that I would like to mention all their names, but unfortunately I have already made this story too long. However the staff and people concerned probably remember we three; they could hardly forget us, what with our torn and burnt clothes, dirt, whiskers and smell. So to those wonderful people of all nationalities we would like to say "Thank you for all you did for us, we shall never forget your hospitality". One good friend, a Norwegian in charge of the canteen, mistook a comment Doug made that "all we wanted was something sweet like sugar", and immediately rushed out and on his return presented us with six lb sugar. "What a man". We didn't have the heart to explain our real meaning, and suppressing laughs we gravely thanked him in the approved manner.

All the food, medical treatment, accommodation and transport we received at this camp and Munyang never cost us one penny. From Guthega a special car was sent and we were driven to Munyang, where their very capable medico took over our welfare. After a hot shower, the first wash for nine days, we were ushered into the sick bay for repair. Doug came off the best of the three with only a few scratches. Keith had some nasty cuts collected on his fall down the rock slide first



day out. These had turned septic and caused him a lot of inconvenience. Whilst I, the so-called experienced member of the party, was the cot case. My heels were badly blistered, my toes were frost-bitten, and together with various scratches there were two deep gashes on my hand from the axe, also picked up on our first day out from Kiandra. Both Keith and Doug have since become more seriously affected with swollen legs due to poor circulation caused by the intense cold, which has had a delayed action. It is now a month since we first arrived at Guthega and both of

the above are still having trouble whilst I have been informed I may still have to lose my big toe.

After a wonderful warm sleep that night and a following restful morning we left our good friends. We were driven to Smiggins by car from Munyang, where we hired Johnny Abbottsmith's snowmobile to take us to the Chalet for a fortnight's holiday with the Kosciusko Alpine Club.

# Wooden Stave Pipes - Rainbow Lake

Notes by Jan Glover

Rainbow Lake is situated on Diggers Creek, upstream from the former Hotel Kosciusko (now Sponars Hotel). It is accessible by a walking track off the Kosciuszko Road, near Dainer's Gap.

Below the dam wall, buried in the long grass, are remnants of the old timber water pipes. I photographed some of these at Easter 2017, and found out more about them from Donald Johnson who is in the process of writing a history of the Hotel Kosciusko. Below is an edited extract from his book - "The Life and Times of the Hotel Kosciusko".

## **History of the Water Supply and Hydro Power Generation**

*The water supply was to receive many upgrades over this period.*

*The original water system that served the hotel when first built in 1909 was fed by gravitation from a specially constructed dam section across the headwaters of Diggers Creek to form a lake (still existing and now known as Rainbow Lake) within the upper valley almost 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from the hotel and with vertical drop of approximately 440 feet (130 m).*

*The water line was constructed from wooden stave pipes, being similar to the accepted method of conveying potable water within cities at the time. The pipes were 9 inches (23 cm) in diameter assembled from longitudinal sections of kauri timber wrapped with galvanised steel wire, given a coat of bituminous composition and wrapped in hessian cloth.*

*The prefabricated sections of pipe were probably supplied from the Australian Wooden Pipe Company's Head Office in Lane Cove, Sydney, being the specialists in this system that had been used regularly by the Department of Works projects throughout NSW.*

*The Company advertised that using this system 1,500 feet (454 m) could be laid by four men in 8 hours, however it no doubt took the workmen in Diggers Creek valley a much longer time due to the difficult terrain and the nature of the alpine ground conditions where granite strata were to be encountered.*

