

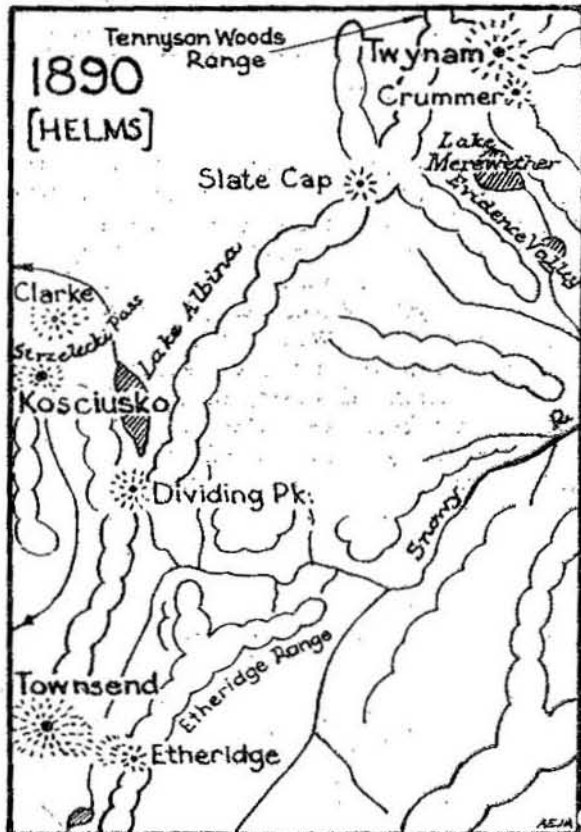
What's in a Name?

Alan Andrews

FOR many years a reader of the Year Book was able to find some writers discussing divers problems on the nomenclature of our Alps—whether, say, Twynam West Spur should really be called Mueller's Ridge, Tennyson Woods Range, or Watson's Crags or whether Watson's Crags or Crag should be reserved for the "Sentinel" Spur—and so forth. However, of late, little or nothing has been seen. Has, then, the subject, like poetry, been banned or is everyone at last agreed? Can it be that the Kosciusko-Townsend controversy at last has been

solved to the satisfaction of all? I fear such is not the case.

Still, these things have intrigued me often, as have the origins of many a place name in the mountains, so perhaps you, too, are interested. Loth as I am to drag the Kosciusko skeleton from its closet, it seems yet the natural place to start and I would ask to be allowed to burden you once again with this sad tale. One further concession I ask and that is, in the cause of brevity, to put forward the first controversial sentences as a statement.



In the year 1840 Strzelecki climbed Mt. Townsend from the Geehi River and described the view. He then (possibly and probably) named the whole massif (including Kosciusko, Townsend and Ramshead) "Kosciusko." In 1846-7 Surveyor Thomas Townsend ran a traverse of the high peaks and named the highest "Kosciusko" as we know it to-day, but, unfortunately, some twenty-odd years later a Victorian survey party making a triangulation of these mountains erroneously named Mt. Townsend — "Kosciusko (Ramshead)."

During the eighties Mt. Townsend was known as Kosciusko in Victoria, but in N.S.W. was known locally as Mueller's Peak. At least, so contends von Ledefeld who, thinking that the true Kosciusko was unnamed, then decided to honour the surveyor and gave this peak the name "Townsend." At the beginning of the nineties when Richard Helms came to the plateau to do some geologising he adopted Ledefeld's naming of our highest peak and recorded the second highest as Kosciusko, assuming it was named thus by Strzelecki. Just before the turn of the century, however, we

find that the highest peak has become once again Kosciusko and the second highest (our Townsend) is back to its old local name Mueller's Peak. Finally, with Kosciusko settled, poor Mueller was relieved of his peak and it was handed over, irrevocably, to the recently dethroned Townsend. To complete the story, it only remains to add that Mueller ultimately was found a home in Helm's old Dividing Peak, making everybody happy.

After Townsend, the next notable to visit the area was the geologist the Rev. W. B. Clarke (discovered gold in 1851, remember!). Clarke named the Muniong Range, a name that lasted about forty years till the more popular Snowy Mountains came into the picture. Muniong is said to be a corruption of the word "munyang" which, by all accounts, is the aboriginal word for the bogong moth, but just what this subtle mutation in pronunciation entails I have never quite fathomed.

Following Clarke was the botanist Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, who does not seem to have added any names, and so there

endured a silence for thirty years till 1885 when another geologist, Dr. R. von Ledefeld, entered the scene. Ledefeld, as well as having fun with Kosciusko, was responsible for naming Lake Albina, Strzelecki Pass and Mt. Clarke. According to Helms' map, the latter was the prominent high peak on the Townsend North Spur—the last peak before the spur starts to drop to the Geehi. However, even as late as 1931 the parish map shows Clarke as a peak much closer to Lake Albina. I don't suppose it matters, since by 1936 it had moved right across the Canyon and Main Range to the present location, while Lady Alice Rawson eventually claimed the vacant possession near Lake Albina.

So we come to geologist Richard Helms, the most prolific mountain-namer of them all. Helms was the first to prove conclusively that extensive glacier action took place on the Kosciusko Plateau. Clarke, previously, had made reference to glacial evidence, stating that he had seen "more than one unmistakable bloc perche," but, on the other hand, the Rev. Tenison-Woods would not credit any evidence. Nor would the Rev. J. Milne Curran, who was quite adamant that there was none. So Helms, who counted himself just an amateur among this bunch, remembering these words of wisdom and the great Ledefeld's statement, too, that he saw no moraines, could not believe his eyes when covering the same ground he discovered every possible type of evidence.

Helms' names are not particularly spirit-stirring, but it is interesting to see that he should name the Twynam West Spur after the Rev. Tenison-Woods quoted above. Lake Merewether (Blue Lake), Mt. Crummer (Little Twynam) and the Crummer Range were named after a president and treasurer of the Royal Geographical Society of N.S.W. respectively. Etheridge he named after Robert Etheridge, a palaeontologist, and he was probably responsible for Mt. Tate after Professor Ralph Tate, of Adelaide—but whether he placed the mountain in its correct position on the map, something many after him have failed to do, I cannot say.

Mt. David, probably his most deserving name, is not particularly well known—since few people know its exact position. Of this fact the President of the Wanderers' Ski Club was undoubtedly aware, when in an entrance examination the question was asked, "Mt. David is—North of Mt. Tate?

South of Mt. Tate? Not there at all? Mt. Tate?"

Sixty years ago Helms illustrated his writings with a map to which he attached this pathetic little note:—

"Regarding certain names in the highest ranges some differences exist between the geographers that named the heights &c. and the application of these names by later visitors. To obviate further mistakes, I have attached the initials of the authorities to names on the map: a new departure in map-making, but necessitated on account of the existing confusion."

The "existing confusion" still exists and further mistakes (some of them probably just as well) have been perpetuated, despite Helms' well-meaning effort.

At a much later date the names Carruthers and Anderson appeared on the map, their origin being, no doubt, a Premier of N.S.W. and his first Director of the Intelligence Department. Even they, however, go to prove how many of the places in the region carry the names of contemporary people. The prevalence of this unfortunate practice can be verified only too easily by studying a map. Out of forty names counted, 80 per cent. are of this category—one-quarter of these being geologists.

A little distressing, perhaps, but could we have done better? Doubtful. Look at some of the other names, The Twins, Sugarloaf, The Pinnacles; the thought occurs that there is no Dingo Creek. Then there is Tate East Ridge, quite descriptive, except that the ridge or, better still, the spur runs due south. So do not sneer, dear reader. This little scene could easily occur at our own Chalet, where experts rub shoulders with the not so expert, just picture it . . . "Naturally, Trapyard isn't Trapyard Creek!" (Here sniggering from the knowledgeable on-lookers.) "Of course you climb over Stilwell to get to Trapyard . . . No, the Stilwell to the east of the Chalet not STILWELL to the south." (Derisive laughter.) "Heavens, no—not over the Stilwell Ridge, that's west!" (Now uncontrollable mirth at such ignorance, joined seconds later by a hysterical, somewhat maniacal scream from the enlightened rabbit.)

[Army are producing a contoured ordinance map of the whole area based on aerial survey and this may well supply the last word on names for the principal features.—Ed.]

traverse hillocks and hollows en route to the cottage and frequent freezings and stoppages and burst pipes might have been expected. But no! At the bottom of each dip and at the top of each rise a small hole is drilled, the former to drain the line in the event of a stoppage and the latter to release any air-lock. The pipe is continued past and below the cottage, plugged and another hole drilled. With the good head of pressure,

water sprays high into the air and not even heavy snow affects the outlet. As a drift developed last year, water saturated the snow and froze, until a mound of ice some 12 feet deep rose over the outlet. Still the fountain flowed, forming (on top of the ice-mound) a column of ice which tapered from about 2 feet in diameter at the base to 2 inches at the top, the column varying in height with thaw and freeze.