

# WHITE'S RIVER

By ROBERT MACLURCAN

**T**HIS area is correctly named Munyang River, and we hear quite a lot about it in the news in connection with the Snowy Mountains Authority. At one time White's, as it is commonly known, was regarded as accessible only to the hardened Main Range skiers, but with the advent of the new roads and bridges built by the S.M.A. access is a comparatively easy matter.

We arranged for a driver to be picked up at Jindabyne and drove right down to the power station, where we off-loaded and the driver took the vehicle back, delivering it to us in a fortnight's time in the same spot.

This was a very simple means of transport, as we did not have to off-load and re-load as usual around Smiggins Holes. At the power station our party, consisting of Noni Maclurcan, Peggy Warren, Reg Ray and myself, were fortunate enough to get a lift in a jeep up to Surge Tank, a matter of 600-800 feet and very steep.

From there we skied down a small re-entrant on the western side of the valley and picked up the pipeline, which we followed on a very easy grade up to the Funnel, about a quarter of a mile from White's River Hut. At the Funnel we found a steep incline for a couple of hundred yards and then a flat stretch to the hut. A party with full packs could easily do the trip in a couple of hours. When you get to White's the hut is not the best. The "Zoey" house is little removed, but provides one of the most glorious views on the range! The hut is quite well stocked and has ratproof cupboards and a wireless for communication. We were in constant touch with the Chalet and Smiggins.

There are some marvellous trips round about . . . to Jagungal, approximately 10

miles away . . . to Mawson's Hut, Alpine Hut, Tin Hut and Valentine Falls, all to the north. You can sleep at Mawson's or Alpine Hut and tour around that area for a while.

In the immediate vicinity of the hut you have a good wood-run down the north-east side of the valley and some beautiful runs to Gungartan, Disappointment Spur, or The Granite Peaks. A most interesting trip is to go to Consett Stephen Pass, where you may look down Guthega River to the dam, or, being on top of a saddle between the Guthega River and Windy Creek, look towards the Grey Mare and Dargals Ranges.

We came out via the Chalet area, taking about 7 hours to do the trip. We took a route on the western side of The Granite Peaks and The Rolling Grounds to Consett Stephen Pass. This, I believe, is an unusual approach, as we arrived at the Pass at a higher level and had to ski down and up the other side. The run down Tate's east ridge was in ideal snow, and the best part of two miles long. From the foot we kept along the east side of the Snowy and climbed up to Charlotte's Pass and then into the Chalet. Views on the run were well worth the trip.



Spring thaw on the Snowy River.

Photo. D. H. Baglin.

It is a pity more people do not make use of these huts on the range. Certainly they are not well appointed as some of the later huts, such as Albina and Kunama, but for a good ski-ing holiday and a cheap one this is undoubtedly the spot. I think all told, including the transport and buying of food and accommodation, the weekly tariff per person was between £4 and £5.

We arranged for our food to be packed in at Easter time in sealed kerosene tins with a couple of bottles of hard liquor,

which just makes that pre-dinner interval so pleasant after a day on the snow.

I would strongly recommend younger skiers to get out and have a look at this country, remembering at all times to respect the Range. By this I mean that you must follow the safety rules and advise people where you are and where you are going. This is quite easily done with the wireless set. The instructions are quite clear as to how to use the equipment and, provided the batteries are charged as soon as you get in, there is no difficulty.

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