

NEWS ITEMS

A diabolically accurate comment on the mid-summer races held at Kosciusko on a day of mist and heavy rain at the end of January, 1957, appeared in the Scottish Ski Club Journal for that year as hereunder:

We ski in every kind of weather,
On wet snow, dry snow, grass and
heather,
But when we ski on peat and
muddipools,
We're bluddifools.

Australian Ski Team

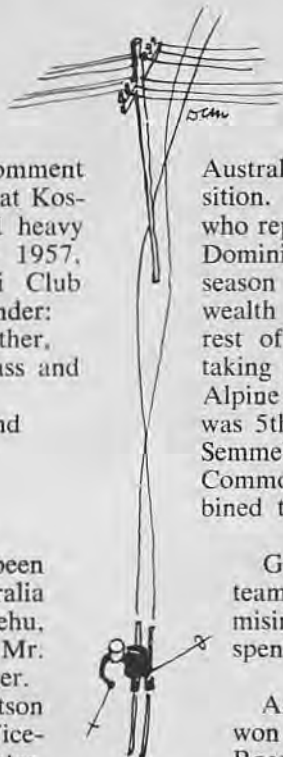
The following team has been chosen to represent Australia against New Zealand at Ruapehu, 20th to 23rd September, 1958. Mr. Ken Breakspear will be Manager.

Men's Team: John Robertson (Capt.), Danny Collman (Vice-capt.), Peter Brockhoff, Will Kater, Tony Mandlik, Bruce Dyson, Bill Davy, Shann Turnbull. Reserves: Mac Munro and Geoffrey Hughes.

Women's Team: Christine Davy (Capt.), Nan Dixon (Vice-capt.), Judy Forass, Peg Nelson, D. Hyde, Pat Barker. Reserves: Margaret Hookham, Gillian Litchfield.

The team arrives in Christchurch, 5th September, from where it goes by bus to Queenstown for six days skiing on Coronet Peak, thence to the North Island, to Ruapehu for ten days, which cover the N.Z. Championships and the Inter-Dominion Match.

The N.Z. teams will not be chosen until after the National titles, but it seems



Australia can expect some tough opposition. Bill Hunt and R. S. Chaffey, who represented N.Z. in the last Inter-Dominion match, went to Europe this season to compete in the Commonwealth Winter Games, and spent the rest of the season skiing there, and taking part in various races. In the Alpine Slalom at St. Moritz, Hunt was 5th, ahead of the Canadian John Semmelink who had recently won the Commonwealth Winter Games combined title.

Garry Coller, a previous N.Z. team member, and three other promising young skiers, have also spent this winter training in Europe.

Among the woman, Jill Huppert won the last N.Z. combined. Wana Rose, who captained the last N.Z. Inter-Dominion team, spent last winter in Canada, instructing at a ski school in the Laurentians. She gained her assistant instructor's certificate and pin. She, however, will not be available to the team this year.

Kiandra

Kiandra, for some years past, has languished as a ski resort, overshadowed by its more glamorous neighbours and relegated to the position of a Cinderella of the Southern Alps. Over the last couple of seasons, however, the former gold rush town has regained some of its popularity and now caters for 130 skiers during the winter season. Three years ago the old Kiandra Ski Club was reconsti-



Kiandra Ski Club Lodge.

Photo: Pat Cronin.

tuted as the Kiandra Pioneer Ski Club and a lodge built adjacent to the foot of Township Hill, the main ski run in the village. This, together with the Chalet, Youth Hostel and the newly built lodge of the Bushcraft Snow Hostel Association as well as several private huts makes up the accommodation.

Kiandra has many advantages as a result, not the least of which is an asphalt sealed all weather road from Cooma, through New Adaminaby to Kiandra. This is open throughout the winter except under the most severe conditions and allows visitors to drive to the doors of the various lodges. Once in residence, the main ski run on Township Hill is only a matter of yards distant. This year will see a new Mueller Junior T-bar tow operating—it is at present being erected on the slope by Rankine and Hill

with John Gam as supervising engineer. When completed the tow will give a direct downhill run of 600 yards with a vertical descent of 350 feet and a nursery slope of half a mile run. It will carry 24 skiers at a time with an hourly capacity of 400.

A new run is at present being cleared, two miles from Kiandra at the site of the old quarry on the asphalt sealed road to Cabramurra. This run is at the 5,250 feet level making it 500 feet higher than Kiandra Village. It is approximately 90 feet wide, of a standard suitable for any championship slalom event, and assures Kiandra of a minimum of three months' skiable conditions, lengthening the average season by four weeks. This year a small rope tow will serve the slope, but plans are afoot for the erection of a new tow on this run.

Thredbo

Thredbo seems to be growing faster than any other ski area in Australia. No one will ever know whether this growth has taken place in spite of, or because of, the controversy, the ballyhoo and general discussion, which has centred upon the new area. Probably the real reason why Thredbo has made such a fast start is that most skiers, who have visited the area in the last twelve months, have come away convinced that it has great potential, even though it is unlikely to be graced with a three hundred bed hotel, or a heated swimming pool, in our life time.

Two huts were built there in the autumn of 1957, one by Crackenback Ski Club, and one by Tony Sponar on behalf of Kosciusko Chairlift Syndicate. The Crackenback members built what

was then the biggest ski tow in Australia. Contrary to general expectations the tow actually worked, and continued to work through the season. Although the tow was 800 feet high, it started 400 feet above the valley floor and finished 700 feet below the top of Crackenback Peak. Many skiers visited the area during the season, and went away talking loudly. Some said it was wonderful, but many had difficulty with the narrow trails. Despite a very lean snow season, it was possible to ski to the river flats opposite the village, from 7th July until 10th September.

During the summer of 1958, Kosciusko Thredbo Ltd., took over from the Syndicate, and has carried out some major works, including a £2,000 trail clearing programme, and the reticulation of water, sewerage, and electricity, for 25 serviced sites in the village.



Helicopter transport of cement to the top station of Thredbo Chairlift, Easter, 1958.

Photo: G. E. F. Hughes.

Transfield Pty. Ltd. have started work on the Chairlift, which is to be a mile long, rising 1,540 feet and with a capacity of 350 passengers per hour. The lift has been designed by Gerhart Muller, of Switzerland, who designed the lifts at Ruapehu, N.Z. It will be interesting to see whether Transfield can complete the lift on schedule. They seem to be making a real effort, and have brought in a helicopter to carry materials up the hill.

The Snowy Mountains Authority have been widening and straightening considerable sections of the Alpine Way. Although there has been much talk of sealing the road for a few miles on each side of Dead Horse Gap, no such action has yet been taken.

Perhaps the most interesting item of news about Thredbo from the skiing viewpoint, is that the Austrian instructors, Leonhart Erharter and Helmut Pfister, are coming out from Zurs. Erharter is said to be an outstanding stylist even in Austria, and coached our Olympic team in 1956. Maybe the combination of big lifts, top instructors, and easy access at Thredbo, will some day produce an Olympic medal winner from Australia.

As we go to press, it appears that there will be some ten or twelve ski club huts, and guest houses, completed for the winter of 1958, including Ski Club of Australia, Ramshead Ski Club, Youth Hostels Association, Ski Tourers Association, Thredbo Alpine Club, The Candlelight Lodge (which is being built by Cornel and Suzanne Deseo) together with a number of smaller huts being built by new clubs—Rainbow, Sequoia and Nee-walla, and several, as yet unnamed, huts.

Ski Jumps

Having few, if any permanent constructed jumps, which would be comparatively easy to prepare, has acted as a deterrent to this branch of the sport.

Now the State Park Trust has approved the site for the construction of a permanent 50 metre jumping hill at

Smiggins Holes. It is expected that this jump will be ready for use by the winter.

In addition there is to be a 35 metre hill constructed at Kiandra, and another of the same size at Cabramurra, the latter with provision for extension into a 70 metre hill at a later date.

It is also planned to build a permanent jump in the Thredbo.

Ski Tows

The Thredbo chairlift takes the lime-light, but in addition there will be several new tows in operation this winter.

The Cooma Ski Club are building a tow in the Perisher area, with a vertical lift of 300 feet.

There is to be a T Bar at Kiandra.

The S.M.A. Ski Club is putting a tow up in the south-east face of Tate East Ridge, 800 feet with a vertical lift of 250 feet, with scope for extension later. This tow will not only serve the Guthega area, but will be of great assistance to Main Range skiing.

At Cabramurra, the main run from the existing tow is being widened, and another course cleared on the steep side.

The Chalet, Charlotte's Pass

Mr. McGuinn, the manager of the Chalet, writes as follows:

"Regarding the Chalet this coming winter, we are clearing a section of the Wood Run, almost directly behind the main garage, in preparation for the installation of another rope tow. Distance is estimated at 1800 feet in a vertical ascent of 600 feet. I have chosen a track which will provide easiest access to the base of the summit of Stilwell Mountain, and at the same time lead off to a trail through the trees."

It is good news that the overburdened Chalet Ski Tow is likely, at long last, to be relieved of some of its queue, and the excellent all weather slopes of the Wood Run be put to use. However, at the time of going to press Treasury sanction was still awaited for the completion of the project.



Falls Creek Chair Lift.

Mr. McGuinn continues to say, "Chalet visitors should be pleasantly surprised by the accommodation this year. All dormitories are at present being done in two tones, and some in three colours. An endeavour is also being made to dispose of the old iron double decker beds, and replace them with built-in wooden bunks. With luck, perhaps, we will finish the lot."

In large measure we should thank Mr. McGuinn's enthusiasm for these welcome innovations.

Hotham

From Hotham comes the promise of improved access from the Harrierville side, which is in addition to what has already been achieved from the Omeo side.

The Country Roads Board, who are responsible for ploughing the road, have now provided extra plant on the Harrierville side. It is expected that the road will be cleared beyond Blowhard Hut, and possibly to Diamantina Hut. New road work is being carried out at the present time, across the top of Little Baldy, to by-pass the drifts lying in that area, which will enable the plough to approach the Diamantina Hut more easily.

A licence has been obtained for the Hotham Heights Chalet, which will henceforth operate as a hotel, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Petterson. Together with the well-known Drift Chalet, this will provide considerable guest accommodation.

During the summer Mr. Robert Prisman built a residence on the mountain. He will provide skis for hire, escort guests, operate the tractor service on both Omeo and Harrierville sides, run a ski school, and provide any other useful service.

Following a recent meeting of the State Development Committee at Hotham Heights, it was decided that the area was one of the most attractive tourist resorts in Victoria, for both winter and summer, and that every effort would be made by the committee to improve the roads, and winter access, to enable the area to develop to its capacity.

Difficult access has long been the bugbear of Hotham, where the excellent ski slopes and tow amenities, deserve to make it one of Australia's most popular resorts.

Falls Creek

Australian skiing history was made at Falls Creek on July 21, 1957, when the first passengers were carried on the first Alpine Chairlift to operate on our snowfields. This chairlift carries skiers 400 vertical feet up Skyline Slope, and above it a nutcracker rope tow goes up a further 300 vertical feet.

There is also a 500 vertical feet nutcracker grip rope tow on Frying Pan, as well as two tows for novices.

Access to the village is made easy by the operation of three tractors, carrying passengers from the snowline.

There is considerable accommodation, both commercial and club, and the village is well supplied with amenities such as a shop, coffee bar, canteen, etc.

The atmosphere at Falls Creek is that of a small European mountain resort, with after ski visits to various chalets and canteens, all of them varying in outlay and decoration, and mostly only a minute's walk from one another.

Tasmania

Considerable interest has been created over the probability of the Tasmanian Government granting finance for the building of a first class road up Ben Lomond. This, together with a projected ski tow, would make Ben Lomond worthy of a visit by all Australian skiers.

Racing

The almost complete lack of winter snow caused the cancellation of the State championships. Small falls in the spring enabled enthusiasts to ski about on drifts.

Helicopter Air Lift at National Park

The air lift of material for a ski tow and shelter hut on Mt. Mawson, scheduled for the late summer of 1957, failed as the helicopter was not made available in time.

A firm contract for the helicopter was obtained for the late spring of 1957 and the material again transported to Lake Dobson, sorted into six hundredweight bundles, tied and laid out on the proposed pick-up area. The helicopter arrived during a period of south west gales and remained in the area for several days making occasional alarming efforts to work under the unfavourable conditions of high wind on the mountain and violent down draughts at the lake. Finally all material was collected and transported to Wombat Moor about one mile further away, but a little higher in elevation. The helicopter was able to work from this pick-up area and to land material on the Mawson Plateau about a quarter of a mile from the building sites. The cost of all this was enormous. Helicopters can be very expensive if conditions are bad.

The building for Mr. Cuming's ski tow is now complete and the setting up of the Chev. six engine and the rope supports will finalise the work on this enterprise. The tow is a Hamilton rope tow type. The shelter hut, of which the material was provided by the Mt. Field

National Park Board, the cost of transport by the Ski Council and the labour by skiers generally, is nearing completion.

Helicopter Air Lift at Cradle Mountain

The Rover Scouts have just used a helicopter to lift material for a hut from Waldheim Chalet to the Cradle Plateau. The air lift was a success and the company only charged the scouts £250 of the £500 cost. The hut is to be used to train Rover Scouts in snow and mountain craft.

In the same area the Cradle Mt. National Park Board are commencing to carry material up to the Plateau by pack horse. This hut is to be used for shelter by parties of walkers overtaken by sudden snow storms.

Buller

Although rumour has it there has been considerable activity on Buller this summer, and large scale plans for the future, no news has so far come to hand from Victoria on the subject.

European Tour

Sasha Nekvapil, so well known to all skiers, plans to conduct two ski tours to Europe this winter.

The first tour will leave Australia by air, first week in January, and terminate in Switzerland, approximately six weeks later. The second tour will leave the end of February, and will be escorted to Europe by Karel Nekvapil.

During both tours, about a week will be spent travelling, and a week in each of five of Europe's best known ski resorts.

Travel other than air, will be by the tour's own Volkswagen Bus.

Sasha would be pleased to hear from any skier who would like to join up.

Pontresina

News has been received that Rudi Wurth won the Diavolezza Downhill race at Pontresina on 16th March, 1958. This is one of the great ski races of Europe, and it is pleasing to know that Rudi is skiing as well or better than ever.



Kandahar Ski Club, Perisher Range, Mt. Kosciusko.

"Progress in the Perisher"

By SVERRE KAATEN.

We had climbed the Blue Cow that morning, George Day, George Arlberg and I, and as we stood on the top and looked back over the snow plains of the Perisher Valley, the potentiality of the Valley as a ski resort was evident to all of us. We felt that here was a sheltered valley with good slopes, good snow and easy access—an ideal combination for the location of a ski community.

We even talked about forming a syndicate and building a lodge in the Perisher, but with racing absorbing most of my skiing interest in those years, and with the others preoccupied with their own interests, we didn't get around to doing anything about the idea.

That was in the early 1930's, but we didn't stop talking about the Perisher and its possibilities, and then the war came and that stopped everything.

As far back as 1931, I have been

skiing in this valley. I well remember how a few of us used to train by running the "fresh meat run" from the Chalet to the Hotel Kosciusko. We used to go down to Spencer's Creek and work our way behind the back of the Perisher to get a glorious run into the creek near the spot where Snow Revellers' Lodge now stands, and then we would continue over the shoulders of Mt. Piper down to Smiggins.

The first building in the Perisher was the Rocky Creek Hut, built by the Tourist Bureau just before the war. It was destroyed by lightning some years ago and has not been rebuilt.

When the war ended, we revived the talk about the development of the Perisher, and this time the prime mover was George Petersen, then manager of the Hotel, who gave his support to the Snow Revellers' Ski Club, which became the

first club to get permission to build in the Perisher Valley. The second hut constructed was Telemark in 1951.

Since then, development of the Perisher area has gone on apace. The first two lodges were followed by C.S.I.R.O. Orana, Cooma, University, Sydney, Kandahar, Warrugang, Perisher Ski Tow, Merriment and Edelweiss.

The lodge for the University of Technology is near completion and extensions are being made to the Perisher Ski Tow cabin. There should be approximately 202 beds available in the area this season.

In 1955, I felt that the valley had progressed to a stage where a modern ski tow was needed. The financial side provided some difficulty and I found that support in this direction wasn't quite what I anticipated, but, nevertheless, it was decided to go ahead with the tow. Although it was fairly obvious until last year that the standard of skiing in the area was not high enough to give the expected support to a tow of this type, the arrival of several ski instructors did improve the standard of skiing, and I feel that the tow will be of real value to this part of the mountain.

A smaller tow for less experienced skiers was erected by Johnny Abbott-smith between the Kandahar and Snow Reveller Lodges, but the Perisher Ski Association considers that the present location of the tow is not suitable. An offer of financial assistance from Mr. Ken Murray, of Edelweiss, will enable the Perisher Ski Association to establish a tow in a more suitable location in the same general area as the little tow. This tow will enable skiers to improve their standard and enable them later to take advantage of the bigger tow with its more extensive slopes.

A few of us were instrumental in initiating the transport facilities into the Perisher area. Everybody who uses the Perisher area will be appreciative of the efforts to keep the transport going, but

the difficulties of preserving equipment in good order in this terrain will also be appreciated. Bob Strizek, who bought the snowmobiles from the original syndicate, had a difficult season in 1957, but he says his vehicles will be in full working order for the coming season.

One has only to ski into the Perisher area during the season and see the number of people on the slopes to realise just how the valley has progressed in a few short years. The October week-end attracts skiers from all over the mountains for the now popular Perisher Cup Meeting, which came from the initiative of Snow Revellers, Cooma and Telemark. There is no doubt that this competition will do a lot towards improving the standard of skiing.

The Perisher is now a thriving, active popular resort and it was inevitable that the clubs should form the Perisher Ski Association to assist in the ordered development of the area. Max Gregory, of Kandahar, must take the credit for the initiative behind the Association. His energy and helpfulness is a pillar of strength to the Association.

The Perisher is prepared for the 1958 season. Week-end working parties have made the lodges ready for the first snow. The Perisher Ski Tow will again have Pat and John Davis in charge. Already they have spent a lot of time in the area extending the accommodation, clearing new trails and getting the tow ready. The little tow will soon be re-established in its new location. These days there is a week-end stream of cars up the new road which goes as far as Merriment, laden with lodge stores for the winter. Bob Strizek has his snowmobiles throbbing impatiently. Far from the mountains, skiers are preparing their equipment and watching the weather reports with the interest of a stockbroker scanning the Stock Exchange list!

Soon the first of the skiers will turn off at the yellow notice board and head into the Perisher Valley.