

# The 1935 Kiandra-Kosciusko Traverse

By A. Telfer.

We left Adaminaby by car on the 27th July, after a long talk with Mr. Bell, Manager of the Grey Mares Mines. He and his sons go, summer and winter, to their mine through Nimmo, over the Brassy Mountains and Bull's Peaks. The snow was very thick in and around Kiandra and we spent the first few days getting our ski legs. We went out one day to Mount Selwyn, the Kiandra championship hill, with Downey, Bill Pattinson and Alcorn. Their downhill course is now quite a clear run, with about a 300 feet descent. The weather that week was very bad and the streets of Kiandra were under 4 feet of snow, with a large drift right across the road, between the hotel and the post office. We went out to the Table Top and its hut<sup>1</sup> twice that week, and spent two nights there. The view from Table Top is very fine, of interesting country, from the hills round Canberra, to the North, to Jagungal and Gungartan, to the South. The Happy Jack Valley is spread out below the trig.



Left to right: Mort's Hut, Bogong Hut, Grey Mare's Mine Hut.

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station in a rather bewildering maze of small ridges. A better conception of the whole Happy Jacks can be gained from the main range at the Dip, or from the South-Eastern slope of the Vale T.S. spur. We tried to find the Dip<sup>2</sup> (Montague's Hut) from there, but the weather made visibility very bad. Our trip on horse-back the following Easter also showed us that we did not go far enough east.

The final effort to get out of the Kiandra district was made on Monday, August 5, when we left Kiandra and the comfortable fireside of Downey's Alpine Hotel at 1.15 p.m. and arrived at the Table Top Hut at 5 p.m. Snow and wind all the way made it a very unpleasant trip. An uncomfortable night on green boughs and sheep skins at Table Top Hut found us ready to leave the next morning at 8.30 a.m.—on what bade fair to be the first fine day for 10 days. We had crossed to Kosciusko last year on the eastern side of the Happy Jacks, but this year we kept to its western side. If a bearing of 190° is taken from Table Top, it will be found that along this approximate line lie Boobee, Farm Ridge and Bogong Huts, and our object was to follow this line and find these huts. We found, after a very icy wade across the Happy Jack River, Boobee Hut<sup>3</sup> at about lunch time. This hut is one of the most pleasantly situated huts I have visited. On the south-eastern slope of the spur which ends in the Vale T.S., it commands a beautiful view of the Happy





Left to right: Mould's (Spencer's Peak) Hut, Farm Ridge Huts, Montague's (The Dip) Hut.

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Jacks, with Spencer's Peak in the far south-eastern corner. The old Farm Ridge telephone line runs across the valley 400 yards from the hut and the small wooded knolls, so typical of the Happy Jack Valley, make a beautiful view from the hut's open verandah.

After lunch, a line at approximately  $220^\circ$  from just in front of Boobee Hut showed us Doubtful Gap (at the top of Digger's Creek), with the old telegraph poles pointing the way to Farm Ridge. The Doubtful River is a fast-flowing stream and, at this crossing, has a very precipitous approach. The stiff climb up to Farm Ridge brought, at the top, a fine view of Jagungal. The door of Farm Ridge Hut was open and the snow had drifted into both rooms. We managed, at the expense of considerable energy, to get the door to shut. The hut is not, at present, in good condition, but is, I think, a most valuable link in the chain of huts from Boobee to Mawson's. Sustained with chocolate and raisins, we pushed on and after a hard climb up out of Bogong Creek found Bogong Hut, tired but very satisfied with what was one of the most interesting day's ski-ing we had ever had. Breakfast at Tin Hut, Table Top, leaving at 8.30 a.m.; lunch at Boobee Hut; afternoon tea at Farm Ridge Hut; arriving at Bogong at 4.45 p.m. for supper—a total distance of about 12 miles. I estimate that it is about two hours easy ski-ing from Boobee to Farm Ridge and about one hour from Farm Ridge to Bogong.

The Bogong Hut should be a very comfortable hut, in excellent condition. Unfortunately, a hole in the roof had let snow on to the ceiling of the second room and it had fallen in. The main room was very comfortable and we had a grand sleep on two excellent wire stretchers with mattresses, until 6.15 a.m. Leaving at 8 a.m. we climbed up to a saddle whose centre is approximately  $170^\circ$  from the Hut and swinging round into a valley running at  $160^\circ$  we found our way over the Strumbo Spur to the Valentine Valley and Mawson's Hut. A happy and half-predicted meeting with Gilder's party, who had arrived at the hut on the previous day, and who provided morning tea, put us in good spirits for the trip back to the Chalet. A great run off Gungartan in perfect snow brought us to lunch just below the Saddle and in sight of the new and evidently strongly built Adam's Hut, on White's River. Using our water-proof capes as sails, we sailed at a great speed across the Rolling Grounds. After a refreshing run down the Guthega we found it possible to cross the Snowy River at the Blue Cow Creek junction. From there the familiar landmarks, Pounds' Creek Hut, Spencer's Creek and Sugar Loaf, brought us to the Chalet and the end of a very delightful and interesting traverse from Kiandra.



Left to right: Mawson's Hut, Table Top Hut, Boobee Huts.

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There follow some notes on huts which should be useful in conjunction with the list in the 1935 *Year Book*.

(1) **Table Top (Tin Hut).**—Bearing approximately  $20^{\circ}$  from Table T.S. A galvanised iron hut,  $13' \times 17'$ , unlined, one window with broad shutters—wooden floor—not completely weather-proof—wood in vicinity—only to be thought of as a temporary shelter. To find the hut, run down off Table Top, or round its eastern slope, to a cleared saddle, which runs approximately north and south—there is a fence along the top of the saddle and from here the hut can be seen about 200 yards on the southern fall of the saddle.

(2) **The Dip (or Montague's) Hut.**—The Hut is situated approximately half-way between Table Top Mountain (Cabramurra) and Addicumbene T.S., but is well up on to the Dip, on the eastern slope of one of the many short spurs running out from the Main Range. It is a single-roomed tin hut,  $15' \times 18'$ , with one wire stretcher. It is not snow proof and should only be considered as a temporary shelter.

(3) **Boobee Hut.**—Owner, J. Cheney. Situation—on the south-east slope of the spur running south from the Vale T.S. Description: There are two huts. One, of tin, is kept locked—the other, fifteen yards away, is a two-roomed rubberoid-lined weatherboard hut with open verandah. Three wire stretchers and five mattresses make this snow-proof hut one of the most comfortable in the snow country.

