

# HERE WE GO AGAIN

More Western Face contributed  
by Alec Richards, Dudley Ward  
and Colin Wyatt

## Australian Arlberg

By T. A. Richards

*The era of exploratory touring in the Australian snowfields that followed the cessation of competitive ski-ing has ended any idea that Australia has no ski-ing terrain to rival that of Europe. In Arlberg-like country on the west flanks of Kosciusko, many runs the equal of, although not as long as, those of Switzerland have been discovered. Each year the popularity of this Australian Arlberg increases. More and more skiers are attracted by these long, exhilarating, steep descents. Shelter huts, particularly near Twynam and Townsend are needed, both as a safety precaution and so that the finest ski-ing in Australia can be enjoyed without having to return to the Chalet or other centres each day. A hut in the vicinity of Albina will make possible a thorough exploration of this section of the alps, the observation of weather conditions and future development be guided by experiences gained. (The Kosciusko Park Trust have promised the erection of such hut.—Ed.)*

In September, although in a poor snow year, slopes of the Western Face were well covered. Dry winter snow was encountered in many places, but generally typical spring snow conditions prevailed. On the higher and steeper eastern slopes, crust had to be contended with, but never on the west. Crossing the Snowy near Pounds Creek was hazardous, and at Foreman's Crossing the last snow-bridge was rapidly disappearing. Rough bridge crossings at both points and further down near White's River would be a godsend to all main range parties.

Down the East Face (see Mary Wyatt's "West Face Rival," 1944) spring crystal snow was experienced. It tended to become very soggy before lunch, and icy later in the day. Here the country was not well covered. Detours had to be made to avoid bare ground to get the maximum descent to where

the snow petered out, a hundred feet or so above the tall timber. The upper part gave fast open ski-ing on a wide, steep slope, until, dropping suddenly into a narrow gorge, somewhat reminiscent of "Little Austria." The east side is much more wooded than the west, and lacks its awe-inspiring scenery and variety of runs. Nevertheless, at present, it is easier of access, and will be very popular.

"Little Austria," which was discovered by Tom Mitchell and George Day (see "Over the Edge," p. 179, 1935), is at present the most popular of the western courses. But Twynam North (which merits an arresting, individual title to distinguish it from other Twynam courses) threatens to dislodge it from favouritism. The direction of spurs radiating from the Main Range is confusing. Perhaps this is because the Main Range makes two easterly sweeps in its course

north from Northcote. Many spurs appear to run west, when actually they run due north. Although it is impossible to show details of slopes, Colin Wyatt's revised map will assist in orientation.

Twynam North Spur branches off the Main Divide about a quarter of a mile west of the Big Twynam peak (7,203 feet). Further south, the prominent whale-backed (Twynam West) spur, often erroneously called Watson's Crag (which is the name of the rugged ridge between the West Twynam and West Carruthers spurs) stands out in majestic splendour with its perimeter corniced almost transparently against the sky. Between the North and West Twynam spurs is a precipitous drop to a valley, across which is seen the eroded side of a subsidiary spur. This runs northward off the West Spur and gives an excellent run of about 2,200 feet (see "The



At the foot of Little Austria.

R. B. McFadyen



**"Australian Arlberg"**

C. W. Wyatt

*Looking north from Carruthers West Spur. Twynam West Spur in left background, Watson's Crag and Sentinel Peak immediately behind figure. Mt. Twynam on extreme skyline to right of centre.*

**The Valentine Falls.**

C. W. Wyatt



## Revised map of Main Range covering Western Face

Colin Wyatt, a General Editor of the Year Book, has just completed a map of the Western Face of the Main Range that exploring skiers will be able to follow confidently. Any spurs indicated on Colin's map are actually there and not merely dotted in as ornament and fill-ups by some long-gone surveyor. Colin has presented the map to the Ski Council of N.S.W., and we are extremely grateful to him for it.

Copies are obtainable at sixpence each, from any of the Editorial Committee. Please enclose stamped and addressed foolscap envelope if you apply by post.

It is advisable to mount your map on calico and make it a permanent fixture in your haversack.

Western Face of the Main Range" by Colin Wyatt, 1942). At the end of the West Spur an extensive panorama of the Australian Arlberg is obtained.

From the top of the Twynam North Spur, a short turn to the right brought us to the head of the valley formed between the spur and the Main Range. This year, instead of rejoining the spur half-way down, we continued down the valley until our progress was stopped by an open creek just under the northernmost end of the spur. It was a delightful fast run, the upper section on dry winter snow, gradually changing to spring snow, which became heavier as we descended. Opposite, a lovely glade, bordered by snow gums, wound down the southern face of the Anderson Ridge. The foot of this could have been reached by a long descending traverse from higher up, around the corner formed by the Main Range and the Anderson

Ridge. Below us, the creek dropped away into the rugged Watson's Gorge on its way to the Geehi.

The descent of the top section should be made down the valley in preference to the spur itself. This part of the spur is fairly narrow, and drops abruptly on either side. Being exposed, it is usually wind-swept, and, although very steep, much the easier (on skins) and shorter climb back than in the softer snow of the valley. If returning via Pound's Creek, considerable climbing can be avoided by branching out of the valley through one of the gaps in the range north of Twynam. Returning to the Chalet, the shortest route is along the Main Range, then across the ridge leading to Hedley Tarn, then schuss across the intervening valley on to the side of Carruthers. A short climb to the saddle on Carruthers, then a continuous, straight run downhill all the way to Foreman's Crossing.

"Little Austria" is the narrow "U"-shaped gulch formed between the West Spur of Carruthers and the subsidiary spur off Lee. This is a pure snow-capped ridge running somewhat in the form of a reversed "S" northward off Lee, and eventually leads into the Northcote Canyon below the finish of the Townsend Race Course. Several open slopes between Lee and Carruthers tumble into a gully that leads to "Little Austria." We found the one running north-west off Lee (the third south from Carruthers) the best. With swing turns we quickly descended this ridge until turning right to schuss into the gully which flows into the mouth of the funnel that is "Little Austria." It is narrow and steep, a rocky fissure between towering walls, snow banked on either side. Fun, great fun, really tight ski-ing, turning on the walls of the two banks alternately just as momentum was being lost and ski, seemingly, approaching the vertical. The speed increasing and a sensation like dropping in a lift with each successive turn. In spring, the sun just reaches the left bank, giving easy spring-snow. The surface of the other, perpetually in the shade, hard, fast and icy, but just not too much so. Still, up and down, from one side to the other, continually losing height. Suddenly the gorge opens on to the more open slopes of Northcote Canyon. Here, at around 5,000 feet,

it was hot, very hot, as we basked lazily in the sun, leisurely eating lunch and enjoying the scenic grandeur of the Western Face. Our talk turned to discussion of future development of this area. What would weather conditions be like, especially bad weather, on this side? Why should weather here be any worse than weather at similar levels (around 5,000 feet) elsewhere at Kosciusko?

Several times in different years, wind and mist on the top of the Main Divide had persuaded us against "dropping over." Yet on a number of occasions, when we determined to see what the top few hundred feet were like in these conditions, we found we soon dropped below the cloud and wind into fine and calm conditions. This is not always so, and conditions on top are no certain guide to those below. We concluded that there was an excellent possibility that, around the tree-line, conditions in bad weather might be better than around the Chalet.

The Northcote Canyon is a much easier climb than "Little Austria." Just under the "Grandstand" (aptly named for its vantage viewpoint of the Townsend Downhill Course) a steep climb through the gap on the left brought us back on to Lee, near the commencement of our descent. An alternative route is up the Canyon past the "Grandstand" and Lake Albina on to Northcote.

Several slopes along the north side of the West Carruthers Spur and either sides of Watson's Crag, all of which lead down into Northcote Canyon, merit investigation of their promise of exciting running. Further north of Twynam, the west side remains comparatively unexplored. On the west of the North Spur of Townsend are a variety of steeper and longer runs than the Racecourse itself. It is unfortunate that there is no accommodation in the vicinity of Townsend. So much time is wasted in skiing to and from the Chalet that Western Facing is limited to fine weather, and then only for a short period each day, so that the remoter slopes remain uninvestigated. Even with continuous fine weather, few are energetic enough to undertake daily what amounts to a 10 to 15 mile trip, including a minimum 5,000 feet of both descent and climb. After several years' exploration, innumerable slopes of 1,500 to 2,500 feet are yet unskied.

## Exploring Geehi Slopes and Spurs

By Dudley Ward

*The 1944 snow season in the Australian Alps will always remain in memory, in comparison with others, as the season when neither blizzard nor foggy conditions interfered to any extent with the ideal exploratory touring programme.*

After the interminable blizzard conditions of the 1943 season, this may have seemed even more propitious from the ski-touring point of view. Strangely enough, although the lower slopes below 5,500 feet were, according to the locals, the barest of snow in memory, except in the early part of the season, yet the upper slopes had approximately average snow covering. The absence of normal August winds, which made for ideal touring, also left unthawed nearly all falls on the upper slopes, apart from slight surface meltings, until late August. The snow surface under these conditions was inclined to be icy on the southern faces and exposed tops, as the intervals between falls was prolonged.

Amongst the western faces and spurs which were explored by Colin Wyatt and myself last season, namely, those running off the main range from Carruthers, Twynnam, Mann Bluff, Tate, Dickey Cooper's Bogong, and The Ghost, the Carruthers west spur adjacent to and below Little Austria, appeared to me to be the only route which could be actually dangerous. The steep southern and eastern slopes of this spur, some over 30 degrees, continue over, around and under rock cliffs, and, being away from the softening influence of the sun, can be crusty or unpleasantly icy.

Under more favourable surface conditions, this particular run could be delightful in every way, as the views are superb. Nevertheless, with the inevitable increase of skiers on the western slopes, the choice of route to avoid the danger spots under unsuitable conditions should be carefully considered and studied, both for the descent and climb back, in advance where possible.

I remember ski-ing on the main range over twenty years ago, be-



Looking up Grey Mare from The Ghost.

C. W. Wyatt.

*The Grey Mare but is in the left circle and the right circle indicates the best spur to run down into the Geehi.*

fore there was any shelter at Charlotte's Pass, and when equipment was poor and experience was limited. A party of us (including Laurie Seaman, a year or two prior to his last fatal Summit journey) was returning to the hotel from the Kosciusko summit. Two of us brought up the rear, and, on running off the top on the eastern slope into the Snowy, a large slice of cornice collapsed under my companion, resulting, fortunately, only in a broken stock and our arrival at the hotel an hour or so after the others.

The Geehi slopes, especially when seen from an opposite spur, look very formidable. But there are very many descents which are simple running, with drops up to

1600 feet in a poor snow season, and considerably more in most years. Slopes can be chosen to suit all tastes, averaging twenty to thirty degrees, or steeper if desired. Starting, before 8 a.m. for preference, from either Charlotte's Pass, Pound's Creek Hut, or White's River Hut, one can climb the main range and descend to the timber below on the west side to many an ideal luncheon spot by midday, without risk and in comfort, weather permitting. This allows ample time for returning, without making the day strenuous.

Of course, in the event of accident or sudden bad weather conditions, the present main range hut accommodation is dangerous-

ly inadequate. It only remains for the widest enjoyment in safety of this glorious ski-ing terrain, that several emergency huts be established on the western slopes where wood supplies are available.

Before commencing on the main western face trips, Colin Wyatt and I explored the north-eastern slopes off the Blue Cow, he having run the Blue Cow western spur the previous season. The eastern slopes looked very attractive, viewed in the distance from the road leading down to Piper's Creek from Dainer's Gap, and indeed they proved in fact as exciting as they appeared from afar, with the steep run through dead timber necessitating sharp and fast swinging into the lower part of the Perisher Creek.

I must admit, in touring with Colin alone, I was destined to tackle many a slope which seemed to call for a parachute, or else find myself marooned, watching him disappear hundreds of feet below, whilst I gazed down at the tops of the trees and, in my solitude, watched an incredibly small speck come to rest in the valley below, before I could decide that it was within my capacity to follow by the same route or choose another.

We had ten consecutive and memorable long trips without a break, although an intervening necessary one-day's return trip down to the hotel from the Perisher and back for provisions was not up to the standard of the others. At least one day's rest in three is desirable, but the good weather was not to be squandered in resting, after the bitter memories of the previous year. Apart from the runs off the Perisher, Back Perisher, and Blue Cow, a couple of runs off Tate into the Guthega over fairly good spring snow surfaces, were well worth while, particularly on the lower slopes into the Guthega.

From Pounds we started the exploration of the two main western ridges off Tate, the northernmost one (The Rolling Grounds) being separated from the main range (The Granite Peaks) by the valley of Windy Creek.

We dropped about 1600 feet from Tate into the timber opposite the cliffs of Mann Bluff, and climbed through a very pleasant glade on to our knoll for lunch. We had a welcome bask in the sun, studying and taking some bearings on the very broken panorama. Putting on

skins, we climbed out again, and reached our main packs at two o'clock, where we had some welcome oranges, and commenced another descent, this time with our packs, down off the end of the Rolling Grounds into Windy Creek. The last part of this run was mushy, and hardly worth the drag out again with packs, up the steep, rocky and wooded slope on the main range side of Windy Creek, making towards the west face of Dickey Cooper's Bogong. Indeed, the remainder of the afternoon was spent in a long, silent, sticky pull, gaining a useful knowledge of the country, planning a run off a knob which we thought at first was the back of the Ghost (but later discovered our error and christened it the Pseudo Ghost).

The day had been hot, and after sundown I was expecting some breakable crust running from the top of Dickey Cooper into White's. However, it was quite unbreakable, and, being away from the sun for some hours, was hard, which made the run fast and thrilling, swinging down in the dusk on the old familiar course to the hut 900 feet below. White's was deserted, although there were signs of a party having been there from the Alpine Hut several days previously.

Next day, putting up a fox in the valley on leaving the hut, we crossed Dickey Cooper's Swamp to the Ghost, and had lunch overlooking the Geehi immediately above the Valentine Falls.

The run off the Ghost into Duck Creek (formerly called Milk Creek on old maps) was perfect. We crossed the Valentine above the falls, climbed a hundred or so feet over a spur, and finally finished up at the junction of the Rocky Plains Creek and Grey Mare's Creek, immediately below the falls after a tricky but memorable run down the west side of the wooded spur north of the falls, which in another few days would have had insufficient snow for the descent. This comparatively clear descent is about a quarter of a mile closer to the falls than the very thick, tall, and almost impassable patch of ti-tree and gorselike undergrowth in which I had previously been badly mixed up in making this descent on foot in summer.

The following day we set out from White's River at 8.15 a.m. to return to the Perisher.

After having battled the 1943 winter's blizzard at its worst with a party of four, including my wife and Betty and Leon Green, for

six hours on the steep side of Tate, necessitating prolonged and unpleasant edging, it left no doubt in my mind that the Guthega Valley is the safest and best winter route to White's River Hut from the southern end of the range and vice versa. It is more sheltered from the wind, is mainly below the cloud line, avoids much edging, and leads direct to Consett Stephen Pass and the fence leading to White's horse paddock.

We then joined a party of six to Pound's Creek Hut, and together we had two very enjoyable days. First on the spur of Mann Bluff, running in a north westerly direction, and finally on the first spur running off the west face of Twynam in a northerly direction.

The following day down to the hotel rounded off a very full and enjoyable, if somewhat intemperate, spate of snow-touring.

## Further Runs

In the early part of last season a leisurely group of us enjoyed some interesting runs on both sides of the main range from Jagungal to Dickey Cooper's Bogong, operating from the Alpine Hut and White's River Hut. In addition to the well-known runs off Dickey Cooper, Gungarten and Jagungal, we particularly enjoyed a very pleasant descent from the unnamed peak north of Gungarten into the valley of Finn's River. At this period these eastern slopes had very pleasant surfaces in comparison with slopes generally on the other side of the range.

The weather at White's River for the second week in July was a little too unsettled for long trips, but this was more than compensated for by the resulting beauty of consecutive evenings of glorious colourings, which is indeed one of the joys of high altitudes when cumulus cloud formations are in evidence. Thunder clouds, not common in winter, of an extraordinary deep green on one hand, changed imperceptibly through the deeper colours of the spectrum to the brilliant fiery colours in the west, and finally all the delicate pastel shades in the south, with glorious juxtaposition of contrasts in tone and colour provided by cloud formations, some towering above us and others at great distances, out over the lower country, seen from above. The snow, from the close ski tracks and stock marks to the distant rocky crags of Gungarten were similarly coloured with corresponding sky

reflections of brilliant warmth and ethereal blue modelling shadows.

Returning to the Alpine Hut from White's, we set out to have an easy following day, and took lunch up to the Mail Box peak, mid-way between the Bull's Peaks and The Cup and Saucer. The panorama from this end of the range is magnificent, and on this occasion the atmosphere was crystal clear for a hundred miles or so out over the Victorian Alps and ranges.

The main tops were clear-cut and enticing from the massive summit of Twynam, with the rocky escarpments of Mann Bluff and Watson's Crag falling into the Geehi, then majestic Townsend, with its proverbial "saddle" and impressive "spurs," befitting one

of the chieftains of the range. Plinnibar, further to the right in the distance, and the Grey Mare's range in the background, is backed by the Dargals. Finally, dominating and lonely, Jagungal on the right, arising so suddenly from the surrounding country, looked close enough in the clear atmosphere for three of us in the party to abandon thoughts of a lazy afternoon.

At 2.30 p.m. we suddenly decided to make a dash to the top and back to the Alpine Hut before dark. We lingered long enough, examining the panorama to the north, for me to pick out my route when I had walked alone from Jindabyne to Kiandra, via the Grey Mare, in the summer time two years ago, and which

either blizzard or lack of snow had prevented our party from following up in succeeding winters.

Swinging down from the summit of Jagungal, on the steep southern face, which had been in shadow since about 3.15 p.m., was fast, and the breathless schuss out over the valley below, which was unhappily surfaced with frozen, wind-blown sastrugi, made the heart miss a beat till it was safely negotiated with a precarious rattle of skis. We reached the Alpine Hut in two hours ten minutes from the summit, a distance of approximately seven miles, including several medium climbs, negotiating the wood run in the dark over a pretty fast surface, and trusting to memory and luck to get us down unscathed.

## KOSCIUSKO STATE PARK—OFFICIAL STATEMENT

By Act of Parliament, entitled the "Kosciusko State Park Act, 1944," the Government of New South Wales recently established as a National Park, to be known as "The Kosciusko State Park," a large area of land embracing nearly one and a half million acres, extending from a point on the Micalong Range west of Canberra southerly to the Victorian border, a distance of approximately 100 miles, with an average width of about 25 miles. Within the Park so established are the existing tourist resorts in the Mt. Kosciusko and Yarrangobilly areas.

This area constitutes one of the most important catchment areas in the Commonwealth, for within it lie the sources of the Murrumbidgee and the Goodradigbee Rivers, feeding Burrinjuck Dam; the Tumut River which flows into the Murrumbidgee above the Berembend Weir; a large portion of the Upper Murray Catchment, serving the Hume Reservoir and the upper reaches of the Snowy River, with which are associated hydro-electric and irrigation proposals.

A Trust to control and develop the area has been appointed. Its members are: The Hon. J. M. Tully, M.L.A., Minister for Lands (Chairman), Messrs. H. H. Guest (Deputy Chairman), C. K. Jacka, E. E. S. Clayton, B. U. Byles, H. J. Lamble, G. E. J. Barwick, K.C., and N. L. Roberts.

From the recreational point of view the area possesses almost unlimited scenic appeal. It is, moreover, the only extensive tract of

country in the State of New South Wales covered in winter with snow of sufficient depth to permit of full indulgence in snow sports. The area also affords scope for development of various forms of summer recreations.

In establishing the "Kosciusko State Park," the Government had two main principles in view—firstly, the necessity for retention and protection of the area as a valuable catchment; secondly, the desirability of permanent reservation of the area for recreational purposes, and its development in this regard.

The Trust feels that the "Kosciusko State Park" is destined to become the premier playground of the Commonwealth, and it is its stated intention to develop to the fullest extent both its winter sport and summer recreation attractions. The developmental work will include construction of roads to give vehicular access to various parts of the Park, trails for riding and hiking parties, improvement of the trout fishing streams within the area, improvement and extension of facilities for enjoyment of both winter and summer sports, fire protection, improvement of timber and pasture growth and conservation.

The various scientific bodies will also find scope within the area for their activities. The Act provides for retention of part of the Park as a Primitive Area, and the views of the various interested organisations will be considered by the Trust in connection with this phase of its administration of the area.

### Australian Women's Ski Club — N.S.W. Branch

A few club members were able to ski during last season; but again the main activity has been the supply and maintenance of libraries for all Australian hospital ships. The library of each hospital ship is maintained at approximately 1,000 books and 500 magazines. On ten occasions during the year the whole or the greater part of a library was removed and replaced with new or reconditioned books or magazines. To this the Victorian Branch contribution of 631 books and 1,080 magazines was wholly applied.

In addition to this, the Branch also contributed books and magazines to English hospital ships, to certain warships, to the Merchant Navy, and, through the King George Fund for Sailors, to the Maritime Royal Artillery Naval Gunners, the W.R.N.S. Hostels at Bondi and Herne Bay. To these 2,800 books and 3,000 magazines in all were supplied.

It will be seen that the support given to the Club has been amazing, but to continue further support will be necessary, and a special appeal will be found elsewhere in the Year Book. The gratitude expressed by the recipients of the books justifies the Branch asking for the fullest support from skiers and the readers of the Year Book.



At the foot of Tate West Spur. (Tate Summit to left of ski tips.)

C. W. Wyatt.

## MORE EXPLORATION OF THE WESTERN FACE

### Carruthers Western Face

Dudley Ward and I went up Carruthers this August with the idea of going down the steep S.W. face into Little Austria, but this slope was so crusted that it was to all intents and purposes unskiable. We therefore decided to try a descent down the sharp west spur of Carruthers, and on down its far west face, if such existed, into the Northcote Canyon.

We started off more or less due west down the ridge, but came to a bluff in it that meant a detour round to the left above the top of Little Austria and then back again to the ridge below the bluff. A further short piece of running took us to the sharp pyramidal peak above the Northcote Canyon that one sees from the top of Carruthers. The height of this is about 6450 feet. The view from here is one of the finest on the range, for one looks sheer down into the gorges between Carruthers and Twynam West spur. To the north of this peak a long smooth gully runs down for about 1000 feet, that in spring snow would make a short and sharp but very lovely run, the climb out being up to the saddle on the range north of Carruthers. To our pleasure and surprise, we found a perfectly skiable slope descending in a series of broken terraces between crags down into the Northcote Canyon, that unfolded as we descended, coming to a blind edge every 150 feet or so that masked another grand slalom slope to the next. Finally a long, left-hand traverse

By Colin Wyatt

*It is a toss-up as to whether the author or Elyne Mitchell has done the most in exploring, photographing and writing about the Western Face. A rare photograph of the author appears above. This year the Ski Council published his revised map of the Western Face. Colin also has skied extensively in Europe, America, and New Zealand.*

ran out into Prostanthera scrub, and so via a steep glade to a pleasant flat by the side of the Northcote Canyon creek. Here we had a hot and sunbaking lunch at 5200 feet, and then slowly made our way back via Lake Albina and the Lee-Northcote saddle.

This run is fun, but I think it would not be worth while until fairly late in the season, when spring snow conditions predominate.

### The Western Faces of Tate and the Mann Bluff

We set off from Pound's and climbed up Pound's Creek to the peak on the range south of Tate that is marked on the Tourist Bureau map as Mount David, but which is also known as Gill's Knobs.

On the western side of this lies a high valley basin from which runs the southern branch of Three

Rocks Creek. On the far side of the basin rises a three-humped snow ridge, the same height as Mount David (6400 feet), which is the highest point of the mass forming the Mann Bluff. The run down into this basin was glorious, ending up with a terrific schuss that carried one right out across it. I can imagine few more pleasant places for a main range practice day. The climb up to the three humps is very short. Behind them lies a small plateau, at the western edge of which is the Mann Bluff proper, a big face of broken black cliffs overlooking the Geehi. This plateau is cut at its northern edge by a steep creek gully; the best run is to start down the left-hand side of this gully and then run out on to the left-hand spur, which leads in a very nice little undulating run to a headland above the Three Rocks Creek, at 5300 feet. Opposite is the full length of Tate West Ridge, alias the Rolling Grounds, and to the right is the West Face of Tate proper. From this vantage point we could see Mt. David whence we had started, and noted that a lovely run would be down over the west face of David, bearing slightly north, and ending up on a snow-gum alp below Tate at about 5000 feet. This will be well worth investigating.

There would appear to be at least two good runs down the West Face of Tate, one immediately below the summit, and the other down a wide valley running back south-west from the head of the

Rolling Grounds just north-west of Tate. This should give sheltered running and lead into good snow-country on the right bank of Three Rocks Creek.

### **Tate West Ridge and Dicky Cooper West Face**

Dudley Ward and I started from Pound's at 7.50 a.m., and reached Tate at 9.50. After a short rest we ran down as if going to Consett Stephen Pass, but swung off to the left above the cornice and skied out along the full length of the Rolling Grounds. These are much larger in area than one would think, and we did not reach the main knob at the far end until 11 a.m. Height, 6300 feet. Two alternatives presented themselves; either down the south-west spur, which rose at its far end to a hump above the Geehi, or down the north-west spur into Windy Creek. I would mention here that the Tourist Bureau map has this area quite inaccurately shown. We decided to do both, and took the south-west spur first. It turned out to be a grand run, starting on a left traverse and finishing up straight along the ridge to the saddle at the foot, 5300 feet. There was a lot of burnt snow-gum here, no wind, and terrifically hot; we looked up the full length of Three Rocks Creek to the Mann Bluff and Tate. We climbed up to the hump for lunch, and sat on a hot rock studying the Grey Mare, which rose up right in front of us. Over to the north was some very interesting country down from the far western ridges of Dickey Cooper, that looked worth exploring.

We left again at 1 p.m., and got back to the Rolling Grounds in an hour. Then we set off down the north-west spur, and after a flying start, traversing round to the left of its rocky crest, we got on to its northern slope, where the snow had gone badly. However, with a bit of bush-hopping we landed up safe and sound in the snaky bed of Windy Creek. The heat was terrific, and we stripped before starting up the long slopes leading towards Dickey Cooper. Then, luckily, a small cloud appeared and shaded us, and we had a very comfortable climb over glorious open slopes, always bearing north-east, until we struck the Divide about a quarter of a mile south of Dickey Cooper. All these slopes form the western faces of Dickey Cooper, and would make wonderful easy home runs from White's. One could make an endless variety

of them, down to the small flats along the course of Windy Creek.

We had started our last climb at 2.50 p.m., arriving just below Dickey Cooper at 4.20. Being rather late, the eastern slopes were getting crusty, and the run down to White's was icy enough to take off the last vestiges of wax from our ski. We were glad to find the hut empty, and were soon relaxing in comfort after a somewhat strenuous day, in which we had covered an enormous area of ground.

### **The Valentine Falls**

I have for a long time been intrigued with the idea of skiing direct from White's to the Grey Mare Hut via the Ghost and the Valentine Falls, but the consensus of opinion was that the "gorges" past the Falls would be impassable, and the creeks all far too open in any case. However, this winter the opportunity came to test it out, in a poor snow winter that would show definitely if it were generally a practical proposition or not.

We left White's (5650 feet) at 9.30 a.m., a horribly late start, and went over White's Saddle and down Dicky Cooper Creek to the Dicky Cooper Hut. I was sorry we had not first climbed up to the shoulder north of Dicky Cooper's Bogong, whence we should have had a lovely run to the hut. We crossed the creek below the hut at 10.30 a.m., 5300 feet, and climbed up the opposite slope and then traversed round to the north more or less on a contour above the head of a valley, until a slight drop went down to the creek at its head. Crossing this, we climbed up the wide snow glade that is so prominent from the top of Dicky Cooper's Bogong, immediately below the Ghost. The top of this glade is a wide snow saddle at 5850 feet between two humps, and this continues as a pass for about 400 yards, and then runs down into the head of Milk Creek. To the left of the pass is the Ghost, just a low hump 125 feet above the saddle. We reached this at 11.30 a.m., and took several compass bearings which confirmed that we were on the Ghost, for it was such a comparatively insignificant top that we were for a moment in doubt. The Ghost is a twin-humped mountain; we ran down to the saddle between and then up to the western top, 5900 feet, at 11.50 a.m. All the western side was bare of snow, so we left our ski and walked down to

the edge and found ourselves on a precipitous rocky slope immediately above the Valentine Falls, whose head we could just see. It was quite obvious that we could ski from the top of the Ghost down to Milk Creek, ford the Valentine where the two creeks meet, climb up along the opposite ridge, and then, it would seem, ski down the other face of it and out to Rocky Plains Creek.

We left the Ghost at 12.55 p.m., and had a glorious run on spring snow down to Milk Creek, which ended with a non-stop sweep over a wide snow-bridge across the Valentine and up the other side. A hard bit of crusty traverse then led up on to the ridge, 5550 feet. Our next section was "blind," for we were on the top of a narrow ridge running south to the Falls, and the western edge was fringed with snow-gum suckers. We finally turned right over the edge, but had a hard bit of bush-whacking before we hit the open glade that led to the foot. On our return we found, by climbing right up it, that we could have hit this glade from the top of the ridge, so to mark the turn-off for future parties we made a stone cairn on a big rock on top. To hit the glade, when ski-ing south along the ridge after climbing up from crossing the Valentine, drop over between an isolated, almost branchless dead gum and our cairn, and you will run into the head of the glade. This was the most glorious 625-foot natural slalom I have ever seen, with bushes dotting it, and ending in a big schuss that carried us right out over the flat to Rocky Plains Creek, immediately above its junction with the Valentine. On turning round to look back, we found ourselves right under the falls, a 200-foot cascade falling in two drops between high purple cliffs. Time, 1.40 p.m.; altitude, 4850 feet.

The snow was very patchy down here, and we had to carry ski for about fifty yards to the edge of Rocky Plains Creek just above its junction with the Grey Mare Creek. We had seen from the Ghost that the route up the northern side of the Grey Mare Creek was ski-able right to the hut, which was clearly visible; so we put on ski and crossed Rocky Plains Creek with a bit of careful stick support. From the other bank it is not much more than an hour's going to reach the Grey Mare Hut.

So it may now be stated that the Grey Mare Hut can easily be

reached by an average party in six hours from White's, including a rest for lunch. We skied very slowly, and took plenty of time for compass bearings and incidental photography. This is also a safe route in all weathers, for all the tricky parts of it lie below cloud level in average bad weather, and, in any case, once White's Saddle is reached, the fence can be followed right to the junction of Milk Creek and the Valentine. Even if cloud were down to this altitude, by cutting straight up over the ridge, some 50 feet only, on the same bearing, and descending the far side, one would automatically hit Rocky Plains Creek well below the cloud, and be able to identify the Grey Mare Creek junction. By following the crest of the ridge to the south, one would come to our cairn marking the best descent.

On our return that afternoon we thought we would climb up the Kerries so as to get a run down on to White's Saddle, but this proved a bad mistake. We got into a maze of valleys and ridges and plateaux at all angles, and had a perpetual up and down trip, with hardly any downhill running, and finally had to get on to the slopes of Gungartan in order to get any run at all. This area of country, round at the back of Mawson's, is very muddling, and should be carefully avoided except in fine weather. Normally, on going from the Grey Mare to White's, one would follow the Grey Mare Creek to its junction with Rocky Plains Creek, cross there, go south along the left bank to the flat where the Valentine runs in, and then strike up our slalom gully to the cairn on the ridge. Dropping down some 50 feet off the ridge to the Valentine (now above the Falls), follow it north to the junction of Milk Creek, and just across this on its northern bank is the fence that runs to White's.

Next day we decided to return to the Perisher. Leaving White's at 8.15 a.m., we climbed up on to the range, where a high wind and sweeping cloud enveloped us. We took a compass bearing on Consett Stephen Pass, which practically coincided with the fence, so we followed this until it turned away to the east; we followed our bearing, and sure enough landed up on the Pass, just below the clouds, at 9.50 a.m. The valley of the Snowy was in the sun, and we had the most glorious run down the Guthega, fine open ski-ing all the way to and fro across the creek, and reached the Snowy at 10.20

a.m., 5200 feet. It was a very easy descent, and so pleasant that we had not hurried. We crossed the Snowy about 200 yards above Blue Cow Creek, and then skied up the ridge above the latter's southern bank. By following this ridge up to where it runs out into a flat by Farm Creek and then up the creek, is the direct line to Betts; we crossed Farm Creek and followed its eastern branch up to the Pass between the Perisher and the Back Perisher. From here an 800-foot run took us to the Perisher Hut at 12.30 p.m., a very easy and peaceful 4½ hours' going, blizzard and all, from White's. This strikes me as being by far the easiest and most sheltered route from Betts or the Chalet to White's, namely, up the Guthega, for the Snowy can be crossed at Pound's and followed down to the Guthega, which can then be climbed in shelter to Consett Stephen Pass. By striking almost due north from here one is bound to hit the fence and then follow it to White's. This route avoids all the crust and exposure of Tate East Ridge, and the very muddling area between its head and Consett Stephen Pass.

#### **The Thredbo Run**

Mrs. Wyatt, in the 1944 Year Book, page 28, described the fine run we had from Betts down into the Thredbo for 2250 feet. Several people said that last winter was so exceptional that that was the only reason this run was possible. This winter, a bad snow winter, and after two further heavy thaws, Len Green and my wife and I did it again as a check. We got 1250 feet of superb running down to the edge of the tall timber, which, I think, conclusively proves that these Thredbo slopes are well worth while in all seasons for long descents on days when the main range is not skiable. I believe Ted Moloney and Alec Richards did it again the first week in September, and still found it good. (We report bare patches in places, and rapidly disappearing snow.—Eds.)

#### **A New Run off the Blue Cow**

The Blue Cow is really one of the best ski trips close to Betts or the hotel. In the last Year Book Alec Richards described our run off it down to the Snowy, and this year I explored the south-eastern slopes from the Perisher Hut. It is a very easy climb from the Perisher, first an 800-foot ascent on to the Back Perisher, and then an undulating trip with a few good

schusses across to the foot of the last climb. From the summit of the Blue Cow we ran eastwards across to the ridge of rocks, round the left-hand side of them and behind them until we could look down into Perisher Creek. All this face of the Blue Cow has the most lovely wide open slopes, with a few scattered dead snow gums, and the obvious run is down to a flat beside the Creek. We had a really superb run of 1200 feet non-stop down to the flat, with one short belt of open wood-running about 500 feet above the last slope. We then climbed up Perisher Creek back to the Perisher Plain, an ascent of about 400 feet in a mile and a half or so, coming out just below the last rise up to Piper's Gap.

This would be an excellent run from Smiggin's, as it would only mean going up to Piper's Gap, punting down Perisher Creek to the foot of the Blue Cow, and then an even climb of 1200 feet to the summit, with all its superb view of the Tate end of the Main Range. It would also be a pleasant way of going from Smiggin's to Pound's, and give the maximum of running.

#### **A New Run off Tate East Ridge**

The best downhill running I have yet struck around Pound's, under average weather and snow, is from the rocks at the top end of Tate East Ridge straight down to the junction of the Snowy and the Guthega, to a point about 200 yards above the junction. It starts with a long gentle schuss into the snow gums, which are very open and full of glorious glades, and then leads to complete Arlberg-like open slopes of about 25 degrees for the rest of the way. These slopes are very sheltered from most winds, and from the sun, and thus hold better snow than the slopes of Twynam. The descent is about 1100 feet non-stop, and the return trip to Pound's just an easy traverse alongside the Snowy, whichever side one prefers, for about a mile.

We did this run twice the same afternoon, the second time right from the summit of Tate, but it is not worth while going beyond the top of the East Ridge, as the run back to it from Tate is one very long and dull right-hand traverse.

This run would make a superb short racecourse, and also a fine test-course.