

# Tasmanian Section

## Editorial Notes

**T**O many of us ski-ing in 1940 will be merely a memory. This, however, makes the recording of last season's happenings doubly worth while. Skiers who are to spend much of 1940 below ground level will hope that 1941 will find them again on the mountains.

The 1939 season in Tasmania was fair—in the latter part of the season quite good. With regard to the total number who used ski, all records were easily broken. On Mount Wellington in particular the snow was literally worn away.

In competitive ski-ing the season was notable for two very pleasing features. One was the successful holding of a championship meeting at which representatives from five clubs competed. The other was the excellent showing of the State team at Mount Buller. The performances of Von See in coming fifth in both the Downhill and Slalom, and of Mills in attaining the same place in the Langlauf show that henceforward Tasmanians must be reckoned with as serious competitors for the National Titles.

## Leonard Tasker Branagen

**O**N the 3rd of September, 1939, Ben Lomond claimed its first victim, when Leonard Tasker Branagan, aged 23 years, met his death.

On the evening of Saturday, the 2nd of September, Leonard Branagan and a companion set out from the Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club Chalet (which is situated at the tree-line on the northern slopes of Ben Lomond at the height of 4,000 feet) to ski to the Summit Hut, a distance of a little over two miles. The whole of the mountain was deeply covered with snow and only the tops of the poles marking the route were showing. The weather was threatening, but, at the time of the departure of the two men, the night was comparatively clear. However, when they had covered about half the journey, a heavy snow storm set in and visibility was reduced to a few feet. The wind increased in force and

during the evening changed direction about 90 degrees. In the darkness and the wild blizzard conditions, the two men wandered off the snow-pole line, and, although they searched for it for several hours, were unable to re-locate it. Finally they decided to discontinue the search until morning and made themselves as comfortable as possible in the snow.

With the coming of daylight they set out again, but Leonard Branagan became progressively weaker and finally collapsed. His companion protected him from the elements as well as he could and, continuing alone, ultimately reached the Summit Hut, at the same time as a party from the Chalet. He returned at once with this party to where he had left his companion, only to find that he had died. On the following day, a party, comprising club members, two police officers and several residents of the Blessington district, made the trip to the top of the mountain and recovered the body under very difficult conditions.

Subsequent medical examination disclosed that death was not the result of exposure or exhaustion, but was caused by an internal haemorrhage induced by over-exertion. Medical opinion also indicated that death probably coincided with the collapse.

Leonard Branagan was an extremely active and enthusiastic member of the Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club, which he had joined about four years previously. He took part in all the club's activities from ski-racing to its social functions. When there was any hard work, such as hut building, track making or coal mining to be done, there was no member more willing or energetic than Leonard Branagan. His energy and enthusiasm, his thoughtfulness and desire to help, and—perhaps most of all—his quiet unassuming manner, earned for him the gratitude and esteem of all his fellow members.

## The Tasmanian Championships, 1939

THE fourth Tasmanian Championship meeting was held in National Park on August 28th and 29th, 1939. Due to the increasing interest in competitive skiing now being shown in Southern Tasmania, it was impossible to accommodate the meeting in the Ski Club of Tasmania's huts. Recourse had therefore to be made to the Government huts at Lake Fenton. While greatly reducing the amount of organisation required in running the meeting, this cut down the choice of racing slopes considerably. It is worth noting, however, that for the first time in Tasmania all the races were held within one mile of a made road—one race actually on it.

Open Slalom Championship.—This race was contested on a short course of 15 deg. prevailing gradient. The snow was new, slow and rather trappy, necessitating a close setting of flags to provide an adequate test. Thus the speeds were low, and the race as a whole lacked interest from a spectator's point of view. There were twelve competitors.

Results.—D. L. Anderson (S.C.T.): 51.2/5 sec., 46.3/5 sec., 1; D. W. Wilson (H.W.C.): 53 sec., 55.3/5 sec., 2; H. Johnston (W.S.C.): 1 min. 1.2/5 sec., 53. sec., 3; L. E. Luckman (H.W.C.): 1 min. 10.1/5 sec., 56.1/5 sec., 4; R. Tilley (N.T.A.C.): 1 min. 10 sec., 60 sec., 5; G. E. Stephenson (H.W.C.): 1 min. 14.4/5 sec., 57.4/5 sec., 6.

### Open Langlauf Championship.

This event was held on a circuit on the mountain road from Lake Fenton to Lake Dobson and return twice. The distance was nine miles, and soggy new snow showed the runners just how long nine miles can be.

Results.—R. Neville (Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club): 2 hrs. 8 min. 40 sec., 1; D. L. Anderson (Ski Club of Tasmania): 2 hrs. 11 min. 24 sec., 2; C. Stevenson (Hobart

Walking Club): 2 hrs. 13 min. 0 sec., 3; D. Wilson (Hobart Walking Club): 2 hrs. 16 min. 30 sec., 4; L. Luckman (Hobart Walking Club): 2 hrs. 20 min. 0 sec., 5; R. G. Hall (Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club): 2 hrs. 21 min. 50 sec., 6.

### Women's Championship Slalom.

Only three competitors started and the results were:—Miss J. Wilson, 4 min. 32.3/5 sec., 1; Miss N. Shaw, 5 min. 16 sec., 2; Miss R. Warren, 6 min. 18.3/5 sec., 3.

The results of the inter-club championship held in conjunction with the two open events were:—Hobart Walking Club, 200, 1; Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club, 172.7, 2; Ski Club of Tasmania, 172.4, 3.

## Club Reports

### NORTHERN TASMANIAN ALPINE CLUB.

**T**HE winter of 1939 provided the greatest amount of snow seen on Ben Lomond since the mountain was chosen as the headquarters of this club. Excellent ski-ing conditions were available through June and July. Then came heavy warm rains—most unusual for the season. However, during the remainder of August and September repeated heavy snowfalls occurred, and an average depth of about 10 ft. of snow covered the mountain. It was not until after Christmas that the ski-ing season could be regarded as ended.

A successful racing programme was completed by the club during week-ends in September and October. The results of the major events were as follows:—

Club Downhill Championship (ten starters): W. F. Mitchell, 1; R. Tilley, 2; H. L. von See, 3. Club Slalom Championship (ten starters): H. L. von See, 1; W. F. Mitchell, 2; A. Dumaresq, 3. Club Langlauf Championship (6 starters): E. D. Mills, 1; R. Neville, 2; H. L. von See, 3. Club Championship Jump (4 competitors): W. F. Mitchell, 1; H. L. von See, 2; R. Neville, 3.

The club sent a team to the Tasmanian Ski Championship meeting held last year at National Park, Southern Tasmania. Unfortunately, the team was rather sadly depleted owing to the absence of von See, Mitchell, Mills and Dumaresq, who, as a four-men team, were ski-ing for Tasmania in the Australian Ski Championships at Mount Buller. Incidentally, this club was delighted to learn that these four club members put up the best performance yet given by a Tasmanian team.

During August a club party, accompanied by the three Victorians, T. Haslam, J. Doyle and A. Hattersley visited "Waldheim" and obtained good ski-ing, but in atrocious weather, on Cradle Mountain.

It is with deep regret that we have to record the first fatality on Ben Lomond and the death of one of the club's most valued members—Leonard Branagan.

Following the death of Leonard Branagan, a new snowpole line was erected by the Government from the Chalet across the top of the mountain to the Summit Hut. This line consists of substantial poles, placed one chain apart and connected by a wire. It is believed that it will now be impossible for skiers to lose their way while following the line. As a further safety precaution, the club has improved and added to its first-aid equipment and has placed the control of these matters in the capable hands of Ralph Bray.

The accommodation on Ben Lomond will again be increased by a new room at the Summit Hut which will provide sleeping accommodation for twelve. The total accommodation on the mountain will thereby be increased to about sixty.

It is also anticipated that the Government will shortly commence work on the construction of the necessary mountain road.

After the Annual Dinner on 30th October and presentation of trophies, Mr. E. D. Mills screened several films in colour. It is regretted that, owing to his departure overseas with the A.I.F., their producer will not have an opportunity of adding to them during the coming season.

Reginald G. Hall, Honorary Secretary.

### SKI CLUB OF TASMANIA.

**T**HE year 1939 has not been a good one for us. While membership actually increased slightly, club activities generally were at the lowest level for some years, despite snow conditions, which were fair throughout and good towards the end of the season. Part of the reason for this lies in the disorganisation caused by the war and in the

facilities given by the Lake Dobson road for Sunday ski-ing, which renders the use of our huts unnecessary. Even allowing for these things, however, the apparently declining interest of members is most disappointing.

We wish to extend congratulations to the Hobart Walking Club for their well-merited win in the Tasmanian Club Championship. Their success seems to have been due to the possession of members who are foolish enough to enter in races which they have no chance of winning.

#### HOBART WALKING CLUB, 1939-40.

**M**ANY week-ends last season were spent at the Lake Fenton Huts and several day trips were made to this area for practice. On the whole, quite good snow conditions prevailed, but the weather was far from ideal, as almost incessant wind, rain and sleet accompanied each snowfall. It was under these conditions that the State Championships were held.

This year, the second in which the club had competed, we were successful in winning the inter-club contest with N.T.A.C. second, S.C.T. third.

During the year the club has built its own ski hut on Mount Rufus (See Ski Year Book, 1939, for map and letterpress). The hut is at an altitude of 3,800 ft. and is about two hours' climb from Lake St. Clair. The erection of this hut was only made possible by the unbounded energy and enthusiasm of members who transported the building material on their backs, up the four miles of track to the hut site. The hut has made accessible some of the best snowfields in Southern Tasmania and was used extensively during the season.

#### WELLINGTON SKI CLUB.

**T**HE 1939 ski-ing season was a successful one for the Wellington Ski Club, which was formed two years ago. Membership reached its highest level and general interest was maintained.

Snow conditions on Mount Wellington were far from good, but full use was made of all available snow. Parties of members made frequent trips to Mount Mawson, where the experience gained on Mount Wellington was well tested. An interesting feature was the entry of a club team for the 1939 Championships which brought the number of competing teams to five, a record number for Tasmania.

Early in the year a hut was commenced on Mount Wellington which, although not completed, found its value on days when ski-ing conditions were bad. Before the commencement of the 1940 season it is hoped that the hut will be lined.

## 1940 Racing Programme

#### NEW SOUTH WALES.

Provisional Dates.	Organising Body.	Event.	Place.
June 29 to July 6	Southern Alps S.C.	Club Championships	The Hotel
July 6 to 19	Ski Club of Australia	Pauss Cup (Club Championships)	The Chalet
	" "	Intermediate Events (Allen Cup and Casey Cup)	" "
	" "	Adams Cup (Women's Championship)—(a) Downhill, (b) Slalom	" "