

The Tasmanian Championships, 1947

G. Chisholm (Victoria)

THE 1947 Tasmanian and Inter-Club events were held on Mount Mawson in the National Park. This snowfield is in the south of the State, some 60 miles from Hobart. The road from Hobart follows the picturesque Derwent River Valley through New Norfolk and similar beauty spots in this fertile area. The neatly laid out orchards and hop fields make this as pleasant an approach as anywhere in Australia.

The road ends at Lake Dobson 3400 ft., and if you are lucky enough to find it clear of snow it is a fast trip from Hobart. However, during and after heavy snowfalls, you may only get within three or four miles of Lake Dobson.

The four government huts are situated a few hundred yards from the end of the road, and are known as Lake Dobson huts. They are a good class of hut, being all timber construction, with accommodation for fifty persons. They are known individually as "Telopea," "Fagus," "Eucalypt" and "Pandanni." All through this lovely area you find names that are both strange and new, with a ring that appeals to you immediately, and as they and their glorious surroundings are opened to you, it is with a determined "I'll be back" feeling that you finally leave.

During the Championship Meeting, those at these huts were catered for by a cook and his assistant. All these arrangements, and others you will notice later were arranged by the Southern Section of the Tasmanian Ski Council, who had charge of this meeting. All those involved deserve high praise for the capable manner in which they carried out their duties.

At the other end of Lake Dobson, is the Walking Club Hut and a half mile further on is the Alpine Club Hut on the shores of Eagle Tarn. There are also well-built and well appointed huts.

All these huts are at the foot of Mount Mawson, which rises a 1000 ft. above them in a little over half a mile. This is the only disadvantage of the low-level huts, as those living in them have this stiff climb each morning before reaching the good skiing slopes, and the snow is not often good enough to get a good run home. For competitors in race events it is very trying, es-

pecially as there is very little shelter on Mawson, and a picnic lunch is not fun for long in bad weather, and we had that!

The University Hut is on the tree line, at the top of this climb. It is the smallest hut, but not because of lack of energy on the part of the club members, as everything of, and in it, was carried there on the backs of these snow slaves. All these huts were connected by field telephone, which proved highly efficient, and well-worth the trouble of laying the lines in the deep soft snow on this heavily wooded slope.

As the Meeting was timed for a rather short period, an attempt was made to try and get some events started the first morning, although the weather, as at other Australian and New Zealand Meetings in 1947, kept getting worse, even when this seemed impossible. However, the Slalom was held on a comparatively sheltered slope known as the Golden Stairs. This slope has some 400 vertical feet, and an average of 35 deg. This seems hard to believe until one learns that it was cleared by an avalanche, and can see the way trees and bushes have been knocked about by other large falls of snow in the vicinity. On many slopes the Slalom set would have been quite open, as gates were set wide apart and pairs well separated. Here, it proved too tight, owing to the steepness of the slope which was underestimated during setting.

Naylor gave a very polished display to gain first place. He showed sound judgment in not rushing things, which proved the downfall of most of the others.

Results of two runs were as follows:—

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. R. Naylor | 2 mins. 11 secs. |
| 2. D. Wilson | 2 mins. 31 4-5 secs. |
| 3. R. Tilley | 2 mins. 33 1-5 secs. |

The blizzard was so bad, many competitors did not start, and officials who stayed at their post, had to be thawed out with the help of heating fluid. The Women's Slalom was held under conditions almost as bad, but on a less severe slope. The women's standard is below the men's, although several of them only need a little more racing on steeper slopes, and a little coaching from some of the more experienced skiers, to improve very rapidly.



Lower
Portion of
Downhill

Results of the two runs in the Slalom were:—

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. M. Gibson | 1 min. 29 secs. |
| 2. N. Hunter | 1 min. 52 secs. |
| 3. E. Masterman | 1 min. 55 sec.s |

As things were now getting wet in addition to everything else, the meeting was postponed for one month.

The first week-end in October found a lot of snow gone from the exposed north faces and lower slopes, but tarns were still frozen, and Golden Stairs had a greater depth of snow than in August.

On a glorious day the Downhill was set, a mile from the University Hut. The course started from the top of the Rodway Range running down onto Tarn Shelf. This gave about 400 vertical feet and it was decided to hold the race in two sections, but, owing to an accident to Dave Wilson this was reduced to one run. The snow was wet and sticky, and with more rocks putting in their appearance than a month previously, it was with trepidation that the race was declared on, even with two controls. Wilson, the first competitor, just mis-cued slightly at the last control, and not regaining his balance, fell near the finish and met a rock. When the race was again started some hours later, a newcomer to racing, 16-year-old Mark Wolfhagen, won the event with a very smooth run, and the fact that he did not once falter in this tricky snow, gave him the race.

Results were as follows:—

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. M. Wolfhagen | 2 mins. 24.3-5 secs. |
| 2. H. von See | 2 mins. 25.1-5 secs. |
| 3. R. Tilley | 2 mins. 26.2-5 secs. |

Women's Downhill.—The Women's Downhill was run on a section of the men's course and in similarly poor snow. After many warnings against a straight schuss, they all ran the course nicely under control.

Results were as follows:—

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. M. Gibson | 44 secs. |
| 2. E. Masterman | 47 secs. |
| 3. N. Wolfhagen | 59 secs. |

Making the most of the good weather it was decided to hold the jump the same day. Owing to the lack of snow a jumping hill was hard to find. Undeterred, and despite an acute shortage of judges a jump was built with snow that would not pack and an out-run on to possibly frozen Mackenzie Tarn.

Tilly gave the best display to win three confident jumps of 12 and 11 metres.

Results were as follows:—

- | | Pts. |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. R. Tilley | 11 & 12m. 142.2 |
| 2. M. Wolfhagen | 9 & 9m. 125.4 |
| 3. R. Naylor | 9 & 11m. 120.4 |

The Tarn proved to be sufficiently frozen, but was it wet when a jumper fell on the out-run!

The Langlauf was held next day in our familiar August cloak of near-blizzard. However, there were still breaks in the clouds sufficient to get glimpses of the surrounding country. The course started along the Tarn Shelf, which, as the name implies is a shelf or ledge on the mountain side, varying in width from 100 yards to half a mile. The Rodway Range rises steeply 500-600 ft. on one side and there are mighty rock precipices falling some 700 ft. to Lake Seal on the other.

Along the four miles this shelf extends is a series of large and small tarns and even a lake or two, all still frozen and enclosed by slopes wooded with Pencil and gnarled and twisted King Billy Pines.

The course ran over seven of these tarns to Lake Newdigate, where, in a hut of the same name the far control was stationed. This is a rest hut for the Ski Club of Tasmania when they are en route to their headquarters at Twilight Farm, a mile further on. Twilight Farm is also provisioned these days by manpower. The energy and enthusiasm you meet on every hand among those who go to the mountains on this small island, is, I am sure, in export quantities.

After turning Newdigate Hut the Shelf was left behind and the long climb to the top of the Rodway Range begun. Once the summit was gained this was followed to the finish. The wild and unexplored country seen through frames of broken mist from this section bewilders description. Unexplored because of the dense rain forests which cover its rugged ranges and peaks, King William Range and beautifully formed Frenchman's Cap out towards the West Coast have a particularly "come hither" appeal. May be, next trip!

On along the top the racers fought the awakening blizzard, which made the track hard to follow, but eventually they did arrive at the finish in the following order:—

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. R. Tilley | 1hr. .05mins. |
| 2. R. Naylor | 1hr. 10mins. |
| 3. E. Mills | 1hr. 13mins. |

The Tasmanian standard of ski-ing is im-

proving in leaps and bounds. Naylor and Tilley with only hard practice and self-criticism plus a fleeting trip to the mainland to spur them on have shown enormous improvement over the last twelve months. M. Wolfhagen, the youngest of them all, will be a three-event, and when age permits, a four-event man to watch in the near future. D. Wilson had bad luck this year, but has also improved. These boys are taking the place of the Tasmanians we know so well from past years and should carry on the high standards and traditions set by their earlier State representatives.

While the runs do not have the length we enjoy on the Mainland there is so much beauty in the National Park that it is one place where a skier can really enjoy a touring holiday. The snow generally is of a soft wet, nature, and tests your technique, but, as usual, with snow like this, it is a lot easier to handle on the steeper slopes, and these are in plentiful supply and are crying out to be used. The rocks that abound everywhere rather like Buffalo, are something of a mental hazard, and it takes a while to become accustomed to them.

Thus ended a most enjoyable trip for me, a newcomer to these regions. The congenial hut life, the spontaneous welcome that is so flattering, the new and world famous scenery, all make a climax in snowland enjoyment. I can recommend the dose to anyone on the mainland in need of a change of snow scenery among a community of snow folk who will do their utmost to help you have a good time. I am certainly going back.

The Northern Tasmanian Alpine Club

ONE of the most notable features of the 1947 winter on Ben Lomond was the excellent week-end weather which prevailed throughout the season from June to October. The snowfalls, most of which occurred during mid-week periods, provided plenty of snow of a generally good quality and the exceptionally good week-end weather enabled members who visit the mountain from Friday evening to Sunday to have more ski-ing hours than are obtainable in most seasons.

When the first snow fell, Club members were working against time to finish further



Club Hut on Ben Lomond

F. Smithies

additions to the Summit Hut. The full programme was not completed, but a new men's bunk room accommodating fifteen was made ready for use, a work room was sufficiently advanced to be used for storage purposes, a new internal water supply was provided, and, finally, despite the raging of a blizzard, a new roof window was fitted in the Women's room. The work is being continued this year and it is hoped that, in addition to completing what has already been commenced, the Summit Hut will this winter have added to it a new food and fuel store and a motor house containing an electric lighting plant.

The Club conducted a very successful series of competitive events during the season, the results being:—

Jump Championship: R. R. Vial 1, E. D. Mills, H. L. von See 3. **Langlauf Championship:** E. D. Mills 1, R. F. Tilley 2. **Slalom Championship:** R. F. Tilley 1, R. W. Naylor 2, H. L. von See 3. **Downhill Championship:** R. W. Naylor 1, H. L. von See 2, S. R. Tilley Jr. 3. **Slalom Handicap:** T. Giles, S. Turnbull 2, S. Anderson 3. **Downhill Handicap:** S. V. Tilley 1, R. R. Vial 2, C. French 3. **Women's Downhill and Slalom:** A. Godfrey-Smith 1, D. Rolph 2. **Novice Race:** C. French 1, D. Smithies 2.

In the Tasmanian Championships held at National Park, Club members obtained good

results and the Club Team succeeded in retaining the Inter-Club Trophy. Two of the Club's members, R. W. Naylor and R. F. Tilley, competed in the Victorian Open Championships at Mt. Hotham very successfully; in the Slalom Naylor was first and Tilley fifth, in the Downhill Tilley second and Naylor third and in the combined result Naylor was second and Tilley third.

In 1947 Ben Lomond was proclaimed a Reserve under the Scenery Preservation Act and the Board appointed to administer the area is taking a great interest in the future development of the mountain. It is expected that public accommodation for both day visitors and those making longer visits will soon be available at the tree-line and that the long hoped for road might soon be provided. The building of two or three miles of road required will bring ski-ing on Ben Lomond within 1½ hours of Launceston and 4 hours of Melbourne and will make possible the development that this fine snow-field deserves.

Office Bearers 1947-48.

President: C. K. Stackhouse. Vice-Presidents: E. D. Mills and F. Smithies. Honorary Secretary: R. G. Hall. Honorary Treasurer: Stanley V. Tilley. Committee: G. C. McKinlay, W. F. Mitchell, E. H. Smith, H. L. von See and R. Vial.

The Alpine Club of Southern Tasmania

THE close of the 1947 season completed the second year of the Club's existence, in which the Club's position has been further consolidated by the hard work and enthusiasm of members. Continued work on the Club's chalet at Eagle Tarn has increased comfort, while the financial position has improved considerably.

Snow conditions in the Mt. Field Ranges were excellent. The Club chalet was used to capacity during the winter and members made many ski tours among the snow mountains of the National Park.

The Club team competed in the Tasmanian Ski Championships at Mt. Mawson, but were outclassed. Efforts will be made to build up a younger team for future events.

In December, when the snow had receded to higher elevations members turned their attentions to cutting a ski track up the



Newdigate Pass

P. Canning

heavily wooded east face of Mt. Mawson from Eagle Tarn 3600 feet to the University Club Hut at 4100 feet on Mt. Mawson. This involves a considerable amount of work as it is necessary to clear a path through dense bush and huge boulders. When completed the track will rise 500 vertical feet in about half a mile. This track will be an amenity that will be appreciated by all ski runners as the existing route to Mt. Mawson up the "Golden Stairs" can be most un-

pleasant under icy conditions, not to mention the danger of hitting a tree when descending. Members look forward to fast and safe wood-running this coming season, now that the hazards are being removed.

Members are grateful to Mr. Fred Wilkins, one of the leading professional ski instructors in Eastern Canada, for tuition during the year which has resulted in a considerable improvement in the standard of ski-ing.