

Victorian Section

*Prepared by the Ski Club of Victoria Editorial Staff.
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The Ski Club of Victoria (Founded 1924.)

Incorporating the Melbourne University Ski Club,
Wangaratta Ski Club, Warburton Ski Club.

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Bogong High Plain, Mt. Bogong, Tawonga

A TRAVERSE OF VICTORIA'S HIGHEST PEAK.

By W. Bertram.

The Bogong High Plains have been visited many times by members of the Ski Club of Victoria during the past six or seven years, but no new way of approach to this wonderful ski-ing area has been explored for some years. Therefore, on a trip there in August last year, our party decided to leave the Plains by a new way.

The party, consisting of Messrs. E. C. Robinson, J. K. Tulloh and the writer, after a stay at Mt. Hotham for the National Championship, proceeded by easy stages over the Plains to Kelly's Hut, where supplies were to be picked up. From Kelly's it was proposed to go out over Mt. Nelson and Timm's Lookout, thence down to the Big River and, after ascending Mt. Bogong, down the "Staircase" to Mountain Creek and so into Tawonga.

Our original intention was to leave Kelly's about 4 a.m., breakfast at the Big River, and climb Bogong the same day, camping at a hut about two miles east of the cairn (a camping site of a walking trip the previous Easter). Then, if weather conditions permitted, we were to spend several days on Bogong.

During our trip across the Plains the weather had been gradually improving and the barometer rising, and we packed ready for a start on Tuesday, the 16th August, our packs averaging a good 60 lb. each. On waking at about 3.30 a.m., the weather was found to be very foggy and snowing, so we returned to bed, disappointed that a start could not be made. Later in the morning, however, the weather cleared, and we decided to leave about 11 a.m. and camp for the night down by the Big River.

The trip to the Big River was pleasant as far as Timm's Lookout. There a heavy fog was encountered, and a sharp eye had to be kept on the Spur. Descending into the timber, the fog thinned out, and, but for our packs, very pleasant running would have been experienced. The last 1,000 feet down to the river was on the northern side of the Spur, consequently there was very little snow, and the ski had to be carried. About 18 inches of snow still lay on the river flats. A camp was soon made on the only bare patch available, a good meal partaken of, and, as a clear sky with a full moon augured well for the morrow, we turned in, happy. The night passed slowly, as the earth was still cold, and, with a frosty night, our sleeping bags were not quite sufficient to keep us warm.

Wednesday dawned a beautiful day, with a clear sky and a slight south breeze. After a good breakfast the river was waded (a very cold job) and the ascent begun. The climb being on the southern side of the Spur, snow was encountered as soon as we crossed the river, and crampons were necessary on the icy, steep slope which extended for 600 feet upwards to the crown of the Spur. Once on the crown, the going was much easier; but, as we climbed higher, the Spur again sharpened and great care



W. Bertram.

Mt. Bogong, from the Bogong High Plain Approach.

was necessary to avoid side-slips, which might have precipitated us down for thousands of feet.

The Cairn of Bogong was reached at 3.15 p.m., the climb having taken five hours, which was one hour longer than that taken by the only previous party to visit Bogong in winter. However, as that party travelled light and we had heavy packs, our time was comparatively good. From the summit wonderful views were obtained of the entire Bogong High Plains and Mt Buffalo, whilst away to the east the wonderful Kosciusko country stood dazzling white above the sombre green of the intervening bush. During the ascent the weather had been slowly changing. The sky was again overcast, and, after about half an hour on top, we were once more engulfed in fog. After a hurried consultation it was decided to abandon the trip down to the Hut, as in the fog it would have been very difficult to locate and, not being built for winter ski-farers, might even have been buried beneath the snow.

With the first lifting of the fog a dash was made for the "Staircase," as this Spur is extremely hard to find in bad weather. Once on the Spur, we soon descended out of the fog, and, after some uncomfortable ski-ing among very close timber, the snowline was reached just before sunset. The track was quickly picked up and followed down towards the creek, but was, unfortunately, lost just at dark. We waited until the rising of the moon, its light facilitating our search for the track. Eventually, at 9.30 p.m., we arrived at the stockyard on Mountain Creek, where we had our first square meal since breakfast,

and, after a good night's rest, walked the last eight miles to Tawonga Hotel. While lying in our sleeping bags during the morning we had decided to celebrate by ordering a roast chicken at the hotel for dinner that night; but, after the previous hard day, we were somewhat slow, and the hotel was not reached until 5.30 p.m.—too late for any chicken to be prepared.

From what was seen of Mt. Bogong during this trip, and what I saw of it the previous Easter, there is no doubt that there is excellent ski-ing on the Mount, especially to the east of the summit, out towards Mt. Wills—a section which deserves exploration during the winter.

The disadvantage of Bogong lies in its inaccessibility. The Plains route is very long, and necessitates camping out en route. Then, the "Staircase," which is very steep and sharp, means going over the top to reach the good ski-ing beyond.

It is hoped that some ambitious members will visit this part before long and completely explore the possibilities; but before doing so I would consider a trip there during the summer months, particularly as Bogong has no well known landmarks or snow pole lines to follow.

WOMEN AND RACING.

By Kathleen Moore.

Each year ski racing is claiming more and more attention and interest. Now that inter-State events are a fixture, this branch of ski-ing will undoubtedly go ahead. It is most important that it should progress, because it is by racing that skiers really improve. Australia is young in the sport and has a long way to go before the Continental standard is reached. To attain this standard, we must race and have difficult courses.

It is disappointing to see so few women enter for the races, and also to see so little improvement in the standard of women's ski-ing in the last few years. I would like to impress upon women skiers that racing *will* improve one's ski-ing. One must race as a beginner and do difficult things from the start. Almost my first race was down the wooded slopes outside Lenzerheide in 1928. There were 59 entries and, although I was terrified at first, I thoroughly enjoyed sorting myself out from the other bodies on the way down and beating some of them to the next tree.

It is amazing when one looks back on a race and realises the slopes that have been taken straight; those which one would never attempt whilst touring. In Slalom, also, the extreme concentration makes many a turn effective which on our tours through the woolly-butts would usually end in a "gesclimozzel."

I know that, just as riding in a Point-to-Point over fences, at a faster pace than one has ever taken them before, gives an added confidence in oneself and greater command over one's horses, so does racing promote confidence and more command of the ski, thereby making tours much more pleasurable.

During the 1933 season we hope to send a ladies' team to Kosciusko. To do this we want more keenness on racing among women skiers than has been the case in previous years.