

Victorian Section

Editorial Notes:

War-time exigencies greatly reduced the number of skiers and restricted the opportunities for skiing by those still here in 1941, so no apology is made for the smaller number of contributions to this section of the Year Book.

Not only were many of our prominent skiers away, but those remaining were working under pressure, with leisure time somewhat curtailed. There were fewer ski-ing adventures to report; and fewer with time to relate even what did occur.

This was noticed too in the photographic field, when only forty-two entries were received for the annual S.C.V. Competition.

Snow was ample, in contrast with the previous season's "drought". Plenty of snow covered Buller, Hotham and, of course, Bogong. Buffalo had a few bare spots at times, but complaints were few. Soft stuff and bad weather marred the competition fortnight at Hotham, causing many spills.

No senior men's racing is taking place during the War, but intermediate and women's events were scheduled as usual. However, two of the latter were abandoned because of adverse weather and snow conditions. Club meetings were well attended considering the circumstances, and ski-ing films shown were very good and very popular. Most films were from overseas and New South Wales.

Landscape section of the photo competition was won by Malcolm McColl's oversea shot—"Alpine Hut Scene". Sydney-sider Keith McClure carried off the general section with "Canopy of Night", an unusual night study of the lights and shadows cast by Buller's Chalet windows. Two films were made at Buffalo and Hotham in August and September—one by Roy Driver for Cinesound and one by Bert Fairfoul, both on behalf of Victorian Railways publicity. Previews have received excellent reports.

Transport, or lack thereof, was the bug-bear of week-end trips, although quite a few managed to scrape up or pool enough petrol ration tickets to visit Buller. To meet the situation, the S.C.V. arranged for a producer-gas parlour coach to take about thirty up on one trip. Leaving town tea-less at 7 p.m. Friday, the party took 11 hours to cover the 150 miles, arriving a little before breakfast, worn out with lack of sleep. Normal time is about four to five hours. Return journey proved worse, for the machine (an old Interstate one, with a 250,000 mile history) passed out at Yea. A substitute was sent from Melbourne after lengthy attempts to arouse the city men of the car company from their beds; and after 14 hours on the road the still sleepless party reached town at 8.10 a.m. Monday, just in time to go to work. Warrant Begg was a tower of strength to flagging spirits on the trip—which, incidentally, was not repeated, although a better vehicle may be available next time.

Killing two birds with one stone, the S.C.V. Hut Appeal raffle raised £334 net. It had the blessing of the powers-that-be, because proceeds are invested in War Savings Certificates for the duration, helping the War effort now and providing funds for huts later. With donations, pennies-from-heaven (Members' loose change thrown into the kitty at meetings) and sundries, the fund has now passed £560 and is still going up. Huts are expected to grow in popularity, and the Hut Committee is anxious to add to its well-managed but sparse facilities to meet the demand.

Shortages of ski-ing gear are not as great as might have been expected. Some second-hand material has been changing hands. New supplies of some lines have disappeared for the duration, but some stocks are held in store. No more boots will be made. The same applies to skiers' socks and mittens. Screws for steel edges are virtually out.

Alpina bindings are reported to be minus. Melbourne shelves still carry some stocks of ski, steel edges, wax, Kandahar bindings and cables. More ample stocks are held of ski-tips for repairs, toe-plates for boots, sticks both steel and cane, goggles, jackets and caps.

Bookings reached capacity at snow resorts in the peak weeks of 1941, but over the whole season they were probably down considerably. The season ended early, partly because lack of transport resulted in absence of guests.

Prospects for 1942 have been doubtful, but hopes are held as the season draws nearer that there will be ski-ing this year. Hotham is taking bookings; Jim

Bradshaw remains at his meteorological post there. When Mr. and Mrs. Brown left Buller Chalet at the close of 1941 season, Mr. Hammet was appointed with a view to running a summer season. Absence of traffic, however, left him virtually caretaking, and the problem of staff shortage leaves the position obscure. The management hopes for a 1942 season.

Mount Buffalo is taking tentative bookings for the coming season, although at one stage it had been requisitioned by the authorities who planned to evacuate school children to there. That idea was abandoned when teachers feared that playing children might fall over the cliffs. Buffalo's popularity as an all-the-year resort is seen in last year's figures, when average daily attendance was 141 (capacity 184) over the whole twelve months to June 30th, 1941.

H. L. Kennedy will be acting superintendent of Victorian Railways Refreshment Services in the coming season, and therefore in charge of the Department controlling Hotham and Buffalo. Superintendent Bert Keown, who has done much for the comfort of skiers, has become Commonwealth Controller of Food Services for the duration.

Mine host of the Snowline Hotel at Harrierville, Cecil Barber, left at the end of the season, and after a short time as assistant manager at Scott's in the city, has gone into the A.I.F. Vic. Wraith supervised the Snowline for a while before taking an administrative job in the man-power department. Popular brother, Carl, awaits an Air Force call.

Derriek Stogdale, dynamic downhill national champion in 1939, is Victoria's best-known representative with the first A.I.F. Ski School in Syria. He is a Sergeant Instructor according to last reports at time of writing.

President Ted Tyler has gained promotion to Flight-Lieutenant in the Middle East. Pilot-Officer Alan Triggs ("Trigger") made the news cables recently in ferrying a Hudson across the Atlantic in almost record time against adverse weather. George Pither was decorated for a flight which accounted for an enemy sub.

Captain B. R. Vial received a D.S.O. for intelligence and liaison work in Libya and Greece. Mrs. Richard Gething (Mardi Gepp), is in line to be the first Australian woman ferry-pilot. It is understood that the job is flying 'planes from place to place in England.

Congratulations go to General Sir Thomas Blamey on his appointment to full charge in the Australian theatre of war under General MacArthur. Son T.R. is going to America on important work with General Smart.

Deeds of our skiers overseas are numerous, and too often surrounded with modesty. The Editors of the Year Book and "Schuss" fail to hear half as much as they would like to, and would appreciate having their attention drawn to the doings of the boys at all times, however great or trivial. A telephone call is all that is required.

We make this apology for our inability to chronicle at the present stage the many doings of members abroad. We hope to hear more of them, and unanimously wish them "Good Luck!"

Ivor Whittaker was reported missing on a flight in the Middle East on September 13th, 1941. Major and Air Intelligence Liaison Officer between the R.A.F. and A.I.F., Ike was one of the first lot to go abroad. A foundation member of the University Ski Club, he won the silver K. trophy in Switzerland in 1931, and in the same year served as a guest officer in an English regiment. He represented Victoria in ski contests.

Missing skiers include P./O. F. A. Bishop (R.A.F.), Lieut. J. L. Donaldson, F./O. J. Hamilton, Lieut. L. Kenny, Lieut. N. K. Payne, Sergt. Eric Nodrum, F./O. J. M. Pizzey, Gnr. L. Salmon. Prisoners of War include F./O. F. Eggleston, Gnr. L. Rolling, Capt. I. MacCormick, Lieut. T. O. Neuendorf. Killed include P./O. Ingoldby, Sgt. J. H. Rogerson (R.A.A.F.).

Committee of the S.C.V. for 1942:—President (away R.A.F.), E. E. Tyler; Acting President and Past President, A. W. Shands; Vice-President, H. Doughty; Secretary and Business Manager Year Book, H. K. Cartledge; Treasurer, Mrs. F. B. Loughhead; Chairman "Schuss" Sub-Committee, S. W. Flattely; "Schuss" Editor, Chairman Photo Sub-Committee and A.N.S.F. Delegate, R. D. McNabb; Chairman General Meeting's Committee, Dorothy Standish; General Meeting's Committee, E. Sayers; Editor Victorian Section Year Book, John Eddy; Chairman Social Committee, L. Smith; Chairman Technical Committee, Huts and Trips Committee, A.N.S.F. Delegate, M. McColl; Committee, W. J. Robertson.

Skiers and miners alike rubbed their eyes on April 4, 1941. Bill had landed down at Bairnsdale with two tons of quartz. It yielded 173 ounces of gold, and gold is worth £10/14/- an ounce. Bairnsdale School of Mines described it as the richest quartz they had ever seen. A few days later Spargo arrived at Flinders Street station. In the guard's van was a parcel of gold worth £1,700. Bairnsdale School of Mines had been worried about having it on the premises.

"I nearly cried with excitement," he admitted later. One of his first acts had been to cable a friend in England: "Struck it rich." Besieged by company promoters, Spargo turned down all offers, including one offering him £60,000 in cash and shares.

Best of all, Victorian Mines Department expert, A. L. Kenny, said the shoot of stone discovered by Spargo was a new line, further east than any of the other lines worked in the district. With only a short section of it opened up, ultimate values would depend on how it lived in length, width, depth and value.

Just beyond Mt. Loch, four miles from Hotham, the mine—5,000 feet up—was snow bound all winter. Summer saw skilled miners and other labor scarce; transport for food on the 20 mile mountain road up Hotham was hampered by petrol rationing. Nevertheless, Bill had several men on and some driving was done, but no more crushings had been reported up to March. A claim pegged by Jim Bradshaw, of the Chalet, is down in a gully and harder to get at. Spargo's mine, the Red Robin, is high up on the Machinery Spur. He has another claim called the One Alone, on which not much work has been done as yet. A four mile road along the Loch Spur from Hotham is planned at a cost of £1,000.

Asked if he would refund the money he had taken from skiers for board at the hostel, Bill laughed. Asked "What about a handsome donation to set up a chain of huts?" he said: "The gold is still in the ground yet."