

# Victorian Section

## EDITORIAL NOTES

HIGHLIGHTS of early 1943 were the all-too-brief visits to Melbourne of the S.C.V. President, Ted Tyler, and Australian Downhill Champion, Derrick Stogdale, after active service abroad. Ted Tyler was able to take the chair at a Committee Meeting. Derrick spent an evening with members of the Committee, recounting much of interest about the 1st Australian Ski Corps School of 1941-42 in Syria.

1st AUSTRALIAN SKI CORPS doings have been chronicled from time to time in the Year Book and Schuss; and war-time scarcity of labour, paper and space forbids duplication here. Derrick Stogdale's letters in Schuss have been warmly received and widely read; and when the days of military secrets are over, one of the first jobs must be to collect all the ski troop information, fill in any gaps, and publish a book setting out its history in full detail, together with photographs. This could also include an analysis, in the light of experience gained, of ways in which the arrangements of such a school could be improved and perfected.

Captain Tom Mitchell, before he went abroad wrote that a study of campaigns on the Dolomite front in World War I showed that the greatest difficulties in ski warfare were living conditions, supply and communications:—"The late Colonel Bilgeri of the Austrian Army, Hannes Schneider, and the late Helmut Kofler (who also fought with the Austrian Ski troops), all told me that in those four years of snow campaigns, especially in high country, it was a case of three days attending to the ravages of the weather to every one day's attention to the enemy. There were times when the opposing forces forgot each other and had to deal with the more urgent questions of blizzards, avalanches, rock falls, and snow drifts."

In the brief three-week schools of the Australian Corps in the Lebanons, there was, of course, no opportunity for rank and file troops to become really experienced snow-dwellers of this type. Alpine conditions naturally differ from those on the frozen steppes of Russia. Hence such mechanical aids as tanks and aero-sledges, depicted from time to time in press photographs of snow fighting, would have only limited application on steep slopes.

There seems to be little likelihood of anything resembling a pitched battle on the snow country within Australia, and, fortunately, little likelihood even for the need of reconnaissance or patrolling of flanks here, let alone intelligence duties, or raids. Rescue parties to succour crashed or stranded aircraft might be a possibility, however.

Among the anecdotes told by Derrick was how all sorts of people who had never seen snow in their lives applied for transfer to the Ski Corps—usually setting out their qualifications with some such claim as "Ski champion of North Queensland!" It was inevitable, of course, that there were relatively few Australians who were competent skiers, and that the school was, therefore, mainly concerned with teaching pupils to ski, rather than with advanced military manoeuvres. Against that, there was the advantage of having strong, healthy and well-disciplined pupils. It appears from this distance that it must have taken tact to work under the Army system of attaching men with the same rank as they held in quite other departments. For instance, to quote a hypothetical case—if a man was an officer in say, Ack-Ack, he would be an officer in a Ski Corps, although his ski-ing knowledge might be less than that of say a non-commissioned man. A book, or a collection of monographs from those who were there, would be a fitting addition to the contents of the Memorial Hut, when it is built.

NEW TURN. Amongst other interesting matters mentioned by Derrick Stogdale was a new turn he has been working on. He calls it the "S" turn, and has promised to let us hear more of it in due course. As far as pencil and paper can make it clear to someone who has never seen it, it appears to consist of ski-ing on the edge of one ski, which, because of its waist, pursues a slightly curved course. Derrick says it is useful for a man who is heavily laden on certain slopes and surfaces. Changing over to the other foot and ski-ing on its inside edge completes the "S." Strong ankles would seem to be a necessity.

BOOKED OUT is the answer given to dozens who wish to visit Buffalo or Hotham in the 1943 season. Not that there will be more visitors to the snow this season—there will be fewer. With staff shortage, Buffalo's capacity is greatly restricted, and many of the overflow have sought to go to Hotham.

BULLER CHALET'S destruction by fire on July 22nd, 1942, was the final chapter in the story of bad luck that dogged it. It was at the close of the 1940 season that Manager Helmut Kofler and his wife met their death on a timber haulage. Story of the fire and desolation have been printed in Schuss (August and October, 1942) so war-time economy prevents reiteration here, beyond the mere recording of the loss.

A FOG HORN is the latest adjunct to ski-ing at Mt. Hotham. Manager Jim Bradshaw had so much worry with parties become overdue in the fog, that almost

refused to leave Hotham for several weeks last season, that he determined something would have to be done about it. Skiers are interested to see whether or not the hills will distort the direction of sound; also whether anyone may be tempted to take a "short cut" over a cornice. Subject will be watched with interest.

Signs of relief went up when it was announced that some horses would be available to take skiers up to Hotham. The early snowfalls (the road was blocked twice before the middle of May) give promise of a good season.

ARGUMENTS are still going on as to whether 1942 saw greater snow volume than 1939. Photos have been compared; arguments raised as to how more fell, but the consistent wind blew it down into the valleys, and so forth. At all events, it was a splendid snow year. Ski-ing was even reported on drifts near Loch in January. November skiing was good on Hotham, and even possible on Buller. Bad, even foul, weather marked the S.C.V. and U.S.C. periods at Hotham. Racing, of course, is off for the duration.

PHOTOGRAPHS of good standard were submitted in the S.C.V. competition, won by Jack Yager with a figure standing sentinel on Loch looking at Feathertop. Naturally there were fewer photos taken than formerly; and with the scarcity of photographic materials, there will probably be another drop in the coming season. Many photographs worthy of reproduction in this Year Book have had to be held out for lack of space. Maybe after the war we can produce a volume including all the things, especially photographs, we should have liked to have printed.

TWENTY YEAR PLAN.—Already discussion has begun on the lines of a five-year, a ten-year, and a twenty-year plan to promote ski-ing. Mick Hull has set the ball rolling with an article in *Schuss* (May, 1943), amplifying ideas to which reference has already been made there and elsewhere. The objective is to take ski-ing out of its swaddling clothes and develop it to the point where we have whole villages in the mountains where we now have odd huts—just as wayside villages sprang up when the provision of facilities awakened the interest of the public.

After all, few people could swim a generation ago—now look at our beaches!

The five-year section would naturally be less ambitious; but what is needed is drive. Requisites include hotels, hostels, huts, water service, electricity, transport, tows, tuition, equipment, safety measures, publicity. Transport must be speeded up to bring our mountains close to the cities. Above all costs under all these headings must be brought down to within the reach of other than the privileged few. Increased scale of operations itself would bring about lower costs.

Notes are being collected on all these subjects to form the basis for the launching of a plan in the post-war reconstruction. Ideas and suggestions on the subject would be welcomed from all skiers for inclusion in the file, which is being got together by the S.C.V.

## Calling All Skiers

By Stan Flattely

From a total pre-war membership of 700 (half women), the S.C.V. is proud of its active service list of more than 160 members. Some have already made the supreme sacrifice; many have received decorations; each is doing his or her bit. Surely such service is worthy of permanent recognition by us and future skiers.

The S.C.V. Committee pondered on what form this recognition could take. Then came a bold suggestion. Why not a Club House? Make it something worth-while.—in the mountains—on the snowfields—a living monument to those who are fighting our battles. This must not be just another 'tin hut' but something to be proud of—comfortable accommodation, a big cheery living-room with traditional big log fireplace over which would be hung the Roll of Honour. A fitting place for skiers to gather and discuss the many thrilling experiences of those whose names are inscribed above.

This would be the headquarters of the S.C.V., built so that it could grow with the Club. The site must be carefully chosen—easy of access, no weary miles of pack-horse, not where only the young and super enthusiast can go, but where the raw novice can have the same chance as the expert. It must not be on an isolated mountain, catering only for the thrills of the racer or downhill expert, but in the heart of good touring country, with chains of smaller huts available, allowing day or extensive touring trips to be made in safety. At the same time, the site must be that ideal location where the novice can learn and the expert revel—with scope for late spring ski-ing and provision for summer activities. Is such perfection possible? The answer is Yes.

With typical enthusiasm, our Secretary got busy and devised means to finance the plan; and to him must go credit for its success to date. A big raffle opened the campaign. Valuable prizes were generously donated by business firms and by members. This brought in £340, which has been lent to the Government for the duration, interest free. Collections at Committee and General Meetings have provided a steady trickle of funds,

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# Alpine Place Names.

By M. Gepp

The names of many places in the Alps are so unusual and picturesque that they stir one's curiosity as to how they were given. Mount Blowhard, Pretty Valley and Granite Creek speak for themselves, and the origins of Bogong and Buffalo are common knowledge, but a great number were given so long ago that it is difficult to give any record of the christening or who stood sponsor. Others which appear on early maps are no longer in general use, and there is some confusion as to the meanings of aboriginal names and even of those commemorating famous men.

The early surveyors named physical features after people prominent in England and early Australia, including their superiors. As their maps were seldom in general circulation, later travellers might rechristen the same features—and the cattlemen and miners would call them after local inhabitants or exciting occurrences in the vicinity. James Stirling, Government Geologist, who made a trip over our Mount Hotham in 1890, named the Rennie Slopes and Mount Gustafsen after two of his companions, but the only map on which we find them is his own.

The earliest people in the Alps were the aborigines, and while some of the names attributed to their dialects are appropriate, others do not seem to be; their vocabulary was limited, and one word might have several meanings or translations. Each tribe would translate words into English in different ways, so that a word for hill in Gippsland dialect might differ from that used by the Murray River tribes.

In the S.C.V. Year Book for 1929, Mr. H. A. Tregellas gave translations of a number of aboriginal names, including Kiewa, meaning "Sweet or cold water," Eurobin, meaning "Lagoon at the foot of a mountain," and Omeo, from "Omio," meaning "Mountains." Concerning this last I also heard that one of the early explorers christened the district by exclaiming "Oh, my! Oh!" as he sank, breathless, on a nearby hilltop.

The first white men in the Victorian Alps came from the Monaro Downs in New South Wales, seeking fresh pastures for their cattle. In 1839 Angus McMillan pushed on to the coast through our Gippsland, which he named Caledonia Australis; we commemorate Governor Gipps, in whose honour it was named by Count Strzlecki, who travelled through much of the same country in a different direction.

As the pastoralists crowded to the new land, which was beyond the limits of the original colony, the country was roughly divided into districts in which they held depasturing licences.

In his book, "Phillipsland," the Rev. Dunsmore Lang gives a list of men who held these licences up to May, 1846, and it is interesting to conjecture with some of their names. Do Charles Cowper and G. E. Mackay live on in Mount Cooper and Mount Mackay, and did the Messrs. Johnstone build the hut near Mount Nelson? Mr. Parslow founded the Cobungra Station on the Victoria River about 1839, hence Mt. Parslow. Holland's Nob came from an early Tawonga family, probably that Holland who held a depasturing licence in the Murray district in 1846.

By 1851 there were so many cattle on the Omeo side of the ranges that the Rev. Clarke noted wild cattle making a track along the hillsides. Donald Gow and Peter Howmen (pronounced "Homen") were the first men to use the ranges for cattle on the Harrierville side, hence Howman's Saddle, and presumably Howman's Falls and Howman's Hollow Hut. In the summer of 1878 they took about 500 head "up top," and collected them again in April. Their success encouraged others, including cattle duffers like Bogong Jack, who evidently hid his plunder near the hut which now bears his name. Among the local tales is a story that Bogong Jack used to camp in the hollow near the hut, steal horses on the Tawonga side and sell them in Omeo, and vice versa.

Early in the 'fifties, gold was discovered in Alpine River valleys, and brought a large floating population, moving on from strike to lucky strike. Virgin country was opened up and new tracks cut from field to field, all of which needed names. The first alpine gold was found in Buckland Valley, but by 1856 the miners were at Growler's Creek, named after Bob the Growler, a miner who was never satisfied and who was always "going to clear out to-morrow."

In 1858, Lightning Creek was mapped as "Thunder-and-Lightning Creek," because of bad storms, and was evidently shortened for convenience. In 1861 the Bon Accord mine, which gave its name to the Spur, was registered in May as a new discovery. In the Colonial mining journal for 1858, "Railways and Shares," mention is made of Judge Cope, to whom were referred most of the disputes on gold-mining laws; we may owe Mount Cope to him, although I have heard there were early settlers of that name, but have found no record.

That same year Mr. Alfred C. Wills was sent to Omeo as police magistrate and warden for the Omeo, Snowy Creek and Mitta Mitta diggings. It is from him that Mt. Wills takes its name, for the Mt. Wills named by Dr. Neumayer in 1862, in memory of the ill-fated expedition to Central Australia, was a peak between the Dargo and Victorian Rivers, now forgotten. The settlement of Sunnyside was formed later as a retreat from gloomy Glen Wills, always in the shadow and filled with snow in winter.

In 1860 the Messrs. Mackay had a crushing battery on the Ovens, so here is another

possible, though far-fetched source of Mt. Mackay. In 1862, Mr. W. Phipps was mining registrar for the Omeo Central District, hence Mt. Phipps. Harrietteville, said to commemorate Mrs. Luke, the first lady on the diggings there, was spelt Harriettsville in 1863, and at one time as Harriet Vale.

There has been some controversy over Mt. Nelson, which is habitually abbreviated to Mt. Nelse. The late Mr. R. W. Wilkinson (first president of the S.C.V.), became interested and had the records searched, revealing that there was never a person named "Nelse" in Victoria. If Lord Nelson was not to blame, what of Lady Nelson—a brigantine whose commander, Captain James Grant, discovered the coastline of Victoria from a point 40 miles over the South Australian border to Cape Schanck, when travelling out from London in 1800.

We also find the names of Vice-Royalty adorning the slopes. In 1854, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Government Botanist, explored the Australian Alps to compare the vegetation with that of other Alpine countries. On December 3rd he ascended and named Mt. Latrobe, and on December 6th named Mt. Hotham. It is beyond my scope to discuss if it was the present Mt. Hotham or not—it is the name that matters. Sir Charles Hotham was the second Governor of Victoria (1854-5) at the time of the Eureka Stockade.

During 1873, when Sir George Bowen, then Governor of Victoria, travelled the Alpine road from Omeo to Bright, the Diamantina Spring was named after Lady Bowen—we rather wonder why.

In January, 1885, Sir Henry Loch, Lady Loch and suite, together with several Ms.P., camped near the summit of Mt. Hotham "on the ridge dividing the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers, which connects Mt. Hotham and Feathertop"—our Razorback evidently as yet unchristened. Here Lady Loch, the first Vice-Regal Lady to set foot on the Alps, gathered snow—and in her honour the valley containing the source of the Dargo River was named Loch Glen. Mount Loch may have been christened earlier, as Sir Henry was Governor 1884-1889.

The South African war left its mark with Spion Kopje and Zulu Creek. It may also be responsible for the Niggerhead, formerly applied to one projection but now to the whole range.

Mount St. Bernard was named by geodetic surveyor Alexander Black, after the famous Pass in Switzerland. R. Brough Smyth, Government Geologist in the 'sixties, who was very interested in the aboriginals, gives us nearby Mt. Smyth; while George Higginbotham, Chief Justice of Victoria, 1886-92, is responsible for both Big and Little "Higgies." Machinery Spur records the transportation of a mining plant to this difficult position, and Hut Creek the site of a crushing battery.

Many of our present-day maps are used on walking and ski-ing trips by people who have not previously been in the Alps. Mr. Roy Weston, whose excellent and untiring work in map-making is a boon to novices as well as to experienced travellers, told me it was necessary to designate all physical features, however small. Weston named the various gullies and hillocks on Mt. Bogong so that it would be possible on a trip, especially in winter, to give accurate directions instead of "the second rise past the trees on your left, near the creek." He has commemorated many of those who, for various reasons, explored the Alps in the past and opened them up for us—for example, A. E. Tadgell, who did botanical work on Mount Nelson and surrounding country. Lendenfeld Point recalls the geologist who examined the general rock structure, 1885-6. We find Hooker's Plateau in von Mueller's description, and Mr. Weston thinks it was bestowed upon Mt. Bogong, which from some aspects looks very like a tableland. So he kept it upon his detailed map. This also gives Audax Point and Ridge, Hell Gap, and Black Jane's Saddle (after a very faithful and uncomplaining steed). Cole's Gully is in memory of the late Cleve Cole, whose party sheltered there in 1936.

A good many other names have been investigated, but space precludes their appearance this year.

The following are incomplete, and further information would be welcome. Marm was a Tawonga cattleman, and the hut now known as Kelly's was formerly "Marm's Hut," Timm's Lookout, after an early settler. Mt. Battery was given by Hume and Hovell in 1824 to a peak resembling a raised earthwork, but it seems to me that the present Mount Battery was not on their route, and is probably called after a nearby crushing plant. Jim was a cattleman, and though a lady named Flora seems to have contested his claim to a mountain on the High Plains (according to one map), he appears to have won. Ligar was an early settler; Mansfield has a big brother in Nottingham; and Woods Point is a reminder of Harry Woods, a storekeeper who followed the miners with a small cargo of flour. Mt. Franklin, near Barnawatha, recalls that Lady Jane Franklin camped on the lower slopes when travelling overland to Melbourne. She was the wife of Sir John Franklin, Governor of van Diemen's Land, 1836-43, who later lost his life looking for the North-West Passage.

But I really would like to know when was the Freeze-Out and who were the Swindlers.