



Mt. McKay (in neighbourhood of proposed S.C.V. Memorial Hut).

Victorian Section — Editorial Notes

Mt. McKay is to be the new "Mecca" of Victorian skiers. Exact site has not yet been chosen. But the general vicinity for the Memorial Hut has been fixed by the S.C.V. committee, confirmed by members at the annual election in November, when a mandate was asked for. Announcement of the concrete proposal was greeted by a great flip in contributions to the fund, which quickly leapt from around £1000 to beyond £2,200.

This sum of money—and it is growing almost daily—means that something worthwhile will be added to ski-ing opportunities. The committee is pressing on with the details for what promises to be the most notable advance in the club's history.

On the Bogong High Plains (not to be confused with Mt. Bogong), Mt. McKay is in the 6000 ft. class, amid miles of ski-ing country to cater for all standards—novices, racers, tourers and beauty seekers. Most important of all, the State Electricity Commission's well-graded metalled road, running from near Tawonga virtually to the top, will be open to the public when the war ends.

For the tourer, maps, lines of poles and chains of small huts are already in existence. Hotham Chalet is twelve miles away by pole-line. For the racer, Martin Romuld, former Australian champion, has said that one of the best down-hill courses in Australia could be set on McKay. This is confirmed by Fred Ewart and others who indicate the likelihood of a 2000 ft. descent. Sheltered runs and nursery slopes provide for the beginner. The views are held to be amongst the best in Victorian snow vistas. Big drifts extend the season into late in the year. Summer attractions are present too, with two big lakes, suggesting fishing and swimming, in addition to excellent walks. Distance from Melbourne is a little over 200 miles; but roads are good and this is not considered a long step for post-war conditions.

Accessibility was ranked as one of the primary considerations in choosing the location; and the hut will be placed with the object of access by road, to eliminate arduous riding and ski-ing ingress, and reduce transport costs for materials.

For the hut itself, the Committee contemplates accommodation for about 50; and aims at comfortable bunks and lockers for each person, in heated bunk-rooms. With a manager in charge, meals and bedding would be supplied, and it is hoped to keep the cost down to £3 a week. Hot showers, indoor sewerage, drying room, and ski-room with facilities for repairs are contemplated.

Naturally, the verdict for McKay was not without some controversy. Some people apparently were not aware that the committee had been collecting data about various alternatives for some years before reaching a carefully-weighed decision. Some advocated a sub-committee to investigate sites, after an investigation had, in fact, been already made. Mt. Bogong, excellent in terrain, was ruled out as being insufficiently accessible at

present or at an early date. Fainter, Feathertop, and Loch also lack road access. Buller, being nearly 100 miles nearer to Melbourne, has other excellent features as well, but lacks the immediate touring and summer attractions of McKay. It was decided to improve the existing Buller hut, and, at an early date to enlarge its facilities. Erica and other mountains came in for discussion, but the more consideration that was given, the more the Committee became fortified in its choice of McKay. Elsewhere in these pages is an appeal to skiers to subscribe the money that will consummate the plan. The photograph of Mt. McKay was taken in September in a light year.

A splendid sign for future years was given when more than 200 members of the S.C.V. came to the opening meeting for 1944. For every person who comes to a meeting there are many more who are interested in ski-ing. And so many are away in the Services, too. Secretary Keith Cartledge read out a list of no less than 60 new members. If this is not a hint of the trend of post-war ski-ing population, what is?

Enthusiasm waxes high, notwithstanding those "three (bug-) bears"—lack of petrol, restricted accommodation, and guesswork about leave.

Snowfalls amounting to a foot or so on the Alps at the beginning of April promise to cool the rocks and set the stage for the approaching season. After two heavy years in 1943 and 1942, hopes in summer were not held high for the hat-trick. One view—not shared, perhaps, by those lucky enough to have ski-ing holidays in sight this year—is that, if there has to be a periodical drought, it would be decent of the weather gods to send the lean year at a time when most skiers are unable to reach the mountains in any case. But latest signs are for ample snow.

House Full is the sign at Hotham and Buffalo chalets, at least until next October, Hotham holds only 27, and staff shortage is restricting Buffalo to 90. For the S.C.V. fortnight at Hotham (August 6-20)—with the railways reserving six beds each week for outside bookings—there were 74 applicants at closing date in February. Names went into a hat; limit, one week each. Even so, nearly half could make only the waiting list.

A queue-ue-ue(!) waited all night outside the Tourist Bureau for the public bookings to open on March 1. First arrivals came at 11 p.m. for their all-night vigil. Some of morning's latecomers were disappointed. After last year's problems of getting some visitors through the last few miles to Hotham in bad weather conditions, the Railways have tightened requirements. The new rule reads: "Only visitors who have had considerable ski-ing experience will be allowed to make the trip"; and it is being strictly applied.

Horses (blessed word) will be available for the seven miles to Bon Accord for at least most visitors, each Sunday. A change has been made with trips to leave Melbourne on Saturdays in future, instead of Fridays. They will get back to Melbourne on Mondays instead of Sundays. It has always been handy to send luggage on ahead, early in the year, before snow closes the road. Apparently the Railways think some have been making a welter of it, with cases too large and numerous to be conveniently handled. This year, there is to be a limit of 35lbs., and, despite the committee's request for review, no ski in advance.



**Snow Shoe
Shod Horse.**
Fred James.

Snow Shoes on Horse—This photograph shows the horse fitted with snow-shoes, successfully used by prominent ski-jumper Eric Johnson to pack meat into Hotham last year. It was also used to convey a casualty and a sick man down.

The device is like the baskets on stocks—somewhat larger (about the size of a large dinner plate), and of metal. The outer ring is a double one, of a gauge about as thick as a man's little finger. The "basket-work" consists of treble strands of strong wire.

From the outer ring, two lugs come up, on either side of the horse's hoof, and a strap through the lugs is tightened around the narrow upper part of the hoof.

Even in "heavy" snow, the horse's feet sink in only about twelve inches or so; in hard stuff, much less. The sledge must be watched against any tendency to slide sideways on some slopes. In fairly heavy weather conditions last year, the horse towed several hundred pounds up the climb from Bon Accord to the Cairn.

Foghorn at Hotham proved useful last season, not only for urging visitors in to lunch when sun and good snow tempted them to dally. It was used to good effect on several occasions to guide skiers overtaken by darkness. Whether or not the direction of sound might be distorted in some sorts of weather is not yet known.

On Service—President Ted Tyler is still in the Middle East. Derrick Stogdale was in Melbourne on leave and attended the opening S.C.V. general meeting in the city for 1944. Tom Mitchell, prisoner of war, sent a few words through the Singapore propaganda broadcast on November 30, saying he was well, conditions good, etc.—phrased according to Japanese instructions, of course, but nevertheless it was good to hear.

No less than 207 members of the S.C.V. have joined the services. The number includes 13 women. Fourteen members have been killed in action, at least seven are missing, and nine prisoners of war. Many have been decorated, and many more have gained promotion. The names of our gallant service folk were listed in *Schuss* in the January-February 1944, issue. The list is not quite complete, particularly in regard to rank and decoration, and perhaps casualties. A complete list is to appear on the Honour Board, which is to be a feature of the Memorial Hut on Mt. McKay.

Those who have given their lives for their country include: D. S. Brown, P. O. Ingoldby, D. G. Kitchen, R. N. Mellor, K. Neuendorf, J. M. Pizzey, R. H. Roe, J. H. Rogerson, E. C. Sellers, I. C. Smith, L. J. Sparke, L. G. Vial, D. J. Walker, A. J. Wilson. Missing include: T. Beauchamp, R. C. Burns, J. L. Donaldson, F. J. Irvine, E. C. Nodrum, P. Pollock, I. K. Whittaker. Prisoners include: H. J. Ead, F. Eggleston, T. W. Mitchell, R. G. Orr, M. J. Pullar, L. Rolling, J. F. Ross, R. D. Shands, and G. H. Veitch.

Constitution—Monday after Monday was devoted by committeemen to going clause by clause through the proposed new constitution for the S.C.V., in preparation for submitting it to members for adoption. The club has outgrown the old one, particularly in view of the enlarged scale of operations that will be involved in contracting for the construction of the Memorial Hut and its facilities, the employment of a manager, and the general conduct of it as a "near-chalet" hostel.

Like most clubs that attain a stature involving business dealings, such as golf and senior football clubs, the Ski Club of Victoria will be registered as a company limited by guarantee. "Limited" refers to the liability of members, who could not be called on to meet the club's debts for any sum beyond their annual subscriptions, and a guaranteed amount which will probably be 10/-. The company must be governed in accordance with a set of rules known as "articles of association," which must be filed with the Registrar-General; and annual statements must likewise be filed so that any person having business dealings may be deemed to know the status and provisos of the concern he is dealing with.

In committee, every one of the 130 or so clauses (some of which with sub-clauses amount to nearly a page) was scrutinised and debated. Originally drafted several years before the war for the committee then in office, it has been modified to conform with latest practice. In some respects, it is on all fours with new constitutions recently adopted by leading football clubs, in providing that, in order to give that continuity of policy essential to business planning, the whole of the office-bearers should not normally retire at once. This has long been a principle of ordinary business companies. Accordingly, it is proposed that one-third of the committee should retire each year in rotation. A committeeman will thus hold office for three years (a two-year term would not assure continuity, because half the committee could change at any annual meeting). It is also proposed to follow business practise in letting the committee choose its own president and office-bearers annually from amongst its number, instead of the whole club voting for each individual office. Envisaging larger operations, the committee is to be increased from 12 to 15, with annual power to co-opt five more. Democracy is preserved by the right of members to recall any committeeman by the procedure of extraordinary general meetings, as with business companies, but this would normally occur only if there were a serious departure from the wishes of the majority.

A suggestion to make 3rd class A.N.S.F. and recent visits to named snow-fields a necessary qualification for committeemen was rejected on the grounds that members should have free choice. Debate was at times heated, but a large majority took the view that the club's function was to popularize ski-ing and not cater solely for experts. Other matters of keen discussion were restrictions against sub-committees committing the club to expenditure; meeting dates; arrears of subscriptions; divisional members, and so on.

Publications—Special praise can be given to "*Schuss*," which in September-

October, 1943, published its 100th issue in the form of a "double number." Besides a vision of the Mt. McKay Memorial Hut, an article on communication possibilities, and the usual news items, more than twenty pages are given to an ably written report on the Mt. Bogong tragedy. "Schuss" began in 1935, succeeding a one-page printed monthly circular, which had earlier been but a roneoed sheet. Congratulations to its editorial directors, Stan Flattely and R. H. (Sandy) McNabb.

All mountain lovers will enjoy the jubilee number of the Melbourne Walker, an attractive 92-page issue to commemorate the Melbourne Walking and Touring Club's fiftieth year. Profusely illustrated, this number is no mere catalogue. It relates interesting experiences from the day the club was born to the present time, and, moreover, succeeds in capturing the romance of them. The Club's ski-ing section dates back to 1929. If any copies of the booklet are left, they are obtainable at 1/6 from bookstalls and ski-ing shops.

The Polar Record, issued twice-yearly since 1931 by the Scott Research Institute at Cambridge, is one of the latest additions to the S.C.V. library. Amongst the collation of scientific and other information gathered in Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, it discusses the technique of living in cold regions, journeys made on skis and specialised types of ski bindings for certain conditions. The club's copies have been received in exchange for "Schuss."

How to the weather —Buller was the scene of a pretty nasty time for two young members in August, 1943, Messrs. Greaves and Howe. They had been on Buller before, in fine weather, by the road and chalet route. This time, they set out to climb direct to the Club Hut from the mill, but lost the track. Continuing upwards and bearing to the right, they finally became lost in fog. Soon it was getting dark, snowing heavily, and the temperature was low. After fruitless attempts to find the hut or any familiar landmark, they made down a little and spent the night getting what shelter they could in a clump of snowgum.

Eating such food from their packs as did not require cooking, they had no better success in locating themselves in the morning. As the day wore on, with weather conditions still against them, they finally decided to make downhill. By this time, they were weak with cold and exhaustion. They became separated. Nightfall found them both still lost, and with a good deal of their gear jettisoned because of growing weakness; stumbling often; spirits low. It was well into the next day before they stumbled—actually, only a short distance apart—on to the road near the mill. One was taken to Mansfield Hospital.

Snows by any other name —Of course it had to be in an article on "Names." of all things, that the writer's own name was given incorrectly in the 1943 Year Book. "Alpine Place Names" was written by Margaret Begg. More of her valuable research on the subject appears in this issue.

Getting on Mt. Bogong

Mention is made of Eskdale Spur as a route to Bogong, in an article elsewhere in this issue, by Harold Doughty. In fact, he says, it must be one of the post-war objectives. P. E. Hull wrote a note on it which was held over for lack of space a couple of years ago. Several habitues have suggested use of the Eskdale Spur as a better approach to Bogong from Tawonga than by The Staircase, wrote Mick Hull. Arguments in favour are that it climbs more evenly and less steeply; that its tree-cum-scrub line is much lower, and its head a little closer to the Cole Hut. The two spurs run parallel up the north face of the mountain; and from a distance there does not appear to be much to choose between them. However, the track of the Staircase below the twin bumps of Castor and Pollux is in some places scrubby and stony, though the cost of clearing would not be very great. The upper half of Eskdale is more rounded and would appear to provide better ski-ing, though I have only been down it in summer, Mick added.

Arguments against use of Eskdale are that it has no half-way hut, such as the Bivouac, nor a hut at its head such as the Summit Hut. It is not unlikely that it gets more wind in the last 1,000 feet of climb than the Staircase. Last, but not least, it entails an extra mile or so of travelling along the foot of the mountain beyond the Staircase.

Anyone with useful information on winter ascent or descent of Eskdale could well send a report to the Huts and Trips Committee. Sooner or later the question may arise of cutting a track up Eskdale, building a shelter hut, and providing a branch line of poles near the bed of the spur to connect with the main pole-line to Camp Valley.

Corrections to 1942-1943 issues

1942: Photographs—"Road above Chalet, Mt. Buller" by Alice Hart (not P. E. Hull); "Hotham at its best" by P. Dewez (not Dewar); "Jim Bradshaw behind the work sledge" by C. (not G.) Ross; "To Hotham" by D. (not P.) Richards; "From Horse to Ski at Bon Accord Snow Line" by A. M. Fairfoul (name omitted), 1943: Page 18, line 26—"wayside" should read "bayside"; "Alpine Place Names" (page 19) by Margaret Begg (not M. Gepp); photograph (page 25) "Loch Spur and (not "at") Feathertop.

Thoughts on Mt. Bogong

By H. V. Doughty

Mount Bogong has again been in the public eye. As the highest mountain in Victoria, and the second highest in Australia, Mt. Bogong naturally has strong appeal to all walkers and skiers. To skiers, it has the added attraction of possessing some of the finest terrain in Australia, from all points of view. Its sheltered camp valley, even in bad weather, is a haven of refuge; in pleasant conditions, a paradise of scenic beauty and ski-ing playgrounds. The mountain provides equally for the tourer and the racing enthusiast.

So far as I know, no Langlauf race has yet been held there. But what a course could be set! In 1937, the Ski Club of Victoria arranged to hold its Downhill and Slalom Championships there. The courses chosen were on the southern face of the mountain; but subsequent investigation has shown downhill courses of even superior quality on the northern face. On this occasion, two accidents (one member sprained an ankle, and another fractured a kneecap) involved the repatriation of the victims, and so disorganised arrangements, as the result of the inaccessible nature of the mountain, that the meeting had to be abandoned.

I happen to have traversed every major spur on the mountain, visited it from every possible approach, between 20 and 30 times, in almost every month of the year, and made trips there from Melbourne over a Saturday-Sunday week-end. I am thus naturally particularly keen to see its almost unrealised resources fully developed, and I think I can express some views which may assist readers considering a visit there.

There are two practical road approaches—one via Tawonga, 220 miles from Melbourne, and 60 miles from Albury; the other via Omeo and Glen Valley, approximately 280 miles from Melbourne, and 105 miles from Albury. The Tawonga route involves the use of the Staircase Spur climb on to the mountain; and the Glen Valley route, the Wills Spur approach. The latter is much the easier climb.

The Staircase Spur climb involves 10 miles travel from Cooper's farm on horseback (or walking) and on ski. In winter it can occupy 10 hours time, and often longer, because of the precipitous nature of the climb up the truly-named Staircase.

The Wills Spur route involves 20 miles travel on horseback (or walking) and on ski; but, except on a positively fine day at a time of only light snow on the mountain the journey should not be undertaken beyond Hodgkinson's hut in one day. Three days' travel from Melbourne is, therefore, involved in this latter approach.

For both Victorian and N.S.W. visitors, therefore, the Staircase Spur approach is the only logical one to undertake on a ski-ing holiday. This approach involves a climb of some 4000 feet in approximately 3 miles up the Spur. The most severe portion lies at the top, where upwards of 1500 feet must be climbed in a little more than a mile. (Readers are referred to the writer's article in "Schuss," Vol. 5, No. 7, July, 1939, for precise details of the Staircase approach to Bogong). It was this last climb, in a combination of unfavourable weather and other adverse conditions, that proved fatal to the unfortunate party who lost their lives in 1943.

I have actually made a summer trip, leaving Melbourne on Wednesday evening, and travelling by car to Hotham, proceeding thence via Loch and Dibbins Hut to the S.E.C. cottage on the High Plains, spending Thursday night there, on Friday going via Mount Nelson and Deane's Spur across the Big River, up to the "T" spur on to Bogong, across its summit, down the Staircase spur to Tawonga, and thence back to Melbourne on Friday evening. But I would not for one moment suggest the places I had visited were easily accessible. Consequently, we are reluctantly obliged to admit that, until a better approach to Mount Bogong is opened up, access is not easy, especially in winter.

Fortunately, a much better approach can be provided if the existing road to Cooper's farm is carried up Mountain Creek to the vicinity of the Eskdale spur, as this better graded spur can be used for the ascent to very much greater advantage. This must, however, remain one of the major post-war objectives for tourist authorities and those controlling ski-ing in Victoria.

In the meantime, winter visitors to Bogong should be limited to those who have had ample training and experience in snowcraft and weather-lore; who are in first-class physical condition; and prepared not to visit the mountain without carrying a tent as part of their regalia—and, what is more important, are prepared and able to use it if necessary.

Despite the fact that the habit has often occasioned others a degree of humor, I regard a tent as better insurance on an outing than the less physical cover of an insurance policy. On one occasion, when caught at eventide on the summit of Bogong in foul, foggy weather, I might have fared badly had it not been that a tent I had with me enabled me and my companion to put in a reasonably comfortable night.

There can be no doubt that those with outdoor experience as walkers or skiers must find it a valuable adjunct when on service with the Forces. In view of this I was recently amazed to find the Victorian State Government reject a request by the Ski Club of Victoria, to improve the snowpole line on Mount Bogong. Surely, if our skiers' services are sought by the Forces as members of Ski Corps, and the Allies are developing Ski troops,

our sport warrants the same right to exist in the community as do other sports, such as football, racing, cricket, tennis and the like—all of which must necessarily require the provision of a proportion of manpower for their maintenance and preservation. Relaxation in a time of stress has proved itself a necessity in all countries. But our venerable government regards the security of skiers as unworthy of the provision of sufficient manpower to provide essential safeguards; and it tries to placate us by advising the club to warn skiers of the danger of visiting the mountain.

So, in passing on this warning, may we be pardoned for expressing another, in the hope that it may not be long before some with greater vision assume the reins of office, prepared to do something tangible to develop one of the finest of nature's gifts to the State. To date, the Victorian Government has contributed £250, compared with upwards of £1100 from the Ski Club of Victoria and its patrons in the last ten years, for developmental work on Mount Bogong.

Job for the S.C.V. By A. F. Shands (President, S.C.V.)

Wartime conditions, and consequently less scope for active ski-ing, have resulted in many ski-ing bodies going into recess. This, however, has not been the case with the S.C.V. It has embarked upon a war-time job, the progress of which is proving more than satisfactory.

In formulating its policy in relation to present conditions and the post-war period, the committee of the S.C.V. decided its main concern to be:—

- (a) To keep the Club functioning to the maximum which war-time restrictions will permit, so that those of its members who are on National Service (whether they be with the forces or elsewhere) may partake, when they return, of the same privileges as, or more privileges of membership than they enjoyed when they left our midst.
- (b) In so doing, to use every opportunity which may present itself for the club to assist the Commonwealth Government by procuring funds for use by the Government for war purposes, and otherwise, to its fullest capacity, to assist the national war effort.

(c) To prepare a programme for improvement in the post-war period.

To the adoption of this policy, the Committee has given much thought, and has reached the conclusion that the Club can function successfully in war-time with a suitable incentive. That incentive is the S.C.V. War Memorial Hut Scheme, the completion of which will be the S.C.V.'s greatest contribution to immediate post-war ski-ing in Victoria.

You may ask: Why is this scheme such an incentive?

(1) The S.C.V. is justly proud of the part ski-ing action has been playing in the great struggle for freedom, and especially proud of the large proportion of members of the S.C.V. on active service. Some have already made the supreme sacrifice. Many have received recognition and decorations for high service or deeds of valor. Each is doing his or her bit. The S.C.V. feels that their service is worthy of every effort we can make to recognise permanently the esteem in which we hold them.

(2) The scheme is the means of raising sums of money which immediately become available to the Commonwealth Government for war purposes. This is accomplished by straight out giving in the form of subscriptions to our fund, savings groups, collections at meetings, etc. It has resulted in several hundreds of pounds being lent to the Government free of interest for the duration of the war. A drive for members to subscribe one or more war savings certificates has resulted in a further big effort. The announcement of a scheme of debentures gave further stimulus to the scheme. The idea is for members to subscribe sums from £5 upwards, the amounts to be transferred immediately to Government Bonds. When the time comes to commence building, the amounts will be converted into War Memorial Debentures.

The total amount to date from all these activities has well passed the £2000 mark—more than double the amount we allotted ourselves to raise by the end of 1943.

(3) When peace comes, the fund becomes available to establish a really worthwhile memorial to those who are winning the war for us—a contribution to post-war ski-ing that will enable the present and future generations of skiers to enjoy, with ease and comfort, some of Victoria's finest snow country.

With the financial side of the scheme reaching such magnificent proportions, the successful conclusion can be reached only by the most careful consideration of a suitable site, best type of building, and other features. Realizing the importance of this, the Committee of the S.C.V. gave much time and thought over the past season to this matter, and was able to announce a definite policy in relation to the future of the scheme, in the September-October issue of "Schuss." That such a policy met with the approval of the majority of members has been instanced by the many appreciative letters received, and a stimulated response in the form of contributions.

Much more remains to be done; but, by exhaustive research, and careful organisation, competent officers with the co-operation of S.C.V. members will be in a position to carry out their ultimate desires as soon as conditions become suitable.