

# PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 15 Summer 2016

## Notes from the President

These notes cover some of the happenings over the last six months.

### Donations

Over the year PHS has been the recipient of a large amount of memorabilia. The collection is growing surely and steadily. Before you toss things out, think of PHS. Our thanks to all who have given us a call. We are swift to move, just email or call. Below are some items that we have received this year.

**Robin Gibb:** Once again PHS is the beneficiary of some wonderful ski gear from Robin Gibb, a stalwart of the Wangaratta Ski Club. Included amongst the realia (historical/library jargon meaning stuff) are early Marker long-thong heel fittings, both the original fixed and the turntable versions, plus numerous very early Marker toe pieces. I am personally delighted that amongst the collection is a Ramy-Securus safety toe piece that I believe is one of the earliest safety toe pieces designed. There are also leather boots, both single shell and pairs with lace-up inners, plus examples of the earliest ski bindings.

**Peter Aynsley – Guthega:** I received a wonderful surprise call from Peter to say he was cleaning out his archives and had a bunch of stuff from the time of his involvement in the earliest days of Guthega emerging as a resort. This will

be excellent for the Guthega pages of the website. Peter has already documented the early history of Guthega in significant detail and he has kindly given his permission to utilise this work on the PHS website.

**Rick Walkom:** Another person clearing the decks. Rick is the author of the wonderful book *Skiing Off the Roof* which documents the early days of the Chalet and guest activities. It's a must have for every club lodge and all who love Kosciuszko. Chatting on the phone, he mentioned that he was going to send a bunch of memorabilia to the Mitchell Library, where some of the PHS collection may end up in due course. Instead he offered it to PHS – wow there are some very interesting pieces of correspondence and images in this lot.

**Leon Smith Archives:** Leon Smith, a stalwart of Southern Alps Ski Club and President for many years, has generously presented PHS with a treasure trove of material. Leon was an early member of the Ski Tourers Association formed by Charles Anton. He was vitally involved in the development and construction of the main range huts Albina Lodge (removed by NPWS), Kunama Hutte (destroyed by avalanche) and Northcote Tow Hut (destroyed by fire). The documents reveal the enthusiasm and assistance



## Contents

- Notes from the President
- Dates for your diary
- Hello in the Snow
- Mad about the Mountains
- Major Bernard Head
- Walter Spanring
- Trip to Kosciuszko 1907
- Hans Zollinger
- Constance Crisp
- Len Harrison
- 50 years of ski instructing

**Perisher Historical Society Inc.**  
PO Box 1263 Manly NSW 1655  
phsadmin@iprimus.com.au  
[www.perisherhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.perisherhistoricalsociety.org.au)  
Ph 02 9907 7082

provided by NPWS for the planned series of main range huts promoted by Charles Anton.

### **Barry Wrenford – Skitube**

**Construction:** Barry and Robyn Wrenford attended the PHS AGM in February and presented the Society with a magnificent photographic album documenting the progressive construction of Skitube. Barry is a man of many parts: pilot, astronomer (with a serious celestial telescope), aerodrome owner and skilled photographer number amongst many talents. The album is a handsome gift indeed and a great addition to the historical record.

### **Perisher Cup**

This year's Perisher Cup was well supported, much fun was had by all and the Perisher Cup was won by Guthega Alpine. Trophy winners, teams and times are posted on the PHS website.

I am delighted to report that the organising group has already met to plan the 64<sup>th</sup> Running of the Perisher Cup. A tight group continues from last year and has been joined by Kim Easdale (SASC).

We are fortunate to have the continuing spreadsheet expertise of Terry Strong. His immediate activity is to achieve the entering of results on-snow. Calculation of the team results is an exercise of significant proportions and was once done with the assistance of slide rules (I am certain there will be many who have never even seen a slide rule.) On-snow entry will ensure that the calculations can be reviewed with minimal pressure to enable holding the presentation at 5.00 pm without the traditional blind panic. The task at hand is to ensure that

the rules of competition and judging are documented and distributed such that there is clarity for all. It is the intention of the committee to hold an open meeting of interested parties about April/May to enable input and discussion.

**Diary Date** - 64th Perisher Cup – 17 September 2016

### **Louise Herzberg**

We received news from Canada that Louise passed away in September. Louise, who lived in Toronto, Ontario, prepared a wonderful collection of photographs, complete with background story, dates and locations, of her father's time skiing in the area in the 1940s. She has kindly passed this collection on to PHS to provide public access to this wonderful record of the period. The collection of images will be known as the Carl Walter Frankel Collection.

### **Film Props**

We were delighted to assist Danielle Baynes and Yolanda Ramke, Co-writer/Directors of a film set on the Main Range involving the early settlers of the region. PHS was able to supply a pair of snowshoes for a scene. I have viewed stills of the scene and can report that the snowshoes should ensure the film's selection for the Cannes Film Festival. Plus, of course, that all important brush with fame.

PHS is always delighted to receive your comments, contributions and suggestions; just call for a chat 0488 159 888 or email.

Best wishes for the festive season,

*Philip Woodman - President*

## **Dates for your Diary**

PHS AGM

Saturday, 13 February 2016  
Conference Room NPWS  
Jindabyne 2.00 pm

Australian Alpine Snowsports  
History Association (AASHA)  
30/31 April 2016  
Conference will be hosted by  
the Southern Tasmania Ski  
Association in the Mt Field  
precinct

Sydney Cocktails  
Combined Perisher/Thredbo  
event  
24 May 2016  
5.30 pm to 8.30 pm  
RAHS History House  
Macquarie Street, Sydney

PHS Annual Dinner  
Sunday, 12 June 2016  
6.00 pm for 6.30 pm  
Marritz Hotel  
Guest Speaker TBA

Hello in the Snow  
Apres Ski Drinks from 4.00 pm  
Tuesday 9 August 2016  
Marritz Hotel

Perisher Cup 2016  
Saturday 17 September

## **New Members**

We extend a warm welcome to  
the following

Warrugang Ski Club

Tony Morrissey - Cooma Lodge

# Hello in the Snow 2015

The late afternoon sun poured into the Marritz bar on Tuesday 4 August as just over 50 PHS members, friends and cross-country skiers gathered to swap stories over a drink and delicious canapés. In fact, many of those present fell into all three of the above categories and were in serious training for the KAC Cross-country Classic race to the Chalet the following day. This very enjoyable get-together was again co-hosted by PHS and Perisher-XC and drew in both new faces and new stories for the PHS.

Our thanks to Manager, Simone, and Chef, Jay, for another memorable Marritz occasion.



# Mad About the Mountains

by Judy Thomson

Travelling over the Snowy Mountains in the winter of 1953, Sue and Pat Edmondson fell in love with snow, and skiing and the mountains have played a major role in their life since then.

Pat's first ski trip was to Kiandra in 1954. The following October long weekend, Sue and Pat borrowed skis, camped in the mountains and, after consulting a book on skiing, skied above the Kosciuszko Chalet and below Charlotte Pass. The next day they made the return trip to Mount Carruthers – quite an introduction to skiing for Sue!

After a skiing holiday at the Perisher Hut (just below Perisher Gap) the following year, they were seriously hooked on skiing. For the next season, Pat made skis from mountain ash with toe irons, runners down the sides and cables round the heels with Kandahar bindings. Boots were old army boots with a steel strip in the sole. Sue made parkas from 'windcol', a nylon/cotton mixture developed for Everest expeditions, and waterproofed old army pants.

By 1960, Sue and Pat wanted to take the family skiing and discovered that Canberra Alpine Club (CAC) encouraged children. They stayed several years in the CAC chalet at Mount Franklin in the Brindabella Ranges and skied on the Mount Ginini rope tow. All the children learned to ski and it was great fun – plenty of gluwein, dressing up and parties. They became members of CAC and helped to build the new CAC lodge in Perisher.

At the same time they helped to start a local Wollongong ski club – Illawarra Alpine Club (IAC). In 1962, the IAC lodge was built at Smiggin Holes in just 13 weekends. Pat was the inaugural president and during his 5 years at the helm engendered a wonderful spirit of camaraderie, encouraged members to participate in races and was involved in setting up the club magazine, 'Cold Facts'. In 1986 he was made a life member of IAC and in 2012 he was honoured for 50 years of consistent service to the club, the sport of skiing and the Kosciuszko National Park.

Pat was also involved in the formation and operation of the Smiggins Ski Patrol. Consequently Sue often had to manage the four children - Michael, Libby, Tim and Simon – skiing on her own. Pat was an inaugural member of the Smiggins Ski Association and, together, Sue and Pat worked to help build and maintain the Sverre Kaaten Nordic Shelter in Perisher and established K-cros, the Kosciuszko Cross Country Skiers Association, in 1995.

Since both Sue and Pat had grown up with a love of the bush and camping, ski touring was an obvious next step. Soon after the formation of IAC, Pat began sharing his love of the mountains and ski-touring with other members and friends. In 1963, he led a party of six from Thredbo to Kiandra on alpine skis. One of his most notable feats was completing the



*Edmondson family skiing: L to R: Pat, Sue, Mike, Lisbeth, Tim and Simon*

Perisher to Kiandra crossing in a single day in 1989. With sons, Mike and Simon, and Simon's future wife, Monica, he made it on his fourth attempt. Over the years Sue and Pat and friends have made many memorable trips, not only in the Kosciuszko area but also in the Victorian Alps, Norway and New Zealand. Pat is still taking groups of friends ski touring, although he says he can't ski with a very heavy pack any more.

Pat also successfully participated in cross-country races such as the Paddy Pallin Classic, the KAC Martini and the Kosciuszko Tour from their inception. Initially Sue helped run 'The Paddy' but later on had much fun and success as a participant.

In 1961, Sue started a ski hire business that she ran from home at Mount Pleasant, Wollongong. With a loan of 50 pounds she bought 10 pairs of

new skis and some boots from Bill Bursill, an early ski importer in Sydney. Paddy Pallin, her godfather, provided some basic ski clothing. The business grew and in 1982, when Sue and Pat were planning their move to the Snowy Mountains, was merged with the Ski and Sports Centre in Wollongong, with son Simon as a partner. In 1988, when the business had been wound up, Simon joined his brother Michael at Paddy Pallin (Jindabyne).

When Pat decided to retire early, the mountains called, and in 1979 they bought 'Carlisle', a steep 7300 acre property at Ingebyra that dropped down towards the Snowy River, 30 km from Jindabyne. Over the next few years, they did up the old cottages, moved in and then built a new house, where possible using materials that came from the property and surrounding areas. The passive solar house was clad in local stone, with mud brick internal walls and polished rammed earth floor. Kore Grunnsund and his son Kyrra were the stonemasons.

Running a farm with a thousand or so sheep and some cattle was quite a change for them both, especially Pat who had previously worked regular hours

with weekends off. Sue also had an acre of berries to look after, backbreaking work at harvest time. Their only problem with the sheep was during a big snowfall in 1987 when IAC members on cross-country skis helped round up the sheep and bring them in to be fed.

During their time at 'Carlisle', Pat was a cross-country instructor for Paddy Pallin, teaching many others how to appreciate and enjoy the mountains and Sue helped Mike and Simon in the shop. With both Tim and Lib and their families not far away, it was a great time for the family to get together to go walking, ski touring or racing. Pat gave up taking commercial tours in 2000.

Pat and Sue 'retired' to Jindabyne in 2004. However, Pat was owner-builder when they rebuilt their house by the lake and Sue still has a large vegie patch. Always creative, Sue has also become a painter of note, winning awards and selling pictures.

Both Sue and Pat have always had a keen interest in the environment and conservation. They attended the inaugural meeting of the Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) in 1970

and joined soon after. Pat suggested that IAC adopt and maintain Cascades Hut, about 10 km south of Dead Horse Gap. For many years, Pat organised autumn working bees at Cascades and Tin Mines Huts through the KHA. Hard work but great fun, Pat's secret for getting people to front up year after year. In May 2014, Sue and Pat were made Life Members of the KHA, joining an elite group headed by Paddy Pallin.

They have both been very active in Jindabyne since their 'retirement'. Sue introduced the town and later the National Park to rubbish recycling and has been passionate about the need to change to 'green' energy. Pat became very involved in the Tennis Club and is still playing in the night competition.

The mountains remain an abiding love and source of great pleasure for them both.

*This article has been drawn from Pat & Sue's Story by Pat and Sue Edmondson (compiled and edited by Rhonda Boxall in 2007) and an article by Rhonda in Kosciuszko Huts Association Newsletter, No.163, 2014.*



*At Mawson's Hut ready for a ski day  
(Sue and Pat at right)*



*Sue on Mt Twynam 1970s*

# Major Bernard Head

by Dianne Cree

*Major Bernard Head was a member of Kosciusko Alpine Club, killed in action at Gallipoli, Turkey, on 12 August 1915.*

Bernard Head was born in England in 1876, the 11th child of Henry Head (an insurance broker of Lloyds Bank) and his wife, Hester. The Head family had been practising Quakers who later transferred to the Anglican Church. Bernard was a determined young man who developed an early interest in outdoor activities, especially being drawn to the challenges of climbing in the New Zealand mountains and skiing in the Australian Alps in New South Wales, particularly at Mt Kosciusko. Whilst Bernard eventually became a keen soldier, he had originally been rejected for an Army career because of poor eyesight! (That same strength of spirit, determination and commitment can be seen in Bernard's brother, Sir Henry Head, who became a renowned neurologist.)

Bernard Head was commissioned into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volunteer Service Company as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 29/5/1895 (London Gazette 28/5/1895) and was promoted to Lieutenant before 1900. The Volunteer Service Company was made up of volunteers from two Shropshire Volunteer Battalions and the Herefordshire Volunteers. It was commanded by Capt. William Trow, Lt Bernard Head and Lt Cutler. The Company sailed to South Africa on 3/3/1900 from Albert Docks at Liverpool and arrived in Cape

Town on 28/3/1900. In May 1900 Capt. Trow died of enteric fever and Lt Head was appointed as temporary Captain to replace him on 27/5/1900 (London Gazette 10/8/1901). Lt Head returned to Britain with the VSC on the *Formosa* on 9/5/1901. He resigned his Volunteer Commission in 1905.

Bernard Head became a regular visitor to Australia and New Zealand between 1909 and 1914. He was a very keen skier and spent a season in Switzerland with the British Ski Club. In the winter of 1909 (a few weeks after the official formation of the Kosciusko Alpine Club) he commenced skiing at Kosciusko, residing at the old Hotel Kosciusko at Diggers Creek (the staff quarters only remain, now trading as Sponars). He returned many times, arriving with a massive, obsessive amount of skiing equipment and clothing – nearly all of which was unavailable commercially in Australia.

On leaving Australia in mid 1909, Bernard travelled on to New Zealand where on 23 November 1909, along with two New Zealand guides, he was the first to climb Mt Aspiring (3033 m) on the South Island. *The Otago Daily Times* (3/12/15) published part of Bernard Head's concise diary: "Breakfast was consumed by 1.45 a.m.," and less than an hour later they had left camp. A second breakfast was consumed in the fog on a plateau, at about 4 a.m. The fog must have cleared, because they continued, and by 9.25 a.m.



*Major Bernard Head*

they were on top, where it was windy. "Just got on top in time", Bernard wrote. The weather was extremely bad, so the team sheltered for half an hour under a rock on the way down. By 2.30 p.m. they were back at their bivouac site. They then retreated to a lower camp and "... were in bed by 8 p.m."

A month later Bernard wrote: "After (the northwest arête) we came to the top, which consisted of a heavy corniced ridge, about 160 ft long. Clarke said it was safe, but we had to cross it to get to the actual summit. The only way was to step aside, with one's feet in Westland and one's axe driven into the cornice at the top. Looking over, one saw a sheer drop of 8000 ft into Otago, as it was the boundary line. It was a weird experience. We spent about five minutes on the top, and then left, as it was very cold. The side-stepping down the 160 ft was almost worse than the going up. From the top, we got a fine view of Cook and Sefton, but the lower mountains

were blotted out with fog.”

Bob Ward's book (1969) detailing the early history of KAC states: "...it was something of an event when Major Head, the English skier, returning from Switzerland in [early winter] 1914, distributed several dozen copies of Richardson's *Shilling Ski Runner*. He also brought with him, to the astonishment of Club members, eighteen trunks of skis and ski clothing. Bradly, a hotel porter, claimed it took him a week to get all the trunks from the snowline to the Hotel. When Major Head went to war, he held an auction sale of all his equipment in the Hotel ballroom, and let everything go at ridiculously low prices. He was a great benefactor to Australian skiing. ... He seldom ventured far afield from the Hotel Kosciusko without a climbing rope and an ice axe." During his stay at the Hotel Kosciusko during Club Week, the KAC's Minute book (July 1914) recorded: "Major Head to be asked to handicap and Sub Committee consisting of Dr Paul, Dr Schlink, Major Head and P. W. Pearson to decide course and arrange details and entrance fee for race to be 5/-."

At the time war was declared in 1914, Bernard was climbing in New Zealand. He had already enlisted with the 5<sup>th</sup> (Wellington) Regiment (date unknown), initially as a temporary Captain. Given his military expertise he was co-opted into the expedition sent from New Zealand to capture what was then German Samoa.

By then he had the rank of Major. The New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed at Apia on 29 August 2014. There was no resistance from German officials or the general population. Major Head, returning to his military roots, accomplished the task with his customary zeal and in fact secured the German flag from the Post Office as a trophy. He later returned to England and joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 5 Battalion, without any difficulties regarding his eye sight test. In the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum in North Wales it is recorded that Bernard presented the German flag to a family friend.

Major Head was transported to Gallipoli with his unit. Unfortunately he was killed by a sniper – before 9 a.m. on 12 August 2015. He was 39. Sadly, like many of his comrades at Gallipoli, he was not buried in a specifically marked grave. Instead, his name has been inscribed on the Helles Memorial, a cemetery (at the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsular) for the Commonwealth War Dead. He is also remembered on the Honour Roll of his parish church in North Wales.

Major Head was an adventurer, often challenged by nature's harshest elements but thoroughly dedicated to whatever activity faced him. A plaque erected in his memory at the Aspiring Hut reads:

IN MEMORY OF  
MAJOR BERNARD HEAD A.C.  
ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS  
WHO MADE THE FIRST ASCENT  
OF MOUNT ASPIRING WITH JACK  
CLARKE AND ALEX GRAHAM ON  
23RD NOVEMBER 1909  
KILLED IN ACTION AT GALLIPOLI  
ON 12th AUGUST 1915

*"What if I live no more those kingly  
days?*

*Their night sleeps with me still.  
I dream my feet upon the starry  
ways;*

*My heart rests in the hill.  
I may not grudge the little left  
undone:*

*I hold the height, I keep the dreams  
I won".*

G.W.Y

### References

Anglo Boer War website, Google  
Auckland Museum  
Australian War Memorial,  
Canberra  
Commonwealth War Graves  
Commission  
Hart, John, general  
correspondence  
Hearl, Graeme, occasional  
speech at the Kosciusko Alpine  
Club's 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner,  
29 May 2004  
Kosciusko Alpine Club archives  
and Club *Bulletins*  
*London Gazette* (28/5/1895)  
Long, Sarah, correspondence,  
great, great-niece of Major Head  
National Archives, UK  
New Zealand War Graves project  
*Otago Daily Times* (3/12/1915)  
Ward, G. R. T., "*Diamond Jubilee  
of the KAC*" (1969)  
Note: Poem on Aspiring Hut  
plaque is by Geoffrey Winthrop  
Young



# Walter Spanring 1930 - 2015

by Peter Southwell-Keely

For anyone who skied at Guthega in the period 1960-1980, the name Walter Spanring was synonymous with the resort. Walter did not start the resort but, with limited funds and much energy and vision, he was its first developer and first professional ski instructor. He was also one of a number of Europeans who made a major contribution to the sport of snow skiing in Australia. Walter died in Brisbane on 31 July 2015.

Walter was born in St Lambrecht, Austria in 1930, the son of a police chief, and grew up in Langenwang. Near the end of the Second World War he was captured by the Russians and spent a short time in a prison camp. After his release, Walter returned to Austria and became a fine competitive skier and ski instructor.

Walter came to Australia in 1959 with the offer of a ski instructing job at Falls Creek. He did not like the look of Falls Creek and went to live in the Capital Hill Hostel in Canberra where he joined the YMCA. During this time he began an apprenticeship as a painter and learned plastering.

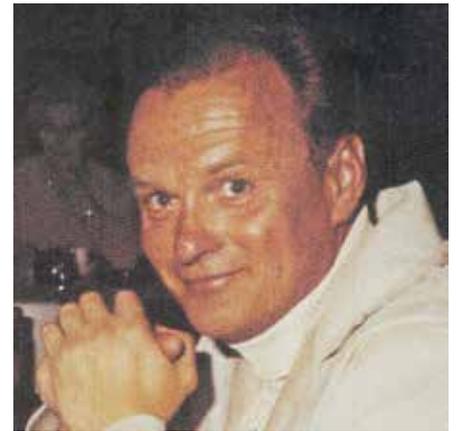
Val Paral, a member of the YMCA (Canberra) Ski Club (now Brindabella SC) at Guthega, 'discovered' Walter and invited him to join the Club as an instructor, which he did in 1961. Walter developed an immediate love for the area and decided to stay.

At the time there were two rope tows at Guthega, one for beginners below the four club

lodges and owned by YMCA (Canberra) Ski Club and another on Tate East Ridge, on the opposite side of Guthega dam, owned by SMA (Cooma) Ski Club (now Tate SC). He leased both tows and started ski instructing immediately.

Although without a lease, Walter decided to build his own accommodation on a substantial concrete slab near the bottom of the YMCA (Canberra) rope tow. The slab had been the base of a chapel built by the Norwegian company, Selmer Engineering, when it was constructing Guthega dam. Walter persuaded Karl Guenther and another friend, to help him build a wooden hut in which they then lived.

Walter then sought approval from the Kosciusko State Park Trust to build another ski lift above the ski club lodges on the lower western slopes of Mt Blue Cow. In 1964, frustrated by the delay in getting approval for the new lift, he returned to Austria for five months where he instructed at Kitzbuhel. He was surprised



Walter Spanring c1965

to find how much things had changed in Austria and then suddenly realised that it was not Austria, but he himself, that had changed. He returned to his beloved Guthega.

In 1965, the Tate East Ridge ski tow hut burnt down. As the tow was so far from the club lodges, Walter decided not to rebuild it but to concentrate on the one for which he had sought permission.

In 1962 Walter married Hannelore Schulz and was able to convince her brother-in-law and several others to form a company, Guthega Development Pty Ltd, to fund the Blue Calf



The Poma, telescopic, Blue Calf T-bar c1968

T-bar. He gained permission for and constructed the lift in 1965. When the famous Poma, telescopic, Blue Calf T-bar began operating, Hannelore assisted by selling tickets and helping skiers onto the lift.

In 1966 Guthega Development Pty Ltd built the Guthega Hotel which Walter and Hannelore ran. Hannelore was chef for 3-4 years. During his time at Guthega, Walter was often seen in the company of his two Samoyed dogs, 'Hexie' and 'Dicker'.

The next stage of Walter's plan for the resort was to introduce three new lifts and the Amenities Building. He was having difficulty getting his submissions through the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) until, in 1975, he gained valuable design and planning assistance from Peter Aynsley, an experienced architect.

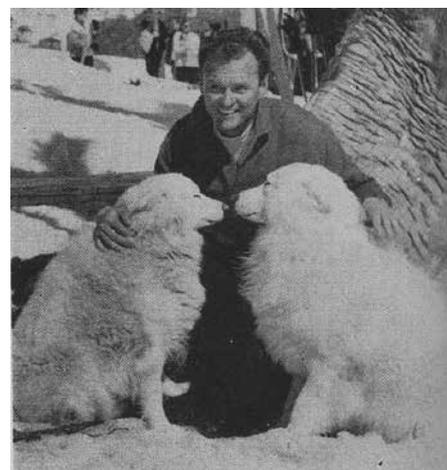
Among the new lifts were two Austrian rope tows, one for the Cowpastures area and the other replacing the beginners tow above his hut. The third lift was an Australian-made T-bar which went from the saddle at the top of the Blue Calf T-bar to the top of Mt Blue Cow. This Blue Cow T-bar was very successful as it opened up a number of good runs of varying gradient for all classes of skier. The Amenities Building provided accommodation for staff, a medical treatment room and food service kiosk.

By 1980 Guthega had grown significantly and Walter wanted to upgrade the ski lifts and build a ski centre. In order to raise the money for the expansion, Walter sold 75% of Guthega Development Pty

Ltd to a syndicate consisting of Dr Alexander Morven Dan, Tibor Balog and Alex Pongrass. Walter continued as head of the company with Peter Aynsley as General Manager. After one year Walter retired from his position as Managing Director while still retaining his financial interest in the company.

During the next four years, Guthega Development replaced the Blue Calf T-bar, the Cowpastures rope tow and the Australian-made Blue Cow T-bar with Doppelmayr lifts and built a new Doppelmayr chairlift from the carpark to the saddle area. In addition it built the Guthega Ski Centre, extended the Amenities Building and the Guthega Hotel and carried out extensive trail grooming to create new runs.

After Walter and Hannelore were divorced in 1981, Walter married Vicki Gamble and they moved to Canberra where Walter continued with his plastering business while Vicki worked for Qantas. Walter sold his interest



*Walter with his Samoyed dogs - Hexie and Dicker*

in Guthega Development in 1985. Walter retired from his plastering business in the early '90s and he and Vicki went first to Sydney, then to Perth in 1995 and Brisbane in 1999, where they remained.

In retirement Walter was a keen reader and enjoyed gardening, travelling, walking and hiking with Vicki and his two German Shepherds. During the last four years he suffered from several strokes, periodic memory lapses and a general deterioration in his health.



*Walter Spanring at Guthega in 1961*

# Trip to Kosciusko in 1907

by Professor Edgeworth David

On the morning of January 21 the whole university party of 27 left the accommodation house at Betts Camp, and walked by way of Spencer's Creek and Charlotte's Pass to the Snowy River and the Blue Lake, a distance of over five miles. There was a burst of admiration as this beautiful Alpine lake came in sight as we crested the ridge that divides it from Hedley Tarn. On the southern slope to the lake, down which we were hurrying, were numerous shallow pools of dark, peaty water in regular terraces, each separated from the other by a narrow wall, a foot or so in width, of dense wiry grass and mossy plants. The whole had the appearance of artificial fish-hatchery tanks, and yet it is purely natural. It is not easy to understand exactly how they are formed. Perhaps the slow downward creeping of the heavy masses of thawing snow in early summer dislodges a little of the surface soil, and leaves this behind, when the snow melts away, in the form of a low dam just sufficiently high to impound a shallow sheet of water. Once such a sheet has been formed, plant growth takes place more rapidly around its margin than elsewhere, so that the rim of the pond tends to become further raised. It must be admitted that this explanation does not account for the terraced character of these little tarns.

The moraine here is formed of blocks of granite and occasional fragments of slate, with loamy sand packed in between; it is

mostly covered with stunted heathlike shrubs, and is gay with Alpine flowers. And what a contrast it formed to the north-west shore of the lake! There black, frowning ramparts of granite rose almost sheer for several hundreds of feet out of the deep, dark blue water. Truly the Blue Lake is the brightest gem in the crown of Kosciusko. The lake is a little over a third of a mile (530 m) in length, and a quarter of a mile (400 m) in width (and, as proved by the soundings taken by means of the university coracle last year), is about 75 ft (23 m) in depth.

After lunch a start was made to find the skeleton of the old coracle. This had been manufactured on the spot by my party last year out of sticks of snow gum, tied together to form a sort of open basket-work, and this had then been covered with some rabbit-proof wire-netting, and the latter in turn with an outer covering of American cloth. Alas! The old coracle, when found, was utterly unseaworthy. She was crushed as flat as an opera hat, and all her ribs broken or flattened by the immense pressure of the massive winter snow drifts, which at this spot are at least 30 to 40 ft thick. But, by dint of a lot of pulling and bending, and lashing on to fresh gum-sticks, the old craft took shape once more in an improved form, recalling the lines of Longfellow's Saga: Till King Olaf said my dragon is better than she was before.

The same old piece of American cloth which was used last year, was hastily stitched on, and the craft christened the *Cara*, after my wife (a wag suggested it should have been named the *Caracle*), was then launched. It leaked a little at first, owing to the American cloth having got frayed in its journey in the bullock-waggon, but some "rubber solution" soon remedied this, and sounding operations were begun. It was found possible only to take a few soundings that day, as the strong wind raised such a sea at the eastern end of the lake that the coracle was rather close to being swamped. These soundings taken chiefly near the north shore of the lake, did not much exceed 50 ft in depth, but they showed that the fall into deep water must be very steep, and there can be no doubt that the Blue Lake is a glacier-eroded rock basin. While some of the students with prismatic compasses, took cross bearings to the coracle from time to time to fix the positions at which the soundings were taken, Mr C.A. Susmilch, of the Technical College, with some others, made a survey of the north shore of the lake.

On the following day, January 22, the whole party started early for Mt Clarke, Lake Albina, and Mt Kosciusko. Special interest was taken in the wonderful rock pavement deeply grooved by the glacier ice, about 100 ft above the lake on its western side. The ruts are like those left by the Roman chariots in the paving stones of the streets of Pompeii.

Leaving the beautiful Lake Albina, with its wild deep gorge below cut in jagged slate and fading into a deep violet blue in the distance, we struck the long dividing ridge between the Snowy and Murray Rivers, which leads to Kosciusko. The ladies were the first to gain the Summit, which is reputed to be 7328 ft above sea level. We were singularly favoured in the weather, and thoroughly enjoyed the magnificent panorama

before us. A billowy ocean of sharp ridges, and crests and stupendous valleys rolled away at our feet to the far-off snow-capped Victorian Alps.

It is believed that our party of ladies are the first to have ever walked the whole distance from the Snowy Valley to the top of Kosciusko and back. Their names are as follows:- M.K. Jarrett, BA, H.E.M. Armstrong, M. Deer, M.G. Free, M. Harker, M. Stanton-Cook and Mrs David.

*This is an edited version of an article by Professor David which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 31 January, 1907.*



*T.W. Edgeworth David in a homemade coracle on Blue Lake,  
Mt Kosciusko, New South Wales, January, 1906.  
Picture from National Library of Australia*

# Zurich to Cooma in 121 h, 5 min

by Hans Zollinger

*In May 1970, Hans Zollinger, proprietor of Hans Oversnow, set out to fly from Zurich to Cooma to return to his job in Jindabyne. This is his account of the first part of his journey - from Zurich to Calcutta. The final stages will appear in the next issue.*

My intention was to join the air race from London to Sydney. For this I needed a Mooney M20 but my finances were limited. So I had to settle for a Cessna 172 which had been built in Reims with a six cylinder continental Rolls Royce 145 hp engine. By this time the race was well under way.

I was very anxious to leave on my planned trip from Zurich to Cooma in Australia. I had been waiting one month for clear weather. Finally, on 4 May, I was told by the met office that the weather was clear for the next three hours so I quickly packed up and took off at 15.45 local time, heading for Florence in Italy. The take off in Zurich was very exciting as I was caught in the vortex of a DC9 which took off before me and nearly finished upside down. To make matters worse, air traffic control in Zurich made me divert from my planned route because the Swiss Military (artillery) were practicing in the area.

I had to climb to L 125 to clear the clouds. It was a strange feeling the first time alone in a Cessna flying to Australia, strange getting used to the instruments too, it kept me busy for a while.

By the time I was over Florence,

the visibility was so poor I had to divert to Bologna, which I reached after a bit of a struggle, just before last light. A glass of milk, a cake and a good old-fashioned bath finished off a rather exciting first day.

Next day found me refuelling and heading for Brindisi. Visibility was still very poor with dust haze all the way. I had to rely on the ADF (automatic direction finder) and eventually landed in Brindisi at lunchtime. I tried to make it to Thessaloniki but did not get past the planning stages as the weather forecast was for strong head winds and low clouds. This would have been too risky for a sea crossing to Greece. Instead I had a good afternoon's sleep and then watched the noisy Italian road traffic.

Next day I arrived at the airport at 8.50 am to refuel the plane. Checking the fuel bill I realised that they had charged me double, which I refused to pay. The fuel man said that 8.50 am was overtime and then the argument started. For the first time in my life I got to know the 'southern Italian temper'. I paid him the normal amount in lira and said "take it or leave it". I was told not to come back again, which I gladly agreed to.

The morning weather was better so I took off for Greece. For the



first time there was no turbulence and fair visibility, even though there was some cloud, and I reached Thessaloniki without any problems. On arrival I was greeted by two Swiss helicopter pilots who were working on an off-shore oil rig. I stayed with them at the same hotel and got away a bit cheaper on the 'expense account'.

Morning came and it was time to leave for Istanbul which took two hours, a straightforward and uneventful trip. Refuelling in Istanbul was very interesting. One man carried the ladder, another rolled the fuel drum and the third carried the pump. All expected to be paid. I paid the normal amount, nothing more. I told them, if they did not like it, to send the bill to my Australian address.

After refuelling, and with customs

and immigration in order, I took off for Ankara, the capital of Turkey. On this section I had to divert a few times for rain storms and turbulence and eventually had to spend the next day in Ankara because of bad weather. On the third day, skies were blue so I set off for Elazig. When I landed I found that I did not have a clearance to land – too bad about that- but I did not have one to leave either. I filled in the time working in the control tower while the chaps went out and played a sort of volleyball. They kept me supplied with vegetarian type meals – not bad either.

With the help of the Swiss consulate in Ankara, I was able to take off next day for Tabriz in Iran. About half way across I ran into a thunderstorm and was forced back to Elazig, spending the next two days sleeping in the aircraft. In the end, I could not get away because the ‘fuel man’ only came out on certain days. After taking off for Tabriz at 4 am (with runway lights and all) I successfully avoided the turbulence. Flying via Lake Van the visibility was quite good with no turbulence. I had to climb to 11,000 ft to clear the rocky tops and Tabriz was under me in 3 h. Tabriz control tower instructed me to land on runway left, but there is no runway left, it is the taxiway, so I landed on the taxiway! Nobody said anything. Here I had the same problem – no clearance waiting for me to fly to Tehran, but a few phone calls straightened things out and away I went.

On leaving, it was difficult to reach my planned height of L 115 because of full tanks, hot winds and turbulence. Even when I got to this height I could not get

rid of the lousy turbulence, which worried me a little at times. I had to cross something looking like a desert flying 4000 ft above the deck and I was losing 1000 ft up or down because of ‘sand willies’ down below – it was just like riding a wild horse! Tehran airport reported 35 knot winds so I was in for some fun to make a landing! Eventually touched down – the Cessna really showing its good qualities. Because of the crosswind, taxiing was almost impossible, so on the apron two fellows had to hold the Cessna by the wings; otherwise she would have taken off without the rider.

Sometime later I was sitting in a nice hotel room where I enjoyed a beautiful bath and an Iranian dinner – Persian pork, I think. It tasted really good. I walked around a bit. The place is packed with American cars and looks not too bad for way out in the sticks. 9 o’clock was time to go to bed, at least for me. I had had a long, hard day. Next morning I showed up at the airport to get all the clearances fixed. Then it was time to service the aircraft. Here I met an American chap who runs AG AC in Ethiopia, who asked me to look out for good AG pilots in Australia. Tea and coffee were served all the time without cost. The people of Iran are very friendly and don’t like to see anyone walking in the airport – you always get a lift. Tehran is 4000 ft above sea level, a mixture of snow-capped mountains and desert, lots of new buildings and wide streets and the traffic is something to be remembered! Just about every car has some dents in it. That day it was quite hot, 89°F. The next day I faced a stretch of 700

miles to Zahedan near the border of Afghanistan.

I left Tehran very early to overcome the turbulence problem and made a refuelling stop at Yazd, which took ages as the petrol was brought in containers from the town 10 miles away. It was a quaint Arabic place with donkeys but no cars except the local taxi which had just two gears left! House were made from mud. Here I had to change my traveller’s cheques – no trouble, to my surprise. I then took off for Zahedan but was forced to make an extra landing in Kerman to wait for the afternoon which is a bit cooler and less turbulent. I spent this time in the control tower, sipping Iranian tea and talking with the Air Traffic Controller, quite a character! It must have been a special occasion to talk to a Swiss-Aussie.

I took off for Zahedan, planning to make it just before last light. Yes, it was a strange feeling crossing the great Kuh-I- Hazar Desert with the sun setting behind me. In Zahedan everyone was waiting for me: the Tourist Director, Air Controller, fuel crews and half the town population (about the size of Cooma). After I had refuelled and serviced the aircraft, the tourist chap talked me into staying at his hotel – a very nice place cost A\$6 per night. To my surprise it turned out to be the worst hotel I have ever stayed in. When I switched the light on in the toilet, the place was alive with cockroaches and to keep the room door closed I had to put a chair against it. The dinner served in my room sounded quite good – fried eggs and some kind of bread – but instead

of going into my stomach it went down the toilet! I was rather glad when morning came and I could get airborne again. The weather was absolutely lovely, so without any problems I headed off for Karachi.

I reached Karachi about lunch time. The terminal weather said 4 miles visibility, so I went in with the help of radar and the wind made a good landing just about impossible. After finishing the necessary paper war, I decided to stay for a day.

Next to the airport I found a very nice hotel run by KLM, so a long, long shower (cold) and an afternoon sleep got rid of the rest of the day. The next morning I would head for India to Ahmedabad and Nagpur. For this section there was no map for sale so I drew one on paper – a mud map!

I left Karachi with a special

VFR clearance and visibility was as usual very poor, this time because of haze over the city. After a flight with the help of ADF, I landed in India where again the unnecessary paper war awaited me. Fuel, passport checks, health regulations – a lot of forms to be filled in, even the aircraft had to be fumigated. It was just about lunch time when I was cleared for takeoff. The heat was just fantastic, 120°F, oil temperature almost boiling point – no checks, just take off. No wonder the aircraft would not perform well. I had great difficulty reaching L 75, but at least at that height it was cooler. After a turbulent flight I landed in Nagpur towards 6 o'clock, only to find that the outside temperature was still 120°F. It was just like sitting in an oven. I tried to sleep at the airport where I found pilot's rooms available.

To get to sleep I had to soak a bath towel and cover myself with it and wind a wet singlet round my head.

Next day I got away very early but the temperature had already risen to 80°F. Cruising at Level 70 and 75, the temperature was a comfortable 60°F up there. After a quick fuel stop at Jharsguda, filling out of petrol cans, and 2 L of water for me, I was airborne again, heading for Calcutta. It was the beginning of the wet season and there were cloud build-ups to 40,000 ft but there was no turbulence and I just cruised around them – they looked menacing but actually the flight was very pleasant. At 15.45 I reached Calcutta.

*Part 2 of Hans' story will be included in the next newsletter.*

## Constance Crisp 1926 - 2015

Constance Crisp (nee Hughes) died suddenly on 10 July 2015 aged 89 years.

She was the daughter of Geoffrey Forrest Hughes MC AFC and Margaret Eyre Forrest Hughes and sister of Tom and Geoffrey Hughes and of Robert Hughes (deceased).

The Hughes family were vitally involved with skiing and its development in NSW and the family were avid skiers at the Hotel Kosciusko and the Chalet, Charlotte Pass. She was a member of the Ski Club of Australia, the Kosciusko Alpine Club, a foundation member of the Ski Tourers Association and a foundation member of Crackenback Ski Club.

She represented NSW in the interstate skiing competition in 1952, and won the Kosciusko Alpine Club's ladies slalom championship in 1956.

Constance was an architect who (along with Robert Maclurcan) designed the original Crackenback Ski Club Lodge in 1957, the first building in Thredbo. Her brother, Geoffrey Hughes was one of the original Thredbo syndicate members.

In May 2015 she was a guest panellist, along with her brothers Tom Hughes AO, QC, and Geoffrey Hughes, at the "Sydney Cocktails" at History House, a combined event of the Perisher and Thredbo Historical Societies.



*Robert Maclurcan and Constance Crisp in front of the Crackenback Ski Club Lodge, Thredbo*

# Lenny Harrison 23 August 1925 – 18 November 2014

by Denis Vanzella



In 2014 Cooma Ski Club lost another of the old time skiers in Len Harrison. While Len was not an original member of Cooma his change in emphasis to cross country skiing led Len and Sylvia to manage the club from 1968 – 1970, in fact their eldest son Mark was with them in the last year after a precedent being already set by Otto and Gina Pinkas. Len was an original in Perisher in the early 1950s having a strong involvement at that time in Snow Revellers. Skiing then was a small world. Len was one of those few people from the period after WW2 who built up skiing in NSW. He was, I understand, the first Australian to achieve a full European Ski Instructor's Certificate (Swiss) and was one of the early instructors in Perisher Ski School. Len was co-manager of the original Sundeck Hotel which burnt down in 1960. In typical fashion Len became one of the

best known 'pirate' instructors in the business. One could never see Len taking second place to the imported Austrians as "bend ze knees - 10 dollar please" became the instruction credo. Len had many private clients. Somehow Len managed to run an electronics business in North Sydney when he wasn't skiing, or purchasing his new cross

country ski boots for the next season! Len was also into rifle shooting, participating at high level in Queen's prizes. Len was also quite deaf!

In later years Len was right into cross country racing and managed to participate for many years overseas and in Australia, lately due to Kevin Heffernan chaperoning him! For as long as I can remember Len stayed two weeks over race week with Heffo and previously Andy McCulloch. His last winter at Cooma Hut was in 2013, it was with some difficulty, but he was there. Len was one of those that have given Australian skiing a history. I still remember Len's advice when I was very young – on sunny days go cross country skiing and on snowy days go alpine skiing – that way there are no bad days skiing – he had it right.

Len's passing at 89 provides an awareness that those early days of Perisher are now not first hand memories and that he and many others were part of our history. Vale Len.



# Christian Keller and Franz Pichler

*Celebrating 50 Years at Perisher*



This winter Christian Keller and Franz Pichler both celebrated 50 years as ski instructors at Perisher. In 1966 Christian joined his twin brother Paul and Roger Staub at Smiggin Holes and Franz was one of Andi Krallinger's 17 instructors at Perisher Valley.

The two share an immense love of skiing and also share their positive energy with clients, hoping to pass on the pure enjoyment of the sport and prove that age is no barrier.

Moving from Europe to Australia was a big cultural change for both Christian and Franz. However, even now, they still feel excited when they arrive in Perisher and see the mountains and get ready to share their skill and love of skiing with their clients. They are the envy of anyone who loves year-round winters.

Christian grew up in Switzerland and began as a ski instructor in 1958 in Arosa, Switzerland. He has taught at Smiggins, Blue Cow and Perisher every year since 1966 and during our summers he returns to instruct at St Moritz. As he says "I'd rather be outside, outdoors than in a workshop".

Franz was born in Austria and worked there as a ski instructor before coming to Perisher in 1966. He has taught in Perisher every year since and taught the first Australian course for ski instructors. Early on, Franz returned to Austria in the Australian summer to teach at Obergurgl and Zurs. Several years later he was part of the group that formed Stein's Tours, guided ski tours of Europe and North America, more recently operating under the umbrella of Travelplan Australia. He

still gets pleasure from being able to teach a beginner to ski in a few days. Interestingly, Franz remembers telling the ski industry 50 years ago that skis were too long!

They are both experts at helping their students discover the enjoyment of skiing in any conditions and having a blast. They ski because it means they spend their days playing. "Speed is one of the biggest parts of enjoyment. Every day....I go up there and have a little buzz", said Franz.

"Skiing gives you a bit of freedom, so long as you can handle the two planks under your feet, you're right", added Christian.

*Photo courtesy Perisher resort*