



A HISTORY OF THE SCOTCH COLLEGE SKI CLUB/KOOMERANG SKI CLUB THE EARLY YEARS 1925 – 1961

Introduction (2008)

In 2007, Koomerang Ski Club celebrated its 50th birthday. As part of the celebration, we published a history of the Club.

The Committee realised that we had many new members who had no knowledge of the early history of Koomerang let alone its predecessor, the Scotch College Ski Club.

In 1963, the Club magazine Die Brettln published, in a number of instalments, the history of the Club from 1925 to 1961.

That history is now reproduced below with minor editing changes only so that this history can be made available on our website for the information of all members.

Preface (1963)

That a history of the Scotch College Ski Club should be attempted at this stage of the Club's existence may appear to be a strange decision to many people. It is acknowledged that the Club will not be celebrating an anniversary of any importance this year.

However, with the influx of new members, particularly amongst the school-boys, it was considered that an account of the activities of the Club since its inception would be desirable. With this thought in mind it was suggested to the Committee that a History of the Club be published in Die Brettln.

It was therefore decided that the history be written in a number of instalments covering the three broad phases of the Club's development.

Part 1 1923 – 1935 Early Skiing at Scotch

Part 2 1936 – 1955 Official formation of a Club and its development

Part 3 1956 – 1961 The Mt Buller lodge

It is to be hoped that, in reading this history, members will come to realise that theirs is no ordinary ski Club. It is the only ski Club in Victoria which has as its members both students and old-boys of a great school working and living together for a common objective. In addition, many of the early members of the Scotch College Ski Club are men who today hold responsible positions in the public and private affairs of this country. Many former Scotch skiers have become well known in other Clubs at our ski resorts.

During its relatively short existence the Club has had many achievements and many disappointments. Therefore, in reading the above comments and the following narrative, we hope that a closer understanding will develop between the various age groups represented in the Club.

Part 1 1923 – 1935

Early Skiing at Scotch

From the available records, the year when skiing became an active interest at Scotch is unclear. There seems to be little doubt that it was an activity that emerged from walking tours that were organised in the early 1920's.

Records show that in 1923 Messrs C. E. Sandford and R. G. Clayton "(Forty Five)" introduced "the day tramps". These tramps, which were to become a feature of the life of the East Melbourne School, were immensely popular and large groups of boys were seen on Saturdays climbing through the undergrowth of the Dandenongs, Werribee and similar places. At this time Mr Clayton became known as the "Professor of Pedal Activity".

In 1925 the first school snow tour was undertaken. Mr A. D. Ross led a party of 30 boys on a trip to Sydney and Canberra with the ultimate objective being a week spent at Mt Kosciuszko. Although they were strangers to the snow, the boys took to it like ducks to water. This was such a successful trip that it was repeated in the winter of 1926, under the leadership of Mr C. E. Sandford. The group included Bruce Wenzel.

In January 1926 Mr Ross led another group of 16 boys on a summer walking tour of the Kosciuszko area. Starting at Benambra, the party walked via Mt Leinster, where they investigated caves which were then undeveloped. They journeyed on to the Cobberas, Mt Pilot and the Snow Plains. Much of the trip was at elevations above 5,000 ft (M). They hiked on to the Thredbo River and on to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko. There was much skylarking in what is described as abundant summer snow. Other visitors at the summit who had arrived by car from the NSW approach were amazed to hear the Scotch party had walked over some many rugged ranges to the south. They returned to Benambra via Tom Groggin Crossing finding some good fishing on the way. From Benambra the party travelled by car via Omeo to Mt Hotham on to Bright. This was no simple journey along the Alpine Road which was only a rough coach track in open topped cars that were relatively unreliable.

In the 1920's walking and skiing tours became widely popular throughout the Victorian and NSW Alps. In 1927 three trips were undertaken which mark the commencement of active involvement in skiing by Scotch boys. In January 1927 Mr Ross led a party on a more ambitious walk through the Victorian Alps, which took three weeks and covered nearly three times the distance of the Kosciuszko walk of the previous year.

The party travelled to Mansfield by train, and then by car on to Klingsporns at the end of the Buller road, well short of the saw mills that are now known as Sawmill Settlement. They camped on the Delatite. The first day's walking took them to the Mt Buller summit, a long hard day assisted by pack horses to carry their provisions. The Boggy Creek Hut, one of the few shelters on the mountain was their camp for the night. The following day they walked to Mt Cobbler, via Mt Stirling and the King River. They then went to Dandongdale Falls, Mt Howitt, Wonnangatta Station, and Lake Tarli Karn. At that time the lake was barely known and had only been visited previously by a few parties. The trip continued to Mt Wellington, then from the remote town of Licola, over Mt McDonald and Mt Skene through some very rough country down to the Jamieson River above the Jamieson Township.

In August 1927 another expedition to Mt Kosciuszko was organised. This was a very inexperienced party of 46 with Mr Lappin in charge. They had abundant snow and met up with a group from Melbourne Grammar. A successful racing program was held. The results were as follows:

Open ski: (1) Benjamin (2) Stephen

Open Jump: (1) Butchart (2) Isaac
Under 16 Ski: (1) Butchart (2) Bullock
Under 15 Ski: (1) Thomas (2) Challings
Under 15 Jump (1) Weston (2) Tonkin
Prep Sch Ski: (1) Brown (2) Hill

Concurrently with the Kosciuszko trip, Mr Ross led a party of 20 to Mt Feathertop, staying in the Bungalow. Their provisions were pack horsed in by Frank Wraith of the Harrierville Store. Wraith was a great friend to early skiers and hikers in the district, and only his knowledge of the snow conditions enabled the stores to get through the heavy snow of 1927. The parties pack horses were bogged down well below the bungalow. Stuart McKay was a member of the party, which had to transfer their packs from the horses to their own shoulders and battle through the snow the remaining distance to the hut.

Many of the party which included Tom Griffiths, Ivor Whitaker and Strauss, were novices but with help and encouragement they soon gained confidence. Trips were made along the Razorback and to the summit of Feathertop. A sequel to this was the temporary loss of Tom Griffiths who, after battling the heavy snow in the head of Blanket Creek, decided to go “down stream”. In the rugged country the searchers were mystified by the lack on tracks in the snow in the creek bed. It was discovered that he avoided the deep snow and after sleeping the night in a hollow log, returned safely the next morning. The searchers had a cold night out and some went down to Harrierville to bring up a bigger search party.

By this time it became the practice to conduct two skiing trips in the winter vacation, concurrently to two different resorts. Usually one resort was of reasonably easy access and chose for the inexperienced skiers and those who liked their home comforts. The alternative was for those who were willing to rough it and didn't mind working for their skiing. Mt Buffalo and Mt Kosciuszko being more highly developed at this period were in the first category, whilst Hotham, Feathertop and St Bernard were in the second.

The Kosciuszko trip was repeated again in 1928, and at the same time Mr Ross conducted a party of 33 to St Bernard. The party was blessed with fair snow and good weather and a tour was organised to Mt Hotham. Here the boys were privileged to witness a demonstration of skiing by the Austrian champion, Mr Koffler, who was one of the first people to demonstrate the Arlberg technique and how to handle Hotham's slopes. He also did much to encourage skiing prior to the arrival of other “professionals”. From Hotham, Koffler moved to Mt Buller where his name is now perpetuated by Koffler's refuge. A lot of fun was had on these trips and on this occasion a beard growing competition was held. It is recorded that Ivor Whitaker was the comfortable winner.

In 1929 the first trip to Mt Buffalo was held, organised by Mr Bienvenu. In the following two winters Mr Clayton also conducted trips to Mt Buffalo. These parties were made up of between 22 to 28 mainly novice skiers.

The usual outdoor pastimes included skiing, tobogganing, pony and sleigh rides, while more civilised amusements prevailed at night. Generally the boys on these trips were more socially minded, and it was the custom for school blazers to be worn at dinner. It often happened that the trips coincided with similar trips to the resort by one of the leading girls' schools.

For the dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast, those who were prepared to rough it, would carry one change of clothes and spend their nights preparing for the next day's skiing, trips were held to the more inaccessible mountains. In those days it was common to have to walk six miles to St Bernard and a further six miles to Mt Hotham.

Mr Ross' party to St Bernard in 1929 numbered 13. Bad weather made the trip to Blowhard Hut very difficult, but Vial, Rees and Straus managed to pass their “Junior Ski Test”.

In 1930 Messrs Ross, Fox and A. J. Walker took a party of beginners, including J. K. Walker, to Mt Feathertop. Again the trip was blighted by bad weather. The same Masters took a party of 20 to St Bernard the following year, including Colin McKay and J. K. Walker. While waiting to move on to stay at Mt Hotham with a small group, it is recorded that Walker and two other boys slept the night in the bar at St Bernard. Their condition the following morning is not recorded.

Mt Hotham was visited again in 1932. A party of seven boys, including Colin McKay and K. J. McKay, spent two weeks in the area without the presence of a Master. The party was blessed with good skiing conditions and their activities included a tour to Mt Loch. The boys also succeeded in conquering the (Varsity) "Drag". This was quite a feat in the days of limited technique when this and another long slope was negotiated by snow plough and stem turns. With no ski lifts, the only way back to the top was to walk up the slope on seal or bear skins.

During this trip the boys met Paul Cremy, a noted Austrian skier, who put on an exhibition. The party gained some notoriety in the daily press when most of its members were lost whilst returning from Hotham via Feathertop. They were found after a night out happy and sitting around a camp fire.

Following the debacles of 1932, Mr Ross led the party to Hotham in 1933. The party experienced excellent conditions, and two people passed their "junior test". The party included D. R. Gould, R. V. Pratt, G. H. Nicholson and R. G. Duckett. The Drag was successfully negotiated once again, and Duckett won the "Harvey Nicholson Cup".

In 1934 and again in 1935, trips were made to Mt Kosciuszko this time under a new leader, Mr Boyes, who was to remain interested in the Club for many years to come. These were the first visits to the mountain since 1928. In both years excursions were made to surrounding areas to the great delight of the boys. Mr Boyes recalls his first time on skis when he went from the top of the Kerry Run to the bottom without falling, only to come to a "Stizmark" stop at the finish and discover his skis were on the wrong feet.

Mt Kosciuszko, being a more sophisticated resort than the others, was able to provide light hearted entertainment including interstate relationships, fancy dress balls and movies. A skiing challenge from Scotch to the Sydney schools made the boys realise the purpose of the trip.

In 1934, Mr Ross was compelled to relinquish his reins on the leadership of ski tours so the annual Hotham trip went ahead without a Master. This occurred again in 1935. In both years the usual stop for refreshments was made at St Bernard before tackling the Razorback. Also in both years there were parties present from Geelong Grammar School and Xavier College, and a great deal of friendly rivalry ensued.

During this period a number of boys performed well in school races. These people included G. E. Nicholson, Harbig, Bell, W. Morgan, I. O. G. McCormick, Dix, Bretherton, Whitehead, Martin, W. H. Press, W. D. Broderick and K. A. Taylor. In 1934 G. H. Nicholson placed second in the Championship for the Ivor Whitaker Cup and won the Tourist Bureau Trophy. In the more novel events Mr Boyes was the undisputed "snow golf" champion.

Part 2 1936 to 1955

The Formation of a Club and its Development

The new school year in 1936 was to herald in the start of a most important phase in the history of the Club. The band of boys who annually went away skiing without a collectively name was to get one. In second term 1936 a most important meeting was called by Mr C. B. Boyes, the main force behind the

Club. The purpose of the meeting was to officially form the Scotch College Ski Club. The first elected Committee of the Club was as follows:

President: Mr C. B. Boyes

Committee: R. C. Bretherton, I. C. G. McCormick, G. H. Nicholson, Q. J. Whitehead

In keeping with the formation of a Club, a badge was designed and made available for sale to members.

A further step forward was made in 1937 when the Committee was able to arrange an affiliation with the Ski Club of Victoria. This meant that the Scotch Ski Club was officially recognised as a ski Club. The Committee that year was Mr Boyes President, R. G. Bretherton, B. R. Martin, C. Hull and W. E. Swaney. Mr Boyes was to maintain an active interest in the Club for many years. Scarcely once did he miss taking boys on their annual ski trip and many of the stories that he could tell. It is interesting to note that many of the boys who formed the Committee of the Club during those years were to come to the support of the Club in later years when our building programs were being launched, and even now (1961) are still interested in the Club's welfare.

The Committee during these two years were extremely active and within weeks of the formation of the Club in 1936, a full program of talks, films and trips was underway.

The first person to address the Club was the then Australian Downhill Champion and Captain of the Australian Team, Mr T. W. Mitchell. He is reported as having given a "wonderfully interesting and humorous address on skiing in different parts of the world and helped considerably towards putting the Club in a position of financial stability".

An old boy of the school, Ivor Whitaker, was to give to the Club more support by giving addresses and lending films. The activities of the Club at the school consisted of screening of skiing films, talks by boys, lectures and demonstrations of techniques by leading experts.

Possibly as a result of this, the Club conducted a demonstration of straw-skiing on the Hill in 1936. This exercise resulted in many weird and wonderful antics. "The crowd was greatly amused as would-be skiers rubbed their bruises and turned the sky red with expletives as they skidded down the track on the seat of their pants".

During all this frivolity, the art of practical skiing was not neglected. In 1936 several members made weekend trips to the snow and on the King's Birthday weekend of that year, three members journeyed to Mt Buffalo, staying at the Horn Hut.

In 1936, as in the two previous years, there were trips to Mt Hotham and Mt Kosciuszko. The Hotham trip was an unqualified success. After the usual soul and back rending climb up the Bon Accord Spur, the party was greeted by the sight of "Hotham Heights" half buried in snow. During their stay, the boys were treated to a display of ski-jumping by Eric Johnson, "one of the best ski-jumpers in Australia, on the new jump constructed this year at Hotham".

The weather and snow conditions were perfect, and the standard improved greatly. The School Championships were held in two sections:

Open Four Event Championship and a Handicap Four Event using the same results for both.

Slalom and Langlauf won by Rod Bretherton.

Downhill & Jump won by Harvey Nicholson.

Open Championship:

1. R. Bretherton, 94%;

2. H. Nicholson, 93%;
3. B. Bretherton, 74%;
4. Hull, 66%;
5. Rodd, 60%;
6. Cole, 59%;
7. Gilchrist, 57%

Handicap:

1. R Bretherton 98% (4% handicap)
2. H. Nicholson 95% (2%)
3. Gilchrist 92% (35%)

By way of contrast, Mr Boyes once again led a larger party on their annual social jaunt to Kosciuszko. Conditions were excellent and several trips were made to surrounding areas. The customary indoor activities prevailed and included a snowball fight for variety. In the School Championships the resorts were:

Downhill: 1st Martin; Slalom: 1st McCormick; Novice Slalom: 1st Laing, Novice Downhill: 1st Colclough; Handicap downhill: Glen & Adams equal.

A large number of people passed various tests in this year, and by no means was the least noteworthy that of Mr Boyes in the Preliminary Test.

In 1937 the Club's activities on the snowfields were greatly curtailed due to the infantile paralysis epidemic. However, an enterprising member took advantage of the situation and retired to Mt Buffalo for six months. This was R. C. Bretherton and with such solid training behind him, he put up a fine effort to win the Open Championship.

The enforced inactivity during 1937 was more than compensated for in 1938 when Scotch skiers visited almost every mountain in the Alps. Several weekend trips were made to Mt Donna Buang, Mt St Clair and Lake Mountain.

The Lake Mountain trip was made by C. Hull and B. Bretherton accompanied by Val Cole. "They decided that the slopes weren't much good anyway, although they did not see them, after spending a day finding the snow, they spent three-quarters of the next day starting their car".

The September holidays of 1938 were crowded with visits to Mt Bogong, Mt Kosciuszko, Mt Hotham and Mt Buffalo. The Kosciuszko trip followed the pattern of earlier years with the usual novice's bag of success. "However, Mr Boyes obliged with some quite professional instruction, and by the next day most of the party could manage quite well." The customary off-the-snow pastimes prevailed with billiards being prominent. A trip was made to Betts' Camp and the Perisher Ranges. In the school championships E. J. Adams, J. N. Diggle, and A. D. Bain put up the best all round performance in the Downhill, Slalom and Langlauf.

The purpose of the Hotham trip was to have some competition in the Victorian Championships. Bruce Bretherton was the outstanding performer with two firsts, two seconds, and a third in the downhills and slaloms, and two thirds in the jumping to his credit. In the Ski Club of Victoria downhill he made the fastest time of the day, but was unfortunately disqualified for missing a control flag. Hull gained a fourth and a fifth place.

Following their successes, "Doc" Bretherton and Hull had "an exciting and protracted journey to Tawonga on Doc's motor-bike which had a sick engine". After climbing the Staircase Spur to the Cleve

Cole Memorial Hut, where they stayed, a week's glorious skiing was enjoyed over virgin snow on Mt Bogong. This was the first time a Scotch party had visited the area.

This burst of activity was seriously curtailed in 1939 when the wartime emergency came into being. In 1939 and again in 1940 Kosciuszko school trips were planned but had to be cancelled. However, in 1940 private trips were made to Kosciuszko and to Hotham with the SCV.

In 1941, the first Buller trip for many years was undertaken by a party of 16. As Mr Boyes was employed on war service, Dr Mendel had charge of the party. Snow conditions were very variable, but Howard Farrow managed a first place in the Men's Open Slalom.

Despite the war and other difficulties, Mr Boyes conducted parties to Hotham Heights in 1943 and 1944. In both years the party travelled by horseback from Harrierville to Bon Accord Hut and then on foot. "The enthusiastic beginners learnt the famous "kick turn" from the undefeated kick-turn champion, Mr Boyes, and made good progress under his guidance."

During the years 1945 to 1947, interest in skiing at Scotch was to reach its lowest ebb for 20 years when the Club was temporarily disbanded.

Skiing interest was restored in 1948 when the Scotch College Ski Club was revived and re-affiliated with the Ski Club of Victoria. Mr Boyes kept his interest alive and took a party of 18 boys, including many novices, to Mt Buller where they stayed at the Ivor Whitaker Memorial Lodge. The school slalom and a downhill were both won by Malcolm McEachern.

1949 was to be one of the most active years for sometime. Activities included summer work parties at Mt Buller and skiing films at the school. It was now apparent that Mt Buller had replaced the traditional Hotham areas as the favourite skiing area for Scotch boys.

The annual September trip was held at Mt Buller where the boys were lodged at the "Whit" and "newly constructed huts nearby". Despite the bad weather, Mr Boyes was able to provide his usual tuition and a great deal of progress was made. This special tuition was becoming a feature of the school's ski trips and it is doubtful whether a trip would have been successful without it.

Buller skiers in this era will always remember the first breakfast at the Whit when Mr Boyes would stand on a stool and invite all beginners to follow him and learn snow craft. After certain elementary ski movements he would demonstrate one of his downhills. This was done by pointing the skis parallel down the slope and checking any movement with his stocks placed firmly in the snow in front of the body.

On one memorable occasion, the stocks were removed and Mr Boyes proceeded at a rapid rate to the bottom of Shaky Knees. He was not seen for the rest of the day.

The Bourke Street, Bull Run, Federation and Summit slopes were all used and since there were no tows at this time a great amount of climbing and walking was required. Several people including John Clements, Peter Haugen, Peter Gibson, Colin Munro, Ian Warirep, Peter Joubert and Bruce Wallace passed their SCV Junior Test. McEachern earned the prize pair of stocks by winning both the slalom and downhill race for the second year. The highlight of 1949 at Buller was the occasion of the Merton Hall hut fire. The Scotch boys were able to demonstrate their prowess by becoming firemen for a night. However, only the girls and their skis were saved.

Mt Buller was visited again in 1950 by a group led by Mr Boyes. This was the first year that the Bourke Street tow rope was operating and it was used extensively. Good skiing progress was made and John Clements, Peter Haugen and Malcolm McEachern passed their ANSF 3rd Class test. The annual races

were conducted on Bull Run by Mr George Chisholm, the then Captain-Manager of the Australian Ski Team. These races were highlighted by Malcolm McEacharn winning both the slalom and the downhill for the third year in succession. The following results were obtained:

Downhill – Open Championship

McEacharn	(37 secs)	1 st
Rosenthal	(40.02 secs)	2 nd
Heugen	(41 secs)	3 rd

Novice Championships

Wood	(57 secs)	1 st
Lawson	(60 secs)	2 nd

Handicap

Fink	1 st
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Slalom – Open Championship (total time for 2 runs)

McEachern	(69 secs)	1 st
Haugen	(87.4 secs)	2 nd
Clements	(88.4 secs)	3 rd

Novice Championship

Lawson	(133 secs)	1 st
Wood	(133.6 sec)	2 nd

Handicap

Boyes	1 st
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The finale to this week on the snow was the traditional bunk room party which helps warm one up for a 3 am departure.

Activities in the Club reached a peak in 1951 which was also the Scotch College Centenary year. The Committee this year was J. McF. Clements, (Sec), G. S. Fraser (Treas), and N. N. Ellis (Comm.).

The ski season was opened for Scotch when a small group visited Mt Buller for the King's Birthday weekend. This was followed by several other weekend trips to Buller and one to Mt Macedon, but there was no snow available for skiing. Mr Boyes led the customary pilgrimage to Mt Buller and the Whit. The usual transport was by bus or train to Mansfield. The party was then loaded into a service coach which was conveyed to the Sawmill Settlement. A further change was made to a four wheel vehicle which went as far as Dump Inn. The remainder of the journey was always done on foot. Mr Boyes instruction was that the party should keep together and that nobody should stray. In 1951 the school boys became alarmed at Mr Boyes prolonged absence alone. A search party of the boys set out, only to find the "Master" sitting on a log near One Tree Hill gazing into space – enjoying some refreshment.

The overall standard of skiing had improved continuously since 1948 and Fraser won the combined title with Rosenthal taking 2nd place.

1951 was also highlighted by the first trip ever made by a Scotch party to the Bogong High Plains. The small party with Dr Mendel in charge stayed at the Wilkinson Hut. The members of this party will remember the Hut for its wood fire stove and Mike Wood's "wonderful" meals. The abundant season meant that the hut was well buried in snow. They will also remember the occasion when Dr Mendel

miscalculated a stem turn with the result that the heels of his skis became buried in the snow and he was left hanging from his skis quite unable to move until a group of boys released him.

Many trips were conducted to neighbouring areas including Mounts Nelson and McKay. The last two days saw the best skiing at Falls Creek. It was here that the inhabitants were greatly surprised to see John Scarborough, who was unused to long slopes, apparently under control hurtling down the slope and brushing the tow passengers going up. He was last seen in the midst of a very disorganised tow queue.

The annual trip to Mt Buller was conducted by Mr Boyes in 1952 and in 1953. In 1952 the school races were held on the Bull Run. Leo Rosenthal skied well to win the Open Slalom, Open Downhill and the Slalom Handicap and came third in the Victorian Junior Championship Slalom.

The weather in 1953 was very bad, but the snow conditions were excellent. The following were the results in the school races:

Open Slalom

1. Tony Jackson
2. Leo Rosenthal
3. Alan Broad

Open Downhill

1. Leo Rosenthal
2. Bill Hutchinson

Combined Downhill Slalom

1. Leo Rosenthal

Novice

1. K. Hick

The first trip to Mt Hotham since the war was made by Leon Fink and David Bardas in 1953.

In 1954 trips were made to Mt Hotham and Mt Buller. The Hotham trip had four people in the party and, although the snow was poor, many day trips were made to nearby areas. One to the Diamantina slope almost ended in disaster as three people careered out of control into the creek below.

The Buller trip was conducted by Mr Boyes who led a party of 20, most of whom were novices. The school races were held on the Bourke Street Run, the results being as follows:

Downhill: 1. Sandy Wallace

Slalom: 1. Alan Broad

Novice: 1. Ken Humes

This was to be the last trip that “the old man of the mountain” was to have to Mt Buller in charge of a school party. To quote the Scotch Collegian “Mr Boyes, as all past and present Ski Club members know, has been in charge of the Club since its beginning, and it was under his guidance that many of Victoria’s prominent skiers first learnt the elements of the sport.”

In 1955, the annual ski trip was again held at Mt Buller. This year for the first time, the party was in the care of Mr Colin Scott, who was to continue this work for some years thereafter. The following are the results of the school races:

Downhill – starting at the top of Little Baldy, then through four control gates to finish at the bottom of Bourke Street:

Championship: 1. A. Jackson 2. A. Broad

Handicap: 1. A. Warren

Slalom – conducted on the Bull Run:

Championship: 1. A. B. Wenzel 2. A. Jackson

Handicap: 1. B. Scoones

With this change of leadership, a very active period of the Club's history draws to a close, only to open the following year with a burst of activity which had, until then, only been the subject of dreams in the minds of many.

Part 3 1956 to 1962

The Buller Lodge

For many years, while the Scotch skiers traversed the snow of Mounts Hotham, Buller, Buffalo, Bogong, Kosciuszko and others as mentioned in greater detail in previous issues (above), it was the dream that one day the Club would own its own lodge in the snow.

In 1950 the subject was opened when a group of boys, including McEacharn, Clements, Meyer and Rosenthal and a Master, Mr Parker, discussed the matter with Messrs Gilray (the Principal) and Boyes (the Master in charge of skiing) and attempted to persuade them that a School lodge at Mt Buller was a proposition. However, no finality was reached and the matter lapsed.

In 1956 the subject of a Scotch lodge was raised again due to the enthusiasm of a Master, Mr Colin Scott, and two schoolboys, Peter Trace and Andrew Broad. These people were, in turn, able to interest Mr Bob Trengrove, an architect and an old boy of the School, in the idea. Mr Trengrove then prepared a set of sketch plans for a ski hut to be erected at Falls Creek. This design was for a two storied hut with the front wall in cardinal, gold and blue panels alternating with glass. The design was prepared so that the hut could be erected with a minimum of skilled labour.

Simultaneously with the preparations of the plans a group of boys prepared a draft constitution. This constitution outlined the aims of the Club, the location of the lodge and the method of raising the necessary finance. At this stage it was estimated that £2,600 would allow for the construction and early maintenance of the lodge at Falls Creek.

Accordingly, the proposal was presented to the Principal, Mr Selby Smith, who "liked the idea" and in turn had it discussed by the School Council which approved the plan with certain conditions. In the latter part of 1956 the location of the lodge was changed from Falls Creek to Mt Buller, mainly on account of the closer proximity that Mt Buller has to Melbourne.

It was at this stage in 1956 that the Ski Club of Victoria was approached by Peter Trace with a view to establishing a schoolboys ski Club building and to obtain a site. This approach was made one "Club night" and it was here that Peter met and greatly interested another old boy, Mr Michael Wood, in the scheme.

The scheme at this stage was gathering momentum and Mr Scott approached Mr Wood with Trengrove's original design. The plans, however, were changed because of the cost and the standard of the labour available to build the original scheme. The revised scheme was drawn up in March 1957 and this was a single story design rather like the building finally constructed. Mr Wood drafted the specification for this building and the plans and specifications were presented to the Forestry Commission for approval, which was granted without delay.

During this period every effort was being made to raise the finance for the scheme. Parents and old boys were approached on this matter and asked to take up debentures or give donations of cash or materials, or just to lend a hand in a very practical way. With the introduction of parents and old boys into the orbit of the Club, it was realised that the nature of the Club was changing. Accordingly, Mr Peter Wilson prepared a draft constitution which was presented to the inaugural general meeting of the newly formed Scotch College Ski Club held at the school on 25th September, 1957. This meeting called “to merge into one functioning entity all the parents, old boys and present boys.”

The constitution was discussed and finalised and it was decided “to absorb the existing Club into the new Club” with membership open to:

- “(i) Present-day boys of Scotch College
- (ii) Staff of Scotch College
- (iii) Old Boys of Scotch College
- (iv) Parents of present-day boys or Old Boys of Scotch College.”

The first Committee of the new Club consisted of:

“President: The Headmaster (ex officio)
Vice Presidents: Mr P Wilson, Mr C Scott (Staff)
Parent Representatives: Mr F Lonie, Mr B Bretherton
Old Boy Representatives: Mr M Wood, Mr R Haper
Schoolboy Representatives: C Stuart, B Wenzel J Vroland, T Lonie

From amongst its own members this Committee elected the first Executive as follows:

“Secretary: Mr C Scott
Honorary Treasurer: Mr F Lonie
Booking Secretary: Mr P R Wilson
Building Advisor: Mr M R Wood
Secretary at School: C T K Stuart”

The initial subscriptions were fixed at two pounds with ten shillings for schoolboys.

Thus the third phase in the development of the Scotch College Ski Club was properly constituted and underway.

During this period the practical work of building the lodge had not been forgotten and construction kept pace with the available finance. Work on the lodge commenced on 13th May, 1957 with the pre-fabrication of the frame on a site in Box Hill kindly lent by Mr M. F. R. Wood for the purpose. It was intended to dismantle the frame when ready and re-erect it on the site at Mt Buller. It became a common sight in Box Hill to see an army of school boys, parents and old boys working together every weekend until December, to achieve the common objective of a lodge for the Scotch College Ski Club.

Simultaneously, work was continuing at a pace in Mr Wenzel’s garage where the joinery work was being made up. All this work was in no small part due to the personal efforts of Mr M. R. Wood.

During the Christmas vacation of 1957 – 1958 a three weeks work party was organised for the site at Mt Buller. The site allotted was in the Ski Club of Victoria area behind the Euroa Ski Club Hut. Prior to Christmas 1957 a survey party consisting of Mr M. R. Wood, Mr P. Eilson and eight other persons visited

the site to set out the building. Despite some upsets, the area was cleared, foundations excavated, stumps placed and the prefabricated wall sections re-erected on the site.

Persons engaged on these work parties were generously housed by other Clubs on the mountain, in particular “Kandahar”, “Chamois”, Elk, Euroa, Omega and Yurredla. How well these people will remember the somewhat primitive conditions but the excellent meals cooked under difficulties by the members of the fairer sex, made up for the lack of home comforts.

During this period, and in subsequent years, there was being built up a wonderful esprit-de-corps in the creation of the Club’s own building.

While all this planning and building was in progress, the art of skiing had not been forgotten. In 1956 and again in 1957 the boys stayed at the Ivor Whitaker Lodge which was almost completely over-run. In 1956 Scotch challenged Melbourne Grammar to races in slalom and downhill. Due to its greater experience, the Scotch team gained the first four places in each race. The result of the 1956 school race was as follows:

Slalom: 1. Wenzel, 2. Broad, 3. Trace.

Downhill: 1. Broad, 2. Trace, 3. Wenzel

In 1957, the snow conditions were poor but Scotch were able to field a strong team in the Inter-Schools races and thus won the championship from Wesley College, Melbourne Grammar and Geelong Grammar.

The School Slalom Championship was held on the Federation Run with A. Broad coming first, S. Brown second, the handicap being won by K. Spicer. The Downhill was won by S. Brown, with D. Wenzel second and the Handicap was won by J. Vroland.

In 1958 a continual drive was made to raise finance and help in other directions for the Club. The funds were substantially helped by a dinner dance organised by the Lonie and Wenzel families; thus the Club was starting to help itself by organising social functions.

Several generous donations were received of materials in the electrical field. Although it is out of place to mention particular names in a narrative of this sort, Michael McKay, Michael Wood and Christopher Wood will remember the occasion when they had to sledge the 240 volt generator donated by Mr Horbig, from the Ivor Whitaker Lodge to the Scotch lodge. The hot water system was also the subject of a generous donation.

By the end of 1958 the lodge was properly locked up and those members sleeping in the lodge for the first time in the only habitable room (a bathroom lined with galvanised iron) will remember sweeping away the snow to lie on straw palliasses. The effort required to get the lodge to this stage was considerable and work parties were present on the mountain during most weekends and school holidays.

The schoolboys spent their annual skiing holiday at Buller during September and stayed at the lodge for the first time. This was also the first year in which a competition was held for the Bruce Wenzel Unofficial Inter-school Challenge Trophy. The trophy was awarded on the results of slalom, downhill, and langlauf-downhill races. The Scotch team consisting of C. Stuart, D. Wenzel, I Lonie, P Wenzel, S. Brown and I. Challingsworth, won the trophy after good performances by Stuart and Brown. Melbourne Grammar School obtained second place and Geelong Grammar third place.

Scotch skiers performed well in the 1958 Victorian Junior Championships by taking the first three places in the slalom and downhill. In the aggregate C. Stuart obtained first place and S. Brown second place. The results of the school championships completed a most successful season for Scotch skiers.

1959 commenced in fine style with an attendance of 75 persons at the Annual General Meeting. The Club's first honorary life member was announced when M. R. Wood was unanimously elected to the position in recognition of his efforts in bringing the lodge to its present standard. Mr Selby Smith was elected our first patron and Mr A. B. Wenzel became the new President.

By the Queen's Birthday weekend the hut had been stacked with 12 tons of firewood and the electric generator, hot water service, drying room, hat room and kitchen were all functioning ready for the skiers.

However, at 4 a.m. in Sunday, 26th July, disaster struck. The party of 14 people in the lodge were awakened by Val Galt to find the drying room on fire. The fire rapidly spread to the roof and the building paper became alight and burning pitch dropped on those people working below. The Club's fire extinguishers were in good order and with the use of these and the help from neighbouring Clubs the fire was brought under control in 30 minutes. The fire fighters were relaxing after their work when it was realised that the fire had broken out again, this time by spontaneous combustion of the mattresses.

The net result of the fire was that the roof was badly burnt but had not collapsed. The walls and floors were badly charred but were saved. Due to the lack of fire fighting facilities most fires in the snow usually result in total destruction. In our case the insurance assessor stated that he had never seen a building so far gone, yet saved. This is surely a tribute to all those present.

Due to the drive of Mick Wood the building was immediately made safe, new roof timbers ordered and moved through the snow to the lodge by twelve people who came from Melbourne on the Sunday following urgent telephone messages. Plans were already underway to restore the building to its original state and make certain improvements. When the professionals had left many teams of members and friends worked to complete the finishing touches.

Despite the set back of the fire the schoolboy party made its annual trip to Buller with some boys staying at the Club lodge while others were boarded at other lodges and chalets.

Racing was keenly contested and good teams were fielded in the numerous championships. The Bruce Wenzel Trophy was won by Melbourne Grammar School with the Scotch team in second place. The Scotch team consisted of C. Stuart, S. Brown, P. Wenzel, D. Bretherton, and C. Simpson. The slalom was won by C. Stuart and S. Brown won the downhill.

The school championship was won by C. Stuart from S. Brown. Simon Brown performed well in the Victorian Junior Races to win the slalom title. The Scotch team distinguished themselves in State skiing by coming second to Geelong Ski Club in the InterClub "B" Grade finals at Falls Creek; the team consisting of C. Stuart, S. Brown and P. Wenzel.

The social side of the Club affairs had not been neglected and the Social Committee completed a most successful, if unfortunate, 1959 season with a number of first class functions. The most memorable of these were the barbecue and supper dance.

The highlight of 1960 was the official opening of the Buller Lodge by the President, Mr A. B. Wenzel, on the Queen's Birthday weekend. The opening was accompanied by the unveiling of the School Crest which was installed on a feature wall in the living room.

Prior to this event a large number of work parties had been held to bring the lodge up to its current standards. This had involved considerable carpentry work, improvements to all aspects of the plumbing facilities, improvements to the drying room, completion of the electrical system and painting both the inside and outside.

In the field of racing, strong Scotch teams were entered in all events. The Bruce Wenzel Trophy was won from Melbourne Grammar and Geelong Grammar Schools. Simon Brown skied well to also come second in the Victorian Junior Championships and first in the S.C.V. Championships. In the school races Simon Brown won the championship from Peter Wenzel and Peter Linley. The handicap was won by Peter Linley from Richard Johnson and Peter Singer.

Scotch skiers performed well in the Merinda Cup to win five of the prizes. Excellent performances were also recorded in the "B" Grade Inter Club finals at Mt Hotham where Scotch came second to Mulligatawny Ski Club. Another trophy was added to our collection when Mr Harbig donated a trophy for the "Most Improved Skier" among the schoolboys to be awarded annually.

The social side of events was most active during 1960 and the Committee responsible organised a number of functions including a schoolboy's dance, picture night and dinner dance. These functions were responsible for swelling the Club's finances.

During 1960 a notable addition was made to the Club's activities. Since the start of the building at Buller, the Club issued periodical newsletters to keep members informed of progress and events. Early in 1960 these newsletters were organised into a magazine to be called Die Brettln and to be issued approximately six times per year. The publication has since proved to be a very well received addition to the Club's activities and serves to keep members informed of current events and future plans.

Late in 1960 a Building Committee was properly organised to co-ordinate the effort of completing and running the Club lodge at Mt Buller and spread the effort amongst a large number of our members. This move has proved most successful as those members who visit the lodge will bear witness and the Committee was then in a favourable position to carry out planning for 1961.

As a result of this planning construction commenced early in 1961 on the stone wall which is now greatly admired by all people who see it. At the same time an underground bulk fuel tank was installed in an effort to reduce the danger of fire in the lodge. The interior of the lodge was continually improved in all departments until the stage has been reached when only finishing touches are required. An item of Club equipment which has not been mentioned to date is the "Blitz" truck purchased in 1957. The Club came to depend on this worthy "work horse" for its heavy haulage.

After having been made roadworthy earlier in the year this brilliantly painted vehicle was found one morning off the Buller road inverted against a tree. The salvage was completely successful and the truck continued to do valuable work.

During 1961 the Social Committee were hard at work and organised a number of successful and diversified functions including a schoolboy dance, theatre night, car rally, mannequin parade and progressive dinner. All this, and more, continued to be reported in Die Brettln which was becoming well known outside the Club's membership thus helping to spread the name and the work of the Scotch College Ski Club.

Despite a fluctuating snow cover on the runs, the lodge was well patronised at weekends by old boys and by schoolboys during the September vacation. Five schools competed for the Bruce Wenzel Trophy which was won by Melbourne Grammar School with Scotch coming third to Geelong Grammar School. The Scotch team consisted of David Bretherton, Barry Evans, Peter Sanlwick, Roger Evans, Andrew Bretherton and John Blamfield.

In the school races Christopher Newman won the Handicap event whilst David Bretherton won the Championship. Richard Mills won the Harbig Trophy for the Most Improved Skier for 1961. In other

aces the Scotch team consisting of Andrew Bisset, Simon Brown and David Bretherton won third place in the B Grade Inter Club Finals at Mt Hotham whilst the individual members skied with credit in the S.C.V. Championships, V.S.A. Intermediate Championships and Victorian Junior Championships.

At the Annual General Meeting in 1962, Bruce Wenzel retired as President and Michael Wood was unanimously elected to this position. This was a just recognition of a person who gave so much to the Club in personal effort.

The newly formed Committee proceeded with vigour to further the plans formed by the previous Committee. Those people who attended the opening of the 1962 Ski Season on the Queen's Birthday weekend, observed at first hand the work of the Building Committee. This work included completion of the stone wall, external terracing, and the sanding and sealing of the floors stained at the time of the fire, excavation of the basement and a large amount of internal finishing designed to bring the lodge to a higher degree of comfort and safety.

This year a further trophy was donated to the Club for competition between all members of the Club. It was named the President's Trophy and was to be awarded to the Club Champion of the Year. The Championship was to be decided on the aggregate of slalom, downhill, langlauf and jump events, and was designed to find the best all round skier in the Club. The trophy, which was donated by Michael Wood, consists of a circular Blackwood base, surmounted by a solid copper figure of a skier in a typical wedeln position. The first competition was held on 22nd and 23rd September 1962 at Mt Buller and was won by David Bretherton.

The standard of ski-racing in the Club continued to rise to the extent that two teams were entered in the V.S.A. InterClub Championships. The A Grade team obtained 7th place in the Buller Zone heats whilst the B Grade team obtained 1st place in the heats and proceeded to win the finals held at Mt Hotham. The B Grade team consisted of Andrew Bisset, Roger Evans, and John Caraher. This success was accompanied by excellent performances in the S.C.V. Championships and the Victorian Alpine Championships.

The annual school fortnight was held in September, during which time, Scotch comfortably won the Bruce Wenzel Trophy from Geelong Grammar School and Carey Grammar School. The Scotch team consisted of Roger Evans, David and Andrew Bretherton, Daryl Evans, Barry Evans, Phillip Goodwich and Peter Singer.

In the Scotch Championship, David Bretherton won the title from Brian Keon-Cohen and Andrew Bretherton in a very close race – while John Atkinson won the handicap. Phillip Goodwich won the Harbig Trophy for Most Improved Skier.

This year, the School held a Building Appeal and the Ski Club participated by presenting an excellent display of its activities and history. The Social Committee continued its good work of previous years by organising a number of well attended functions including a film night, school dance, mannequin parade, progressive dinner and dinner dance.

During this period of continuous improvements to the Club's property the increasing standards in ski-racing, the behind the scenes work had not been neglected. The Committee, on which so much of the Club's progress and success depends, was keenly active. The Club's financial position continued to improve over the years, and was by 1962 in a strong position.

The Club's constitution was changed to reflect some different classes of membership, and to encourage family groups with a Scotch background. At the Annual Meeting in February 1963, a completely new

constitution was passed which consolidated many of the Committee decisions of previous years and gave direction to future Committees.

The future of the Club as viewed in 1963. The development of the Scotch College Ski Club through its various stages over the years, from a collection of ardent mountain walkers to a recognised Club with its own property, gives great promise to the future. Work at that time being carried out by the Committee was laying a foundation stone for the future.

The changes to the constitution which were accepted in 1963 were designed as a basis for further improvement to the Club's organisation, to define and protect members' rights and to define the activities of the Committee.

The Club's property was continuing to improve. It is hoped that the Mt Buller lodge will be completed in all respects by the end of 1964. At the 1963 AGM there were discussions about furthering the Club's activities in other areas. The Committee was instructed to investigate the possibility of construction of a small lodge at Mt Hotham. It was expected that site work would commence on this project in 1965.

Other departments of the Club's activities also show bright prospects for the future. The standard of racing has improved greatly as the results show, and with younger skiers coming along, there was a strong nucleus of good competition skiers for several years. This was thought to be a product of the number of trophies available for competition within the Club.

Socially, the Club is expanding its activities and there is evidence to expect further expansion. The Club magazine, which started life as a single sheet newsletter, broadened in scope greatly and has become the chief means of spreading news and information within the Club. This was one of the Club's most important activities as it helped to keep cohesion amongst the large and ever widening membership. With the increasing membership, this function increases in importance.

In conclusion, without the continual individual support of members all the planning to that date was but wasted effort. The Club can never stand still, it must retreat or advance. It is up to the members themselves to ensure that it is the latter course that takes place.

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