

PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 13 Summer 2014/15

Notes from the President

I am opening with a call for assistance in loading the website with all the data that has been passed on to PHS.

Over the past seven years we have progressively become more comfortable with our mission. Almost from the inception of PHS the utilisation of emerging technology was seen as core. The vision was a website which would be a receptacle for everything – stories, photographs, movies, audio interviews, etc. As such it would cater for three audiences – first the interested web-surfer and fact checking inquirer, second the ‘rusted on’ skier of the area interested in background and detail and also for academic research.

Lee Brulisauer got us going with our initial site but generational change was in progress with the look, feel and the public's expectation of websites. Two years ago a chance meeting with a Jindabyne local, Jacinta Muras, of Webgraffiti handed us a real opportunity to rocket our presentation into the here and now and enable us to progressively inject functionality as it emerges. A website builder and mentor, she offered to become involved and provide her services at very attractive rates as a community service. Importantly she brought new enthusiasm to the project.

Regrettably, it has been a year of continuing distraction for me. This has meant that the website project has been treading water a bit. For this I apologise.

Collaboration Forum

In mid-May Pam and I went to Mt Buller for the inaugural meeting of historical societies from other resorts. This initiative was sponsored by Thredbo Historical Society (THS) and Mt Buller Ski Company. The plan was to gather in a structured meeting with a view to discover together who was doing what and investigate the opportunity for collaborative association. It was a huge success. This was especially pleasing, as since inception PHS has espoused the sense of working closely with others and promoted the virtue of collaboration.

Twenty-five very enthusiastic representatives from eight organisations involved with ski and alpine history got together. Egos were not present and a big agenda was completed on Saturday, with a dinner and social interaction that evening.

The outcome was positive and unanimous – that a mutual beneficial and collaborative association be formed based on sharing and the



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avoidance of duplication, and that there be a further meeting in a year.

The embryo group is nominally the Australian Alpine Ski History Association (AASHA). A Steering Committee was formed and charged with investigating a structure suitable to the task of assisting sensible collaborative activity and to set some objectives.

The next meeting of AASHA will be held in Thredbo on Saturday 16 May 2015 hosted by THS. The meeting is open to all and I encourage any interested persons to attend and contribute to this exciting initiative.

The President of THS, Alan Fredericks, is to be congratulated on pushing through with this initiative and thanks are due to Mt Buller Skiing Company for their involvement and sponsorship of the meeting.

It is an opportunity to highlight the wonderful museum at Mt Buller, impertinently known as the National Alpine Museum of Australia (there is an arguable reason for this). The material is beautifully presented, it includes thematic displays and is backed up by a very large collection of well stored and catalogued 'realia' (that's library/history jargon for real physical 'stuff' like skis, uniforms, etc). It is certainly a must see when you pass that way.

The following organisations were represented.

NAMA National Alpine Museum of Australia

THS Thredbo Historical Society

SCT Ski Club of Tasmania

PHS Perisher Historical Society

ISHA International Ski History Association

ASSH Australian Society for Sports History

KHA Kosciuszko Huts Association

VHCH Victorian High Country Huts Association

NPWS

As we are all only too well aware NSW citizens are being caused to live within their budget, this has meant the NSW Government has had to make expenditure cuts. Regrettably, NPWS has copped it too and, in an exasperatingly long exercise, staffing cuts have been the result. That's always the easy one because it is the big ticket item.

Many talented and highly skilled personnel have been scrapped. The rationale escapes me and revised objectives for NPWS are yet to be publicised.

Since the inception of PHS we have been blessed by the involvement of NPWS Environment Liaison Officer Dave Woods. Dave's revised job description means the assistance he provided PHS has been significantly curtailed. We are very grateful for the investment of NPWS in community liaison via PHS and believe that the goodwill this created has been significant.

I take this opportunity to thank Dave for the standards that he created and for his enthusiastic contribution. We are delighted that he will continue as the NPWS ex-officio committee member for PHS.

Newsletter

I am delighted to have the involvement of Jan Glover in the production of the Newsletter. Jan is an accomplished photographer, keen historian and collector of ski and alpine facts and stories, both of which she has contributed to past issues of the newsletter.

Vale – Trumm and Freuden

Recent weeks have seen the passing of two men integral to the development of skiing in NSW and beyond – Hans Trumm and George Freuden.

Hans Trumm, a foundation member of Fjellheim Ski Club in Perisher, was the second president of the NSW Ski Association (now known as NSW Snowsports).



Hans was vitally involved in the establishment of the annual NSW Ski Show which generated significant funds to be invested in skier development and funding. He was part of a small group who physically built the exhibition stands. It was under Hans' presidency that Twin Valleys was investigated for development.

George Freuden is a true legend of Ski Patrol both in Australia and internationally. Not only a patroller since the earliest days of the Thredbo Patrol, he was critically involved in the evolution of ski patrolling to the sophisticated and disciplined organisation that it has become.

Regrettably he passed away a few weeks short of the launch of his biography *Off Piste My Way* a fascinating account of his life, its travails and triumphs and yet another example of the benefits and strength of the multi-racial, ethnic and religious mix that immigration has provided for Australia.



It is a fascination to me that skiing appears to attract interesting people who are frequently generous people of goodwill.

Membership

Annual Membership falls due 31st December 2014 and renewal notices will be sent shortly. The rates remain unchanged.

My best wishes to all for the festive season and thank you for your support and encouragement.

Philip Woodman
President.

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW
ADDRESS AND PHONE
NUMBER

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to our readers**



Hello in the Snow 2014 Season Get-together

In the second week of August a happy group of PHS members and friends gathered at the Marritz Hotel after skiing. Although we missed the cross-country fraternity this year, the group included skiers from Charlotte Pass and Smiggins as well as Perisher stalwarts.

Great finger food and a drink or two fuelled vigorous conversation, interrupted only when the ageless and iconic Perisher ski instructor Christian Keller, rose to present Pam Woodman, PHS Secretary, with what appeared to be a shock absorber but was in fact a trophy from the days of Professional Ski Racing. Christian has had it squirreled away for years and has done a marvellous job of restoration. Many thanks Christian.

Once again, our thanks to Simone Beilicz and her staff for their support.



Dates for your Diary

PHS Annual General Meeting

Saturday 2.00 pm
7 February 2015
Conference Room, NPWS
Jindabyne Office

Australian Alpine Snowsports

History Association
(AASHA)
Saturday 16 May
Thredbo

Sydney Cocktails

Combined Perisher/Thredbo
event
Tuesday 26 May
RAHS History House
Macquarie St, Sydney

PHS 8th Annual Dinner

6.00 pm for 6.30 pm
Sunday 7 June 2015
Marritz Hotel, Perisher Valley
Guest Speaker TBA

Hello in the Snow

Après Ski Drinks from 4.00 pm
Tuesday 4 August 2015
Marritz Hotel, Perisher Valley

Perisher Cup 2015

Saturday 19 September

NEW MEMBER

Welcome to Phil Guilfoyle of
Arlberg Lodge
at Charlotte Pass

Hotel Kosciusko

By Olive Cann (2002)

This article continues Olive's memoirs from Issue 12 of this newsletter.

After World War II was over and peace was here again, I went back to the Hotel Kosciusko: I couldn't forget this place, the snow and this spot. In 1948 I went to the Tourist bureau in Sydney, as they hired the staff for the hotel, and acquired for myself a job as waitress. Then I worked and skied all winter.

Snow did fall in plenty around this area then and the Hotel was such a special sight all decked in white. 'Sponars', which still stands today, was only a small part of the hotel (the staff quarters) and the only part built of stone. The large hotel stood in front of the staff quarters and was built of wood, and even lined with wooden boards.

Log fires were numerous in the many lounging rooms. All of the bedrooms and long hallways were heated with steam pipes and this was very cosy. Old historic photographs lined the hallways.

In those days too, you could comfortably wear your lovely thick fair-isle jumpers down to breakfast and lunch, and show them off, as the rooms were not as hot as now, with central heating. Then in the evenings, especially before the war, almost everyone dressed for dinner. Ladies wore those lovely long evening dresses.

The tables were decked with starched white tablecloths and set up elaborately by today's standards. Coffee was

served in those tiny cups after dinner and much conversation developed about falls and near catastrophes of the day. Much laughter and companionship spread around the big log fires. In this atmosphere of warmth and friendliness, we forgot about our sore and aching muscles.

On the 'Kerry', a short way up the road, we took our ski lessons. (This slope is now a scrubby mess.) Sometimes we move to Smiggin Holes when the snow was better there, or we needed a change. The instructor first involved the class in side stepping the snow slope on our skis to make a firm, flat surface – no grooming machines then! As soon as we could stand on our feet, the whole class of 15 or so would patter up and down. Soon we'd all be warm and have the spot ready for our 2 hours of 'How to ski'.

In these earlier days we all had to learn to climb the hills if we wanted to ski. No ski lifts then to take you up or to stand in a queue in the cold for! So methods of climbing were very important. Herringboning was a must; also side stepping and using your edges for winding up the slopes. Being able to climb was a necessity.

Before the war, ski boots were quite inadequate; our feet were really distressed. It was a real treat to warm them later by the fire. A comfortable pair of hire-boots was almost impossible to



find. They were no better than a pair of single leather lace-ups. No matter how much you soaked them in boot polish, your feet would be wet and cold within the first hour. No matter how many socks and bits of rubber one managed to insert, the blisters arrived in droves. Then the thought of the morning's agony when trying to place the feet back into these nightmare containers. It wasn't a happy thing to do! But we couldn't miss the skiing and the lesson.

Our skis then were wooden and much longer than most use now. Our boots were attached to a cable binding which clipped along the side of the boot. Eventually, after 1945, I had a pair of hickory skis made and acquired a pair of superb leather ski boots with soft linings and double tongue! My feet were so happy and my mind stopped concentrating on blisters. The bindings had improved from the old cable one by then – a kind of spring latch kept the boots in place.

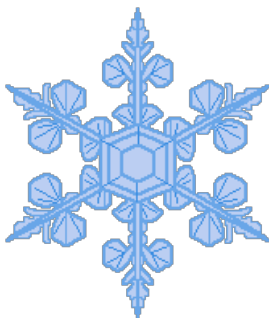
The ski room at the Hotel was a busy place, especially on a

Mt Kosciuszko – 175th Anniversary

Saturday when new guests arrived and some departed. A warm sizzle and smell of skis being waxed hung around the big room and so did an air of anticipation.

Outside the ski-room door a steepish short hill rises quite smartly. It became a talking point! This was where the daredevil novices and a few experts did their 'thing'. A shout from the top, "Coming down, clear the way!" Everyone would scatter. The little lake was the most likely destination for some of these wild ones! This slope would be unnoticed today when we have ski lifts and snowmobiles to take us up the highest slopes. But every hill had to be climbed first, back then, if you wanted to ski down, there was no choice.

It was quite sad when the fire took the old Hotel Kosciusko and it disappeared overnight, though luckily no lives were lost. It had developed a sense of presence and character, and nowadays when I go up the mountains to see the flowers in summer, I always see it still, a gracious, gabled building, right in front of the staff quarters, now 'Sponars'. This is an interesting building too, but old Hotel Kosciusko sits etched on my mind. People who have stayed here will always speak of this place with nostalgia – though now there are not many of us left to remember!



By Peter Southwell-Keely

Aborigines were the first people to climb Australia's highest mountain and had done so on countless occasions prior to white settlement, but had made no record of it. Thus, on 12 March 1840, Paul Edmund de Strzelecki and James McArthur made the first recorded ascent of the mountain, with Strzelecki himself proceeding to, and naming the summit. The year 2015 will mark the 175th anniversary of that event.

Strzelecki named the mountain after his fellow countryman Tadeusz Kosciuszko. Kosciuszko was a Polish hero, having commanded Polish forces in numerous battles against Russia, but was also a hero of the American War of Independence where he attained the rank of Brigadier General.



On his maps and in his letters to Governor Gipps, Strzelecki used the anglicised spelling, Kosciusko, for the name of the mountain. Incidentally, the former French Minister for Ecology, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, uses the same spelling in her name.

Kosciusko remained the accepted spelling until 1997, when it was changed to Kosciuszko by the Geographic Names Board. The change was made, supposedly, to give the mountain the true Polish spelling. However, the Polish spelling uses an acute accent above the first 's' - Kościuszko. Thus, the present spelling is just another anglicisation. Unless one uses the true Polish spelling, there seems little reason to have changed from the form used by Strzelecki himself.

The first winter ascent of Mt Kosciuszko did not occur until 1897 when Charles Kerry led a party of fifteen plus five pack horses up the Thredbo Valley to Friday Flat where they made camp. After one day practising snowshoeing (skiing), a novelty to most of the party, the ascent was completed by twelve of the travellers on 19 August, 1897.



Right: The Strzelecki memorial at Jindabyne

Nureyev on Skis or The Emperor of Illawong
Eulogy for Alan E J Andrews
by Klaus Hueneke AM



I have known Alan in person since about 1984 and I've known about his writings and journeys across the high country since the 1960s. He had a big impact on my life and my book publishing business Tabletop Press.

Alan was a lover of:

Australian History especially the early explorers,

the Australian Alps and skiing in all its forms,

the mountain huts especially Illawong and Albina,

old style poetry with rhyming verse,

the ballet and bacon sandwiches and

an old Holden Station Wagon.

He loved reading, drawing and using maps,

and the careful composing of numerous articles and books.

He enjoyed helping others with

their own research and replied at length to any questions or correspondence sent. He did this in careful, often quite tiny, longhand or neatly printed with lots of curly bits. You can view it in some of his books. When his distinct handwriting was not on the last parcel of books I thought, "something must be seriously wrong". It was.

His books and long sojourns at Albina or Illawong hut above the Snowy River were very important features of his life. When he was at Illawong it was like the Emperor was in residence. Not a domineering Emperor who demanded our attention but a quietly spoken, quietly smiling, self effacing Emperor, one who didn't have to shout it from the roof tops.

I loved listening to him reciting Australian classics as well as his own poetry. This is an extract from The Fan-shaped Snowgum.

*There it is, the fan-shaped
snowgum,
Glinting in the morning frost;
Reminding us of courtly
pleasures
From time forgotten – long since
lost.
Lovely eyes 'neath lowered
lashes,
Flirting sweetly, ringlets tossed,
Fan on crinoline laid demurely,
Clamouring suitors imperiously
bossed.*

*But look again, the trunk is
twisted,
Leaning perilously askew.
Another instant it had fallen,
Yet still survives, to grow anew,
The branchlets fanning to the
northward,
Others stretching southward too;
Now proudly standing tall,
defiant,
A sentinel to welcome you.*

In 1982 I wrote *Huts of the High Country*. Alan took note that there was a new kid on the block and on a later visit to Illawong we spoke about my new book *Kiandra to Kosciusko*. He offered to draw a number of maps and gave me permission to use his articles about early ski tours in different parts of the Snowy Mountains.

When the book came out he said “but you only spent a couple of pages on the history of Mt Kosciusko itself”. Sorry Alan. It got him going and in 1990 he asked me to design and publish *Kosciusko – the Mountain in History*. It covered all the first European explorers who reached the high tops and filled a missing gap. As usual, the research was meticulous.

In 1993 he wanted me to do the same with *Skiing the Western Faces* but this time he said, “I want the book to breathe more”. “Breathe?”, I thought. “Can a book breathe?” It showed how books to him were living entities with eyes, lungs, heart and soul. No wonder his and Muriel’s house is full of them.

He showed me a book which had lots of space around the text and between chapters. I got the message and *Skiing the Western Faces* became his most popular book. It inspired many others, including his sons Neil and Ian as well as my step-son Chris, who brought me here today, to explore the dramatic western faces. I always

know it has been a good snow year if orders come in during September and October.

By 1996 he was ready to go with *Rainforest and Ravished Snow*. Half of this book dealt with his bushwalks on the Comboyn and in the Upper Manning River area, one in which some of his relatives once lived and where Ian, his son, still owns a plot of bush. After skiing became too hard for him, Alan often went there to communicate with nature.



It became obvious that Alan had been sitting on a large body of drawings, maps, photos, writing ideas and unpublished work. I was very glad he chose me to bring them into the world. These were books with small print runs not commercially viable for big publishing houses but important nevertheless.

In 1998 I received the manuscript for *Earliest Monaro and Burragorang*, his last major work. It is jam-packed with historical detail, black and white photos, dozens of hand-drawn maps and many references. It has been well received by old Monaro families and local historians.

His books have been selling steadily for the last 20 years and will continue to do so for a long time. I often say “History doesn’t age, it just gets older”.

Before I came along Alan published a number of books with Blubber Head Press and smaller hand-made ones like *Where the Wombat Goes* and *Surveyor Thomas Townsend, his work in Australia 1831-1854*. Another was a compendium of all the articles and books he had published between 1950 and 1983. Yes, starting in 1950, 64 years ago, when he was a young 24. A note in one said, “This really is a table top book – written, made and printed at home”.

On one of our day trips he took me on to Twynam West Spur and showed me the gap in the cornices through which I could thread my long, thin skis and descend into Siren Song Creek. “Ski down there?” I thought, and went off to sit at the end of the Craggs to bask in the sun and contemplate the vista to the crouching lion Jagungal.

He, meanwhile, wasted no time and in a series of adroit, light as a feather, linked turns, leapt, carved and flew into the siren’s arms. It was Rudolf Nureyev (a famous ballet dancer from the 1980s) delicately balanced on a couple of plastic planks in the steepest snow country we have.

About the same time I discovered he adored the Australian Ballet and the stunning, lithe, pink-clad

ballerinas. He wrote poems about them too. The ballet must have rubbed off for it was ballet on skis that he displayed that memorable day.

Writing this about Alan, the word 'fey' kept bouncing around inside my head. The dictionary explained. It means, 'as if enchanted, under a spell and aware of supernatural influences'. Yes, that was Alan all over and that's what explains his love of skiing, his poetry, his wry sense of humour, some of his drawings and his ability to morph from a cheeky Shakespearean imp to a serious historian over the same cup of tea.

I will end on a poem he wrote after ascending Twynam North Spur. It could be his epitaph:

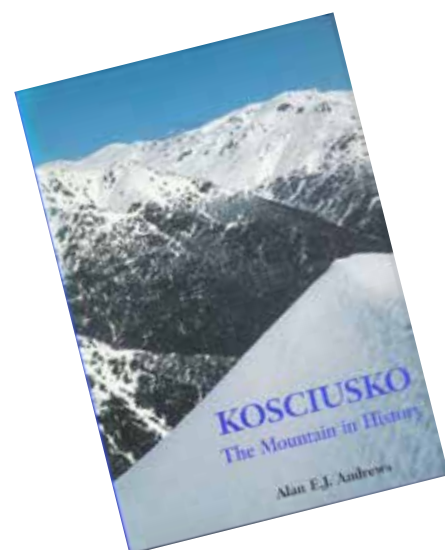
*We leave our stately sentinel
And pass on through the Arc of
Trees,
Then upwards still and cross the
snowbridge,
There possibly to take our ease,
But not for long; it's on to
Twynam
To the throne to pay our dues
And find our fealty rewarded -
The granting of the kingdom's
keys.*

*You may be sure we will not
waste them.
Full many a secret we'll explore.
Full many a slope will feel our ski-
tips:
Past craggy slate and granite tor,
Down gullies steep and
awesome,
We'll ski them all, you may be
sure.*

*So when at last we hand the
keys in,
As needs we must – so stands
the Law –
There'll be no need for
compensation.
There'll be no need to ask for
more.*

I will miss him, his annual hand-illustrated and written Christmas cards, his tightly composed letters often with poetry, his years of support and all that he stood for with all my heart for the rest of my days.

Alan, you were an inspiring scholar and an old fashioned gentleman.



The Exclusive Squirrel Club

By Bill Kenyon

In 1962 six members of the Kosciusko Alpine Club agreed to spend a week each year ski touring. Mawson Hut was to be the base for this. About April each year the winter supplies were to be carried in and buried in a cache near the hut. Because of this the group was named the Squirrel Club, later the Exclusive Squirrel Club because there would be no additional members.

Neville Gare, Superintendent of the then Kosciusko State Park, was a good friend and supportive of our activities. He helped us in many ways and accompanied us on our summer trips to the cache. I think he also wanted to educate the Squirrels about Park preservation policies. He told us – “No Ratsak in Mawson” – these were broad toothed bush rats which are protected.

On one occasion Neville accompanied us on a trip in April via the Snowy Plains – we could not use the Schlink Pass route because of snow. I had built a sledge, based on the design of Antarctic sledges where the joints are made of rawhide lashings to give greater flexibility over uneven surfaces. We carried the sledge with our supplies and articles for the repair and improvement of Mawson, including the library, from Kidmans Hut to Alpine Hut, where we stayed overnight. Next day the party carried the sledge and gear to the top of the Brassy. Because of the snow which covered the ground to the Valentine River, all supplies had to be loaded on the sledge and towed to Mawson, Neville being one of three on the tow ropes. In 1965 Neville told us about the Park policy



Top Right: Squirrel Club painting by Unk White
Right: Bill Kenyon, Chief Squirrel

Above: Hauling the sled to Mawson

which would result in the removal of huts which the service could not maintain, and which were in any case incompatible with wilderness values. We had a conference with him that year at Mawson and proposed that the Squirrels would act as honorary caretakers of Mawson Hut and effect repairs to it so that it could remain as a refuge for walkers and skiers who may be in need of shelter in emergencies.

It was hoped that bushwalking clubs would follow this example for there were many other huts also in need of maintenance. To this proposition Neville gave his tacit approval, although official approval under Head Office policy could not be given. So for about five years the Squirrels carried out maintenance work on Mawson until 1970 when Squirrel activities ceased, after which the Kosciusko Huts Association was formed to continue the work on an organised basis. I made another sledge for Grey Mare which was despatched by rail to Cooma and Neville Gare transported it to Grey Mare on the fire trail from Round Mountain.

The Squirrels used Mawson as a base between 1962-1970 making many day trips to Jagungal, Grey Mare, Bulls Peaks and other places.

In 1982 four of the Squirrels walked to Mawson from the Schlink Pass Road on what proved to be their last visit. A large party of bushwalkers staying there were dumbfounded to witness the group of not so young and nondescript men arrive and announce their identity. The party apparently thought the story of the Squirrels was a mountain rumour. Their doubts were dispelled when the Squirrels dug up the cache of 1970 – some canned Beaujolais, tinned tongue and other luxuries. The hole was carefully re-turfed to its natural condition.

*Written by George William Beresford (Bill) Kenyon (1913 - 2008) in November 1990. This article was prepared by Jan Glover, Bill's daughter.
Bill joined the Kosciusko Alpine Club in 1948.*

Members of the Exclusive Squirrel Club 1962-1970

Bill Kenyon (Chief Squirrel), Claude "Gus" Fay, Fred Porter, Dr Maurice Joseph, Tony Furse, Tom Blyton

Note: Mawson Hut is situated in the Mt Jagungal area, in the northern part of the Kosciusko National Park.



Top: Gus Fay and Bill Kenyon - summer work party at Mawson Hut

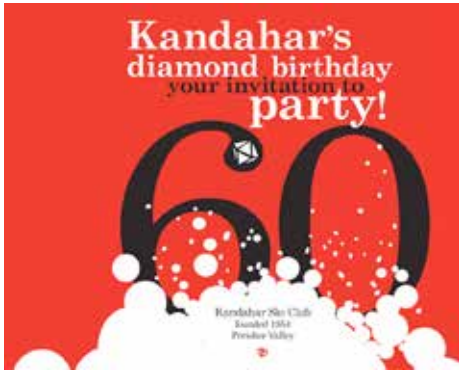
Centre: Fred Porter, Tony Furse, Maurice Joseph, Bill Kenyon

Bottom: Tony Furse and Fred Porter



Above: Two well-dressed Italians were bemused to see the Squirrels arrive back in Berridale after one of their trips. Little did they know that the ragged group comprised a prominent physician, an engineer, a pharmacist and hotelier. Squirrels left to right: Bill Kenyon, Tony Furse, Gus Fay, Fred Porter, Maurice Joseph and Tom Blyton.

Kandahar Ski Club 60th Birthday



By Lisa Chandler

Kandahar Ski Club turned 60 this year! To mark this diamond jubilee milestone, the Club threw a party by the Harbour to honour the foresight and work of those who had created the Club – our first generation, of which 22 founding members attended.

In his welcoming address, Club president Andrew Cutler pointed out how fortunate to have a lodge founded by members who pitched in to help build, fund and maintain a ski club in a perfect spot, a location which became a ski-in/ski-out lodge as the resort developed over the following decades. Today, the Club is still a family-based membership, self-catered and communally run, managed and maintained by a Board of seven plus member volunteers for working bees and social functions.

We had 126 members and guests attend for a sit down dinner, a quiz, a DJ and dancing. It was wonderful to have all three generations celebrating together in sparkling style.

Kandahar began in June 1954 when Ethel and Gordon Robson called a meeting of friends to build a ski lodge at Perisher. The Park Trust designated a few sites and on the 11 October that year the site was chosen - above

Telemark lodge on a grassy plateau facing out to North Perisher.

Initially Kandahar was a simple, pre-fab hut built in a few weekends in a garage in Sydney and erected over several working parties. It was accessed by parking the car as close to Perisher Valley as the snow would permit, and then walking in hauling equipment, supplies and booze. Water supply was from the gully above which sometimes yielded tiny yabbies. We have dishwashers now!

During the night, memorial boards were presented to the Club by founding member Marg Woodward and Jane van Hagen - two lengths of cladding foraged from a working bee, still coated 60 years on in the original deep red paint, onto which the names of the first foundation members have been etched into the boards. These now hang in each lodge.

It was a special night thanks to the care and planning by Kandahar's voluntary social committee headed by Board member Maria Silk Young and to the enthusiasm of our members. Dress code was "wear something that sparkles", paper snowballs hung from the venue ceiling, snowmen and diamonds

decorated the tables which were dressed in Kandahar's flag colours: red, black and white. We had a fun photo booth with ski props and snowflakes, set up by one of our Gen 3 members. The tables sparkled and glowed and large red wax lanterns became gifts for each of our pioneer members.



Top: Kandahar, 1957 – photo Roy Lascelles

Centre: Andrew and Janet Cutler
Bottom: Founding member Bob Powell with Charles Powell