



30 YEARS GOING DOWNHILL
WITH THE RAN SKI CLUB



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1953 - 1983

RAN Ski Club

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The nearer your destination
The more you're slipping away.

Paul Simon

In appreciation of those who made the telling of this story possible.

FOREWORD



This is the story of the first 30 years of the life of the RAN Ski Club. It is a good story — a happy, successful story . . . Why? Well, it is a Club for Navy people, both serving and retired, and our families; it is independent of the Navy Office and of the Defence Department. We own it, we look after it and we are proud of it.

At the time of going to press we have three lodges: Mount Buller, Perisher and Lindabyne. The acquisition of each of them was a great challenge and was achieved by dint of hard work and wise management. Because of the attitude of the members, each lodge has a friendly, family atmosphere — "family" in the sense of the whole Naval family. Most members leave their rank and seniority behind when they come on the snow; thus the RAN Ski Club provides wonderful meeting places for us all, and a great chance for people of different backgrounds, and from all ranks, to get to know each other very well.

So, given the facility of the lodges, at a price we can afford, we are able to enjoy skiing for recreation and the excitement of this great sport.

Our history over the last 30 years is the story of our members. Firstly, the foresight and faith of our founder members. Secondly, the devotion, managerial ability and energy of those who have served as club officials and office bearers and those who have given their contribution to the development and maintenance of the Club as "a labour of love". The completion of this account by Graham Wright is a good example of that willingness to take on work and do it well. Thirdly, the support given to the officials by as

many members as has been necessary to get the work done. And fourthly, the members who have always shown a sense of responsibility and fun in making the whole thing work. The chores get done in the lodges without regimentation. Most members have been busy over the years doing their jobs in the Navy, bringing up families and doing various other activities — but a most significant feature of this Club of ours is that, whenever people have been needed to step forward and help in the management or just do a minor job around the place, there has never been a problem in getting the right sort of person to volunteer.

Add the desire for self-help, and the helpful attitude of the RAN Central Canteens Board — and you have a recipe for success.

As we approach the end of our thirtieth year, the Club is, not for the first time in its history, poised on the brink of some big decisions. Skiing has become a very expensive sport and the cost of buildings and property has soared. Our younger people have high expectations and want a good standard of comfort. Naval people today have a bit more money in their pocket than we did in the "good old days", and want to do something useful with their lives — therefore we have a lot of people wanting to become members. Clearly we must expand and must obtain more beds if we Naval people are to have a fair chance of getting accommodation when we want it. Surely the Club must grow, but we must take great care that we do not become so big that we destroy the atmosphere that has been our most valuable asset so far. Clearly also we must become more businesslike in our management, but care must be taken that we do not become too official and impersonal. These are the dilemmas that face your committee as 1982 draws to a close.

I have every confidence that the Club will face up to the problems, sort them out in a wise and mature way, and reach decisions which will preserve our character and integrity, and will set the course for the future. As the current President, and on behalf of all those who have served as Presidents since 1953, I congratulate all the members past and present on what has been achieved so far, and wish the best of luck, fun and good skiing to those who will look after the Club and enjoy it for the next thirty years.

CANBERRA
November 1982

David Martin
President

FOUNDATION MEMBERS OF RAN SKI CLUB

H.L. Byass	C.D. Gregory	P.M. Mulcare
R.R. Calder	G.R. Griffiths	G. Murray
C.C. Clark	J.M. Harries	B. Osborne-Smith
M.D. Clark	R.G. Harris	R.J. Peek
W.F. Cook	G.P. Hood	P. Playford
P.B. Cooper	J.P. Howden	R.J. Robertson
I.McL. Crawford	P. Howden	A.B. Robinson
P.M. Cumming	J.L. Jobson	D.C. Rose
J.L. Curtis	T.E. Kilburn	S.A. Sewell
P.R. d'Abbs	L.E. Langford	R.A. Sinclair
D.J. Dalton	J.A. Lonergan	J.P. Stevenson
R.M. Dawborn	C.S. McLaren	J. Streeter
N.L. Donaldson	M. McLean	G.M. Trueman
D.L.N. Dyke	K.J. Maddocks	L.R. Turner
P.J. Edwards	D.J. Martin	K. McK. Urquhart
C. Egan	P.F. Maxwell	B.L. West
E.F. Ekert	P. Mellish	P.A. Wood
J.A. Eldridge	J.L.W. Merson	M.F. Wright
J. Ellis	J.O. Morrice	W.G. Wright
P. Field	T. Moore	V.P. Youl
A.D. Gray		

In 1982 the total membership was 1178.

SLIP SLIDING AWAY

The first thirty years of the RAN Ski Club



Every now and then in the life of any sporting organisation someone asks the question: How did it all start?

The origins of the RAN Ski Club depend very much on who is expounding on them. There are at least half a dozen with claims to parenthood of the baby which is now moving rapidly towards middle-age.

The object of recording this story in this booklet is to bring to present and (we would hope) future members some appreciation of the stages through which the Club has moved since it first became officially recognised in the publication of a Commonwealth Navy Order in 1953.

Pre-World War II Activity

No record would be complete without reference to those members of the RAN who followed the sport of skiing in a private capacity in the years before World War II. Of course there were some who took to skiing as a necessary adjunct to their work in various Antarctic expeditions. But it is with the sporting aspects of movement in the snow that we are concerned.

The name of Ken Urquhart will not be familiar to many of the present members, but those of the initial band of 1953 will be aware of the tremendous prestige he brought to the new RAN Ski Club through his patronage. As a long-time friend and companion of

Charles Anton, who must rank as the one who did the most to get the sport of skiing going in Australia after the war, his voice in discussions with other senior RAN officers was effective in sweeping aside many of the objections which could have scuttled the Club before it was truly afloat.

There were also a number of adventurous young men who took advantage of their service with the Royal Navy to take some of their winter leave skiing in Europe. A picture of one such group shows not only how fashions have changed, but the heights that some can be expected to reach.

Notwithstanding that the RAN had skiers, as undoubtedly it had those who rode horses, it simply had not occurred to anyone that the Navy was the sort of organisation in which skiing as a sport could be fostered.

Those who have been fortunate enough to have listened to Sam Sewell's accounts of skiing at Kosciuszko in the 30's will no doubt wonder that enthusiasm could be so unbounded.

A typical day's skiing started at dawn. The horses would be rounded up, and after an early breakfast the ride would begin from about where Jindabyne is today. Once at the bottom of a likely looking slope the horses would be tethered and the skiers would set about climbing to the top. The first run would either convince the party that this was it or encourage them all to move off to a better place, rather like Dad taking the family on a picnic to a little spot he remembers from his youth. Four runs equalled a day's skiing; with no tours and no tickets one might envy them their freedom from queues and frustration.

Nevertheless it was a sport for the relatively well-to-do. A train left Central Railway Station on Friday night for Cooma where a charabanc took the skiers to the Kosciuszko Hotel. (Sponar's Inn is all that is left of the old hotel — it was the staff quarters!) Segregation of the sexes was the order of the day, with a men's dormitory and a women's dormitory the usual accommodation. Mr and Mrs Smith (usually John and Mary) spent a great deal of the winter in the few suites there were.

Skiing, such as it was, was a matter of walking and carrying to the top, and then sliding down trying to remember what the instructor in Europe had been saying during those all too short visits while at Finishing School or on the Grand Tour.

Post War Revival

We owe the rapid development of interest in skiing to the enterprise of those European migrants who came to Australia in search of a new life.

Clubs were formed in universities and among youth groups, and with great foresight the Government set up management bodies to preside over the development of the skiing areas in the Southern Alps. The acquisition of a lodge in the snow for non-profit making organisations was to become more than a dream.

While all this was going on, a new generation of young men was following the path to Europe, but this time there was a difference. A large number of officers and men were standing by the new aircraft carrier being fitted out in England. There was an enthusiastic response to an invitation to join a party going off to Austria to ski.

There were some who found time while in the Occupation Force in Japan to try out skiing, which was included as a pastime at the main holiday resorts run by the American Red Cross.

The scene was being set. The orchestration was nearly complete. All that was needed was a conductor.

The Curtain Rises

HMAS Sydney was commissioned in England in 1949 with the 20th Carrier Air Group. After a brief round of the southern capitals of Australia showing the people what Naval Aviation meant to them, the ship was despatched once again to Britain to take on the 21st Carrier Air Group. It was the summer of 1950 and no thousands of skiing in Europe were entertained by those on board. By the time of return to Australia it was the end of the southern winter, so it was not until 1951 that the young men's fancy turned to thoughts of snow and what could be done in it.

In September of that year four young officers met in the Gunnery Officer's Cabin to discuss the formation of the RAN Ski Club. Three of them, Guy Griffiths, Philip Stevenson and Geoff Hood, were to carry the banner behind which many others trudged, slid, herring-



W.F. Cook T.M. Symon J.M. Ramsay I.K. Purvis



Spooling about

boned, and eventually acquired some degree of expertise. Guy Griffiths, accompanied by George Jude, Peter Brassey Cooper and a young man with the unlikely name of Bentley-Buckle, set off in December 1951, during a maintenance period, for the Japanese snowfields at Dogoyama about 100 miles from Hiroshima. Geoff Hood had skied enthusiastically with the Melbourne University for some years, particularly in the Mount Hotham area. Philip Stevenson had accompanied many of Sydney's smart set on to the slopes. Each of them can rightly claim to have founded the RAN Ski Club.

Following the conclusion reached by those who were in HMAS Sydney that a Naval Ski Club was a possibility, a meeting was called at Naval Headquarters during 1952. This meeting attracted sufficient support to confirm the decision. From then on it was a matter of getting the hierarchy on the right side, writing to the RN Ski and Mountaineering Club for its views, and putting in train the formal formation of the Club.

The RAN Ski Club came into existence officially with the publication of Commonwealth Navy Order No. 50 on 3 February, 1953. This stated that a Ski Club had been formed in the Royal Australian Navy with the title "Royal Australian Naval Ski Club". It announced that the Club Committee for the period ending 31 December 1953 would be:

Chairman: Lieutenant-Commander (E) G.P. Hood, RAN
 Members: Lieutenant-Commander J.P. Stevenson, RAN
 Lieutenant R.J. Tulip, RAN
 Lieutenant (P) P.B. Cooper, RAN

Honorary Secretary and Treasurer:

M.F. Stainfield, WRAN

The aims of the club as set out in this CNO were:

- To gather together all those in the Navy who had skied at one time or another, or who were interested in skiing in the future, for their mutual benefit and for the encouragement of skiing as a Naval sport.
- To collect information regarding skiing facilities in the Australian, New Zealand and Japanese areas.
- To assist in the organisation of skiing parties.
- To form a Naval ski team to represent the Service.

Membership was open to all members of the RAN, RN, RANR, RANVR and WRANS. Associate membership, limited to one per member, was permitted on a temporary basis for relatives and friends of members. Cadets of the Royal Australian Naval College were eligible for membership without subscription, but would not receive the journal. Members were to be proposed by one and seconded by another member of the club with the Committee having the power to accept or reject any candidate.

The annual subscription was \$1 payable on election or on 1 January each year. (Any member who was three months in arrears ceased to be a member.) For this a member was entitled to receive the monthly journal of the Federation of Victorian Ski Clubs, and to use the club facilities.

The Navy Order ended with the statement: "It is hoped to design a club badge in the near future". This was done, and the approved badge is reproduced on the front cover.

One problem which quickly became apparent was the inability to handle club business quickly with a committee whose members were invariably in different places through normal posting action. Moreover when one of the principals was away at sea, the business of skiing was forced into the hands of those closest to the snow.

Notwithstanding CNO 50/53 the business of getting the RAN Ski Club on to the snow fell to a group in Melbourne which met regularly at a handy hostelry in beautiful downtown Toorak. Geoff Hood got them going before a seagoing appointment claimed him in August 1953. Peter Cooper took over as Treasurer and two members of the RANR, Sam Sewell and Cam McLaren, provided the driving force. Sam boiled the water, and Cam provided the billy in which it was boiled. No one who went skiing with them ever came down with a wog.

The winter of 1954 saw the culmination of all the preliminary work and investigation. Through the contacts made while skiing at Mount Buller the Club was able to enjoy several organised weekend trips to the snow. Accommodation for these trips was provided by the University Ski Club, the Monsanto Ski Club and the Youth Hostels Association Ski Club. Tom Kilburn, a Victorian member of the RANR, arranged for YHA to accommodate cadets from the RAN College, then at HMAS Cerberus (the famous Crib Point Tech as it was called by the Fleet Air Arm officers), for a

three-day visit in August. Some of those cadets are now senior officers in the RAN who still give great support to the Club.

ACT I Breathmaker Acquired

In November 1954 Geoff Hood and John Jobson went to Mount Buller to choose a site on which to build a lodge for the RAN Ski Club. There were only three sites left for them to consider, all of them on Breathmaker Point. Naturally enough an application was made for the best of the three. The Mount Buller Committee of Management had already allocated this to another club, and so approved the allocation of the adjacent site to the RAN Ski Club. The final site was allocated to Harold Cuming, the operator of a commercial lodge at Dump Inn. This was a very appropriate name for the accommodation that was handy to the car park but well below the main skiing area at the time.

There was naturally some surprise when it was learnt in 1955 that Aurel Forras, one of the enterprising brothers with a commercial interest in Mount Buller development, had been commissioned to build a canteen for Harold on a site at Breathmaker Point to which the Dump Inn guests could retire for lunch rather than face the long trek back probably not to return for the afternoon's skiing. There was even more surprise when the building finally rose on the site that the RAN Ski Club had first hoped to acquire. No one ever did get to the bottom of it because fate took a hand. In December 1955 the Dump Inn burnt down, and Harold decided to pull out and return to his native Tasmania. He offered the partially completed building on Breathmaker Point to the RAN Ski Club for \$4,400.

Without a cent with which to clinch the deal, but with the certainty that it was on to a good thing, the Committee bought the building. A loan of \$2,000 was obtained from the Central Canteens Fund, an equal amount was raised in the form of debentures from the members, and the 1956 Club Subscriptions made up the difference. The RAN Ski Club was in the snow at last, flat broke.

ACT II: Scene 1 Consolidation at Breathmaker

No one who has not done the weekend bit at Buller Point can appreciate what it was really like in those days. After Divisions at Cerberus and seeing off the liberty personnel by train, car, motor-bike, or whatever transport there was, the skiers would aim to get away as soon after 1700 as possible. As skiing was an official activity, a box of rations carefully packed by the Wardroom Messman accompanied the party.

On arrival in Melbourne there was usually the need to rendezvous with the locally based members before heading off down the Whitehorse Road to Croydon and beyond, through Nellie Melba country to Mansfield. The stop at the Hunt Club Hotel, Merrigum was mandatory. Let it should be thought that this establishment was the last word in luxury, catering to a clientele enjoying the classical dirty weekend, it was entirely as it had been built, a one-roomed wattle bark structure with a tin roof and an outside dunny. The reason for stopping, apart from the obvious, was to let the other idiots sort themselves out in the car park after the nerve shattering experience of ten miles of winding road from Mirimbah, which used to be a one horse town.

For many, the fire at the Hunt Club Hotel was the last chance to be really warm all weekend because, contrary to popular belief, strict segregation was the rule, and the girls watched each other like hawks to ensure that Ma'am received only good reports on Monday morning. Then it was off to the mountain, occasionally with an adventure on the way such as happened the night Rae Sinclair hit the horse in driving rain, and one of his passengers leapt out with a wicked looking hunting knife to put it out of its misery. The animal was last heard clapping off down the road leaving a very shaken party of skiers to phone the local constabulary. Mirimbah was never the same after that.

Once at the top, or as far as the road went, there was the parking, the unloading and the trudge up One-Tree Hill, endlessly it seemed, until the lights of Forras's Hotel came in sight. From there to the bottom of Bourke Street, it was not so bad, and with the lights of Max Otter's Artberg beckoning from the distance, there was a

plunge to the left and a walk that never ended until the Breathaker ramp was reached at last.

A fiddling with keys, the lighting of hurricane lamps, the pot-bellied stove, and perhaps a Tilley Lamp, and Breathaker Lodge was revealed in all its primitive glory. The snow drove in through the cracks in the floorboards, the stove glowed cherry red in the corner, and from up above came the sounds of dismay as those who were there for the first time saw where they were to sleep, each in a sleeping bag somewhat the worse for wear.

But first of all the hut, for really that is all it was, had to be brought to the state in which it could provide night-time shelter for the members. With no funds and only enthusiasm to sustain them, the working party members in 1956 did wonders in preparing for the winter season. Geoff Hood, with Stuart St. Vincent Welch and his family, used the March holiday weekend to lay the foundations for the massive stone wall which surrounds the basement of the lodge. The Mount Buller Management Committee and the Victorian Forestry Commission required this as protection from grass fires.

During the Easter of that year a kitchen was built, a gas stove was installed, a drying room was put in, and a water supply from the basement tanks connected. Throughout all of this activity the rain pelted down, making access impossible to all but four-wheel-drive vehicles. If it had not been for Ernst Forras and his landrover, the supplies and the bedding would not have been brought in.

It was not all work, work, work. The winter season saw some of the best snow in years throughout the Southern Alps, and the Navy Office in Melbourne and HMAS Cerberus kept the lodge and the cash box reasonably full. Cam McLaren's hardware store did not press too hard for payment and the first ever RAN Ski Club Ball at HMAS Lonsdale raised \$700, largely due to Philip Stevenson who persuaded all those skiers he knew in Melbourne to turn up. Hal and Nan Dixon who were interested in our cause made sure that we were supported by other Melbourne Clubs.

If 1956 was the year the Olympic Games were held in Melbourne and the year that television first came to Australia, then it was also the year that the RAN Ski Club proved to those who had helped to bring it into existence that it was a worthwhile addition to the sporting activities of the Navy.

Act II: Scene 2

HMAS Melbourne in the Austrian Tyrol, January 1956

(We are indebted to David Martin for this account.)

Like lots of the good things about this Club, the idea for it was born in the Gunnery Officer's cabin — this time in HMAS Melbourne.

We advertised among the ship's company, worked out an itinerary and before we knew what had happened we had collected twenty-five names.

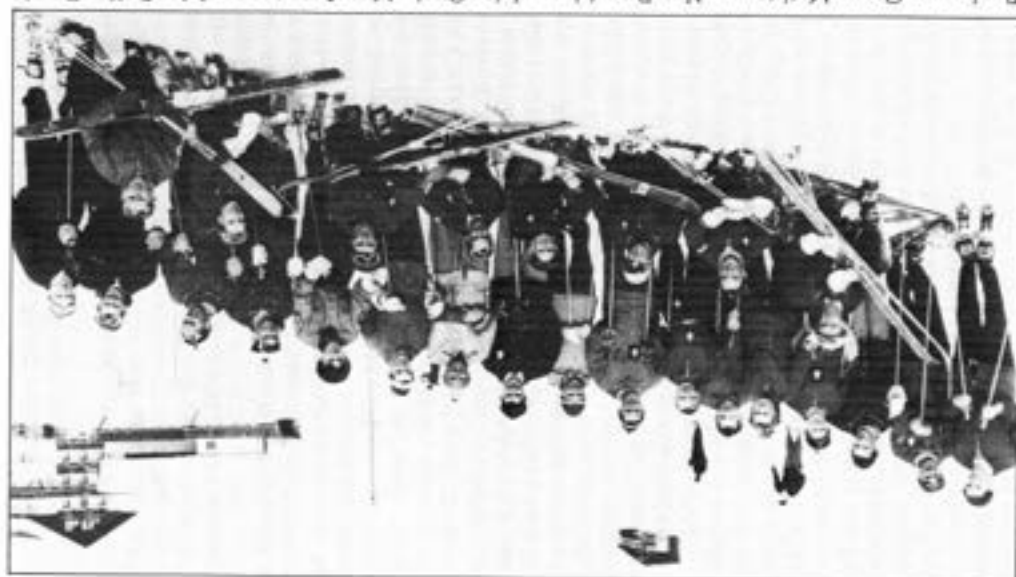
Most of us were novices, all of us looked forward to it feverishly — we even trained for it. One of our party, Petty Officer PTI Phil Rackett, took charge of our bodies for three quarters of an hour in the dog watches each evening and gradually converted us from being typically sluggish Australians into a fairly fit group.

Then, all of a sudden, it was mid-January and we were on the platform at Victoria Station boarding the Snow Sports Special.

So, across the Channel by ferry, back to the train, across France, through Switzerland, through the St Anton Tunnel and then the Tyrol and the snow. We got off at Imst: to our horror all the best looking girls went on to Oberurgl with John Curtis, who had his fiancée with him anyway — there's no justice! From Imst we took a bus to Soelden, then up 2,000 feet in a chair lift to the beautiful resort of Hochsoelden.

For fourteen days we mastered the various routes down to Soelden, the Red, the Yellow and the Blue, or took the next ski lift another 1,000 feet above Hochsoelden, from where we donned our skins, and tramped up the mountain for three hours to the Rotkogel Hutte. Here we ate the memorable picnic lunches prepared by the hotel and then spent a couple of hours skiing back down again through the deep powder. Ah, the well remembered agony of wet leather boots, long cold laces, ski bindings which held one as firmly as a rabbit trap, and skis so long one could barely see the ends of them. One day we took a day trip to Oberurgl to conquer fresh slopes and to meet new people, but we were glad to get back to our own circle of friends. And of course to Georg Haid and his gluwine.

And then the fortnight was up. Sad farewells to Georg Haid, to Jenny the girl from Ingham's who looked after us, and to various



Back row: Garry Mathieson, Nev Donaldson, John Cook, Max Armstrong, John Rolfe, Frank McRae, Shorty Clements, Harry Kann, Guy Griffiths, David Martin, Nat Gould, Algy Terry, Pete Ferguson, Phil Hockett, Jim Green, Roy Hill, Noel Francis
Front row: Bill Williams, Bill Priest, Bimbo Bailey, Keith Potts, Peter Wood, Bing Wheeler, Shiner Wright, Robin Pascoe

new friendships and romances which had developed on the mountain. (We had consumed *all* the red wine from the whole region, and had used more bathwater than had ever gone down the plug before — mad Australians.) The last breathtaking run to Soelden, then we gathered on the platform waiting for the Snow Sports Special the other way, clutching our bags, our new skis and boots, and of course, vast quantities of Bichelhof to comfort us for the journey home. Then suddenly, Victoria Station, rain, drizzle and all the fun was over.

Not surprisingly though, we never lost the friendly spirit which had been forged on the slopes — the twenty-five members of the RAN Ski Club all wore their badges proudly alongside their gold and silver medals from the competitions on the last day at Hochsoelden. And everyone knew how to render his A25! Garry Mathieson, a young musician, had recorded much of it on movie for us; so we were able to relive the experience with a lot of club members at a get together, film show and party on board, in Melbourne town when we reached our name city on the way home.

But for one of the Club's Secretaries the path to Europe was also the path to romance. A few years after this visit a mixed party of British, Canadians and Australians from the Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon followed the ski trek to Lech. One of the party, the younger sister of a fellow skier, now lives with him in Bungen-dore in wedded bliss with a grown-up family. And there are still those who think that a broken leg is the only skiing hazard!

I went back to Hochsoelden several years later and the picture of the Melbourne still hung behind the bar, but Georg had gone and no one remembered the party of Australians who had had such a memorable holiday and had planted the Australian flag so firmly on the mountain. I felt rather like Rip Van Winkle.

Act II: Scene 3 From Hut to Lodge

Meanwhile, back in Australia, Geoff Hood had been posted to sea; he handed over the management of Buller in 1957 to Graham

Wright who was elected President at the Annual General Meeting later in the year. Given the steady increase in membership and the fact that the volunteer handymen had done just about all that they could be expected to do, it was decided to call in the professionals to turn the hut into a lodge.

An upper sleeping area was evolved after much juggling with drawings and cut-outs to fit in the equipment the Club already had. The result was 1 single berth (Annie's room), 4 double berths, 2 live-berth shelves one above the other, 2 showers and a sitting room with an unparalleled view from the windows on two sides, reached by a proper staircase from the living room below. A massive stone fireplace and fitted gas lamps gave the lodge a character all of its own. Masonite over the floorboards stopped the wind and snow, and finally the whole was carpeted wall-to-wall, or almost. The pot-bellied stove ended up in the drying room and never again was allowed to glow cherry-red. Liverpool and London and Globe, the insurers by courtesy of Rae Sinclair, who had taken over from Eve Ekert as Treasurer, would never have allowed it.

The improved accommodation brought with it some problems. Who will ever forget the acion of a noble Italian family who drove from Melbourne to spend a weekend with the lady of his fancy in, as he thought, the luxurious surroundings of the best lodge at Mount Buller. After parking his Ferrari (or was it a Maserati?) in the slush at the side of the road, he was forced to walk untold kilometres in the dark to a wooden hut at the end of nowhere, there to share his bed, such as it was, with a man. Next morning he took one run down Bull Run and without so much as a word of farewell to anyone, returned to Melbourne. Soon after that he left Australia for good. He and the young lady were married in Italy, and as far as we know lived happily ever after.

This was not the only romance which flourished at that time. One of our staunch committee men and our WRAN Honorary Secretary, who had been point-scoring over one another for years and saying the most terrible things to one another for as long as anyone cared to remember, decided to end it all. On the day the footy started in Melbourne in 1958 they took their vows somewhere in the Dandenongs. Most of the guests arrived late at the church because the President of the Club, who was to give the bride away, failed to take the traffic all over Melbourne that afternoon into consideration.

and, travelling too fast, missed the turn-off to the church. Nevertheless, it was a great wedding and as far as we know — well you've guessed it.

On St. Valentine's Day of the same year Philip Stevenson went to the altar, although one cannot claim any credit for the RAN Ski Club in that, and within a year Guy Griffiths joined the band of happily married skiers.

While the principals occupied the centre stage it should not be forgotten that there was a great cast of supporting actors and actresses who made the whole production possible. Without them the RAN Ski Club could never have survived.

ACT III Perisher

The Club had long realised that although Buller offered a wonderful introduction to skiing for Naval personnel it was difficult for those serving in the Fleet or in the Sydney area to make use of Breathaker. Moreover, many skiers were Birdmen to whom HMAS Albatross was home. Added to that, the return of the RAN College to Jervis Bay and the movement of a large part of the Navy Office to Canberra shifted the focus away from the Victorian snow fields to Kosciusko.

Inevitably the debate polarised: Thredbo or Perisher. The better skiers were invariably Thredbo supporters. Those with the experience of introducing sailors and WRANS to the sport came out in favour of Perisher on the grounds that no matter how bad the weather, nor how poor the skier, it was always possible to find somewhere on the slopes to enjoy the snow. Then too there was always the problem of money. Whether it would be ethical to use the profits from Buller to support a venture in Kosciusko or not was a question frequently posed by the more conservative element. Thredbo was strictly a commercial venture. Would a club like the RAN Ski Club really fit in?

In 1962 the decision was made for us. The RAN Ski Club was invited to inspect the last remaining sites for allocation as club

OFF STAGE — THE FORMATION OF A NON-PROFIT MAKING COMPANY

lodges in the Perisher Valley. Guy Griffiths who had done the spade work with the Kosciusko State Park Trust, and Graham Wright who was performing his last action as a Club official before leaving the Active List of the RAN walked the sites and opted for the one on which the RAN Ski Lodge now stands. The choice was decided on the basis that good skiers would be able to run down to the bottom of the chair lift to start their day and the beginners would have an easy run to the nursery slopes. Coming home — well that was a problem no matter where one spent the day; and the nearer your destination the more you're slip sliding away.

Once again the Club faced the problem of financing the building of a lodge, this time without the option of starting with a modest structure and by dint of ingenuity developing it into a worthwhile asset. The conditions imposed by the NSW Government and the Kosciusko State Park Trust required a building of the highest quality, properly sited, and constructed to withstand the worst that the Perisher was capable of providing.

The name Perisher was given to the valley by the old sheep minders who, with the approach of bad weather, took their charges out of the direct path of the biting wind (the Perisher) that came in from the west and buried them in holes in the snow (the Smiggin Holes). How different from today when it is snow bunnies who are wrapped in continental quilts in the area still called Smiggin Holes.

Guy Griffiths and Geoff Hood were given the tasks of selecting an architect, a builder, and raising the necessary finance. Once again the Central Canteens Committee was prepared to back the opinion of the Ski Club with a gift of \$7,000 and a repayable loan of \$11,000. The Commonwealth Bank lent \$4,000 and \$10,000 came from Club Funds. With a contract for \$32,000, tremendous enthusiasm, and the support of an understanding wife, (even though she equated visits to Perisher to oversight work with sea service) Guy Griffiths undertook the project. In the years that followed he became famous as "they". Night after night, visitors to Perisher were heard to ask: "Why didn't they do so and so? What were they thinking about when they did that?" In the event the Lodge was open for business in time for the 1964 season; the credit for this belongs to him, and to Carla for her forbearance.



With the assets of the Club being added to and with their value increasing, it became increasingly difficult to appoint new trustees for the property every time a Club official received a new posting. It was decided to incorporate the Club as a non-profit making company. This met the requirement of the Kosciusko State Park Trust that each Club holding a lease in the Perisher area be formed as a non-profit making company. A Subcommittee, of which Geoff Hood, Rae Sinclair and Peter Cooper were the members, was formed to draft the memorandum and articles of association.

The Minister for Defence, the Hon. Athol Townley, on 21 November 1963, consented to the use, by the RAN Ski Club, of the letters R.A.N. in the title of the RAN Ski Club subject to the condition that the Club remains under the control of serving members of the R.A.N.

Progress at Buller

To their eternal credit the Victorian stalwarts never lost heart and never gave up. Conscious of the fact that all their efforts at money making would have to be devoted to the common good, that is the building of a rival, and by all accounts a superior, lodge at

Perisher, they continued throughout the sixties to improve Breath-taker.

Just as there could be no story of Australians in World War II without the Sullivans, there can be no account of Mount Buller without the Haughtons: Tim, the driving force, Mary, the guardian of cleanliness, and Geoffrey, the resident fireman. Without them to show the way, Greg Swift would have had nothing to enlarge and modernise when the time came for it to be done.

But first things first. The basement area was levelled and a stair-well access built. Pressure to extend the Mount Buller village area resulted in an extension of the boundary in the vicinity of Breath-taker. Another club was allocated a site adjacent to ours and as a consequence our septic tank had to be moved.

With a sense of urgency created by the approach of winter in 1964 and after three vigorous weekends had been spent in trying to dig with picks and crowbars, a contractor was called in to blast a hole out of the solid rock which is Breath-taker Point. He did a great job, and succeeded in putting a large chunk through the roof of a neighbourhood lodge with whom relations were never really friendly. A pre-cast septic tank was brought in by truck and the task of getting it into the hole addressed. Geoff Hood with a thorough knowledge of Archimedes Principles but with little experience of Upper Deck mechanics decided to fill the hole with water, seal the tank, and launch it. In the fullness of time the water would drain away and the tank would then rest in the hole in its proper place.

On the selected day the forenoon was spent getting everything ready. A launching lady with a bottle of plonk stood by; the tank was lowered from the truck, steadying lines were attached, and everyone went inside for lunch. During this meal there was a sudden change in the weather and the first snow of the season started to fall. Everyone rushed outside and in the haste to get the job done before the weather got worse the launching ceremony was forgotten, the lid was left off, those who should have held on checked away and those who should have checked away held on. Geoff Hood as Foreman was powerless. In went the tank, in rushed the water, and down it sank area about face. "What do we do now, Geoff?" asked Rae Sinclair aghast. "We all go home." And they did, to work out a recovery operation for the next weekend.

Inter-Service Skiing

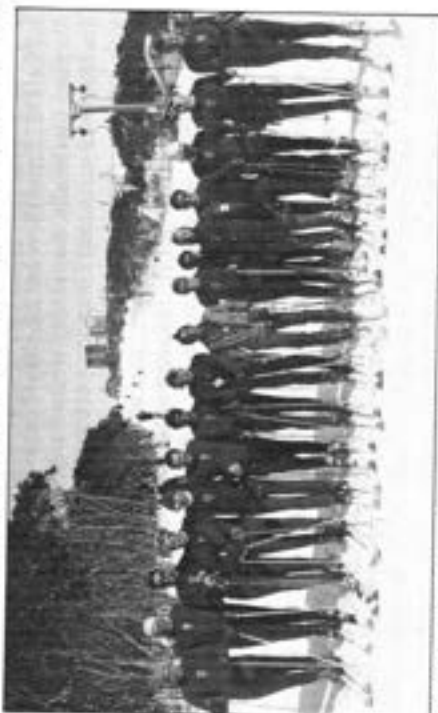
Philip Stevenson was perhaps the classiest skier of the Old Brigade. He took the lead in organising the racing activities of the Club which bore fruit in 1966 with the first Inter-Service Contest at Buller. Ken Luke, of Australian Football fame, presented a handsome silver cup for the event.

No doubt the cup records the winner even if the written records do not, but with the benefit of hindsight, and knowing the strength of support for skiing from Point Cook, it is fairly safe to say that RAAF probably came first.

It would be fair to say that the first recorded Club Race was over the weekend of 17 and 18 August 1963 at Mount Buller. Apparently the snow was good, but as it so often happens, the visibility on the Saturday morning was not. As a result a plan to set a course off summit ridge to Boggy Creek was abandoned, and a short slalom course was set by Jim Logan-Bell on the Orange Marker Run below the Breath-taker Hut.

All that is left of the record is as follows:

Jim got away to a good start followed by Jack Andrewartha, Geoff Hood, John Curtis, Peter Cooper and Tim Cecil (non member).



Navy Southern Inter-Service skiing team 1970

Jim clocked 54 sec, Andrewartha 59 sec. Hood lost a ski in the straight and ended up with 1 m 44 sec and Curtis clocked 60 sec.

Results:

Navy Championship	First	J. Andrewartha
	Second	J.L. Curtis
	Third	G.P. Hood
Club Championship	First	J. Logan-Bell
	Second	J. Andrewartha
	Third	J.L. Curtis
	Fourth	P.B. Cooper

Following his success the Club Champion broke into verse, the quality of which the reader must judge:

From hill to hill as if on wings

Gliding on

Over broad white waves

Whizzing in full swing

Silently downward

And then to strive

Upward again —

That is living!

The 1967 Inter-Service Ski Week was held from 29 July to 6 August. Generally the skiing was very good. The weather was overcast and cold until Thursday but then two sunny days followed with perfect snow conditions. The Inter-Service Race, run on Saturday, 5 August resulted in a win for the RAAF, with RAN second; and Army third. However, Lieutenant I.A. Noble of the Navy team recorded the fastest time, and became Navy Champion.

In the following year the snow conditions were not so good, and the results reflected this. RAAF again came first, but this time Navy was well down in third place. Finally in 1970, Navy did it. In the closest of all contests it won the Inter-Service Skiing. Each team consisted of ten racers who each did two runs to get a best time. The seven best competitors in each team were counted for the team's aggregate time. The competition consisted of two races, a Giant Slalom on the Friday afternoon and a Slalom on the Saturday afternoon. Lieutenant Ian Noble and Lieutenant Commander Chris Nisbet were the Navy stars.

In 1971, Navy fielded a brand new team managed by Mike Neumann. As usual at Buller the team arrived on a Sunday. The next day the team split into four groups, one of which was classed as beginners. At the end of the Giant Slalom on the following Friday the Navy was in third place with RAAF well in the lead. The Slalom saw no change to those placings. Apparently there was considerable concern in the Navy team about the number of inter-state representatives in the Air Force and Army teams, but one could well ask: What's new about that?

Cross Country Skiing or Nordic Skiing, or as some would perhaps prefer it — Langlauf, was introduced to the Inter-Service Calendar for the first time in 1972. The weather took a hand as the snow was very wet on the day set down for the cross country. A shortened course was agreed, from Helicopter Flat up round Tyrol and back. Army came first, but was disqualified when it was found that its No. 1 had skied on downhill skis, which were removed for the uphill part of the run. The Navy team of two came in first and third, thus winning this leg of the competition. However, the Giant Slalom and Slalom saw Army come first, with RAAF second and that was the final result.

About 1973, the less said the better. On Monday, 2 July the Navy team arrived to practise Nordic skiing for a week. By the following Friday they and the rest of the people on the mountain had left. The temperature at Buller was higher than either Mansfield or Melbourne. And so it continued throughout the season — there was no snow!

But what about Perisher? There the season started well with a blizzard in the week before the opening weekend; and some ideal days for skiing were reported up until the end of June. From then on, however, it was the same story as at Buller. It was to be some three years before Perisher came into its own as a training ground for Inter-Service skiers. The Hut Leader's log for this period, as well as recording the exact times at which Roger and Marion Pearson retired to bed and the full details of their early morning activities, show that the skiing burden was shared by:

Brian Read	Peter Knoblock	Bill White
Chris Nisbet	Charlie Hill	Tony Howell Snr.
Ian Noble	David Tomkinson	Tony Howell Jnr.
David Martin	Chris Skinner	Ken Green

Trust increased the requirement for cubic space per bunk, with the result that the two additional bedrooms with woodstore underneath became three additional bunks and a rumpus room.

The Buller contingent, armed with innumerable proxy votes, argued that the priority for improvements should be Buller first. Perisher as a newer and more comfortable lodge at the time had a high usage factor, and it was judged that the cash flow resulting from improvements there would be greater than at Buller.

In the event the contract for the Perisher extensions was signed in November 1973, and the work finished in time for the following winter season. Looking today at what Ludwig Limbeck, his assistant Gert Lederbauer, and Freddie Moser the stoneworker achieved, all for the sum of \$7,000, who can say that the decision to tackle Perisher first was not wise? John Jobson's project was a great success, although we should not forget the groundwork done by Tony Gilmore.

However, by 1975 the requirement to extend and improve the accommodation at Buller had become urgent. In spite of the 1969 improvements which prepared the lodge for complying with the Uniform Building Regulations applicable to structures over 4,000 feet above sea level, the Victorian State Forestry Commission had made it abundantly clear that lodges had to be upgraded with respect both to accommodation and safety. Moreover, a Club was to be rated for rental purposes on the assessed capacity of the area that its lodge occupied. Our capacity was assessed at 40 bunks, and failure to improve the standard of a lodge would result in the non-renewal of the annual lease.

At the 1975 Annual General Meeting, Tom Fisher was elected President of the Club and John Lloyd, Vice President for Victoria. Tom's account of the development of Buller follows:

"During September 1975 I was attending a course in Melbourne when John Lloyd arranged a meeting with me to discuss a proposal to extend the Buller Lodge. Over several quiet ales in the Officers Mess at RAAF Tottenham we decided to spend \$1,800 on an expert opinion from Arvi Paulberg, who was associated with the Lend-Lease Corporation.

Arvi produced a very well documented proposal to extend the Buller Lodge by some 20 berths and to make other altera-

Many of these are still skiing and still representing Navy in Inter-Service competitions. Brian Read, Ian Noble and Ric McMaster are always ready to bring you up-to-date with progress in racing whether it be cross-country or downhill.

By 1974 there were two distinct Inter-Service competitions, with rules governing who could represent each Service in each area. That year saw the first of many members of the Women's Services taking part in open competitions. At the risk of incurring the wrath of many it should be recorded that June McGloin was the first such Navy competitor.

Inter-Service skiing is now a regular feature of the Inter-Service sports calendar in NSW and Victoria. Much credit is due to the support given to the Inter-Service competition in Victoria by John Hilton Wood and the French Ski School at Buller. In NSW progress has been steady and Inter-Service Alpine and Nordic Skiing are well established. The Rothmans National Sport Foundation has never wavered in its support of the coaching clinics.

Whereas in 1977 Nordic was a minor aberration indulged in by Alpinists, we now have specialist cross-country racers in Tony Garing, Paul Jones and Peter Purcell who are ably supported by all-rounders Dave Cotton, Andy Raff, Doug Collins, Chris Shepherd and Roger Pearson, of compensation and other fame.

In skiing, yesterday's competitors are always there to spur the new young talent on, and take their places if need be to ensure that Navy wins its share of the events.

Crows Nest Revisited

In the early 70s the Club was in some danger of splitting into two factions: those for Buller and those for Perisher. The Annual General Meeting of 1972 placed a considerable strain on Club unity.

There was about \$14,000 available for improvements. One proposal was to extend Perisher by five bunks and so increase its revenue. Tony Matthews, the Club's Honorary Architect, no sooner had the plans developed than the Kosciuszko State Park

tions to meet the State Forestry Commission requirements. By early December 1975 I had a comprehensive set of drawings, a schedule of materials and an estimate of costs broken down in detail. Thus armed, a letter was written to the RAN Central Canteens Board seeking a loan of \$40,000; the Club had some \$20,000 in its development funds at this stage.

Thanks to the well documented proposal and the detail into which documentation went, and no doubt the good standing of the RAN Ski Club, the Central Canteens Committee allocated \$35,000 to the Club for the purpose of extending Buller.

As I recall, the payment rate was \$3,000 per year and the loan was interest free.

By the end of January the project was well in hand. Certain savings had been effected — thanks to self-help. For instance, the site was cleared by club members, and the blasting of the rock structure to accommodate the piers for the building was also undertaken. I am told that it was an exciting weekend.

Without going into detail, it is sufficient to say that the lodge was ready for occupation by the middle of May, and that the traditional opening of the season weekend, that is the second



Mount Buller 1979

weekend of June, saw the lodge opened with great pomp, ceremony and bonhomie' with the President being present. As far as the locals were concerned, the impossible had been achieved, and what a comfortable addition to the Buller facilities the extension provided!

Although this is only one of the Ski Club's many success stories, in my opinion the extension of Buller was a major milestone in the growth of the club. Having undertaken this task the Ski Club had some 60 bunks on the snowfields and had thus the potential for a considerable cash flow, which is an absolute necessity if the club is to expand at a rate in line with the demands being made upon it for ski facilities."

We have certainly come a long way from the days when the major interest centred around tanks in the basement, hand pumps, soaks and temperamental generators charging unreliable batteries. But we needed those experiences to appreciate what we have now — as one of our Life Members, thinking back on preparations for the start of a winter season at Buller, recalls:

"This vividly revives the fearsome and frequent sight of Peter Freeman wielding a murderous chainsaw when we were laying in the winter stocks of firewood. I always liked to contemplate what I hoped would be a marked contrast between his chainsaw technique with its earbursting background and the exercise of his delicate professional skills during the following week."

(Peter is an FRCS, FRACS, DLO in case you did not know.)

While on the subject of woodwork, the Buller table will long be a monument to Frank Belcher and Norm Wall who made the legs while under the influence of Peter, Port and Mary (an in-joke which only those with Victorian affiliations will understand). The stools are the work of Lindsay Bidgood.

It is not at all clear when the name Crows Nest faded out, but it apparently did not survive beyond 1962 when "Under New Management" signs were posted. Nevertheless, the traditions of the early days were carried on by the aforementioned Haughtons, John and Nornie Lloyd, together with Tony and Mary Gilmore, until they moved to Canberra.

THE EAST SIDE STORY

They were the second generation of the few; no doubt there will be others in the future, and it must be left to the 50-year story to record their deeds.



*Saturday 6 August 1977 —
the day they burnt old Geebung down*

Bar Seelars

"The ultimate end of all ski lodges is incineration."



Early in the 70s it was clear that more bunks were needed in the snow for Navy skiers. The Club membership was rising each year, and the drop-out rate was going down.

Skiing was fast becoming the in-thing and sailors were not about to be left out.

When Mike Hudson assumed the presidency of the Club in 1979, urgent action was necessary. Since 1976 we had been considering a report from the Development Sub-Committee led by Stewart Russell. This group had looked at all the skiing areas in Australia and had taken into account the growing movement against any increase in the number of residents above the snow-line, which virtually put paid to any suggestions to increase either the size of existing lodges or the number of those lodges.

Jindabyne, however, presented itself as a place for future expansion, with easy access to Thredbo for day skiing and reasonable access to Perisher provided the weather was right and the monied interests were prepared to keep the roads open and the car parks operating. Once again Guy Griffiths and Geoff Hood took the lead, and planning to provide additional club accommodation in the Jindabyne area became the thing.

Well, there the matter stood until the Annual General Meeting in 1979. Lots of planning, but no action. In fact, the only action appeared between the 'I' and the 's' of the factions which continued to argue over where to go.

But the planning paid off. Bill Williams, who headed the Development Sub-Committee at the time, persuaded the 1979 Annual General Meeting to agree that what we needed was a small lodge or

large house at Lindabyne with not less than 12 bunks and capable of expansion to 35. The in-coming Committee had something positive to work on.

Raising the Wind

Mike Hudson took on the task of finding the money while a Development Working Party consisting of Mike Apps, Brian Read, Dave Dalton, Ric McMaster and Jon Delaney set about finding what to buy with it.

Working on the principle that when you are in debt the only successful thing to do is to go further in debt, Mike approached the RAN Central Canteens Board to extend the existing loan of \$34,000 by a further \$100,000. The only fly in the ointment was a proposal that the Board should extend the scope of its very successful Naval Holiday Centre at Burrill Lake to embrace a Naval Alpine Holiday Centre.

What was to be done?

The Dream

All would be resolved by offering the members of the Central Canteens Board a day in the snow by courtesy of the RAN Ski Club. This would serve two purposes: it would give them some idea of the popularity of skiing and they could see at first hand the way in which Lindabyne was going ahead.

After a leisurely drive from Canberra to Lindabyne the Board would be driven around the township and the lakeside and then on to Perisher for a great lunch at the RAN Ski Club after which they would go on to Thredbo for afternoon tea.

On the way back to Canberra the Board's already favourable view of the Ski Club would be subtly reinforced to such an extent

that the members would be falling over one another in their efforts to help the Club.

Alan Willis and his fellow board members accepted the Club's invitation for Sunday, 12 August 1979.

The Reality

As Mike Hudson says:

The reality was somewhat different. The day before, I had ominous reports from Mike Apps that blizzard conditions had virtually closed off Perisher and heavy snowfalls were forecast for the general area. No matter, we decided to go ahead.

When I picked up Alan Willis he hobbled out to the car, cheerful enough, but suffering from an old back problem which I could see would not be helped by a long drive and struggling through snow at the other end.

Lindabyne, when we arrived, was at its very worst. It was a miserably cold, grey day with very wet sleet adding to our discomfort. On top of that, the village was crammed with unhappy skiers who couldn't get into the valley. After a quick cup of lukewarm coffee we pressed on to Sawpit Creek in the vain hope that something might change, but all to no avail. The queue of cars waiting to get into the valley was at least a mile long. With no way of getting in touch with Mike Apps and his beautiful lunch, we accepted the inevitable and turned back towards Thredbo.

This time we were a bit luckier. Despite very heavy snow we managed to get into the village, albeit on chains for the last few miles. Parking of course was at a premium and it was a very cold and wet group that finally struggled into the hotel for a belated meal of meat pie and chips. Visibility was low and we couldn't see beyond Bottom Station. By the time we got back to Canberra late that night my early optimism had plummeted to an all-time low.

The Breakthrough

As John Milton once wrote:
All is best, though we oft doubt,
What th' unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.

So it was with this adventure. The Central Canteens Board abandoned its interest in an Alpine Naval Holiday Centre — and no wonder after what its members had been through — but agreed to look at any proposal to extend the Club's existing loan. From then on it was all systems go.

We were not alone in the race to acquire property in Jindabyne. Every time we looked at a likely prospect we were beaten to Blattman's door by someone with a cheque book prepared to fill in six figures for the deal.

But you can't lose them all, as we proceeded to demonstrate. At a Committee Meeting on 7 January 1980 Mike Hudson, Bill Williams, Ion Delaney, David Collingridge and George Scown agreed as one with Peter Blackman's proposal to buy the Hailgapa Lodge at East Jindabyne for \$135,000. For those who have not yet seen this property it has three self-contained flats, a real water frontage, land galore and a magnificent view of the mountains. As far as skiers are concerned, those who have enjoyed staying there have welcomed the ski down to the car park, the easy drive through Jindars, picking up goosey pastry on the way, and that first after-ski drink as the sun sets on yet another glorious day on the mountain. It certainly beats that trudge up the valley or dicing with an icy death in the creek between the self-loader and the Lodge.

Paying the Piper

Having called the tune, all that was left was to pay up. Mike Hudson again takes up the story:

A holding deposit of \$13,500 was paid on 14 January to Blattman's Real Estate with the proviso that it would be refunded if the deal didn't proceed.

Meanwhile the RAN Central Canteens Board was considering our earlier application and finally, in a letter dated 15 January agreed to a loan of \$100,000 at 8% interest with certain mortgage conditions. These were accepted by the Club on 29 January 1980 and the same letter formally advised the Central Canteens Board of our proposals to purchase Hailgapa Lodge. I also sought a variation to the repayment schedule to a flat annual rate of \$17,500. This was well within our capacity and was subsequently agreed by the CCB.

The settlement date had originally been agreed as 31 March but I failed to take sufficient account of the length legal processes involved, especially when a Government Department is involved and covenants and zoning regulations by local councils have to be sorted out. There was a further hiccup at an Extraordinary Committee Meeting called for 27 February to discuss a number of pressing issues and to receive a report on the new lodge purchase. Some members were still not convinced that Jindabyne was the right decision and suggested that priority be given to expanding the Perisher Lodge.

However, at this stage there was no turning back and, finally, at the AGM held in Canberra on Saturday, 3 May 1980 I was able to announce that settlement had taken place the day before, 2 May, and the Club was now the owner of three substantial lodges in Perisher, Buller and Jindabyne East.

Earlier, I said acquisition of Hailgapa Lodge was a team effort and I repeat that now. Whilst Mike Apps and I may have been more involved in the final phases than others, we were only able to act as we did with the approval of the Committee and with the accumulated advice of many members going back several years.

I have mentioned a number of people by name but there were two others who gave me great support during this period and helped maintain a balanced view on proceedings. These were Dave Dalton and Greg Swift, the Vice Presidents from NSW and Victoria respectively. Peter Blackman, mentioned

earlier, was ACT Vice President and Phil Davies the Treasurer. During 1979/80 we had a number of Honorary Secretaries: Nick Hammond, Doug Stevens and Mike Matthews. The first Lindabyne Lodge Manager was Oscar Hughes.

THE START OF SOMETHING BIG



Two ski enthusiasts, one British and one Australian, were sharing an office in HMS Collingwood in 1978. The Brit was appointed Chief of Race for the 1979 British Services International Ski Championships. He thought it would be super if Australia could be included.

Des Carney thought the opportunity too good to miss and passed the idea back to Australia. An official invitation at CDFS level was not taken up, but Ric McMaster, Des and a couple of other Australians made up a team to compete at Val d'Isere in France.

While not terribly official the whole thing was such a success that in 1980 another invitation was forthcoming. This time approval was given for an Australian Defence Force team to compete, provided that those taking part did so at their own expense and on leave.

Ken Green led the squad and Kerry Delaney, Barry Fregon, Peter James, Ric McMaster, Greg Swift and Dave Tomkinson were the other Navy members. Greg's wife, Beverley, left with the team in January 1980, no doubt with memories of mortgaging the Swift homestead in 1976 to provide bridging finance for the Buller extension and Mother's Day the next year when Greg failed to front because he was busy flashing up the repaired heating system at Buller.

The Europeans were in a class of their own, the best of the Brits were too good, but the Australian team did well, winning much praise and the Moet and Chandon Trophy, which although now empty supports a lampshade at Perisher Lodge.

Ken Green and Ric McMaster returned to Europe in 1981 accompanied by Ben Stark and Frank Wakewood. Ben went again in

1982, and all being well Frank will be there in 1983 with Tony Powell. Money and time would seem to be the only barriers to be overcome, but of course skiing ability is also a great advantage.



**Executive Sub-Committee
1981-1982**

Hon Sec Ken Shandis	President David Martin	Treasurer Phil Davies
Vice Presidents VIC Greg Swift	NSW Bob Perkins	ACT Chris Nisbet

EPILOGUE



Management of the Club has never been an easy matter and has become progressively more complicated. With accommodation in three places, members gathered in significant numbers in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Nowra and at sea; with prices rising and the membership growing, it gradually became obvious, towards the end of the 70s, that the old atmosphere of friendly, casual 'near enough is good enough' management was no longer satisfactory if the Club was to continue to meet its objectives. The President at the time, Mike Hudson, reorganised and revitalised the system of control. His system still envisaged a Committee of about twenty but he divided them into three Sub-Committees: Victoria, ACT and NSW, each with a Vice-President. These three, together with the Treasurer and the Honorary Secretary, would take their place on the Executive Sub-Committee, chaired by the President. Thus each Area Sub-Committee would have its vote and its voice at a small, manageable, central decision-making body. Each Area Sub-Committee would have its own specific responsibilities: Victoria to look after Buller, ACT the NSW lodges and club development, and NSW membership and advertising; all would share the load for fund raising and, of course, all committee members would share equal responsibility for the decisions of the Executive Sub-Committee. These Sub-Committees would be supported, as always, by that body of gallant workers who keep the show on the road — the bookkeeper, the booking officers, the assistant secretary, the lodge managers and the permanent hut leaders.

RAN SKI CLUB OFFICE BEARERS

	President	Secretary
1953	G.P. Hood	M.F. Stainfield
1954	G.P. Hood	I.P. Stevenson
1955	G.P. Hood	I.P. Stevenson
1956	G.P. Hood	W.G. Wright
1957	W.G. Wright	P. Collins
1958	W.G. Wright	G.R. Griffiths
1959	W.G. Wright	G.R. Griffiths
1960	K. McK. Urquhart	W.G. Wright
1961	K. McK. Urquhart	W.G. Wright
1962	K. McK. Urquhart	W.G. Wright
1963	G.P. Hood	G.R. Griffiths
1964	I.P. Stevenson	G.R. Griffiths
1965	G.P. Hood	G.R. Griffiths
1966	G.P. Hood	L.F. Winch
1967	I.P. Stevenson	L.F. Winch
1968	I.P. Stevenson	L.F. Winch
1969	I.P. Stevenson	G.P. Hood
1970	G.P. Hood	J.B. McAlister
1971	G.P. Hood	J.B. McAlister
1972	W.J. Rourke	D.G. Holthouse
1973	W.J. Rourke	N.D.H. Hammond
1974	J.A. Robertson	B.J. Read
1975	T.R. Fisher	B.J. Read
1976	T.R. Fisher	B.J. Read
1977	T.R. Fisher	B.J. Read
1978	T.R. Fisher	W.C. Williams
1979	M.W. Hudson	N.D.H. Hammond
1980	M.W. Hudson	M.K. Matthews
1981	D.J. Martin	K.W. Shands
1982	D.J. Martin	K.W. Shands

It has worked very well. It must be said that a significant reason for the success of the new system has been the arrival of Ken Shands. Ken was a latecomer to the snow scene. He was well into his fifties before he took up the sport, but he soon made up for lost time with the enthusiasm and dedication for which he is well known. Ken was invited to take over the job of Secretary at the beginning of 1981 and he grasped it with alacrity. If Dawn had expected any relaxation when Ken retired from the RAN then she would have been disappointed - but she was probably too wise for that. Ken surveyed the management tools at the disposal of the committee, measured up the problems and started the suggestions. The membership went on to a computer. Financial operations were streamlined. Investment policies were devised and instituted, booking routines and forms were revolutionised, Bankcard introduced, newsletters regularised. The dedicated and hard-working Treasurer, Phil Davies, introduced some very important innovations of his own, and he and Ken between them set a course for the future with a stable financial system and a tight management.

What of the future? Some increase in the number of beds is obviously necessary. As 1982 drew to a close, the Committee was looking at the options for another lodge, and the means of raising the money. There could be some tricky decisions to be made, but the club is well qualified to make them. The dedicated, laborious and constructive efforts of Chris Nisbet and the ACT Subcommittee have led to the production of a development plan which gives us a very sound foundation for choosing the way ahead. It has been a very professional, time-consuming task - members will be grateful to the research team.

MY RECORD OF SKIING TRIPS

38

MY FAVOURITE SKIING STORY

39

MY CONTRIBUTION
TO THE 50-YEAR CLUB RECORD

30 YEARS GOING DOWNHILL
WITH THE RAN SKI CLUB

1953 - 1983

RAN Ski Club

30 YEARS GOING DOWNHILL
WITH THE RAN SKI CLUB

1953 - 1983

RAN Ski Club

30 YEARS GOING DOWNHILL
WITH THE RAN SKI CLUB

1953 - 1983

RAN Ski Club