

# PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 24 Winter 2020

## Notes from the President

Well, we are certainly in a weird world at the moment. Our thoughts are with all those who are suffering in one way or another from drought, bushfire or buckling down in an effort to beat off the coronavirus. For skiers it was awful to see the devastation that the fires delivered to Selwyn Snow Resort and then the pitiful sight of the destruction of the recently restored Kiandra Courthouse. We watched as the fires toyed with the idea of wiping out Charlotte Pass, Perisher, Guthega and Thredbo. I understand that it is the intention of the Blyton Group to rebuild the Selwyn Snow Resort for the 2021 Season.

The virus set the rules and as its reality dawned on us all, it was self-evident that caution was the by-word and thus the Society sadly abandoned all planned functions for the year including the Thirteenth Annual June Dinner. Perisher XC week and the Perisher Cup have also been cancelled.

### Life Membership – Judy Thomson and Dave Woods

On a brighter note, the Annual General Meeting in February was unanimous in conferring Life Membership of the Society on Judy Thomson and Dave Woods in recognition of their significant contribution and enthusiasm in the establishment of the Society.

Individually they stamped their high standards on the Society, enabling it to establish itself as a reputable, responsible and trustworthy organisation to care for history.

Both were present at the very beginning when we decided to form a society. Judy and Dave teamed to develop the Society's Newsletter of which we are so proud. I thank them for their steadfast assistance over the years in every facet of the Society. Personally, I have been spoilt to have had Judy as Vice-president, providing her counsel and guidance, only stepping down in 2019. Dave has been so generous in so many ways, including designing the newsletter format, writing many of the articles and enthusiastically bringing awareness of the country he loves. The Society is in their debt for the standards they established.

### **Hotel Kosciusko, the book – seven years of toil**

*Hotel Kosciusko – the history and legacy of Australia's first planned ski resort* by Donald A. Johnston is the Society's third historical publication.

The book is here, it is walking off the shelves and it is getting heaps of positive feedback. It has been a labour of love over seven long years for the author and retired heritage architect Donald Johnston.



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Finding the original drawings of the hotel captured Donald's interest and his archival search commenced. In discovery phase, a significant act was to place a notice in the 'RSVP' column of the Saturday *Sydney Morning Herald*. A virtual fount of information flowed from the families of people who had worked at the Hotel. He was almost overwhelmed with material and images.

Donald is to be congratulated for his tenacity and success. It is a worthy document, filled with wonderful images and stories of the time and is a must have book for the skier's library.

The Society is delighted to have fulfilled its role in sponsoring and publishing this important and very entertaining book.

### PHS Website

Have you visited the Society's revitalised website ([perisherhistory.org.au](http://perisherhistory.org.au))? We have retained Vergil Iliescu from Greybeard Systems to assist us. Vergil has worked with SLOPES to achieve their very successful site and has a collaborative approach. Our challenge has always been that our needs do not fit well with available offerings; all required shoehorning our needs into a system that almost but never quite fit with our needs. Worse, this approach meant that features of the CMS design software were denied to us as our site developed.

I am delighted that Jan Glover and Peter Southwell-Keeley have thrown themselves into the task of populating the site. The layout of the website is emerging and will always be amorphous as it

reacts to our experience and the material at hand. We would be delighted to hear your thoughts on subject areas that appeal to you. There is plenty to do, so we are keen to hear from anyone who would like to join our happy throng and we can chat about how you might get involved.

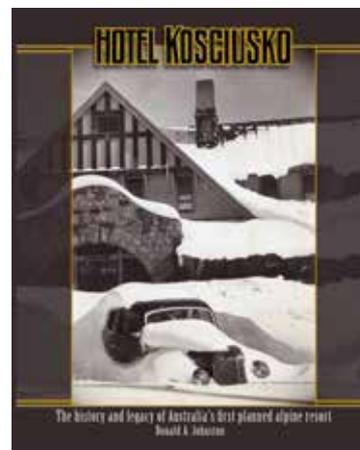
### Snow Australia Medal

A further high-note for 2020 is that Snow Australia (the revamped Australian Ski Federation, ASF) has struck a new award – the Snow Australia Medal - to recognise significant winter athletes. Past icons have been recognised and our own dear friend, Bill Day, a three time Olympian, is one of the initial recipients. Our hearty congratulations. See more at <https://www.snow.org.au/legacy/>

### International

I note the passing of John Fry, journalist, Past President of ISHA (International Skiing History Association), creator of NASTAR, recognised internationally for his passion for skiing, ski journalism and a driving force in ski history. John was a charming man who reached out to Australian ski history, creating a firm bond. I commend you to search and read his story. We offer our condolences to his wife and family on their loss.

My best wishes to all,  
Philip Woodman  
[philip@perisherhistory.org.au](mailto:philip@perisherhistory.org.au)



### NEW PUBLICATION

*Hotel Kosciusko: The history and legacy of Australia's first planned alpine resort*

by Donald A. Johnston

Built in 1909 by the NSW Tourist Bureau to address the demands of emerging alpine tourism, the Hotel in the Diggers Creek valley of the Kosciusko National Park, became a vibrant year-round playground for many decades. It was the birthplace of organised skiing in the Kosciusko region at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Researched and written by Donald A. Johnston, Heritage Architect, it contains over 300 pages detailing the Hotel's life, many rare photographs, maps, brochures, architectural plans and Hotel memorabilia.

Order your copy here:

<https://perisherhistory.org.au/hotel-kosciusko-order-form/>

### \*\* STOP PRESS \*\*

Hotel Kosciusko book  
NSW Premier's History Awards 2020  
**We have been shortlisted!!**

Winners announced - Friday 4 September  
Details and judges' comments at

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/awards/nsw-community-and-regionalhistory-prize/2020-shortlisted-hotel-kosciusko-history-and-legacy>

# Summer Fires

by Dave Woods

*Dave Woods was part of the small group that established the PHS and was recently elected a Life Member of the Society. Dave worked for many years with the NPWS and now is an environmental consultant. He and his wife Nicky and their family live at Moonbah, out of Jindabyne, and have a cottage and a bush block at Mallacoota. At the end of February, Dave sent this report to the Society.*

It's been an '*aestas horribilis*' of a season with the fires. Moonbah had a number of high threat days but the expected fire front and ember attack didn't eventuate. Given the strength of some of the winds, we are still dumbfounded that fires to our southwest, west and northwest didn't reach us. We relocated the kids to Nic's sister in the Southern Highlands, only to have them evacuate a second time. Nic booked a flat at McMahons Point and sent them all to Sydney to escape the threat and give them a holiday of sorts. (Mallacoota was obviously canned and for most of January inaccessible.) When the fire risk had diminished in the southern parts of the Snowy Mountains, Nic joined them in Yass and from there undertook tourist activities in Canberra each day.

On one of those days Nic was slightly delayed as she pulled off to the side of the road to take a work call. That 15 minutes prevented her car being pummelled by large hail. As they drove through Canberra to Questacon the destruction of buildings and car windows unsettled the kids so much they

headed back to Yass. Then a few days later we had very strong winds at Moonbah. I popped outside to make sure everything was okay and noticed one of the animal cages was missing. Eventually found it on the roof, hooked around the satellite dish... that's a 90 kg metal cage (2 m x 2 m x 1.8 m). On a positive note, hooking-around the dish probably prevented the cage rolling on to the north side of the roof where vacuuated tubes and solar panels are positioned. That would have cost a lot to repair/replace. The dish belongs to NBN, so other



*Animal cage on the roof*



*Above: Smoke and fiery skies at Moonbah*

than the inconvenience of not having internet for a week, there was no cost to us.

As for Mallacoota...a miracle! I knew three days after the fire that went through the town that the cottage was intact. The neighbours I spoke to spent two nights down at the jetty watching the inferno circle around the area. About three weeks ago I finally got back into Mallacoota after procuring a permit. There were two burnt spots in the grass and the front step had a burnt spot and blistered paint. How the leaf litter underneath the step that I failed to remove didn't ignite is miraculous. There's a simple Colorbond shed in the backyard and when I opened the door there were charcoal particles sitting on cardboard and other burnable items.



*Blistered paint*

Driving around Mallacoota was slightly surreal. Large sections of no bushfire or devastation, then a row of houses missing. In some cases gardens were intact but you knew where a house used to be by the collapsed roofing. Nearly all of the public infrastructure associated with beach access, picnic grounds, walkways and retaining walls have been burnt...very little to the south, west and northwest escaped. Our cottage is on the northern side of town but had every right to be consumed because of its proximity to a council bush reserve. Most of the bush reserve didn't burn and when I went for a walk anticipating to find a large dozer break to account for stopping the fire, there wasn't one...the fire went out on its own. Yet a few hundred metres further on, where the reserve gullies and meets a small cove in the lake, it was totally consumed, as were the houses around it. This part of the reserve is technically littoral rainforest.

As for the block 20 km upstream, it burnt about two weeks after the main event. I watched on the map the fire slowly infilling areas in the upper Wallagaraugh River. It burned over three days and when I got in there a few weeks ago, it was best described as a

good fuel reduction prescribed for a scrubby coastal forest. So I got the burn I wanted to help me with my track down to the river and for ecological reasons... just lucky. The neighbours to the south only lost a shed but were lucky not to have lost the house... they vacated to Eden. Because there was active fire and uncleared fire trails in the area, it was too dangerous (and illegal) to access the block via the fire trails either from NSW or Victoria, so I boated upstream from Gypsy Point. Overall that part of the Wallagaraugh River escaped with a low to mid-intensity fire (some canopy scorch). So it will recover very quickly. I now have to work with this window and complete my tracks otherwise it will scrub up and I'll have lost the advantage (without bringing in machinery which I don't wish to do).

After being on high bushfire alert and preparing for the 'big fire', I've found it hard to get back into the groove of work. At least most of my jobs at the moment are located in unburnt areas and there's still an expanse of unburnt vegetation in the south end of Kosciuszko National Park (although that expanse will be my next season's bushfire risk), but for the moment everything is green and we've had plenty of rain.



*Fire survivors*

## ***The Australian Thursday 16 January 2020***

The historic Towong Hill Station, where *Silver Brumby* author Elyne Mitchell and her family have lived for generations, has been gutted, with only the walls appearing to remain of the massive homestead that overlooks the Murray River and Snowy Mountains.

As hundreds of Victorians made their way back into fire-ravaged towns to survey the damage, photos of the homestead, built in the early 1900s just outside Corryong, show the building is almost unrecognisable since being hit by an inferno on Saturday.

The large two-storey homestead, said to have boasted 27 rooms, two kitchens and eight bedrooms, was where Mitchell wrote books romanticising the Snowy Mountains, its brumbies, and life on the region's cattle stations.

Current owner John Mitchell, a cattle identity and well-known philanthropist, declined to comment. See also

<https://www.visituppermurray.com.au/places/towong/>



# Hut Wrapping, Huts Saved and Huts Lost

by Megan Bowden (NPWS)

The last bushfire season was unprecedented and tragic for many affected communities. The bushfires were exacerbated by extreme weather events – high temperatures, strong winds and intense drought conditions. Firefighting is a dangerous business, yet last summer saw amazing effort and heroic actions to save assets and historic huts in the Kosciuszko National Park.

Despite this, unfortunately ten huts and four buildings at Kiandra were lost. Huts lost included Delaneys, Sawyers, Happy Jacks, Brooks, Four Mile, Round Mountain, Bradley & O'Briens, Vickeries and Farm Ridge/Linesmans. Kiandra buildings lost included the Courthouse, Wolgals, Mathews and Pattersons.

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) crews mowed and cleared areas around huts and other historic buildings before summer which assisted in providing protection for some of the huts. During the fires, dozers were used to construct

earth breaks around huts where possible. These lines are now being rehabilitated after the fires.

Where possible, crews were dispatched to protect huts - spraying foam on and around buildings and staying to fight the fire where safe. Aircraft were also used to spray foam and retardant on and around structures. Retardant is applied as a red liquid and has the advantage of providing protection for several days after application. Even as it dries, it works by a chemical reaction which removes the oxygen when heated by fire.

Mackeys hut was nearly burnt three times early in January. NPWS crew in an aircraft, who were searching and retrieving walkers, were able to divert the fire away from one side of the hut. The next day the crew landed again and quickly extinguished the fire approaching the hut on another side. Later in the week the wind drove the fire back to the hut again where crews were again able to provide protection. Another

great save involved Townsends hut where the fire jumped the Murrumbidgee River and was racing up towards Townsends and would then have headed towards Currango. Luckily Air Bosses (fixed wing aircraft) were available to scoop water from nearby Tantangara Reservoir and slow the progress of the fire to enable crews to get around it.

Other actions included wrapping huts in thermafoil. This technique was first seen by one of our firefighters when on secondment to USA and has been tried during a number of fires. Our crews headed out to huts with ladders, rolls of foil, tape and nails, which raised quite a few eyebrows from people wondering what it was all being used for! For wrapping, strips of foil are nailed over timber walls and windows, using tape to seal any gaps. The thermafoil looks like sisalation and helps protect the huts from ember attack as well as radiant heat.

*Coolamine Homestead was wrapped in thermafoil to assist with fire protection*



Post fire, NPWS officers are still assessing what has been impacted by fire. Historic huts and sites that have been affected have been recorded and artefacts and materials salvaged. Structures and parts of structures, e.g walls and chimneys that are still standing have been assessed by engineers and made safe to ensure they will keep standing until a decision is made about what to do with the sites. Contractors have been used for the sites containing asbestos, including those at Kiandra. At the Kiandra courthouse, the big metal beams and other materials were carefully removed with a crane to access artefacts underneath.

Consultation has commenced with the Kosciuszko Huts Association to discuss rebuilding or commemoration of sites. There are over 70 huts in Kosciuszko National Park and each one is different: they are significant architecturally, historically and socially, as well as for their current use.

Please contact NPWS or Kosciuszko Huts Association if you have any information or photos of the burnt huts before the fires or would like to assist with conserving huts in KNP. Photo captions

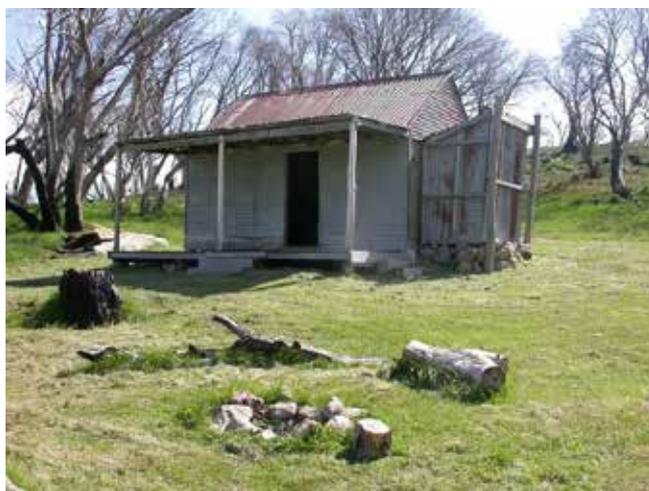


*Bill Jones Hut was wrapped in thermafoil and had an earth break constructed around it for fire protection.*



*Left: Delaney's Hut was rebuilt after 2003 fires by NPWS and KHA volunteers and unfortunately was burnt again in 2020.*

*Below: Happy's Hut (also known as Montague's, the Dip Hut or Boots Hut depending on the people using it at the time) was built in 1931 by graziers, had a pre fire season fire break slashed but unfortunately was burnt in 2020*



# Cliff Wallis Celebrates 30 Years at the Sundeck

The Sundeck Hotel is not only the highest hotel in Australia (1769 m above sea level) but also the oldest commercial hotel in Perisher Valley. It was first built in May 1959 by Ken Murray who also built some of Perisher's first lifts. Just over 6 months later, in January 1960, the new hotel burnt to the ground. The *Sun Herald* famously ran the story on its front page: "48 flee from blazing Alps hotel. Dog gives warning". Incredibly, just over 4 months later, the hotel was rebuilt in time for the 1960 snow season.

Cliff bought the Sundeck in 1990 and has made many improvements, including the 10 kW grid interactive solar system – the first solar panels in Perisher. All carbon emissions from the hotel are offset with tree plantings on his south coast property. At the end of each season, any remaining food is donated to Oz Harvest.

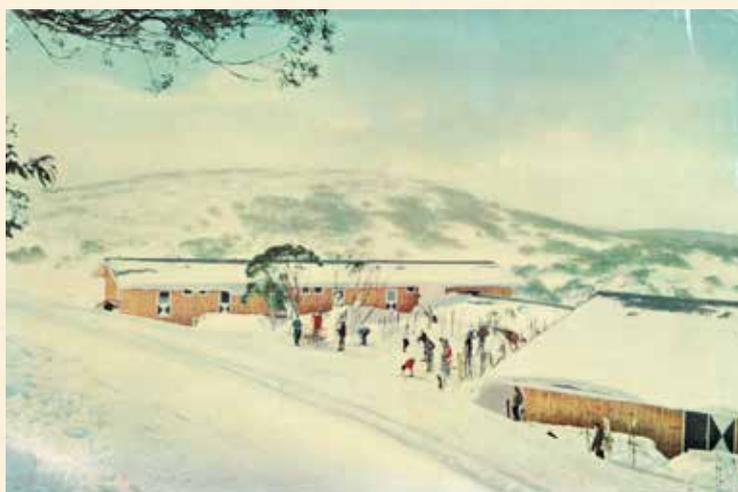


Cliff and Sayaka share a great love of music, commissioning new work, providing live music at both the Sundeck and Tathra Hotels and supporting the Four Winds Festival at Bermagui. They also run music festivals at both hotels.

They are keen members of the PHS and have been closely involved in the Perisher Cup and Presentation. The Sundeck Hotel also runs the Sundeck

Cup, a cross-country race for all comers, run under handicap conditions, with all proceeds going to the development fund for the Australian XC Ski Team.

When Cliff and Sayaka cannot be found in the mountains, they will be by the sea at the Tathra Hotel.



Left: Sun-Herald newspaper cutting reporting the fire.

Right: Sundeck Hotel Postcard

See more historical photographs at <https://www.sundeckhotel.com.au/50th-anniversary> and <https://perisherhistory.org.au/photo-collection/the-neal-collection/>

# Summer Skiing at Sea Level

Skiing in Sydney in the middle of summer? Impossible you might think, but the Cortina Ski Slope at Warringah Mall in Brookvale made this a reality in the sixties.

Australia's first open-air artificial ski run was opened on 1 February 1967 by Donald Maclurcan, President of the NSW Ski Council. At the time, the slope was the largest of its kind in the world and the first in Australia. It was 47 ft (14.33 m) from the ground at the highest point, 40 ft (12.19 m) wide and 200 ft (60.96 m) long. The extruded nylon bristle skiing surface was imported from Holland by Dick Mann and Lex Cohen after Dick had observed a similar slope in use in Alkmaar, Holland. For skiers, the surface felt like packed powder snow and, unlike some other artificial ski runs, did not damage the soles of the skis. The varying gradient of the slope offered a challenge to all skiers, from beginners to experts.

An electric rope tow carried skiers to the top of the slope and floodlighting at night allowed operation 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The slope was enclosed with a wire mesh fence and thick cushions at the bottom provided protection for out-of-control skiers and toboggans. Even so, there were some minor injuries. John Green of Merriment Lodge in Perisher remembers a painful broken thumb. Ski equipment could be hired from the Snowline Ski Centre at the site.

To complete the skiing experience, there was a kiosk serving light refreshments and a



Above: Ad for the Cortina Ski Slope from the *Ski Year Book 1967*.  
Below: Postcard advertising the ski slope.



barbecue and dance floor under the stars.

The Ski School – Christine Smith (Australian champion and Olympic representative), Rod Dunning (ski racer) and Johnny Destefanis (Perisher ski instructor) – provided instruction for all standards.

Fairly soon, snow-less skiing became a popular Sydney activity, with large attendances at weekends and evenings.

Rod Dunning was keen to run slalom races on the slope but needed slalom poles that could be fixed to the metal base under the matting and would right themselves when knocked over. This problem was solved by a creative George Spartalis (also famous for importing Lamborghini skis), who designed and made a self-righting slalom pole with a spring base – similar to the type in universal use today.

Given that this was 1967-68 it is possible George's invention was the first such slalom pole created – what a shame a patent was not taken out!

The slope is believed to have ceased operation in 1968. Perhaps you skied on the artificial 'snow'. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who can add their experience to this story about an ambitious venture to bring skiing to the Northern Beaches of Sydney.

Many thanks to Rod Dunning who provided the information and images for this article. Rod went on to instruct skiers at Thredbo and still lives in Jindabyne.

*NB: An interesting article on grass and sand skiing can be found on the PHS website at <https://perisherhistory.org.au/dry-skiing/>*

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## Vale Margo Feiersinger

24.07.1925 – 21.07.2020

Many will be saddened to learn of the passing of Margo Feiersinger. Margo, together with her husband Fritz, built Marritz Alpine Inn at Perisher in 1962. Together they created a special 'once experienced never forgotten' atmosphere for their guests. The name Marritz was created by combining their first names – Margo and Fritz.



## Vale Len Hibble

Len Hibble (21.11.1924 - 15.2.20) was a founding member of University Alpine Club (UAC). With a small group of bush walkers from Sydney Technical College and Sydney University, Len inspected potential sites in 1951 for building at Perisher Valley. He was active in the construction works, forming lifelong friendships with the likes of other foundation members, Harry Gorman and Brian Cohen.

From completion of the lodge in 1953, Len was a director of UAC and then chairman for 6 years from 1978 to 1984. Len worked tirelessly, contributing his time to club administration and work projects. He was always available to offer or discuss ways to improve lodge facilities and administration. He cajoled others to develop their own ideas then found solutions/ways forward in a collaborative manner. In particular, he was constantly looking for ways to assist the younger members to become actively involved by sharing experiences and promoting open discussion.

As an engineer in the bearing industry, Len was highly respected nationally, initially as a draftsman then applications/sales engineer. With a constant yearning for challenges, he continued to work part-time well into retirement, representing specialist bearing suppliers to the railway industry.

Len's love of hiking knew no barriers and included trekking in the Himalayas and Mt Everest in his 60s when others would be thinking of somewhat less

demanding challenges. His other passion was photography which has manifested itself in the pictorial history of the lodge through wall hangings and extensive albums of club memorabilia meticulously arranged in chronological order that enlighten club members and bring every visitor into the heart of UAC. He was also active in working with the Perisher Historical Society, representing the club at book launches or events and enjoyed chatting and exchanging memories with other Valley lodge foundation members.

With his loving family, wife Laurel of 66 years and children Narelle and Ian, Len had a love of life, was a very sincere and passionate person, not one to put himself above others, nor complain about health or life's

*Len Hibble relaxing on UAC deck*



# Stone Churches on the Monaro

by Jan Glover

Skiers motoring down the Monaro Highway and the Kosciuszko Road are usually focussed on getting to their alpine destination in the quickest possible time. Many do not realise that two of the Monaro's oldest churches – Christ Church Maneroo and Saint Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Gegedzerick - are located not far off the main road and are worth a visit if you have some time to spare.

Up till the year 1845 the religious needs of the Anglicans of Maneroo were cared for by the Rev. Edward Gifford Pryce MA, who was the last of the Missionary Chaplains sent to Australia by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1845 Bishop Broughton, the Bishop of Australia, and afterwards the first Bishop of Sydney, made a southern pastoral visit, which included Cooma. After a discussion with the Rev. Mr Pryce, it was decided to erect places of worship in the area. This led to the foundation of the churches at Maneroo and Gegedzerick.



Above: Christ Church, Maneroo

The oldest stone church on the Monaro is Christ Church Maneroo – located only 5 km or so to the southeast of Cooma (via Bombala Road, then right onto Church/Maffra Road). This stone church was constructed between 1845 and 1849 and is a quaint building reminiscent of English country churches. It has been regularly restored to good condition. A cemetery is located on two sides of the church, and it is situated in a picturesque small valley. Regular worship ceased when St Paul's Cooma was completed in 1871/72.

Heading south down the Kosciuszko Road from Cooma, just north of Berridale, we cross the creek with that unpronounceable name - Gegedzerick. A little further on is a laneway with a small sign to St Mary's Gegedzerick. It's only a couple of minutes' drive up the hill to the second oldest church on the Monaro. The official name is Saint Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Gegedzerick, and it was built from 1849 to 1860. The Gegedzerick Cemetery is located at the rear of the church and is the resting place of many pioneer families of the area.

*St Mary's, a modest and rustic stone church, was sited to take advantage of sweeping views over the Gegedzerick plains. The church was solidly built reflecting the pioneering character of those in the mid 19th century and is devoid of decorative elements except wooden crosses topping each gable and only one of the windows featuring a gothic arch. The design shares similarities with the earliest Monaro stone cottages which have a strong resemblance to the crofters' cottages in the UK. The interior is well fitted out with cedar pews and*



Photos this page - Saint Mary the Virgin Anglican Church, Gegendzerick

other church accoutrements, simple and in keeping with the character of the place.<sup>1</sup>

The site is associated with the Monaro's first settler, Richard Brooks, who established himself at Gegendzerick in 1827. St Mary's is one of 21 stone churches on the Monaro and demonstrates the local tradition of building in stone. Its design is modelled on St Mary the Virgin at Denham Court, Campbelltown, the Brooks family residence. The church is still in use on special occasions. All Saints, Berridale, built in 1920, now serves as the Anglican church for the area.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageltemDetails.aspx?ID=2410071>

Resources

<http://www.monaropioneers.com/Brooks-richard.htm#RICHARD%20BROOKS>

<http://www.monaropioneers.com/churches/anglican.htm>

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageltemDetails.aspx?ID=2410079>



Cemetery inscriptions for Saint Mary Gegendzerick:

<https://austcemindex.com/cemetery.php?id=722>

Cemetery inscriptions for Christ Church Maneroo:

<https://austcemindex.com/?cemetery=1306>

# Kiandra to Kosciusko circa 1939

by Bill Kenyon (1913-2008) (written c1990)

Fifty one years ago six members of the Coast and Mountain Walkers arrived in Cooma after a long journey on the overnight Cooma Mail. The Railway Refreshment Room served a hearty breakfast most welcome after a sleepless night.

Frank Yen was waiting with his Mail Car to take us to Kiandra on the then rough and dusty road, stopping only to buy some lamb chops at the Adaminaby butchery, an activity which sent millions of flies waiting outside into a state of frenzy. One of the twelve inhabitants of Kiandra waved goodbye as we shouldered packs and set off with our crude sketch map.

We camped near Farm Ridge Huts where we were welcomed by cattle and sheepmen with their wives and many dogs, and given lemon syrup and biscuits. At the Bogong Hut (pronounced Boogong) we met stockman Jim Murray, a neighbor from Boobee and a cattleman from Round Mountain. We were told that at sundown a beast was to be killed. The animal, as three year old Hereford, was to provide meat for a few folks around. Lance Turton and I were determined to see this. Standing in the perishing wind, in the shadow of the Big Bogong, we saw the job done, helped with the hanging of the meat, and received four pounds of the best steak for our efforts. Stockmen arrived next day to take their share of the meat.

Mawson Hut was reached after a walk through the Grey Mare area. The hut was occupied by

stockmen Lindsay Willis and Arthur Harris. They remembered the visit of an earlier CMW party – Trevor Krok, Daphne Ball and Beryl Heather who walked from Kiandra to Kosciusko about 1935. The hut was the same then as it is today except for the array of saddles, pack saddles, harness, dingo traps, sheepskin rugs etc and the keg of salted-down meat which together with damper provided the staple diet when fried, boiled or stewed. The hut was also known as the Bobundra Hut after the station near Dalgety, Mawson I believe being the head stockman.

Lindsay and Arthur the next day took our rucksacks on pack horses and led us most of the way over the Kerries to White's River. As the weather was becoming threatening for the first time on the trip, we decided to camp in the hut. On a wall was Beryl Heather's poem "Riders of the Range" cut from a local newspaper and now quite yellow. It was better known to the mountain men than "The Man from Snowy River". A stockman arrived at night with his dogs – I think his name was McPhee.

And so we went on over the Main Range, camping near Foreman's Hut (a good hut). Finally after Kosciusko and Townsend we took to the road past the Chalet with its corral – brumbies were herded in there at times. Balmain's Bus was boarded at the Hotel, travelling over the fine old Snowy Bridge, now submerged at Jindabyne, a sleepy town with hitching rail, then on to Cooma. The dreaded



Biilman's Hut with Pack Horses



Bill, Beryl, Bruce Spiers, Ede Gilmour

night train was boarded – the only way to travel in those days.

Members of the CMW (Coast and Mountain Walkers) party of 1939 were:

Beryl Thompson (Kenyon), Ede Gilmour, Toni Day (Cottier), Vee Champion, Lance Turton, Bill Kenyon.

In the following years several long walks and ski trips were made from Kiandra to Charlottes Pass, and later when the road was built, from Round Mountain. Our early entry to skiing about 50 years ago, was on the Snowy Plains. Jack Biilman who owns property near Nimmo, assisted us with pack horses and made us welcome in his hut on the Gungarlin River. With Esther Biilman, Dudley and Tom Blyton from Rocky Plains, we led the horses to Kelly's Hut where we stayed for a week. The men shot rabbits to supplement our food supply. From Kelly's we walked, climbed and skied to Bogong Hut. Without the expert bushcraft of the local men we could not have found the way.