

PERISHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 25 Summer 2020-21

Notes from the President

We will all remember the year 2020 as one of the most remarkable in our lives. The thought that, in one year, starting with one case of a virus, 2.5 million people could have lost their lives, is astonishing and heartbreaking. In our skiing world the resorts have limped along with small numbers of skiers, but have done a wonderful job in managing the ever-changing health scene to enable skiing last winter. Arrangements for entry and ticketing evolved over time, challenging for all, but good snow was available for those who ran the gamut.

The Perisher Historical Society is now 13 years old and in good health but cannot rest on its laurels. Its members are no longer in the first flush of youth and, while still enthusiastic, would welcome an influx of younger troops with new ideas and skills that could add to the organisation.

Vale

Members will be sad to learn of the death of four prominent older members of the Perisher family.

Ian Curlew QC's early days of skiing were at the Chalet in the 1950s and he helped to build Kunama Huette at the foot of Mt Clarke. He was in residence at the hut in 1956 when it was destroyed by an avalanche. He was involved with the early development of Thredbo, helping to investigate suitable sites for

lodges. A keen outdoorsman, Ian was involved with Outward Bound, Surf Lifesaving Australia, and the Duke of Edinburgh Program. Ian was guest speaker at the PHS annual dinner in 2016.

Kurt Brulisauer emigrated to Australia from his native St Gallen, Switzerland, in 1960. After working as a chef in several hotels he made his way to Perisher in 1965 where he worked for Jake and Judy Zweifel and in 1969, with Jake, opened the original Kurt's Keller. Kurt married his wife Di in 1970 and, after finishing at Kurt's Keller, they ran the Valley Inn and various restaurants in Perisher before Kurt became head of food operations for the new Perisher Resort in 1995. Kurt retired in 2005.

Phyllis Abbottsmith, wife of Johnny and partner in his amazing life, has died in Bombala. Phyllis and Johnny raised four children, Fay, Diane, Gary and Ken, under very trying conditions in the Snowy Mountains. Phyllis outlived Johnny by 30 years and was loved by all who knew her.

Grant Turnbull was known to three generations of skiers as, variously, a bar tender, ski patrol officer and ski instructor, both in Australia and Austria. Grant was also a lifelong member of North Bondi Surf Club and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.



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Publications

We were thrilled to learn that Donald Johnston's book 'The Hotel Kosciusko – the history and legacy of Australia's first planned alpine resort' has won the Skade Award of the International Skiing History Association. This award is for an outstanding work on regional ski history and is the second time that a book from the Perisher Historical Society has won the award.

Donald Johnston is planning a new book on 'The Creel', a fishing lodge established by the NSW Government in 1907, which was a favourite of trout fishermen and fisherwomen for many years but is now under the waters of Jindabyne Dam. Anyone with any stories or memories of the Creel is encouraged to contact Don at johnston@acenet.com.au.

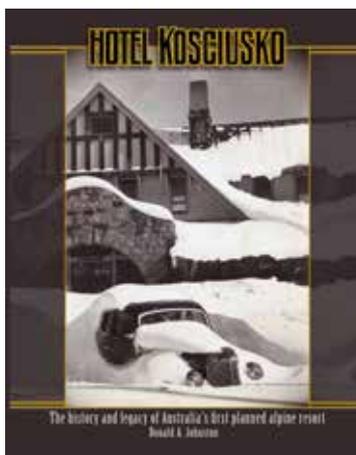
Peter Southwell-Keely is writing a biography of Johnny Abbottsmith who made an outstanding contribution to the development of skiing in NSW and who led a multi-faceted, extraordinary life. Anyone with stories or other information about Johnny is encouraged to contact Peter at pskeely@bigpond.com.

My best wishes to all,
Philip Woodman
philip@perisherhistory.org.au

DIARY DATES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Saturday 10 April at 11am,
via Zoom. Members will be
advised of details by e-mail.

ANNUAL DINNER
Details are still uncertain
because of COVID-19
limitations. Final details will be
advised via e-mail and on the
PHS website.



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

by Donald A. Johnston

The first print run of this popular book has sold out, but we can let you know when a reprint becomes available. Complete the form at:

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

Snowies Iconic Walk project update - January 2021

Information on the walk project is available at:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/walking-tracks-and-trails-in-national-parks/snowies-iconic-walk/updates-january-2021>

New walking track from Guthega to Charlotte Pass

Construction is underway on stage 2 of the Snowies Iconic Walk project between Illawong (near Guthega) and Charlotte Pass. The new section of track is approximately 5.6 kilometres long and will offer a well-graded walk of steel mesh, rock paving and gravel. The new walk will showcase expansive views of the Snowy River and Main Range.

Construction of the track by Steelworks Engineering is well-advanced and the installation of the bridge over Spencers Creek will commence in early 2021. The track remains closed and visitors are requested to avoid the area whilst works are undertaken. The track is expected to be opened to walkers in late April 2021.

Charlotte Pass to Perisher via Porcupine Rocks

Work has now commenced on this new section of track to link Charlotte Pass and Perisher Valley villages (via Porcupine Walk).

The new track will start near the Charlotte Pass Resort and will set out towards the Ramshead Range where it will continue across the top of the escarpment through to Porcupine Rocks. The track will then continue onto Porcupine Walk through to Perisher Village. This section of track is planned to be completed before mid-2022

Seamans Hut toilet

Seamans Hut is a scenic spot to stop and refuel along the Mount Kosciuszko Summit Walk. The new toilet at Seamans Hut will cater for the increasing numbers of Summit trail walkers from early 2021 and will also cater for back country adventures during the winter period.

Highest Praise for Cafe Views at Perisher's Alpine Eatery

by *Tim the Yowie Man*

Tim writes a regular column for 'The Canberra Times', where this article first appeared on 5 September 2020 (Panorama, pages 8-9).

With a final rev of the engine and in a puff of snow, Steve Young arrives at the Alpine Eyre.

Not many people commute to work on a snowmobile, especially not in Australia, but during the ski season it's the only way Steve can access his remote café at the bottom of Perisher Resort's Eyre T-Bar.

"It's such a fun way to get to work, so long as you don't have to dig it out of the snow," he laughs, while still unstrapping his helmet.

Since first discovering Alpine Eyre a few years ago, this modest wooden hut has become my must-stop en route to alpine adventures, in both summer and winter. In fact, much to Mrs Yowie's mirth, I'll often time a trip to the Snowies, based around Steve's opening hours. Really.

Peddling a limited menu of hearty burgers and hot drinks, this far-flung kiosk is by no means a mecca for foodies. It's the knock-out location at Perisher Gap, 1800 m above sea level, which lures me back here time after time. In one direction is the relative safety and familiarity of the Perisher Valley and down beyond the snowline towards the expansive plains of the Monaro, while in the other is the true roof of Australia, where blizzards howl



Steve Young enjoys a morning cuppa on the deck of the Alpine Eyre near Perisher. Picture: Tim the Yowie Man

and back country adventures await.

The other attraction here is Steve. He is a bit of legend in these parts. Even if people don't know his last name.

Having run the kiosk for 12 years, a lot of people call him Steve Eyre. "Oh, and I still get Steve Stillwell from when I worked at Stillwell Lodge [at Charlottes Pass]," he laughs, saying "people just seem to attach the name of where I work to me."

No matter what you call him, Steve is the go-to man for advice on accessing this part of Kosciuszko National Park. He firmly has his finger on the pulse regarding snow and weather conditions, especially along the Kosciuszko Road, which fronts his kiosk. He has to. His livelihood depends on it.

Although open in summer, in winter the road is closed to all motorised traffic except for those oversized snowmobiles which regularly chug past taking day trippers up to snow-bound Charlottes Pass where the road abruptly ends.

This means in winter the coffers of the Alpine Eyre are almost entirely dependent on Steve being able to satisfy the hunger pangs of downhill skiers and snow boarders. So when there's not enough snow for the Eyre T-bar to open, Steve's customers simply can't reach him.

"Before the Eyre T-Bar opened earlier this season, I'd go hours between customers, just the occasional walker or cross country skier" he says. "For many days I had to be content with selling just a few burgers and a couple of coffees".

Thankfully for Steve, who this year has had to endure forced closures due to a summer of fires and COVID-19 restrictions, with good late winter snow falls, it's been a promising start to spring. And having awoken to a bluebird day, Steve's hoping the cash register will continue to ring today.

Unlike just about every other café in Australia where coffee is the number one seller, here at Alpine Eyre, hot chocolates are the beverage of choice. And not your stock-standard hot chocolate either. Most here prefer their hot choccies laced with rum or Baileys. Or both.

Not that you'll find Steve working the coffee machine - he leaves that for his younger staff.

"When that wind starts whipping through the gap [Perisher Gap] you can freeze to death over there making drinks, it's much cosier back here on the grill," he smirks, moving to the back of his modest kitchen, no bigger than mine at home.

Lucky he's on the ball, for a long line of ski bunnies are already queued up for what are widely touted as 'the best burgers on the mountain'.

According to Steve, the secret to his burgers "is that everything here is made fresh".

"Well, it's way too cold to leave anything sitting around in the Beaumaris," he quips.

Anyone who has visited Australia's High Country will know there's often friendly argy-bargy over who has the highest this and the highest that, like the highest town [it was Cabramurra until recently, but that's a story for another day], highest lifted ski



*In winter, Steve Young rides his snowmobile to work.
Picture: Tim the Yowie Man*

run [Karels T-Bar, Thredbo] and, of course, the highest eatery. While Eagles Nest at Thredbo Top Station is without doubt Australia's highest restaurant, the Alpine Eyre has its own claim to fame.

"To be called a café or restaurant you need a toilet which we don't have, so instead we claim to be Australia's highest licensed kiosk," declares Steve.

Apart from the fickle mountain weather, one of Steve's biggest hurdles is finding staff. "Unless they hitch a ride with me on the Ski-Doo, they have to walk-up (no mean feat in deep snow) from Perisher, or ski down from the top of the mountain," explains Steve.

Despite the obvious challenges of running such a remote and seasonally-dependent business, Steve loves his job almost as much as the punters love his burgers and "wouldn't be anywhere else for quids".

"I get to work in the great outdoors, meet lovely people and soak up one of the best views

in Australia every single day," he says.

I don't need any convincing. I'm already planning a summer hike among the wildflowers just so I can savour another of his burgers with that view. Oh okay, and a hot chocolate.

The Alpine Eyre (often referred to as Eyre Kiosk) is located at the bottom of the Eyre T Bar on the Kosciuszko Road at the southern end of Perisher Resort. Usually open all snow season (June long weekend - October long weekend) and in summer from Boxing Day. Cash only.



*The deck of Alpine Eyre after a winter snow storm.
Picture: Alpine Eyre Kiosk*

My Pioneer Trip to Kosciusko

by Percy W. Pearson

*From the 'Kosciusko Alpine Club
1923 Year Book'
Reprinted in the K.A.C Bulletin
December 2009*

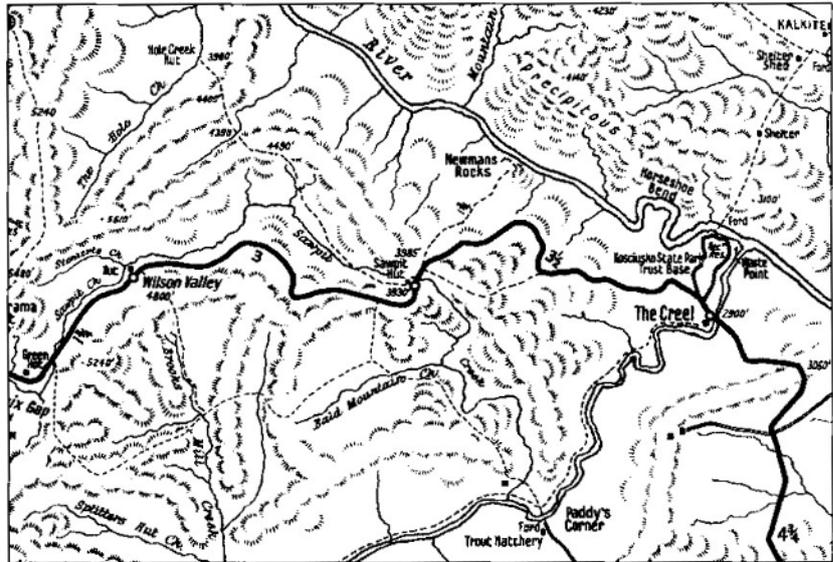
As a boy my greatest ambition was to be amongst snow, and when in after years I jealously read of Messrs. Chas. Kerry, Percy Hunter, George Bell and a few others visiting Kiandra for the snow sports, I was very anxious to join the party.

I think it was in 1907¹ I heard that the Government Tourist Bureau was organizing a party to visit the snow fields at Kosciusko, where the Hospice² was being erected and I hastened to have my name enrolled.

I think that Mr. Paterson and the other officers of the Tourist Department must have got tired of the sight of me, as I was in and out of the office daily and asking all sorts of silly questions about the snow and what I would have to wear.

A large number of people had their names given in to join the party. I think most of them were as anxious to go as I was, but a week before we were to leave, Sydney experienced a cold snap, and the majority lost their enthusiasm, and the party dwindled down to six, with the addition of three others who left Sydney a few days previously for Kiandra and were to join us at the Creel³.

I was out of my bunk in the train at daylight and had my face glued to the window looking for the snow, and I think we were all disappointed on arrival at Cooma not seeing any, as we



fully expected to view snow all the way out, but when we met old Paddy Heyland, who was to drive us out in his coach, we were more contented, as he assured us that we would get all the snow we wanted when we got to Kosciusko.

We left Cooma at 10 o'clock and arrived at Berridale in time for lunch, leaving again at 2 o'clock.

We had a bit of excitement as we were leaving Berridale. A mile out from the town we saw two mounted constables galloping across the country and signalling for us to stop. We did so, and, when they arrived they looked very important and demanded to know who was in charge of the party, also the names of us all. It appeared the driver of the coach had broken some antediluvian traffic regulation at Cooma that morning and had been reported, and consequently the troopers were sent after us. At any rate we heard nothing more about the matter; I think some of our names must have given them a bit of a shock.

We arrived at the Creel at 7 o'clock and were met by the three Charlies, Bennett, Paterson and Brockhoff, who had been to Kiandra for a few days.

We were up early the next morning, as we were to have our first experience on skis. We loaded the coach with Kiandra skis and a toboggan and started for the snow, all excitement. We drove for an hour or so and suddenly got the order, "All out; get your skis ready and cut a brake stick each". These we had to cut off a tree, and were to be used to help us climbing and also to sit on when coming down a hill.

Of course, the three who had been to Kiandra and our friend, George Bell, put on a "bit of dog", and showed us how it should be done, but we soon found that even they had spills, so we had to try ourselves. No adjusting bindings, as we only had Kiandra skis, with a plain leather strap to put our feet in. We each waddled gingerly

to the edge of a slope and let go, and found we could fall just as gracefully as the others, and before long, with a lot of perseverance, we got on famously, and I shall never forget the satisfaction and pleasure I felt when I first negotiated the slope.

We spent about an hour practicing and then made our way toward the hotel, which was partially erected, and left for the winter, and I think the sight of the building in the centre of the snow was one of the finest I have ever witnessed.

One little incident I must mention. We left the Coach at Rennix Gap and loaded the toboggan with skis and various articles, including a box of eggs. We decided that two of us would draw the toboggan by a rope and another sit on it and look after the luggage. We seemed to be getting along famously. George Bell was in the middle of a funny story when we felt a tug and heard a muffled cry behind, and looking back saw the toboggan upside down, and our friend, who had been holding the box of eggs, dragging on

his back. He was a pretty good sport, for although he had frozen omelette over his face, he took it in good humour. We proceeded to the building, unloaded, and spent a most delightful afternoon in the snow, and left for the Creel at dusk, all very pleased with our first day's ski-ing.

We were back again the next day and felt we were all improving, but as so much time was spent travelling up and down the mountain I suggested we should camp in the building, so four of us found some old camp stretchers and took them to what is now the drawing room, made a good fire and were comfortable for the night.

The next day Mrs. Percy Hunter and her two boys joined the party, and all hands decided to camp in the building for the balance of the holidays.

That night we decided to call a public meeting with the object of forming an Alpine Club. I found a bell and toured all round and invited all residents of Kosciusko to attend. The meeting was most successful and enthusiastic.

[KAC was founded the following year with an inaugural meeting on 3rd August 1909.ED] I think Charlie Paterson⁴ was made President and I was elected Hon. Secretary, which position I have held ever since.

The next day an excursion was arranged to explore, and got as far as Dainers' Gap, and as the party left the hotel I happened to be in the lead, so think I can claim to be the first man to go up the road on skis.

We had a carnival on our last day which was most successful. We had a ladies' championship, which I think, was won by Mrs Hunter; a gentleman's championship, won by Charlie Paterson, and I had the honour of winning the new chums' race.

I have revisited Kosciusko annually ever since. I never lost my enthusiasm, and hope to be able to do so another sixteen years.

My greatest ambition is to encourage the sport and make Kosciusko what it should be — the most popular holiday resort in Australia.



The 1907 group including Percy Pearson (standing, 4th from left) and Charles T Brockhoff (seated, 2nd from right)

Footnotes

1. *Actually 1908*

2. *The future Hotel Kosciusko was originally referred to as a Hospice - the definition in that era being a house of shelter for strangers or pilgrims and not serving alcohol.*

3. *The Creel was built on the Summit Road in 1907 to house the workmen constructing the Hotel Kosciusko opened in June 1909.*

4. *Actually Charles T Brockhoff (Southwell-Keely, P (2009) Out on the Tops)*

About Percy Pearson

Percy Pearson was a successful competitive cyclist as was his father Joseph Pearson. Percy heard about skiing in 1906 and in 1908 joined a group of eight which went to Kosciusko to see the embryonic hotel being built at Diggers Creek. The group camped in the partly completed hotel and Pearson suggested the formation of the Kosciusko Alpine Club.

This did not happen immediately but did so the following year. Pearson was elected foundation Honorary Secretary, a position he held for the next 27 years.

During that time he was involved in all activities of the club including racing, importation of skis, development of ski technique and instruction and manually clearing ski runs with an axe. He was a meticulous recorder of minutes and records and it is due to him that KAC has such an excellent record of its earlier years. In failing health he was elected President in 1938 and died in 1939 at the age of 64 years.



Gretel's Fashion Letter -

Wherein the Kosciusko Enthusiast Gets Some Sound Advice

Sun (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), Sunday 18 June 1933

Dear Betty, — Don't worry about your clothes for Kosciusko, they won't be as expensive as you think. It's bad taste, you know, to have too many outfits for the snow. I'll tell you about the trip and then you'll be able to judge for yourself what you will need. If you are driving up you'll need a very heavy overcoat or fur coat, worn over thick tweeds — preferably old ones— because it's quite likely to be very slippery going for the last few miles and you may have to walk or even help push the car. If you are an indifferent skier you will probably be putting up at the hotel for the whole of your stay, in which case you'll need a couple of evening dresses with long sleeves, or proper evening frocks with little jackets.

The most important garment in your Kosciusko wardrobe is the



skiing suit. You'll notice it's very plain, no bits and pieces at all, and this is extremely important the more comfortable the suit the more pleased you'll be with it. It should be of waterproof gabardine, either black or navy blue, as dark plain colors look best -in the snow. The trousers

are cut very full at the bottom, into, a tight buttoned band around the ankles. This band has an elastic loop which passes under the foot and holds the trousers quite immovable. The coat should be long and I would take several old jerseys and shirts, you'll be glad of fresh ones. Now your headgear. A hat is really necessary to protect your skin from the glare of the sun and snow. These hats should be the plainest sporting felts possible. A beret for windy weather is a good idea. Both the hat and beret should be the color of the suit; brilliant colors, you'll find, will look rather out of place. A pair of smoked glasses is an absolute necessity, also waterproof gloves, which are worn over a woolly pair for warmth.

The First Winter Ascent of Mt Kosciusko in 1897

The Sydney Morning Herald
(1897), 30 August, p.6.

A party of Sydney gentlemen desirous of making the ascent of Mount Kosciusko during the winter season left Sydney on the 11th August, fully determined to accomplish the task, one recommending itself chiefly by reason of the difficulties to be overcome in a region where the snow is known to lie in immense drifts, which hitherto has attracted no excursionists in the depth of winter.

The party consisting of Messrs Kerry, E.A. Holden, B. Barnett and J. Wyatt proceeded by train to Cooma, where they arrived the following day. They then proceeded to Jindabyne, which journey was prolonged greatly beyond its usual limit, two days being lost through a heavy fog enveloping the neighbourhood through which they passed. However, Jindabyne was reached on Monday, the 16th instant, where the party was augmented by Messrs Laurence Clifford, A. Brook (manager of Jindabyne Station), McAllister, Kennedy, Willis, Stephenson, McKinnon and guides Spencer, Bolton and son. Mr Clifford undertook the horsing of the party, and in addition provided five packhorses, thereby adding greatly to the assistance and convenience of the party.

No time was lost in making a start, as the cavalcade left the same day, in mild and beautiful weather and no snow being visible. Proceeding along the valley of the Thredbo River,



The first winter ascent of Mt Kosciusko. Image by Charles Kerry.

a distance of 25 miles was accomplished, when the party camped for the night. During the night a heavy fall of snow took place, and in the morning it was thought best to send out a reconnoitring party to report on the state of the valley higher up. Nothing of an unfavourable nature being met with, the main body moved on, but were overtaken by a sudden blizzard of snow, the temperature falling in an astonishing manner rendering progress anything but agreeable. So severe was the fall that in a period of two hours, 20 inches of snow were recorded.

Ten miles was the distance covered that day, and it was here determined to establish a camp as a basis of operations, which was accomplished under great difficulties, the thermometer registering at sunset 18° F (-8°C). The site of the camp was 35 miles from Jindabyne at an altitude of 5,000 feet.

The following day was spent in practising snowshoeing, an accomplishment of novelty to the greater portion of the party; nevertheless sufficient progress was made that the following morning the final ascent was deemed practicable. For the first mile and a half the party passed through heavy timber where snowshoeing was impossible, the distance taking something just under 4 hours to accomplish, the keenest of the excursionists being greatly exhausted. This portion of the journey was the most trying experienced during the trip. Snowshoes were then brought into requisition and for 5 miles the passage was across immense snowdrifts entirely covering every sign of vegetation and granite outcrop. Here no water was to be obtained, and the thirst of the travellers was extreme, which was greatly aggravated by the involuntary habit of eating snow.

On reaching an altitude of 7,000 feet to the amazement of the guides the valley immediately below the ascent was found to be almost entirely filled by an immense snowdrift, the depth of which no estimate could be given, covering in a continuing unbroken mantle the land, the waters of the Snowy River and Lake Cootapatamba: in fact entirely altering the physical features of the mountain. This however, enabled the party to pass on with comparative ease for a considerable distance until the point of the last ascent was reached. Here it was found necessary to abandon the snowshoes, and some articles of clothing were likewise dispensed with.

Eventually the summit was reached by 12 of the travellers at 2 pm on the 19th August, the first to reach the goal being guide J. Bolton, who thus won the gold medal offered by Mr Barnett for the first man to

reach the summit. As if in final consummation of the grandeur of the snowfields the cairn and survey mark which crown the mountain were found to be entirely buried in frozen snow, which had been blown by the winds into fantastical and stalactitic formations, presenting in the brilliant sunshine a dazzling picture never to be forgotten by the elated explorers.

The view was described as being grand in the extreme, looking over 50 miles of unbroken snow on the Snowy Ranges, then over the snowclad sister peaks of this district, and finally over towards Albury on the one hand and to Cooma on the other. In the sun the temperature was 22° F, there being only a difference of 2° in the shade. The mountain is supposed to be 7,600 feet in height and the travellers claim to be the first party of excursionists who have attempted and accomplished its ascent during the winter months. Numerous

photographs were taken by Mr Kerry, which fully illustrate the trip. After a stay of 3/4 of an hour, the descent was commenced, and the camp reached in safety.

Messrs Kerry and Holden, at the invitation of Mr McAllister, proceeded to the Bogong on snowshoes, taking up quarters at the camp of some miners there. Snowshoe races were organised, and some capital sport was furnished. A trophy offered by the Sydney visitors for a race over 350 yards was won by J. Bourke, who covered the distance in 22 seconds. Ice skating was also indulged in by one of the party, and proved a novelty to the residents. The return, a distance of 37 miles, was accomplished in one day, 12 miles being covered on snowshoes and the remainder on horseback. Sydney was reached on Saturday, 21st August, the trip being thoroughly enjoyed by the whole party, who have reason to be satisfied with their exploits.



*Charles Kerry's photograph of the Crackenback in winter, the route taken by the first ascent party
Image courtesy of Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS)*

Vale Kurt Brulisauer (13.10.1937 – 23.11.2020)

by Peter Brulisauer

Thank you so much for joining us today (16.12.20) at the Alpine Church in Perisher Valley to celebrate and remember Kurt, or Curly to most people, and Dad to me.

Dad was born in St Gallen, Switzerland on the 13 October 1937. He was the second child to Eduard and Clara Brulisauer, younger brother to Eduard, and older brother to Peter and sister Rita. Kurt had an enjoyable childhood and spent weekends walking to alpine lakes, riding bikes and skiing in the Appenzell region with close family including his Aunt Mary and his friends.

Kurt started work at a young age and then made his apprenticeship as a butcher and sausage maker in St Gallen. He managed to avoid the Swiss military in his late teens through poor hearing and flat feet. The latter an ailment he sometimes used as an excuse to avoid any occasion of which he was none too fond. Kurt worked in his profession until he travelled to Sydney by sea when he was 23 with 3 mates who set out on a working adventure to Australia, New Zealand and South America. He wasted no time and started work at a butcher shop one day after he arrived in Sydney. He settled into the Bondi lifestyle and later transitioned to cooking at the Pfahlerts hotel in Wynyard.

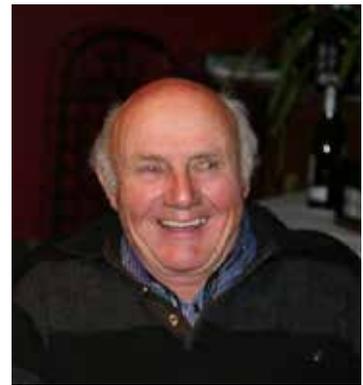
While Kurt's friends embarked on the next leg of their journey, he decided to stay in Australia and in 1962 he moved to Portland in Victoria working in the

Restaurant White House as head chef. The owners of the hotel owned a number of racehorses including a Melbourne Cup winner and Kurt proudly told the story of riding these horses bareback along the beach, in and out of the surf "full-speed" with the wind in his hair!

In 1965 Kurt travelled to Perisher Valley to visit his friend Rudi Kunz at Warragang Lodge. He was introduced to Jake and Judy Zweifel who became life-long friends and who owned Jolly Swagman, Perisher View and Corroboree Lodges. Kurt started work for Jake and Judy as a cook at Jolly Swagman for the '65 season and assisted Jake, a fellow Swiss, doing lodge maintenance in the summer.

In 1966, Kurt managed Chez Jean for Jean Ecuyer. While Jean played his guitar and sipped wine to entertain the guests, Kurt pampered them with wonderful European delicacies and beer! During the summer of 1966 Kurt returned to Switzerland for a holiday to see his family and upon his return to Perisher for the '67 winter season he managed Corroboree and then managed Millpost, a farm at Nimmitabel where he worked with cattle and sheep.

In 1969 Di was working as a receptionist for Gwen and Alan Cooper in her first year in the mountains at The Man From Snowy River Hotel. One night Kurt arrived at The Man to pick up his date for the evening but when the receptionist dialled her room, there was no answer. So



Kurt, thinking on his feet, asked Di the pretty receptionist out for dinner instead. And the rest is of course history.

During the summer of '68-69 Jake and Kurt built the original Kurt's Keller at Corroboree. With its great success in the first season, the next summer they extended it to become the first licensed restaurant in Perisher Valley. The menu featured Cheese and Beef Fondues along with Schnitzel, Veal Cordon Bleu and Steak Diane and the restaurant soon opened for breakfast and lunch as well. Year after year regulars came back for a meal at Kurt's. When the restaurant closed in '76 it was completely booked out and Di had even booked people sitting on the floor on cushions.

In 1969 Kurt assisted Keith Line, Ray Coles, Jake and others in building the church while Di assisted Mrs Cooper with church fundraising events. Kurt assisted in raising the roof structure and completed the rock rendering and went on to become a trustee of the church for many years.

On the 23 May 1970 Kurt and Di were the first couple to be married here. Di arrived in an

oversnow vehicle decorated with traditional white ribbons and the Reverend Tony Ireland performed the wedding ceremony and guests celebrated the reception at The Man. As there was no heating or seating in the church they made do with a few kerosene heaters and borrowed bench seating from The Man. Rudi Kunz was Kurt's best man and Rudi's daughter Heidi was flower girl. The ladies were dressed in velvet, fur trimmed hoods and hand muffs and the men in ski pants and ski jumpers. Di was given a Great Dane puppy as a wedding gift but Kurt wasn't too happy about that so he gave it away on the wedding day!

A wonderful dinner was served at The Man with Helmut Freitag as head chef, lots of laughs and beautiful oysters that Di's dad had brought down from Newcastle. The next day most guests continued celebrating on Front Valley as the lifts had opened early! No honeymoon for Di and Kurt, just a day skiing with friends and then straight back to work.

I came along in October 1975 and in '76 Kurt and Di opened the 'Sausage Shop' at The Valley Inn. Kurt would do all the prep at Kurt's Kellar and Di would take me over to the hotel in a toboggan, where I would stay in a bouncer whilst she served hundreds of customers with steak and leberkase sandwiches, bratwurst and knackwurst.

In 1977 the then General Manager of the Resort – Harold Droga - asked Kurt and Di to lease The Valley Inn from the resort. The hotel was in terrible condition but friends

helped them get it into shape for the opening of the season. The Valley Inn became the entertainment and dining hub of Perisher Valley with international acts, jelly wrestling, body painting, fancy dress parties and much more! This was obviously Di's forte and needless to say Kurt wasn't that impressed. Kurt and Di leased The Valley Inn until 1984 and during this time made many life-long friends.



Many of their staff say the Valley Inn years were the best years of their lives. Kurt coined lots of his famous one liners in the Valley Inn....including "Are you verking or lurking?", "Are you cleaning or leaning?" and.... "I'll see you in the soup". He invented a ridiculous nickname for many of his staff which, when he saw them, he would shout out with authority, laugh himself silly, shine that cheeky grin and walk off.

During that time Kurt and Di also opened two restaurants in Jindabyne and a restaurant in the Perisher Centre where Jax is now, where he catered for his loyal guests from Corroboree and also for the workers building the Skitube and Blue Cow in summer.

In 1991 Kurt was approached by Allan Patterson to manage the food at Mt Blue Cow, and then became Food & Beverage Manager for the Alpine Australia Group. Some of his favourite memories were working with

Colin Toll, Ray Balmer, Ian Brandon and the team who spent many an evening enjoying Kurt and Di's hospitality over a BBQ and late night "shpa" at the family home at East Jindabyne which he proudly built with the help of his friends.

After the Perisher Blue merger, Kurt became responsible for all resort operated food outlets. Ashley Blondel, the then CEO could never quite understand where the line was drawn between Kurt and Di's responsibilities as they both treated the businesses as if they were their own. Sometimes he found himself in the difficult position of mediator.... one that I know well.

During Kurt's many years in the industry he shared his passion for hard work and great fun with hundreds of staff, many being inspired to build their own careers in the industry, me included. He developed a very successful formula of extracting the best and hardest work from people while having a fun time and building the strongest of friendships, legendary to this day. Over the years, so many people have spoken with me about their very fond recollections of working for Kurt and Di, including many of the great people who still live and work in the mountains today.

When he wasn't working, Dad found time for fun with his mates sailing - racing Hobie cats on Lake Jindabyne, around Australia and to the World Championships. He taught me to sail and swear in Swiss-German concurrently. All with a droopy wet cigar hanging from the side of his mouth, while looking back at his hat bobbing along in the

water behind us that had just flown off his bald head, as we tore across the lake on trapeze together, flying on one hull.

Dad also enjoyed some unique and special adventures in the mountains in the early days with his mates which he loved to talk about. One described in the late Johnny Davis's words:

On a clear sunny winters day, with excellent snow cover, Grant Turnbull, Kurt Brulisauer and myself, three other people and three Evinrude snow-cruisers, happened to meet up at the Chalet. Three of us were driving the snow cruisers and three were towing behind, we went up to Charlottes Pass to have a look across at the main range. The sight was magnetic drawing us across the Snowy River to the base of Mt Clarke, then for the next two hours or so we explored the hills and valleys of the main Kosciusko range, pausing for a breather and refreshment 2229 metres above sea level on the summit of Mt Kosciuzsko, overwhelmed by the magical vistas in every direction and excited in the knowledge that few before or after us would share the experience.

But Kurt didn't ski much and work was his main focus in winter. I only skied with Dad on cross country skis and then only a few times. The most memorable for me was with Sigi and Joe Draxl and a few others on an epic ski touring trip from Thredbo around the Main Range and back to Spencers Creek. I can still remember Dad falling when entering a steep face over a cornice and spinning and sliding uncontrollably hundreds of metres to the valley floor below, his trademark laughter echoing around the mountains and Sigi rolling around in the snow in stitches gasping for breath. Dad

said his feet hurt for a year after that day, and we laughed about it for many more.

Kurt loved making trips back to Switzerland to visit family and his great friends Freddy and Sonja. He enjoyed showing us the places his Aunt Mary took him and the mountains he climbed on his bike as a kid, again, apparently full "shpeed". He would take us to important parts of Appenzell and proudly described battles brutally fought and won by Appenzeller mercenaries hundreds of years before. All quite amusing coming from a little Swiss man!

But most of all he loved coming home to East Jindabyne. He took great pride hosting his Swiss family and friends in Australia, showing them the life, family and friends he had made - his house, pool and view of Lake Jindabyne. Dad was a proud Swiss but ultimately he enjoyed the more laid-back lifestyle of Australia, the open spaces and the people, and that's why I think he chose to stay.

Kurt retired in 2005 to fish Lake Jindabyne, do some travel with Di, relax in his pool, tend to his roses and enjoy his house. He spent much of his time checking the Perisher webcams and calling me to share his observations of how the resort looked, which usually turned to conversation about which stocks we were winning and losing on.

After he retired, he also spent lots of time with his much loved grandsons, Tom and Zac, and spent many hours walking and talking with his dog Woody, who rarely left his side until March this year. He cherished this time and was a wonderful granddad, telling

stories, singing Appenzeller songs and always joking around. Whenever I picked up Tom and Zac from Mum and Dad, as we reversed down the driveway, they would tell me how crazy Curly was and how he made them laugh while he cooked them their favourite schnitzel and chips and spoiled them as he pleased.

He loved these years, despite some ongoing challenges with his health. He was very grateful to go on drives and spend time chatting with many of his closest friends including Franz, Uwe, Doc and Darren, and his dog-walking friends while he tried to persuade Woody to get out of the lake.

Kurt and Di remained best friends through 50 years of marriage and the challenges of running businesses and working closely together in the mountains. Dad was extremely grateful for Mum's love and care in recent years, although he still loved winding her up for a good laugh. And with years of practice, it took little effort!

Dad gave me unconditional love and supported me in whatever I did. He worked hard to afford me a great education and was always interested in how I was going. He was generous with his time teaching me about the world he knew and reinforcing the things in life he thought were important.

His love for mum and me and our family was unwavering, his laugh - unique and infectious, his smile - beautiful, his work ethic - legendary, and his sense of humour - wicked.

Rest those sore feet.

Good-bye Dad.