

Across the Deep White Snow

(By Sir Samuel Hordern.)

The following very interesting account of one of the early trips to Kiandra for the ski-ing is contributed by Sir Samuel Hordern, who is well known throughout Australia and England for his valuable services to all forms of out-door sport, as well as for his more important avenues of activity on behalf of the community.

"In the winter of 1905 a small party was gathered together by Percy Hunter and journeyed to Kiandra. Kosciusko, as it is to-day, was unknown then.

"The party consisted of the writer, Percy Hunter, Reg. Todman, Professor Kilburn Scott, of the Sydney University, Charley Bennett, of Bennett & Wood, the late Tom Scott, and the late Geo. Bell, official photographer to the 'Sydney Mail.'

"We travelled over night by train to Cooma, and then drove by coach to Adaminaby, and spent the night there. The next day we started early in the morning, and drove as far as we could into the snow country, where we were met by a party of miners, who came out with extra skis from Kiandra to escort us into the township.

"This tramp over the snow was about 10 miles, and most of us had never seen a ski before, and, being novices, we had rather a trying time. Our baggage was limited, as we had to carry this ourselves; the miners shared our burden with us, otherwise some of us, I am afraid, would have fallen by the wayside.

"Geo. Bell, with all his gear, had a pony brought out as a pack-horse, but we had not proceeded far when Bell, the pony, cameras, etc., disappeared in a snow drift. We then had our first lesson in 'language' suitable for ski-ing. After reseuing Bell and the pony, he had to send the pony back, and this entailed our having to carry the camera plates and other gear that Bell had with him.

"From memory, I think the journey to Kiandra took about five or six hours, and, as I mentioned, none of us having used a ski before, most of us made slow travelling. About a mile from Kiandra I gave

out in the right thigh and had to be assisted into the town by Jacob Wilson, the hotelkeeper and the local constable.

"After a rest and wash, we sat down to an excellent dinner, prepared by Wilson's wife, and it can be surmised that after our long tramp we did full justice to all the good things placed before us. The party elected me to the chair, and that meant I was carver for all meals, and with a party of hungry men I was kept pretty busy, but, being carver, I had the opportunity of retaining the choice portion of either the turkey, fowl, or joint, as the case might be, which made up for the work I had to do.

"The day after we arrived the novices at ski-ing were taken in hand by the experts in the use of the skis, and in a short time we were able to enjoy ourselves and venture forth to look for hills to climb and ski down. No doubt it is a fascinating sport when you become proficient.

"We spent about a week there, and on occasions prospected virgin snow country, miles away from Kiandra, taking our billy and tucker with us, and we thoroughly enjoyed the experience. On these trips we developed a chorus, which finished with the words, 'Across the Deep White Snow,' with which I have headed these notes.

"After dinner, in the evening, we sat round the fire, swapped yarns, and generally had a good time. We whiled the hours away with a card game, then known as Ricketty Kate, though I believe it now masquerades as Slippery Sam. We were always glad to turn in early, as, after a day's ski-ing, we were generally dead-beat. There was only one sitting room, and in it we ate, dried our clothes, and spent the evening in front of a roaring fire. We had no ladies in the party, and had the hotel to ourselves.

"The week went all too fast, and we were genuinely sorry when the day to return arrived.

"The journey back to the coach was done in about one-third of the time, as by then we had managed the art of using the ski and travelled fairly fast.

"The homely folk who live at Kiandra could not do enough for us, and we all have happy recollections of their kindness."