

Kiandra in 1900

The publication of the *Year Book* last year aroused many memories among old-time devotees of the sport, and the Editor received numerous congratulations from them. Some were stirred to action, and among contributions received was one from Mr. J. Palmer Wyatt, being a contemporary account of the visit to the Kiandra winter sports in the winter of 1900. This is printed below. It will be noted that ski were invariably known in Kiandra in those days as "Shoes."

Our party, bent on taking part in the Kiandra Snowshoe Carnival, left Sydney by the southern mail on July 16th, 1900. Our stock of Norwegian ski and a few Canadian snow-shoes created no little wonder at Sydney Railway Station, but the remarks of the "natives" at the various stations en route to Cooma created considerable amusement amongst our party.

On arrival at Cooma our impedimenta was there as great a novelty as it was at Sydney. Some four miles on our way in a five (5) horse drag we topped the Cooma hill and were treated to a fine view of the "Snowys." An immense amount of snow had fallen, which gave hopes of some wonderful runs on the "shoes" at Kiandra.

We lunched at Rhine Falls, a miserably bleak spot, about half-way on our journey to Adaminaby. Here we met the first snow drifts, which increased considerably as we progressed. On approaching Adaminaby we could see that much snow had recently fallen. The morning broke beautifully fine, with only a couple of inches of extra snow, so there was no jollier crowd than ours round a breakfast table in Monaro. Here we added a few men to our party. Some rode horses that were to be returned on reaching the deep snow. Speculation was rife as to whether the five horses could take our drag to the sawmill some eight (8) miles from Kiandra. We could plainly see by the snow drifts, cut through by the maintenance men to allow the mail coach to travel, that to have reached Kiandra a week or so earlier would have necessitated the use of the "shoes" the whole way from Adaminaby—20 miles—a great performance for one unaccustomed to the exercise.

When about 10 miles from our destination the drag stuck in the snow, so all hands turned out, donned "shoes," and strapped their small packs on their backs (lucky he who was satisfied with little more than socks and toothbrush). Our President, Mr. C. H. Kerry, the well known landscape photographer, having some heavy luggage in the shape of cameras and plates, had engaged men from Kiandra to carry it over the snow, as the road had been

blocked for many weeks even to horses. We had a short run of about two miles to the sawmill, where we lunched. Here we met many old friends, members of the Kiandra Club, who were kind enough to meet us. As the snow had a good "shoeing" surface we anticipated making a good run into the little Alpine township. This proved to be the case, some of the Sydney contingent doing the trip in (for them) record time. The town had an extraordinary appearance. The snow in some cases reaching the eaves of the cottages. The Kiandra Hotel, where we had secured accommodation, had an imposing entrance in the shape of a tunnel through the snow. All the stragglers of the party arrived in time for 6 o'clock dinner, to which we all did ample justice. The cuisine was excellent, and we did not object to the inevitable Monaro turkey appearing again as the "piece de resistance."

After lunch, next day, we witnessed the racing carnival of the children, and those to whom it was a novelty voted it to be the most sensational and amusing of sights. Great enthusiasm prevailed amongst the onlookers, as the competitors were greeted with laughter or applause. The girls' championship was won by Olive Eastwood, who "shoed" in a graceful and daring manner. The boys' championship was annexed by W. Wortes, who covered a course of 250 yards in 16 seconds.

Saturday was the days of days in this little Alpine township; particularly as fine weather had brought in a record number of visitors. Miners were seen bringing in their wives and children on sleighs, in one or two instances, where it was inconvenient to use the "shoes." The females had donned their very best attire for the occasion, and, seated around the winning post and other places, lent a pretty effect to the ensemble.

The strangers had the first race of the day allotted to them, the winner being Mr. N. P. Richards, of Sydney, who proved himself to be quite an expert, although this was only his second season on the "shoes." Then followed the new chum race, which elicited roars of laughter as the contestants appeared as if training to become professional contortionists. As in skating, so in snow-shoeing, the fair sex appears to the best advantage as graceful performers, and Miss A. Pattinson deservedly won the blue ribbon of the day, Mrs. G. Ball, an ex-champion, being a good second. The race for members of the Alpine Tourist Club only was won by Mr. E. A. Holden, of Sydney, who is also a dexterous ice skater. The second and third-class "amateur" races were won by W. Wortes and A. Bradley respectively. The next race of importance was the first-class "amateurs," which included the best riders. The final proved to be a

great struggle between F. Yan and F. Weselmann, the former negotiating the course of 400 yards in the fast time of 20 seconds.

The day's sport was brought to a conclusion by a toboggan race. The largest and most heavily laden competitor came to grief near the winning post, overturning and sending a cloud of snow high into the air, completely hiding the late occupants. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and everybody went home contented with the day's amusement. A ball took place in the School of Arts at night, when the funny sight of men dancing in gum-boots was witnessed.

Next day's sport commenced with the jumping contests. A bank of snow about 6 ft. high is made on the side of a hill over which the jumpers fly as they descend from the heights above. The champion jump of 38 ft. was made by E. Weselmann, who was also the most elegant performer. A jump of 47 ft. was made by W. Wortes, after clearing which he failed to ride his "shoes," a sine qua non of the performance.

The championship was a disappointment, not one of the contestants being able to ride the full course, 440 yards, without a fall. This was accounted for by the rough and frozen state of the snow on parts of the course. The event was won finally by a stalwart young rider, Wm. Burke, who was greeted with tremendous cheers on his reaching the winning post.

The Alpine Club was anxious to get a record of speed, so 220 yards of the least treacherous part of the course was carefully measured, and, with a flying start, this distance was covered in 10 seconds.

Unlike other sports, the snow carnival is a continually animated scene. Should there be a few minutes interval between races, or if one felt cold one could take a run in a toboggan, or challenge a friend to a short race, or try one's balancing powers over the small jumps. It is not unlikely that one might suggest a race to the nearest hotel and the loser pay for refreshments.

The residents have to thank their indefatigable Secretary, Mr. Geo. Irwin, in a great measure for the wonderful progress of the Club, and the public are much indebted to Mr. C. H. Kerry for his many views and various articles appearing in the Press since 1896, before which time the snow country of N.S.W. was a sealed book. The Kiandra Snow-shoe Club now numbers over 100 members.

The officials of the Kiandra Snow-shoe Club were:—

Kiandra Snow-shoe Club: Patron, Right Hon. Earl Beauchamp; President, James Pattinson, J.P.; Vice-Presidents, Sir Wm. Lyne, K.C.M.G., Hon. J. L. Fegan.

M.L.A., Messrs. G. T. C. Miller, M.L.A., C. H. Kerry, David Marks, E. S. Marks, Jas. Eastwood, J. P. Wyatt; Committee, Messrs. Eastwood (chair), Wyatt, Weselmann, Wortes, Kilfoyle, Marks, Neilson, Donoghue, W. Pattinson; Treasurer, H. E. Quick; Judges, Messrs. Pattinson and Eastwood; Starters, Messrs. Beattie, Hetherington, Wortes, and Donoghue; Time-keeper, Mr. Jas. Eastwood; Hon. Secretaries, Messrs. George Irwin, and J. W. Attwood.

Sydney visitors and party: Messrs. Lockyer (Commissioner), Holden, Richards, Puckle, Kerry, Gibson (squatter), McAllister, Smart (squatter), Miller (member for district), Wyatt, and others.



A CHRISTIANIA AT HIGH SPEED, APPROACHING DANGEROUS GROUND.

Photo: E. Gyger, Adelboden.