

A History of Australian Ski-ing

INTRODUCTION.

By Stewart Jamieson.

At the end of last year I said gaily to myself that I would write a short history of ski-ing in Australia. It appeared to be an interesting task. I expected to run it through two numbers of the Year Book. A few days of investigation, however, was enough to convince me that I was in the position of the man who wrote a life of Napoleon and was forced to start with the Flood. The period at which ski-ing began in Australia is badly documented. While much has been written of the gold rush days, the Kiandra rush has been passed over. There are practically no "secondary" authorities on that phase of the feverish activity which changed the whole nature of Australian history; it becomes necessary to work almost entirely from original sources and these are scattered through libraries, private collections, country newspaper files, and personal letters all over Australia.

It is intended to deal first with the exploration of the Alps and their naming, in the thirty years or so preceding the discovery of gold, then to deal with the Kiandra gold rush and the first ski-ing done in New South Wales. The first Victorian ski-ing will have to be described later. From that point onwards the recollection of various men connected with the mountain towns must be tapped, until we reach the point where club records and other sources become useful. For this year I am able only to make a rough list of the documentary sources and to appeal for further assistance in that respect. The task will be difficult and can only be done if those who are interested in the subject come forward with suggestions, advice, and, best of all, with information as to where the documentary sources can be found.

The sources of information for a history of ski-ing in Australia are of two kinds. First there are the various documents, contemporary or secondary from which details may be found; then, as to the later phases of the subject, much will be got from the recollection of men who saw the ski-ing of the 'eighties and 'nineties. Later still we come to the time when club records are available.

The exploration of the Australian Alps is fairly well covered by such men as Strzelecki, Von Müller and Lendenfeldt, though the records of the Lands Department are sadly deficient. Much of the exploration of the Monaro district, however, was done by pastoralists and their stockmen, working south from the Goulburn Plains in search of new country. They are not, as a class, particularly articulate people and little can be expected from this source. The 'sixties are an extraordinarily difficult period for the Australian historian. Up to about 1840 the subject has been thoroughly worked over; from 1880 onwards there are hundreds of excellent sources wherever one turns. But the period 1840-1880 lies between the two and only at the present time is it being touched by investigators. It is rich in newspaper information, for there was a large number of country periodicals at the time. But all this requires hard work at the originals and takes much time. Two of our best possible avenues of research were closed by the fire which destroyed



This picture (kindly lent by Mrs. Christian) was the first painting of the Main Range from the North-west. It was painted about 1856 and bought by the Melbourne Public Library in 1866. The artist was Jean Eugene von Guérard, a son of the Court painter to the Emperor of Austria.

Charles Kerry's records and the loss of the records of the Kiandra Ski Club. The brief list of documentary sources which follows is given more as an appeal for further information than for any other reason. I should be very glad if anyone who can fill its obvious gaps or tell me where files and documents can be found would do so as soon as possible. It will then be possible to compile a more authentic account than is at present within my power. I should like to acknowledge the help received from Mr. Speet, Mr. Percy Allen, Librarian of the "Sydney Morning Herald," Mr. Havard, Miss Nesta Griffiths, Mr. Wood, of the Department of History, University of Sydney, and, also, the authorities of the Mitchell Library. I have worried them all with requests for help and will have to do so again.

Newspapers.—The following list is not exhaustive and I should be glad of further references, and also of information as to where some of the missing files may be found.

"The Sydney Morning Herald" is not indexed for the period in question. In 1860-1861 it carried a regular "Kiandra Letter" nearly every week and it contains many other references to skiing, particularly in excerpts from country papers. Mr. Havard's work has covered most of the files of the "Herald" and his copious notes are invaluable sources of reference. There remain, however, further gaps to fill and the whole of the files up to about 1875 must be searched. "The Alpine Pioneer and Kiandra Advertiser" ran for about 12 months from about June, 1860, when it was merged with the "Monaro Mercury," a paper which subsequently merged with the "Cooma Express." The Mitchell Library files of the "Alpine Pioneer" (which incidentally have the finest old newspaper smell I have ever known) are not at all complete and the missing numbers would be invaluable. Of the other newspapers of the time the following may be useful: "Monaro Mercury," "Cooma Express," "Yass Courier," "Adaminaby Mail," "Braidwood Observer," "Braidwood Despatch," "Wynyard Times," "Ovens Constitution," "Adelong Mining Journal," "Albury Banner," "The Colonist," "The Empire," "Illustrated Sydney News," "Evening News," "Echo," and the local papers of Tumut and Wagga.

Other original sources include the "N.S.W. Government Gazette," Lands Department files, Mines Department files, Surveyor-General's map of Kiandra Field (1860), "Australian Mining Journal," "Colonial Mining Journal," Hume and Hovell's "Journal," Strzelecki's "Physical Description of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land," Hargreave's "Australia and its Goldfields," Clarke's "Researches in the Southern Goldfields," McFarland's "Illawarra and Monaro," Brodribb's "Recollections," Castella's "Les Squatters Australiens," Lhotsky's "Expedition to the Australian Alps," Lendenfeldt's "Australian Alps," the collected papers of Von Müller, The N.S.W. Postal Directories (annual), "The N.S.W. Gazetteer," Heaton's "Dictionary of Dates," the various books and pamphlets published by Parkes, the Australian Almanacs of the period, Sturt's and Mitchell's "Journals," the Reports of Select Committees of the House of Commons, the Government Maps, Owen's "Map of N.S.W.," Arrowsmith's Map,

Lawson and Pearson's "Map of Riverine Districts," County and Snow-Lease Maps, Backhouse's "Australian Colonies," Bennett's "Wanderings in N.S.W.," Wentworth's "New South Wales," Cunningham's "New South Wales," Flanagan's "New South Wales," Wells' "Geographical Dictionary of Australia," "The Statistical Register," Parliamentary Papers—and many others.

Other sources, which may be classed as "secondary" include such standard general histories as those by Rusden, Jose, Brook, Scott, Cramp, Jenks, Gregory, Sutherland, and Blair, together with the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, "Report on the Kiandra Deep Lead" (Andrews), "N.S.W. Intelligence Pamphlets," the "Australian Encyclopaedia," "The Romance of Mining" (Williams), "Irish in Australia" (Hogan), "Australia's Awakening" (Spence), "Thirty Years in Australia" (Therry), "Life and Progress in Australia" (Davitt), "Australian Exploration" (Favenc), "Australian Discovery, Vol. II." (Scott), "Labour and Industry in Australia" (Coghlan), "The Squatting Age" (Professor Roberts—this will be published shortly), "The Cambridge History"—Article on the Gold Rush (Portus—this will be published shortly), "The Pastoral Age" (Collier), "Fifty Years of Progress" (De Brune), "Geoffrey Hamlyn" (Kingsley), "History of N.S.W." (J. D. Lang—in various editions), "Australian Expeditions" (Mitchell), "Handbook to Australia" (Mitchell), "Australian Expeditions" (Wood), "Geography of N.S.W." (Wilkins).

Many of these may sound very remote from ski-ing, but it will be necessary to use them, for reference at least. The history of the south of N.S.W. has been so little touched that the field must be explored thoroughly, even to extract details of a sport.

Just before the *Year Book* went to press two important changes in Tests and Summit Trophy rules were made by the Ski Council. The Ski Council Tests have now been opened to all amateur skiers, whether club members or not. Test badges, however, may only be issued to members of affiliated clubs. Competitors for the Summit Trophy may now, if they wish, start the race from the Chalet. If they do so they must commence their run by going to the Hotel and back. Further Summit Trophy regulations are that during the trip no competitor may be accompanied by another runner who is not himself a bona-fide competitor and that a competitor may replace a ski or equipment during the trip, but may not change both ski.

