

OLD

AUSTRALIAN

SKI

By T. W. MITCHELL.



Old Tasmanian Model Ski.

Photo by Elyne Mitchell.

Our ski museum here at Towong Hill has already been written up in the 1941 Australian and New Zealand Ski Year Book at Page 19, but since then we have had several additions.

The first of these was given to me by my old friend W. F. Mitchell the prominent Tasmanian skier. It is the old style Tasmanian ski which was originally evolved by the Tasmanian fur trappers in the 1830's. This one we have, belonged to Weindorfer of Cradle Mountain and he gave it to W. F. Mitchell in the 1920's. It consists, as the photograph shows, of a billet of King William pine shaped rather like a Canadian snow shoe. It is 36½ inches long; it is 3½ inches wide at its heel; its widest part is 9½ inches; its thickness is ¾" at its thickest part; and it weighs 4 lbs. ½ oz. It has a slight turn-up at the toe.

The binding consists of a hinged flap of the same wood with a "toe-iron" of leather and the remains of a strap that presumably fastened over the wearer's instep.

As well as the above, we have several skis of unusual shapes used in Scott's expedition to the South Pole, but the most fascinating are two old Kiandra skis ("snow shoes") inscribed "Kosciusko 1897," "Kiandra 1898," "Kiandra 1900," and "Kiandra 1901," with one of them having the added inscription of "Mt. St. Bernard winners W. M. Thompson 1919." It is said that they belonged to the Eastwood brothers who are said to have brought skiing from Kiandra (N.S.W.) to Harrierville (Victoria). These two prize possessions were given to me about ten years ago by Mr. Wraith (Carl and Vic's father). He dragged them out from a dust-clogged and cob-webby corner of the old store at Harrierville where they had reposed since goodness only knows when with a heterogeneous conglomeration of incongruous relics including fragments of gilded cedar earrings from the Chinese Joss House of the roaring, gold-rush days of bygone decades.