

# Mount Bogong

## THE REALISATION OF A DREAM

By H. V. DOUGHTY

The 1934, 1935 and 1936 *Year Books* have not been long on our book-shelves, yet we find, when we turn our thoughts to Mount Bogong, that a tremendous forward stride has been made in the development and popularity of this wonderful ski-ing resort on the highest mountain in Victoria.

At this stage, the reader may well turn to the relevant articles on the development of Mount Bogong by the late Mr. C. J. M. Cole in the 1934 and 1935 *Year Books* and the summary of the Mount Bogong disaster, in which Mr. Cole lost his life, which appeared in the 1936 volume.

Briefly, 1937 has seen the erection of a very fine stone accommodation house on Mount Bogong with excellent facilities for accommodating up to 20 people, the further exploration of the whole of the mountain top and adjoining country by several parties of members of the Ski Club of Victoria, and the birth of an opportunity to complete the final item in the late Mr. Cole's developmental programme, namely, the erection of a shelter at the top of the staircase spur near the cairn at present standing on the summit of the mountain.

To many of us there is no doubt, particularly in view of the development of the State Electricity Commission's hydro-electric scheme on the head-waters of the Kiewa River, that a motor road will be constructed from Tawonga giving closer access to Mount Bogong. (See Mr. Beggs' article on the Kiewa scheme.—Ed.)

### The New Hut.

Herewith is a photograph of the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut taken in August last from which an impression can be obtained of the type of structure which has been erected. In the November issue of the club journal, *Schuss*, Mr. S. C. Stephens (president of the Ski Club of Victoria) said:—"Bogong has been tamed. Of many impressions obtained during the club week at the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut, this was the deepest and most lasting. During the week the snow-pole line from the Staircase Spur to the hut became a well-trodden highway, and was traversed as easily as any well-worn bush track. Possibly the real high-light of the week was the casual ease with which two local residents paid a Sunday afternoon visit to the hut, coming on foot from the snow-line. At its first real test, the Cleve Cole Hut came through with flying colours. Its comfort was ample and its warmth amazing. With a sharp frost setting in outside, the sketchiest of underclothing was regarded as sufficient wearing apparel inside the hut. As a snowfield, the mountain is wonderful. Practice slopes are at the hut door and good slopes of championship standard can be reached in less than ten minutes. Most of the country in the neighbourhood of the hut appears to be very well sheltered and good ski-ing is possible in the worst of weather".

A detailed description of the construction of the building appeared in the 1936 volume of the *Year Book*.

The outstanding feature of the erection of the hut was the work of the builder's foreman, Mr. M. McLaren, who remained on the mountain without leaving it from February 21 to May 17, 1937. During those three months, he declared for himself only two public holidays. The following extracts from his diary will give some impression of the difficulties with which he and his assistants had to contend:—"March 2—fine day first, then heavy rain followed by thick fog . . . everything in the camp has been wet to date . . . Jones (assistant to the snow-pole contractor) tired out after heavy going for some days on snow-pole road in



CONTEMPLATION, 1935.

C. J. M. Cole.



REALISATION, 1937.

M. McColl.



CULMINATION, 1938.

M. McColl.

bad weather. Concrete very slow in setting. Men complained at cold through having to puddle snow by hand. . . . March.—Worked till midday, then had to go to bed to keep warm. Later got up and laid first stone". At another place in Mr. McLaren's diary occurs the following interesting comment:—"Big storm—nothing quite like being in a storm at Bogong. . . . March 28.—Began to snow—four inches by ten o'clock. Snowing heavily after tea with heavy blizzard and very cold. . . . March 29.—Tried to work but conditions too bad".

There is no question, now that the structure is nearly complete, that great ability and forethought have been shown by the architect of the building, Mr. Malcolm McColl. On one occasion, May 8, 1937, during a hurried visit to the mountain by the writer, the outside temperature was 17 degrees Fahr., yet one was able to move comfortably about in the hut in shirt and shorts.

An outstanding feature of 1937, from a tourist point of view, was the decision of the Ski Club of Victoria to hold the State Downhill and Slalom Championship Meeting at the mountain. The last week in September found twenty club members there ready for a good week's ski-ing. This was marred by an unfortunate accident to one of the party, Mr. Arthur Downer, who broke his knee-cap soon after his arrival at the hut. The following extract from Mr. Stephens' article in the November issue of *Schuss* rebuts allegations that an accident on Bogong might well prove fatal:—"Probably the most satisfactory knowledge of all resulted from Arthur Downer's unfortunate accident. It had previously been a matter of some speculation as to whether a seriously injured man could be transported across the mountain and down the Staircase Spur. It has now been proved that this can safely be done".



MT. FEATHERTOP AND THE RAZORBACK.

F. F. H. Eggleston.

### Recent Exploration.

Exploratory trips which have been made by members of the Ski Club of Victoria have resulted in a thorough knowledge being gained of all approaches to the mountain and in the discovery of new shelter huts in the vicinity, notably Hodgkin's Hut, situated about half-way between Mount Bogong and Glen Valley, just off the Bogong Wills Spur. The spurs which are now familiar to a number of club members are:—

On the North.—Staircase Spur, along which lies the beaten track to Tawonga; the Eskdale Spur, which gives an alternative route to Tawonga and also a route to Granite Flat and Eskdale; and the Granite Flats Spur, which is the one route, via Howman's Hollow Hut (the exact location of which is doubtful) and to the Tallangatta-Omeo Road from the northern side of the mountain.

On the East.—The Wills Spur, which is the only spur running from the mountain on the east and which gives a direct approach to Mount Wills, and via which a cattle track takes one either to the Omeo-Tallangatta Road over Mount Wills or to Glen Valley, via a spur running south-east between Mount Wills and the Big River.

On the South.—The Memorial Hut Spur, which is the shortest route to the High Plains from the hut and which goes straight down to the Big River at the back of the Memorial Hut; the Quartz-Knob Spur, along which lies the beaten track to the High Plains, via Timm's Look-out, and an alternative route to the Plains across the watershed of the Kiewa and Big Rivers, approached by a spur branching off from the Quartz-Knobs Spur to the west and which takes one on to the Plains, via Mount Arthur and Spion Kop. (See illustration, p. 36.)

On the West there is a route off the mountain over the west peak on to Little Bogong and down to the Kiewa River near Tawonga South.

TIMM'S QUARTZ NOB  
LOOKOUT. RIDGE.

MT. ARTHUR.  
BIG RIVER. BOGONG GAP.



SOUTHERLY AP

A good week's round trip is from Bogong to Glen Valley on to the Plains and across from Fitzgerald's or Kelly's Hut, via Mount Nelson and Timm's Look-out, or via Mount Nelson, Spion Kop, Mount Arthur, Kiewa-Big River watershed on to Quartz Knob and back to the Memorial Hut along the new snow-pole line.

#### Looking to the Future.

The Committee's immediate objectives for the future are, firstly, the completion of the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut by building on to the present structure the section shown in the Year Book as Section C. This will contain the shower, kitchen, and meal alcove (which should be completed as we go to press). Subsequently the erection of a line of snow-poles on the High Plains from Holland's Knob across to Mount Nelson and thence to Timm's Look-out and also to Spion Kop and Mount Arthur will be carried out.

In line with these objectives comes the welcome news that the Batty Brothers at Glen Valley are contemplating the erection of a hut on the High Plains, near Mount Nelson, at the head of a spur up which their present cattle track runs from Glen Valley to the Plains.

The completion of the Kiewa hydro-electric scheme will provide an opportunity which not even the most parochially-minded Government can fail to seize. The new road is being built reasonably near Mount McCay. Mount McCay has first-class ski-ing slopes. There will shortly be available a large quantity of

EAST KIEWA  
VALLEY.

MT. FEATHERTOP.



MT. BOGONG.

electric power. What could be more logical than the construction of a modern Chalet for 300 people, complete with electric funicular, at the 4,000 feet level under Mount McCay on or near the road?

Such an event could not fail to bring Mount Bogong within normal striking distance of other High Plains shelters and would provide a great link between the present Mount Hotham Chalet and Mount Bogong.

To complete its work, the Committee proposes to clear the Staircase Spur sufficiently to enable free downhill running under all conditions to the normal snow-line (4,000 feet). The tree-line undergrowth at present makes travelling in snow-time very difficult. This work it proposes to put in hand before this year's snow season begins. Lastly, through the kind offer of one who does not desire his identity to be disclosed, we are delighted to announce plans for the erection of a shelter on the summit of the mountain at the head of the Staircase Spur. We hope to be able to publish a photograph of this shelter in the next issue of the *Year Book*.

It is obvious that there is much to be done which cannot be done unless funds are available. The opportunity, therefore, cannot be lost to ask for the whole-hearted practical support of readers by forwarding contributions to the writer of this article, H. V. Doughty (Secretary of the Memorial Hut Appeal Committee), 397 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria. In this connection we thank those in England and New Zealand, as well as donors from all the Australian States, who have assisted with contributions during the preceding year.