

MOUNT BOGONG DEVELOPMENTS

By H. V. Doughty

The Past:

1928.—August 18th—first winter ascent by four members of the S.C.V.—W. F. Waters, Kemble Gibson, E. C. Robinson and Eric Stewart (1). 1932.—August 17th—three members—W. D. Bertram, E. C. Robinson and J. K. Tulloh—accomplished the first complete ski traverse of the mountain. (2). The late Mr. C. J. M. Cole made a ski ascent up the Staircase Spur to the summit from the Tawonga side and Roy Weston, also a member of the S.C.V., spent some time on the mountain and produced an excellent map.

1933.—August: Messrs. Cole and Weston spent a week in Maddison's Hut at Camp Valley, being the first party to stay on Mount Bogong in winter.

1934.—First steps taken in the late Mr. C. J. M. Cole's Development Scheme, consisting of:—(i) the erection of a Shelter Hut on the Staircase Spur; (ii) the clearing of the track on the upper portion of the Spur; (iii) erection of snow-poles along the uppermost portion of the Spur to the summit and thence to Camp

(1) See pp. 11-19, 1929 S.C.V. Year Book.

(2) See pp. 27-29, 1933 S.C.V. Year Book.

Valley; (iv) the building of a Club House in Camp Valley; (v) the erection of a Hut at the summit at the head of the Staircase Spur. (3).

1936.—August 19th.—Mr. Cole died at Glen Valley after having been lost for a number of days in a terrific blizzard at the summit of the mountain.

1937.—Erection of snowpoles and the commencement of a large stone building as a memorial to Mr. Cole. (4).

1938 Activity:

Building: The original Bogong Development Scheme has now been completed. Through the generosity of a member of the S.C.V. who desires to remain anonymous an excellent hut has been erected at the head of the Staircase Spur only 100 ft. below the summit, accommodating eight people. In the design of the hut several factors had to be taken into account; pack horses limited the length of timber to six feet; the high velocity of wind; the steep slope resulting in a great pressure of snow from the uphill side; and finally the presence of solid rock very close to the surface. The thanks of the donor and the Ski Club of Victoria are extended to Mr. A. E. Semmens, one of its members, who, being an architect, gave valuable help in designing and supervising the erection of the hut which was built by Mr. George Sharp, of Bright (who also built the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut), and also to the Lone Scout Section of the Boy Scouts' Association which again provided free transport of 2½ tons of building materials from Melbourne to Tawonga.



A. Semmens.

New Summit Hut.



Mountain Creek, Tawonga, and Staircase Spur.

P. E. Hull.

The third and final section of the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut was also completed. Thanks to the persistence of the builder, Mr. Sharp, assisted by Mr. Arthur Downer, another S.C.V. member, the defects in the chimneys have now been completely rectified. Owing to the negligence of some person in failing to

(3) See A.N.Z.S.Y.B. 1934, pp. 189 and 190 and 1935 pp. 207-209.

(4) *ibid* 1937 pp. 45-55 and 1938 pp. 33-37 and p. 128.

turn the master tap, the water pipes under the hut burst. The whole of the water system at the hut had to be replaced. It is imperative that persons using the hut observe the directions as to the use of water supply.

Exploratory: It should here be pointed out that Mount Bogong is quite independent from the Bogong High Plains.

During the recent summer the writer has, in company with other members of the S.C.V., made a thorough survey of all the spurs off the southern slopes of the mountain and off the northern slopes of the Bogong High Plains to the Big River. There are only three practical routes connecting these two snowfields. (See map.) From the Plains to Bogong they are:—(1) Down Duane's Spur and up the Tee Spur or up the Saddleback Spur; (2) down the Spur running off the highest point of the Razorback at its extreme eastern end and up either the Saddleback or Tee Spurs; (3) down Timm's Spur and up the Quartz Nob Spur. In my opinion the last-mentioned route should no longer be used under snow conditions. It is by far the longer route and involves the traversing of a large portion of the exposed summit of Bogong, together with the trip across the exposed Razorback to Timm's, both of which are hazardous in foggy or other bad weather conditions. Moreover, the Quartz Nob Spur is subject to considerable ice formations and is an extremely sharp-edged spur in places. The route via Duane's Spur is the best. The spur involves the least amount of climb or descent, is a reasonably easy grade, offers considerable shelter, is the nearest spur to Mount Nelse and brings one at the Big River, right opposite the Tee Spur and very close to the foot of the Saddleback Spur; in addition Roper's new hut is located at its head. Care must be taken in crossing the Big River, however, as at the foot of this spur it has become a very strong flowing stream of considerable size by reason of the number of tributaries which join it both from Bogong and from the Plains above the point of crossing. The junctions of Camp Creek and Duane's Creek with the Big River should be used as the guide as to where to commence the climb out of the Big River.

Two important recent developments by the cattle industry have had substantial effect upon ski-ing conditions, from the tourer's point of view, in the Bogong and Nelse districts. The first is the opening up by Mr. F. Roper, of Tawonga, of the old mining track between Tawonga and Glen Valley from Mountain Creek near Cooper's homestead to the Big River Gap and the cutting of a track up Timm's Spur and across the Razorback to give him a way into his Mount Nelse grazing leases in place of his old track up the Rocky Valley branch of the Kiewa River, closed to him by the advent of the new Kiewa Road which follows almost in its entirety his old stock route. The second is the erection of two new huts in the Nelse district. The first Mr. Roper has built on the site of Duane's old hut at the head of Duane's Spur and the second is that of Batty Bros. from Glen Valley on the New Country Spur. Roper's Hut is an extremely well built hut, accommodating nine people, in a nicely sheltered position in the midst of wonderful ski-ing terrain. In this connection it is interesting to note the following extract from the article by Mr. W. F. Waters in the 1929 Year Book referred to above:—"The open country in this vicinity (the head of the Big River and around it) to the north and north-west of Mount Nelse offers some wonderful possibilities for ski-ing, and if a small hut could be erected on the site of Duane's old hut it could be used as a base for some very fine trips". This hut is now easily approached by horseback along Roper's new track from Tawonga to the snowline on Timm's Spur, from where it would not be more than 3 miles to the hut along a route of which the Razorback makes the major portion fairly well defined even in fog. Arrangements have been made by the S.C.V. to book the hut during winter.

The Future:

The opening up of an approach to the Bogong High Plains from Tawonga by Roper's new track must result in the earlier development of the Mount Nelse

**Ruins of Bivouac Hut.**

A. Semmens.

terrain and also provides a back door to Mount Bogong and the Bogong High Plains jointly. Consequently, it is essential that the existing main snowpole route across the Bogong High Plains from Mount Hotham to Kelly's Hut via Mount Cope should be continued in a northerly direction to Mount Nelse (from the point near Hollands Nob at which, after crossing Rocky Valley, it now turns eastward), and then westerly across the Razorback to Timm's. The West Peak district of Mount Bogong has not as yet been developed at all and the erection of a cabin on the saddle between the Quartz Nobs and the West Peak will soon become necessary to satisfy the requirements of the increasing number visiting the mountain.

Finally, it is to be hoped that it will not be long before our Government and interested local bodies realise the value of the Bogong snowfields and press on with the continuation and better construction of the existing road from Tawonga to Cooper's along Mountain Creek to the foot of the Staircase Spur and thence up the Eskdale Spur over Camp Valley and Mount Wills to the Tallangatta-Omeo road.