

Obituary

John Sharp

IT is with deep regret that we record the death of our fellow-skier, John Sharp, who, after an illness of some months, passed away on September 26th, 1939. John's loss to Victorian skiers will be felt keenly. His cheery personality and good-natured comradeship were ever a tonic to his many friends in the ski-ing world. Since his association with the Ski Club of Victoria in 1932, John had taken an active part in the club's activities. He worked hard in the development of ski-ing on Donna Buang, and during the establishment of the S.C.V. Hut there many working bees owed their success to his efforts. During the 1939 season he was secretary of the S.C.V. Social Committee and a member of the General Committee of their club, and, up to the time of his death, was actively engaged in endeavouring to make the S.C.V. Ball a success. He was a representative for Heinz & Co. and carried into his work the wholehearted enthusiasm so well known to us in his ski-ing activities.

Sharp had made several pioneering ski trips, having been to Mts. St. Clair and Matlock in 1935, and in the Easter of the same year toured the Poly Range. Besides ski-ing, John had many other interests, having made a tour of Canada with the Young Australia League. He was also selected as a representative for the military contingent from Australia to the Coronation in 1937, and was one of the guards at Buckingham Palace.

Towards the end of 1937 John was transferred to Toowoomba, Queensland, and joined the Southport Life Saving Club, and in 1938 was elected to Patrol Captain.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to John's people, and we share with them their loss.

Clyde Davenport

THE news of the passing of Clyde Davenport, on March 16, was received with sincere regret by his many friends in the ski-ing world. The Ski Club of Victoria, as a club, and many skiers in person, owe much to his outstanding personality, and join in the widely-expressed sympathy in his untimely loss.

"Dave," as he was best known to his wide circle of friends, enjoyed his first ski-ing at Buffalo in 1923. He joined the S.C.V. a few weeks after its foundation in 1924, and soon made his mark in three spheres of its activities—touring, racing, and administration. A frequent visitor to Buffalo, he knew all parts of the mountain well, and was probably the most successful and popular organiser of skiers' trips and entertainments who has stayed there. The same applies to his touring in the Alps and to his racing activities. He managed the championship meetings in 1928 and 1929, and races at Buffalo and elsewhere; was runner-up in the Club Championship in 1928, and in the Open Championship in 1929; Club Langlauf Championship in 1932; and member of the inter-State team at Hotham in 1932. These are only a few of his many successes.

He was first elected to the Committee in 1926 and was particularly successful and active as secretary and chairman of the Social Committee. During his association with Mr. Gordon Brown on the Social Committee over £250 actual profit was brought into the funds of the S.C.V. Together with Mr. N. McDonald he produced the 1928 Victorian Year Book, and was the Editor of the 1929 and 1930 issues, setting a high standard for his successors. Chairman of the Publicity Staff in 1931, member of a number of Racing Committees, a very capable photographer and camp cook—so we could keep on adding to his many achievements in the ski-ing world.

In business activities he was again to the forefront in his work as a member of the staff of the State Savings Bank, and seemed destined for further successes in this sphere too. To note a final field of his endeavours, his tennis prowess was proved many times by his fine performances in club and country tournaments, and by his captaining of premierships teams in "B" and "C" grade pennant for Grace Park Tennis Club.

"Dave's" engaging personality will be sadly missed by his many friends. His enthusiasm and efficiency in all he undertook will long be remembered, and his record stands as a challenge to future S.C.V. members.

R. W. Wilkinson

WILL we ever forget the many pleasant hours spent with him in the old Buller Hut, or in the huts on the Bogong High Plains, and how we listened in rapture to his early talks on "The Alps of Victoria" at meetings of the Ski Club of Victoria? It is with deep regret that we record the death of our friend and fellow-member, on May 22, 1939.

Mr. Wilkinson's first experience of ski-ing was in 1909, when a friend persuaded him to take a trip to Mount Buffalo. There was only a hut there in those days; no chalet, or tracks to guide you over the plateau. There he was first introduced to ski, if such they could be called—being merely bent pieces of paling, with primitive foot attachments, and long sticks to use as brakes. For some years he made many trips of exploration with friends to Mts. St. Bernard and Buffalo. In company with Mr. Connell, he had some very interesting trips to the Alps, both in summer and winter. It was with Mr. Connell that he made his first trip to the Bogong High Plains, going out from the St. Bernard's Hospice and back in a day (a man's trip), just seeing enough to fire their determination to return for more.

About 1912, with Mr. Fay, who was then Norwegian Consul in Melbourne, Mr. Wilkinson went to St. Bernard during the winter. Mr. Fay, on seeing the Alps, was amazed to think that such splendid snowfields were not used in winter;

so the following winter they returned with more suitable ski and equipment, and crossed the Razorback to Mount Feathertop, probably being the first to accomplish the trip on ski. In November, 1919, with his wife and a friend he made his first stay on the High Plains, and later he made several trips there in the snow with Mr. Connell.

Mr. Wilkinson joined the Ski Club of Victoria at about its second or third meeting, and was elected to the first committee at the sixth meeting in July, 1924. At the fifteenth meeting in September, 1924, he was elected president. This position he relinquished in May, 1926, but remained on the executive until May, 1928, when he was once again elected president, and remained in that position until 1933 when he resigned.

Mr. Wilkinson led the first party across the Bogong High Plains in the winter of 1926, pioneering Mount Nelson on the same trip. In 1927, with Jack Docherty, he was the first to climb Mount Fainter on ski. Those who were with him on these, two of the earlier major pioneering trips of the club, cannot speak too highly of his ability as a leader. Again, in 1929, Mr. Wilkinson, with a party from the club, were the first to climb Mount McKay on ski.

As a photographer he was known far and wide, and many are the informative lectures he has given the club on that subject, to say nothing of the many winter studies which grace the pages of *Year Books*.

It was at one of his lectures that he was heard to remark, "It's a grand life in the huts. There is always someone ready to get out in the morning and give you a cup of tea in bed". But he did not mention that it is not everyone who is ready to do his daily dozen with the axe; for, without a doubt, he lived up to his second name. You would always know if "Wilky", as he was popularly known, had visited a hut by a great pile of chopped wood, neatly arranged in stacks of different lengths—for kindling, cooking and yarning; wood that would fit the fireplace, which is not by any means always the case with wood left for the next party.

The S.C.V. were indebted to Mr. Wilkinson, who, with Clive Morrish, donated the Club Championship Cup, thus showing his interest in the racing side of ski-ing.

Cope Hut, on the Bogong High Plains, as well as the lines of snow poles, were the outcome of his untiring efforts. No one realises the amount of time and energy he spent to further those two projects.

Even in business hours he was a veritable bureau of information, and many were they who found their way to him for advice on anything ranging from equipment to suggestions for the best routes to follow.

There is no doubt about it. Mr. Wilkinson knew the mountains, and loved them. He might justly be termed the pioneer of ski touring in Victoria.

After relinquishing his executive position with the S.C.V. he remained a member and still took an active interest in its welfare and in ski-ing generally. His latest efforts were connected with his interest in the Rover Scout movement, in which he help considerably in getting the lads interested in the sport.

Besides ski-ing, Mr. Wilkinson was a lover of walking and the bush. He was one of the most respected and energetic members of the Melbourne Walking Club, and his summer trips were no less extensive and thorough than his ski-ing trips.

As long as people ski in Victoria will the name of Robert Wilkinson be remembered, because of his devotion to the sport, and his untiring efforts to assist the Ski Club of Victoria in its growth and activities.