

THE BERGHUTTE SKI CLUB DIARY.
OR THE HOUSE THAT JACK & JILL & FRED & A HOST OF OTHERS
BUILT.

The story of the building of Berghutte Ski Club is a bit like the story of the four blind men giving their impression of an elephant, each one has an entirely different version. This is my story and I have written it in the form of a diary so that others can contribute to it to get a full living history from the beginning up to the present time.

In 1957 we moved into a new house in Earlwood and Joe Peplow, who lived a few doors away, was very interested to see a pair of Johannson & Neilsen skis on his new neighbour's roof-rack. Incidentally, the skis were 215cm. long made of laminated hickory with spring bindings and were purchased in 1948 at a cost of approximately two months wages. Subsequently Joe came down and introduced himself and family, delighted to meet another skier, an unusual sport for an Australian in those days. The following winter Joe invited us to go skiing with his family and friends. They were Derek and Shirley King and Peter van Ritten. By then there were three Murrays, Kim our daughter was just 4 months old.

We travelled down in Joe's Volkswagen van over the winding Hume Highway to Goulburn then along the very narrow road to Canberra, from there over the gravel to Jindabyne and on to Sawpit Creek Motel. This "luxury" accommodation was in sharp contrast to the very ramshackled tin hut it had replaced and which we previously used to race to on the Fridays before the June weekend. The thrill of not finding smoke coming out the chimney as we rounded the last bend was indescribable as the only other alternative in those days was to camp in the snow. After the Hotel Kosciusko burnt down in '51 there was basically no accommodation available except at the Chalet and the old staff quarters, now Sponnars Inn. By the way we stayed in the old staff quarters once before rebuilding and it was like being locked in a refrigerator.

On the Saturday of the June weekend in 1958 we went up to ski at Smiggin's Hole. Believe it or not in those days the snow was very dependable by the June weekend. At Smiggins a very enterprising guy had installed a rope-tow driven by the back wheel of his motor bike. The tow was a very heavy hemp rope and one purchased various coloured buttons for specific times. A run of a few hundred yards was for us like the run from top to bottom at Thredbo today.

The following morning Derek, Shirley, Peter and Joe having heard of a land auction at Thredbo, travelled there. On their return they announced they had obtained a lease on Lot 18 for a deposit of ten pounds. They invited us to join them and form a ski club. I demurred as I had already been involved with two clubs, the Y.M.C.A. and Snow Revellers and had found that my holidays with them had been 90% work and 10% skiing. However, I put up my Two pounds five shillings and was in.....

We held our first official meeting at the King's home in French's Forest on the 9th. of September, 1958. By this time we had twelve members approximately. Derek King was President, Dick Holt was introduced and elected as Honorary Solicitor and made responsible for the drawing up of the constitution and registration as a non-profit club. Shirley King was Secretary and Joe Peplow was Treasurer. The others present at this meeting were David Hurley, John and Lea Kars, Janet Treloar, Jean Cox, and Peter van Ritten.

The agenda for the meeting covered a Prospectus for new members, arrangements for a social committee to hold monthly functions to raise money for expenses and introduce new members. Plans for an October working party were discussed.

Our first big hurdle was to raise four hundred pounds for the water and sewerage connections, this was due by the 1st of October. At the second meeting held on the 30th September, at Dick Holt's office we were advised that we were incorporated as a Company on Certificate No. 735132. The registered office was at French's Forest and eleven Directors were appointed. It was further resolved that I be appointed Honorary Secretary of the Company. Our bank was the Rural Bank with whom we had a balance of three pounds.

The October weekend working party was to be the first of many as you all well know! But this was to be something different, it poured from the time we left Sydney and the road to Thredbo was a mud slide. We had arranged some 'loose' bookings with Y.H.A. who were in the process of building but all went wrong on arrival. Naturally we were tired on arrival and as very little had been organised I shall mention no names. Firstly, the only food we had was bread and steak, hoping to buy supplies in the village. We had been advised that a shop was available as well as suitable labour. Not a dry stick of wood in the village was to be found so it was steak tartare for 3 meals. All of the K.T. personnel had gone on holidays. The person in charge of laying out the pier positions was working from the wrong boundary marks, so all our efforts were wasted, but we did succeed in creating great puddles of mud and digging up some giant 1.5 metre Gippsland Great Worms. Nowadays no one believes me when I tell them that a colony existed in the friable granite soil. I assure you I had not been imbibing. They have vanished from the valley and even though I have made enquiries do not seem to be around anymore, one of our missing species. Rather early on the Saturday afternoon we retreated to the hotel bar which was located in what was to become the post office on the eastern side of the main steps to the hotel. Inside the place was packed with workmen wearing wellington boots as there was six inches of water on the floor. An elderly lady who supplied the village with vegetables arrived and after knocking off a dozen vodkas proceeded to entertain us by playing the squeeze-box. Actually I and others were having a good time when two of the party seemed to be having a heated discussion, one of them, who had been a boxer, let fly with a punch that lifted the tall one over the counter. There was a lull in the conversation, and

on inspection of the flattened one it appeared First Aid was required. Luckily, a nurse was available and patched him up. Eventually tempers subsided and all was well again. I had driven down in a car that John Kars was making available for the club transport. It was a pre-war Chicago type model complete with glass flower vases and dickey seats and seated eight. As our mission was aborted we decided to leave the next morning and this brings us to another tale.....

Joe Peplow, who had studied time and motion, had decided to make the fastest trip to Thredbo. He had arranged to fly down and be met by Jim Franks in his Porsche. Well Joe suffered from motion sickness and after staggering off the plane at Cooma Airport, suffering from air-sickness, Jim collected him in his car and deposited him on the banks of the Snowy at Jindabyne - over-whelmed by car sickness. So much for the record. We met Joe on his way to Thredbo on our homeward bound trip. I can remember our drive out of Thredbo by the number of 44 gallon road markers we knocked down into the valley due to the condition of the road and driver.

At the next meeting Dick Holt advised us that we had received a lease for 21 years with an option for a further 21 years after which the renewal was at the discretion of the Lessor. Imagine being concerned with 42 years hence at this time! Now it is just 6 years off. The lease obligated us to build a hut accommodating a minimum of 6 people within 18 months. Our banking situation was a nett balance of six pounds so it was realised that the most foolhardy step was to employ a contractor...which we did! The lucky builder chosen was Tietz & Co. of Berridale whose shop was where the large motel is on the southern side of the road. He quoted us one thousand, four hundred pounds for a basic structure without interior. A copy of the original plan is available amongst the plans on show. No provision for heating, bedding, etc. was made at this time.

We knew the only way to raise the funds was to advertise for new members. We advertised in Honi Soit and arranged to have a membership drive through every possible avenue. We held a number of social gatherings, like Amway parties; the hardest work ever was to get people with money who were skiers. We were out and about like the Hari Krishna and generally making nuisances of ourselves. At that time skiing was very new and the idea of a chair-lift in a village had not been appreciated. Two of the members who joined through my golf club were the Titmuss brothers and Arthur Corpse who went on to bring many more into the club. Please do not think I am just reminiscing but without the missionary zeal of the first year applied by all and our efforts to come up with members with their ten pounds joining fee we would not have a club.

By January, 1959, we had three hundred and thirty pounds in kitty, Kosciusko-Thredbo had approved our plans and we were hopeful of opening before the 1959 season.

The Club soon realised that it would need to achieve a target of one thousand pounds before December of 1958. We increased the membership fee to thirty pounds and set ourselves the target of achieving four hundred pounds in debentures. The club car was sold and the one hundred and twenty pounds received was donated to the club.

At this stage we were lucky to have Bill Gardiner, a builder, join the club. He was very generous with both materials and credit over the following years.

A club badge was designed and made up for us, they were sold for 8/6d. each. We made a profit of 4/- each and this went towards the building fund. Before Easter '59 we had been promised that the building was progressing so that we could work on it on the holiday weekend, however enquiries made in the village advised us that even though the material was on site no work had been done. Even so a working party did go down. Considering that the trip took an average of 12 hours because of the condition of the roads, the need to buy petrol at Michelago where we rang a bell to awaken the owner of the petrol bowser and pay an inflated price it was no mean feat to go on a working party. This Easter working party could only move stones about the site, and as few had any labouring experience not much was achieved.

On 17th April, Derek King and Bill Gardiner went down to Thredbo and confirmed that the hut was under construction and the cladding with the heavy fibro was beyond the capacity of unskilled labour to fix to the frames. This increased the cost quite considerably, however because of the late start we negotiated with the builder and some of the expenses were reduced. In May a small working party led by Bill Gardiner were able to go down to do some inside fixing.

At the next committee meeting the rate for accommodation was set at four pounds ten shillings per member and double for guests. As we seemed to be increasing our membership at a reasonable rate we enquired of the other lodges what they were charging for membership and accommodation and subsequently increased ours to sixty pounds. We also imposed a mattress levy of two pound each person, this was the hardest money the club ever had to collect.

At this stage the club rules were formulated. A copy is attached to the plans to show how thoroughly we covered every possible contingency, because we never considered we would have caretakers in the lodge. The plan was that a club captain be appointed from the directors if possible to be available each week during the season. M. Brell was appointed hut captain, a position he held for many years and without his control and reports the club would have suffered much damage.

Bill Gardiner offered to send two carpenters down and I offered to drive them. The truck that came with the carpenters was a one ton truck with two tons of load. One of the carpenters spoke with a very strong Irish brogue and the other was very deaf. This combination became a riotous trip.

We started from Bill's workshop in North Sydney and my first task was to back up a short driveway. I found that because of the load the front wheels hardly touched the ground. The truck steered like a drunk on ice, the two carpenters were fuller than the truck. By the time we had reached Liverpool they were sound asleep, at Camden they were wide awake and started a strange three way conversation. Not only was I having to interpret but I also had to shout the answers back loudly enough for the deaf one who was sitting on the right hand side. Luckily as I thought the hotels were shut by this time of night, however they had brought their own supply which they demolished at an outstanding rate. I only wish I could have taped this conversation, it was better than Monty Python.

The law required all trucks to be weighed and checked at three station, one near Camden, the next near Picton and the still existing one at Marulan. There was a tax payable on road freight and also a special permit was required even though you were carrying your own material. I had to sneak up on all these places with the lights off, driving slowly past with the fear of the inspectors catching me.

We eventually arrived at Thredbo at lunchtime the next day after having stopped at every hotel that was open from daylight the next day. On arriving at the hut the two men decided to make a day of it and headed off to the hotel! By evening that night I heard the Irishman yelling for somebody to tell him where he was and I was fortunate enough to find him in the darkness. By midnight there was no sign of the deaf one and I walked around the village, hoping he hadn't drowned in the river. Not having any success I went to bed, i.e. on a mattress in the kitchen. The next morning I asked the Irish guy, who had sobered up extremely well, did he have any idea where his mate was and he replied that he had left him quite early to go back to bed. I started the Irishman off on the lining work on the bunk floor when we heard what sounded like a possum trapped in the wall. On investigation we found the deaf one wedged between four mattresses, he had climbed in to keep warm and except for his snoring we would have never known he was there. We spent a week down there and I cannot remember a funnier time keeping them fed, sober and working. The return to Sydney had us all singing different songs at the same time; this trip stays in my memory as though it was yesterday.

In our effort to open for the season Bill Gardiner and a group of us went down again. To give you some idea of the lay-out of the hut we had only finished half the flooring boards of the bunk floor and our access was by a ladder. We had pushed all the mattresses together and Bill, after having taken up his position in the corner, quietly placed his dentures in a glass. Not having any separate sleeping quarters for some years we had plenty of snorers to compare with and Bill won hands down, well almost, our good friend Joe Manka would have been a worthy challenger. We had our revenge next morning when Bill's teeth were found frozen in the glass and the only way we could thaw them out was on the little wick heater which was our only cooking and heating device.

Now more about the lodge:- if you have a look at the plan you will understand that although A frames are theoretically easy to build, they are truly not at all suitable for alpine conditions. The very height of the structure required to give a reasonable floor area on the bunk floor and to provide stairs makes the physical building extremely difficult and dangerous. The very large sheets of heavy fibro weighed much more than could be managed by two men in a near vertical position. Because the walls are receding inwards, stairwells have to be placed parallel to the side walls. These problems plagued us until the major reconstruction. By June we had completed the bunk floor, bathrooms and toilets. The living room and kitchen had been lined with caneite, thus fuzzy material which is so easy to damage, but very cheap and light. There was no provision for stairs and what is shown in the plan was a vertical ladder.

The height of the lounge room ceiling was approximately 3 metres but the height from the floor of the bunk room to the top of the A frame was over 7 metres. This gave a cathedral-like appearance. Because the supplier had used local hardwood, which was still green enough to see the leaves sprouting from, they were of narrower dimensions than those specified. The stability of this very large roof structure depended on the accuracy of the fibro fixing screws to the battens. The total hut had been planned to sit on widely spaced, i.e. 2.4 metre spaced piers with provision for 2 concrete slabs. One of these slabs under the bathroom toilet section and the other for a fireplace in the lounge room that was never constructed. Both these areas were not correctly joisted and so the floor rafters covered larger spans than normal. The corrugated walls did not continue all the way down to the bottom of the cross rafters but stopped to allow vertical walls to be installed so that we had ventilation to toilets and bathrooms. This design meant that the hut was very subject to the southern wind that blows up the Thredbo valley. (The valley is a geological fault and there are no ridges that intrude to slow the wind down that develops over the Cooma plains). Anyone who stayed in the hut for the first few years will remember hearing the wind howling and the sudden hop of the hut off its piers and the dust from the carpet filling the room.

The entrance to the bedroom floor was a ladder and if one was injured or self-incapacitated by liquid refreshments the only place to retire was the lounge room floor. I remember one night when one guy, who I believe later on became a cleric, when pulling people through the access hole to the bunk rooms announcing that through their good works they had been saved and had arrived in Heaven.

There were two two-burner primus stoves for cooking, and a very efficient Colman heater installed in the lounge room. The bathrooms showed off our male chauvinism of the time, having two showers for the men and only one for the ladies. This was one of the first alterations that had to be done.

The hut both inside and outside was painted in the strong colours of the club - blue and gold. There were no greenies about then trying to make buildings unobtrusive and apologising for their existence. Ours was painted in a brilliant harlequin fashion with alternate squares of colour. The interior southern wall of the lounge was painted blue (bright) and the kitchen was painted gold. The furniture that had been supplied rather generously by Jim Franks of Framac matched the colour scheme - everything in patriotic club colours!

I may be jumping around a bit but the first names in the visitors book were the Kings, Rick Rothpletz and the Somongys - this Visitors book was started in July 1959. Why I mention this is that during Easter of the following year Nino Somogy, an accomplished muralist found a new canvas in the form of our kitchen wall late one night. The following morning members were stunned by the sight of what was to become the famous Berghutte mural. The name of the club was depicted by naked figures in various poses and positions. This mural was an integral part of the club for many years. Unfortunately it was stored during one of our renovations with the intention of reusing it but inadvertently thrown out by workmen.

And so on to skiing:- The chair had originally been built to run to Kareela station only and functioned well for the first season. The trail from top to bottom was only about four ski lengths wide and was churned up pretty quickly. The snow was restored by workmen with shovels. The queues in the early days were accepted because we had been used to climbing and the luxury of a chair-lift was just magic.

Thredbo was known as Mud Hollow in the 'early days' as there were no sealed paths or ski mats. This created a hazardous trip even down to the chair, especially with two toddlers in tow carrying all the necessary gear. Mud was a problem for many years and it was necessary to introduce the overshoes rules in the club. So many times after the struggle of lacing up leather boots it was necessary to go back upstairs and it was 'verboden' to enter the lounge with ski boots. This problem was solved by supplying canvas overshoes that were made by members of the club.

Berghutte's site created another problem as it did not have road access. Banjo drive was not sealed and generally open only for four wheel transport. The entry to the lodge was down a long ladder from the Alpine way. Arriving late at night with two tired children, all our food, skis and bedding for a fortnights holiday was not the ideal way to start. This brings to mind a time when I was working there before the season started with only a kerosene lamp for lighting, we heard a cry "Berghutte?" We opened the back door from which the entry plank had been removed to reveal a well dressed gentleman wearing a hat and holding an umbrella, asking had he the right address, as he had been advised that the lodge was completed and ready to accept guests. He assured us that he had followed the instructions as to the ladder, however the one he

descended was not attached to the hill and he had travelled down with it into the bog where Scotch College now stands. On helping him through the door we discovered his elegant apparel was saturated with the thick of Thredbo mud. What had happened was Happy Wanderers had hired a long ladder from the company and they had just thrown it over the bank.

It is still 1959 and Kim was 18mths old. Helen was expecting Trenton and we were playing by the river with a Norwegian sled with runners. As it was most unusual to see a baby in snow gear a photographer from the Womans Day took our photo. We were pleasantly suprised to see it featured in the magazine and was good publicity for our club.

Unfortunately the visitors book for the first season was damaged but it appears that about 60 people stayed at the lodge during that time. It was most rewarding in that we had started only a short time ago and achieved the target of being able to supply accommodation for the 1959 season.

We had done everything back the front, starting with faulty plans, no money but loads of enthusiasm. Most clubs that built in Thredbo at this time were off-shoots of larger clubs that had been in existence for many years, well financed, fully structured and had the benefit of better planning and experience in building. Our lack of foresight coupled with the limitations of the building became obvious after the first season. From then till recently, the raising of money and the need for alterations was on the agenda of every meeting.

As soon as the first season was finished we were planning our next working party for the October weekend. The main objective was to build steps down from the road to the hut and then to the village path. To transport material we built a flying-fox which was made of a 3" steel pipe, encased in concrete, at the road end and joined to the building with enough sag in it to stop any load damaging the building. Soon after installation the operators were over zealous in loading the bucket and as they lowered it with their control rope the 3" pipe bent to 45 degrees, this lengthened the cable and the load of rocks headed off towards the back of the hut. There was a mad scattering of people however Fate was being kind to us - just as the bucket was about to hit the wall of the hut Newton's law of gravity took over and the missile ran back to the centre of the now slack cable. A major disaster averted for a change.

In the minutes of October '59 we planned our first annual ball - no hide no Christmas box - We had a credit balance of one hundred and seventy six pounds and outstanding debts including debentures of nearly two thousand pounds.

OUR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING.

The minutes of this meeting explain rather fully our situation at that time. The president's report mentioned that we had collected three hundred and ninety one pounds in bookings, seventy eight people had stayed at the lodge as paying guests/members, eighteen beds were in operation which was intended to extend to thirty six. He also reported that most directors had been down on every working party at an average personal cost of twenty five pounds.

A booking procedure was formulated as well as the idea of having hut captains reporting to a hut manager who was to be elected each year. The hut captains were responsible for enforcing the hut rules, it was never a popular job. During the year our very active social committee had run a number of functions which included a back to the 20's night, a risque party (gambling), a talk by Paul Reader, a ski fashion parade, a barbecue and a ball. Can you imagine this happening nowadays? Well our group was 35 years younger and television sets were rare. All these functions were well attended and even though we had the ballroom of the Lane Cove Town Hall, our small and enthusiastic contingent had a most successful evening.

At a meeting in December, Kosciusko-Thredbo advised us of the possibility of obtaining mains power from the Cooma grid. Our power supply came from the K.T. generators that mainly supplied the power for the chair-lift and the hotel. The idea being that as the chair stopped at 4 p.m. there would be sufficient current available for the lodges. As more lodges were built we were constantly having power black-outs and kerosene lamps and candles were very frequently in use. There was a restriction on any use of electricity for heating but the hotel had placed electric-bar radiators in all the bedrooms. Guess who got the available power first.

In February Rick Rothpletz arranged a car trial and quiz. This was a huge success but some members did not obtain the final meeting place for our barbecue, so that only about 50% of the cars arrived to enjoy the food. This reminds me of a famous Graham Price barbecue held in the Basin where in a white-out, Graham had cooked all the steak, and he had a zero attendance. We skied the Basin, smelt the food but couldn't find him.

In April 1960 we obtained permission to remove the tree that stood at the south western corner of the building, approximately 2 or 3 ft. from the hut. Some time later we removed it, however its removal is another story.... We were advised that a certain village guy had a tree-felling licence and the necessary insurance. He arrived at the site with a number of steel cables, chain-saws and axes. He carefully measured the height of the tree and laid a mark where he intended it to fall, this mark was at right-angles to the side of the lodge where Scotch college is now. He proceeded to cut into the 4ft diameter tree that had an estimated height of 20metres, when the tree decided to go its own way (our way). Instead of falling

towards the mark, it took a sideways jump while still in the vertical position and then crashed down on the line of the steps, wiping the roof of Y.H.A. lodge with its uppermost branches. Pandemonium reigned supreme as the whole working party from Y.H.A. fled from their hut thinking the roof was crashing in. Amazingly, the only damage to either of the huts was a small piece of fibro roofing from ours and some negligible scratching to Y.H.A.'s roof.. Another miraculous escape! Had the tree not jumped sideways it would have destroyed our hut and possibly smashed the wall of Y.H.A.

May, 1960 saw the arrival of the two large black dining tables and the bar stools with red seats. These had been supplied at a generous rate by Jim Franks. All the members from the early period would remember the tables and stools as not only did they function normally but were used as saw horses, ladders and ski repair benches as well as the setting for our famous card games, during school holidays.

At our next meeting we decided to cancel our order for a kerosene frig as we had been promised that mains power would be available that year, as usual in Thredbo fashion we were to do without refrigeration for essentials such as beer cans for another full season. The May working party apart from the general list of never ending jobs eventually placed a safety rail around the top of the ladder entry to the bunk room. I think a few members still have feet problems from descending the ladder in navy fashion.

We now started on a long and protracted argument with Y.H.A. about the use of our steps as they had all their building material and gas bottles delivered and we had a number of abrasive meetings with their representatives. No sooner would we get our steps into some sort of order than they would be badly damaged. It is only in the recent years that our step problems have been solved.

Our annual report for 1960 listed the following significant items :- our membership now numbered 65, the famous mural was now framed, our old primus stoves had been replaced by electric hot plates, overshoes had been supplied and the use of them was made mandatory, our club was now valued at 4,500 pounds, we had a profit of 300 pounds and two members had joined in June who need no introduction - Graham Price and Peter Titmuss. At the annual election that year he became a director.

The K.T. company had by now run out of working capital and were issuing debentures for the sum of 15,000 pounds to extend the chair-lift to the top. The Murray Publishing Co. (Man magazine) had recently started up the Ski Australia magazine and had written to us requesting the story of the foundation of Berghutte Ski Club. The correspondence was tabled to be looked into. I wonder if they are still interested!

By Easter 1961 we had obtained two Roden stoves, two Sunbeam frypans and a toaster, we were certainly moving up in the world. The extension of the roof line to the bottom rafters was completed and floored to provide us with storage accommodation.

At a meeting on the 23rd May, we received a letter of resignation from Derek King together with a surprise request for 270 pounds in payment of his fees as Club architect. I was vice-president at this time and the committee appointed me acting president and G. Price acting vice-president. This was the beginning of long partnership which lasted with a short interruption until 1983. Derek's actions at this time shocked us, both his resignation and demands. There were a number of meetings taken up clarifying and resolving demands made upon the club. In July we purchased the first of our many vacuum cleaners and I consider the hut has had more vacuum cleaners than that well known retailer Godfreys. At the next meeting Bob White (Mr. Boncrete), was accepted to do a number of alterations and this was the beginning of a series of renovations of which even I with the minutes and plans find hard to remember in their correct order.

About this time the ladder stairs were losing favour as it was almost impossible to move luggage and children safely. Plans were made to build stairs in the lounge room, this simple exercise showed us how difficult the A frame design was to work with. The stairs had to start so far out and cut so deeply into the bunk floor that we combined this job with a complete rebuilding plan for extending the bunk room divisions to the ceiling and drawers under the beds. This required the completion of Peter Rommel's architectural plans of tying the A frame together with a ceiling for the bunk rooms and a flooring to create the attic. Jim Sawyer was appointed non-member caretaker for the summer and in May 1962 Bob Kemple and wife were appointed winter caretakers. In August that year the attic stairs and landing were completed by Peter Larsen and a working party lined the attic with timber. In the summer of that year we housed a number of Lend Lease staff and this started a long and involved battle to recover rentals from the company. Kath Dale, our previous treasurer, was recuperating at the hut in early summer when she was involved in a domestic disturbance and one of the parties was armed with a rifle. Kath's convalescence was hampered somewhat. Barbara Piggot, who had been secretary and a very active worker resigned through ill health in that same year.

The famous pine trees at the back and front of the lodge, which are the subject of much discussion by the Parks and Wildlife Authority, were planted by Margaret Simmat (Keith) who had joined the club that season. Soon after our attic renovation was queried by Lend Lease and they began to insist on a number of alterations and additions to the lodge including toilet exhausts, attic fire escapes and stone retaining walls. About this time M. Brell discussed with the owner of Lantern Lodge the possibility of obtaining access to the back of our lodge. K.T. on hearing of this hit us with a 150 pounds road levy contribution.

Dormer windows were installed in all the bunk rooms. The stairwell had reduced the size of the lounge room so we requested John James, a member architect, for some ideas for extending the area. He supplied us with a number of sketches for our perusal.

By 1963 we had formed a very strong social committee and had planned the following ambitious program. April - a Warlock and Witches night at Scott Jelley's barn, June - Pre-ski function including a ski fashion parade, October - a gambling night, December - a Christmas party and water skiing and car trials for 1964.

Ron Mercer, who had been appointed electrician in preparation for our future connection to the mains power, brought a group of thirty volunteers from a social club he was involved with to join our Easter working party. This resulted in our biggest catering problem ever - Helen Murray remembers this well as she was guilty for burning the stew and as no other food was available in the valley tried all ways to eliminate the burnt flavour. The luncheon menu, which was Devon sandwiches was devoured by a starving working party again for dinner. The purpose of the weekend was to collect as much river stone as possible and K.T. as usual, let us down and failed to supply us with the truck we had booked. Member's cars were brought into use and we managed to collect quite a few stones from the river - a practice that would be frowned on today.

As a result of advertising we received a large number of members, among them Colin and Betty Thompson. Colin as an architect played a large part in the future designs of the lodge.

On the insistence of Lend Lease (who had by now taken over from K.T.) we had submitted a number of plans for fire escapes, however all our plans were turned down by the Fire Commission. On further meetings with the Fire Commission we submitted sketches by J. James. Due to the numerous lodge fires that had occurred, most stringent regulations were now being applied to the old lodges which had been approved under former lenient building requirements. A meeting of club architects was held and sketch designs were presented that extended the hut back 8ft. and created "Siberia" and the extra bathrooms. G. Price was able to present a quote of approx. 3000 pounds for plans drawn by Mr. Nicholls. It was agreed by the committee to proceed with these plans when funds became available. At the June meeting of '63 we accepted P. Larsen's quote for the extension and also planned and submitted to Lend Lease future projections for a new toilet block to be completed by the end of 1964 and a new sunken living area by the end of 1966. At the same meeting G. Price was authorised to arrange a bank overdraft to be guaranteed by a number of directors.

The Colman hot water service, which had never functioned satisfactorily, gave up the ghost and we agreed to purchase an electric mains pressure system. A new 40 gal. hot water service was installed in the A frame. Now imagine 40 gals. of water which works out to about 2 gals a head - we now have 300 gal. tanks with back-up support.

At the September meeting of the committee, Kath Dale, due to illness submitted her resignation much to the regret of all.

Having spent my August holidays at the lodge and acting as hut captain, I gave the following report to the next committee meeting:- 1. The two large Berghutte shield signs had been erected on the outside doors. 2. The covers had been placed on the divans. 3. The flooring had been laid in the A frame extensions. A particular note was that curtains were hung which had been prepared by a sewing bee including Ellen Corpse who featured so much in the future years of the lodge by bringing down large weekend parties from a club to which she and her husband Arthur belonged. These groups aided our financial situation significantly.

Mr van der Lee, who was K.T's village manager and had such control over our building activities, advised us that our building plans had been improved by them and passed on to Berridale Council for their subsequent approval.

In September we switched over to mains power and had the privilege of being billed 350 pounds so that Monaro shire could sell us electricity at a most exorbitant rate.

Our Warlocks and Witches Party was reported to be a great success having an attendance of 47 members, which was approx 50% of our membership. Needless to say there were no booze buses in 'those days'. 1963 was an extremely difficult year due to the change in the building requirements and the general tightening up of the Park's authority which they passed on to K.T. and eventually on to us. We had numerous requests by them to clean up the site and very strong demands on our inadequate income.

Peter Larsen introduced us to Mr. & Mrs. Lawler, who were managing Happy Wanderers and we agreed for them to become summer caretakers.

At our annual meeting our income had increased to 1,185 pounds which was an improvement of 160 pounds on the previous year. The annual joining fee was increased to 60 pounds and we introduced an annual subscription of 2 pounds 10 shillings.

A building report presented in October '63 noted that the stone wall at the back of the hut, the cement slab, the outside walls and the roof had been finished however it was noticed that water was leaking through the stone wall - a problem which was to plague us well into the 80's. In November '63 we were advised that the first stage of the 'Siberia' extensions were completed and it was arranged for Colin Thompson to inspect the work and to prepare plans for the bathroom block extensions. Also, at that time further discussions were held on the building of a driveway access behind Lantern Lodge. From this period onwards we began to hold our meetings regularly at the Aquatic Club in Woolloomooloo. A most popular decision was made in May '64 to place electric heating in the bunk room area at the earliest opportunity.

In August '64 we accepted the quote from Arthur Crowson to finish off the new toilet areas. This was to even up the number of showers per sex and to provide a separate ladie's toilet. I had agreed to labour for Arthur and it was a rather hilarious week. Apart from completely dismantling the ladies shower and toilet area, forcing them to use the mens bathrooms, we had to initiate a time table. Staying at the lodge at this time was a glamorous lass very capable of looking after herself, adept at dodging-the washing up, paying for lift-tickets and outside dinners. With this lass there was no way she would abide by the time-table, she frustrated the builder by wanting to use the bathroom while he wanted to work there. One day he knocked on the door and she answered "You can't come in, I'm in the shower". Quick as a flash he replied "Don't worry, you close your eyes and I won't look", to which she replied "O.K. then", and Arthur continued on with his work. During the same week another new member of the club, Deiter Klempt, having found both the common toilets occupied one morning, decided as a matter of urgency to use the new ladies one. Unfortunately the pan had just been positioned on the floor while the cistern was being tested for water leaks. On completing his task, he reached over and flushed and was hit by a full load of water from the cistern. To cap it all, he had the responsibility of cleaning out the pan, which he carried on his shoulder through the crowded ski room.

It now seemed feasible to proceed with the car park. A special debenture issue was decided upon, this would allow only the holders of same to park in the area. The quote from Stawonvick was accepted to build the rear and front retaining walls and provide the filling and drainage. The cost of this work was 624 pounds and was to be paid for by a levy system, as previously discussed.

Our winter caretaker was appointed in May '65, her name was Elizabeth Maynes and she was responsible for cleaning the hut. We eventually received permission from Lantern Lodge to construct the driveway and decided to build a wall in the lounge room to maintain the heat and reduce the noise.

We received a quote from K.T. for 115 pounds to build a small dam together with connecting drains to stop the run off between Lantern Lodge and Berghutte damaging the path. We were also required to build a series of holding ponds. By February '66 the car park had been completed and we were ready to go on to our next project - the new lounge area. Alan Penney was caretaker for us this year.

By April 1967 we had finally received all approvals for the front lounge extension and a quote from Paul Alenspar for \$3,950 for carpentry and \$1000 from Ulf Kusarchi for stone work was accepted. The building of this extension provided us with our new front lounge room and allowed us to extend our dining room. The major feature of the extension was the very large beams supporting it - the

sizes had been specified by the architect for Oregon timber but because of the availability of the local mountain ash hardwood the latter was substituted for the job. I can well remember the erection of these six beams. We had at least 20 people, standing on a temporary deck that was laid over the simple stud walls which supported either side. No one could believe that we were going to use such gigantic timbers to hold up such a simple tin roof. Luckily they fitted together and stayed in place, even now with the ends of them cut off where the new dining room adjoins, they have stayed in position.

An opening party was held on the June weekend which was reported in the S.M.H. of the 18th July. Everyone was flat out and we only just finished waxing the walls when the first guests arrived. I think it is worthwhile quoting Helle Sorauer (snowfields reporter) article - 'I must tell you about last weekend's most unusual party. It was at the Berghutte Ski Club, which has already been going for nine years, but it is only just now having its official opening, now that the extended new lounge has been completed, with modernistic yellow chandeliers. Helen Murray (Clontarf) helped her husband Noel host the impressive turken and chicken party and naturally "everybody" was there.

I caught up with lots of old friends. Ellen Corpse (Lakemba), who is responsible for most of the interior decorating, was congratulated by Graham Price (Randwick). I found Yvonne and Ken Davis (Bellevue Hill) who had brought with them their daughters Michele (13), Martine (11) and Daniele (9). Andy and Margaret Mackay (Eastwood) were joined by Fred and Joan Somerfield (Vaucluse) and John and Diana Crumpton (Pymble), Margaret Watson (Warrawee) and Corinne Hammet (Sylvania).'

We had many parties and always a Christmas Party. The Astor Christmas party of 1965 was a rather memorable affair. With an attendance of 50 members and guests at the Astor Hotel in Woolloomooloo we sat down to dinner with only one table occupied by an outside couple, who must have been the floor show, for by the time we received our dessert she had dropped the front of her dress to reveal a well-endowed bosom high-lighted by strategic lipstick marks. When the dancing started, she and her partner were on the floor first and it was a very unusual situation for 'those days'. This became a real embarrassment when the band played a barn dance, none of the men sat out. This sight was generally only reserved for husbands and babies!

The Berghutte ski club flag, made by Ellen Corpse, was duly raised on July 13th. and Elaine Finlay was our winter caretaker.

Apart from our usual run of repairs and working parties our next notable problem was the unfortunate circumstance of having to expel two members. This required a most judicious handling by our solicitor Dick Holt and our honorary barrister John Crumpton during the 1968 season.

Our caretaker, who many will remember, was Miss Elle Jacoba de Witt in 1969. The bathrooms were retiled by Koos van Gent. It was reported in the minutes that all were satisfied with the breakfasts that Elle provided. This is our first record of any catering being done in the lodge for the members.

Our architect was again requested to prepare plans for new extensions at the back of the lodge that would provide for suitable manager's quarters complete with ensuite and a bridge to the car park. This was required to allow us to keep our number of beds for guests.

In 1970 we increased our overdraft and the amount guaranteed by directors. The plans were drawn up by C. Thompson and a quote by Harry Cummins and the extension was ready for the winter season. We received an application and accepted a Mr. Byron as caretaker-manager and sadly to report he absconded with our funds at the end of his employment.

After the end of the 1970 season we realised the the dining facilities were too small and again asked C. Thompson to design an extension of the lounge room to go through the wall on the Lantern Lodge side.

Applications were received for caretakers for 1971 and a Mr. & Mrs. Thomas were employed. Lack of privacy for their domestic differences was a problem not only for them but the members. Joseph Holman was employed in 1972 as caretaker and by August we were holding emergency discussions. He left us high and dry in the middle of the season and was replaced by new caretakers. Subsequently, we received exorbitant claims through the union which we had to settle.

A farewell Christmas Party was held in December, 1972, for the Murrays on their transfer to Queensland. Noel Murray resigned as president and G. Price took over the position.

Peter Spring and his sister became caretakers in 1973 and stayed with us through the '74 & '75 season.

The new heating and ducting system was installed by Noel McIlwaine and Chris Sutton in the '73 season.

Jill Duncan (Netsar) was appointed summer caretaker in '74, and in 1976 was appointed summer and winter caretaker.

I returned from Queensland in 1974 and was elected vice-president.

In 1975 David Rowley refurbished the bathrooms.

By this stage, Graham Price's planning and hard work had resulted in our site being the picture it is today.

Dormer windows were added to the caretaker's and attic rooms in 1977.

In August 1978, M. Lodge, a village architect was invited to provide future plans for the ski club. Over the next four years a series of plans were presented, altered and refused by the various authorities and it was not until a set of working plans, based on M. Lodge's sketches was finally approved in 1982. These working plans were created by Lightfoot, Stanton, Hanlon & Ritchie P/L and we received a quote of approximately \$300,000 from Skinner and Edwards Development for the building.

Our popular caretaker Jill Netsar resigned and was replaced by Alan and Linda Hinde at the end of 1980.

Needless to say a substantial change in our club was necessary in order to fund the new building. We advertised and in 1982 and '83 received a total of \$250,000 in new entrance fees. This together with our overdraft allowed us to complete the building as it stands today with ensuites, new lounge rooms, double glazing, extra bathrooms, etc. etc...

In 1983 I became ill and reluctantly resigned from the vice-presidency. I'm only happy I've had the opportunity to have had all those very active years with the club and still enjoy being a member of Berghutte Ski Club.

Why is the club called Berghutte? At the first meeting of the club we looked for a simple name and Joe Peplow suggested it be called mountain hut in German, ergo BERGHUTTE.

5/8/92

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