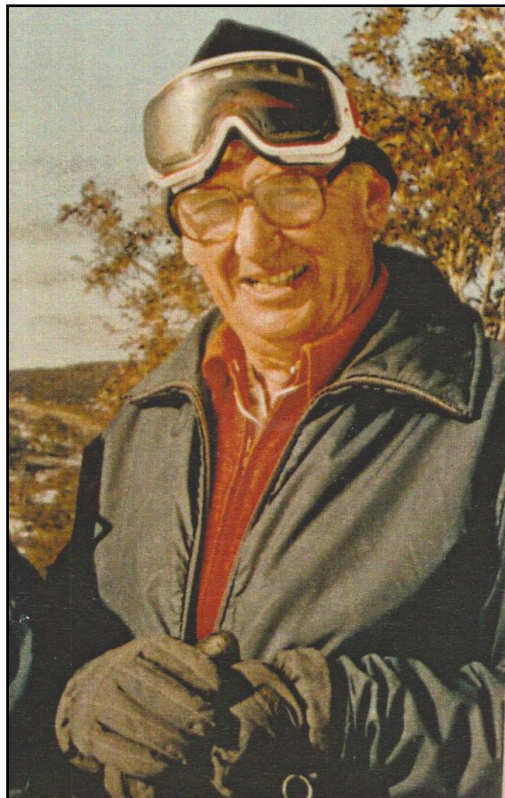


THREDBO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ALAN BAGNALL

**An oral history conducted by Edie Swift
Curtin, ACT on 30th June 2014
Transcribed by Shauna Knee**



Alan Bagnall, Perisher Valley, 1985

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ALAN BAGNALL – AN ORAL HISTORY

Interviewed by Edith Swift, on 30 June 2014.

Transcribed by Shauna Knee, 27 October 2014

My name is Edie Swift and I'm interviewing Alan Bagnall at his home at 54 Jennings Street, Curtin. He's a skier and a walker and he's done everything. He's going to talk about his skiing experience and I think we should start with just a brief biographical on your parents.

Fine, well my name is Alan Bagnall. I was born 27 May 1930. My father was Stephen Richard Bagnall and he was born in 1897. Interesting enough he had his 18th birthday on the 30 April at Anzac Cove straight after Anzac Landing and was awarded Military Medal and Bar at the Western Front. He died in 1961.

My mother was Doris Anne Ward and she was born in 1896 and she died in 1979.

I came to Canberra when my father was transferred here in 1933 as part of the Patent Office. At that stage the Canberra population was roughly 5000 people and so in the middle of the Depression a government department of conservative people such as Patent Officers were very sort of unsure about leaving a big metropolitan city of Melbourne to come to Canberra, a country town and losing all the family infrastructure. The government of the day made a brilliant offer to the Patent Office employees that all officers transferring to Canberra were guaranteed their children's employment when they completed their schooling which was a tremendous incentive at no cost to the government. It really was a brilliant idea.

So just to go over some of this, the Canberra Alpine Club was established in 1934?

Well initially, it was, the Canberra Rovers Scouts were keen on bushwalking and skiing and they were going to Kosciusko and Kiandra in the late 20s through until the early 30s. In 1934 there was a group from Canberra led by Tim Ingram and they were at Kiandra and met up with 4 members from the Kosciuszko Alpine Club. The topic of having a ski club was raised and an informal meeting was held to discuss the possibility and the decision was made at that meeting to form the Canberra Alpine Club.

So the Mt Franklin Chalet, now that was built in, opened in 1938. Is that right?

Correct.

And 2nd of July, and then we start with you.

I joined the Club in 1950 initially because my interest in bushwalking mainly because being a, having grown up in Canberra and Canberra was the bush capital, one was interested in bushwalking and later skiing and fishing; anything to do with the outdoors which was quite normal for young chaps around town those days. So I joined the Club to bushwalk and I went on a first bushwalk in March that year. Then as the snow season came, I became involved in skiing at Mt Franklin and from there I became I guess involved and visited Perisher. Because of my enthusiasm I was co-opted to the committee that year and I stayed on the committee then through until the late 70s and in 1956 I was elected President which I look back now and I find myself rather overawed by the fact that I was 25 at the time and I was President of the Ski Club.

What was Franklin like? Mt Franklin Chalet? Can you tell us about the interior?

The Chalet was built in '38. The Club at that time were attempting to raise money to build it. Then a local builder Warren McDonald, who later went on to become chairman of the Commonwealth Bank and honoured with the appointment to Sir Warren MacDonal and he agreed to build the Chalet for us at cost, cost being 600 pounds or \$1200 in today's money. That was started in January 1938 and it was opened as you say on the 2nd of July 1938.

The building was a 2 storey building. The lower floor had an entrance hall which ran across the front were ski racks and a bathroom, basin at one end and a bush shower in a cubicle at the other end. For those who don't know what a bush shower is it's a case of having a barrel of hot water above the person, a string coming down with a ring on the end where you put your toe in and you adjust the water flow by using your toe to have your shower and get refreshed.

Behind the entrance hall there was the main lounge room with a wood stove, an old Canadian wood stove, cast iron one, and a stove in the kitchen next to it for cooking and above, upstairs there was a 1 two bedroom room and 7 four bedroom rooms.

When it was first built, there was no ceilings so up until the '50s we would experience waking up in the morning after a blizzard to find snowflakes on our sleeping bags and pillows and our beanies and what have you and in 1953 we addressed that problem by lining the ceiling and giving us sleepers some protection. As well as that, the walls in between the bunk rooms were hessian; good old hessian so we replaced that with lining boards. The bunk rooms didn't have doors, just curtains.

The Chalet was being used by a group of Dutch airmen who were stationed at the Fairbairn Airport in Canberra for defence duties and they used to use that as an R and R location.

So when did you, when you went there how was it, what was it like leaving from Canberra to go up to Mt Franklin Chalet?

In the summer it was fine. The road

Yes. but the winter?

One of the big problems with Franklin was that the access road was at the same altitude as the ski fields and that is not a good concept for a developing ski resort and it was very difficult. If we had a good year, it was difficult to get in and sometimes we might have to ski 13 kms from Bulls Head into the lodge to get there. Other times it, occasions with the special ski races, we would approach the ACT Government for snow clearing and they would clear the road for us, for the Club championships or the Balmain Cups, things like that.

The runs around the lodge, just outside the lodge to the right hand side, sloping to the east was what was called the Nursery Run, which was for beginners. Then we had a long, narrow run for going up to the top of the summit of Mt Franklin, which was called the Wood Run. It was a fairly narrow run and not very negotiable coming down at any speed because it was very narrow. And at the top of Mt Franklin on the right hand side, there was a cleared area, on a rocky escarpment which was called Death Gulch and a little bit further on at the point where you reach the cairn at Mt Franklin, the Slalom Run went down. This used to be our main skiing run, which was quite wide and then over towards the north we had what was called the Morning Run, which would run down a few hundred yards into the Cotter Valley and those were our skiing spots.

In the mid 50s we decided that a mountain, next down, range from Franklin, Little Ginini had better snow and we decided to build the new run down there and there we were helped occasionally by road with bulldozers who helped in the removal of some of the trees. Otherwise we chopped them down, sawed them up, and in those days we didn't have any chainsaws available, mainly crosscut saws, two-man crosscut saws to saw up the logs and

burn them. I suppose one would have to say, looking back, that our ski run clearances of that day were probably unacceptable in today's environment of conservation.

And what was the, what did you have for skis, starting when 1950 all the way through to 1984?

In the main, the skis in the 30s and the 40s were, in the main, handmade skis made by Club members under the guidance of Charles Lane-Poole who was head of the Australian Forestry and Timber Bureau here in Canberra and our first President running through from 1934 to 1940. He used to run training courses at the Canberra Forestry School where he would show people how to make skis, how to trim them and how to steam them and then put them into clamps to give it the shape and then bevel off the edges to put the steel edges in and bend the steel to make front holders and cables, the cables for the back so they were very primitive.

My first skis were a pair of Club made skis I bought for 10 pounds or \$20 in today's money and that was fine and then as we moved forward there was a ski maker in Melbourne, a chap by the name of Alan Broad (note that he is referred to as Andy Broad in "A Select History of The Canberra Alpine Club" by Bill Bray) who made skis. He also used to buy up army boots and put a metal strip in under the leather sole to stop the boot folding in the damp. He put a groove on the heel and so that was pretty basic stuff going on.

How was your skiing affected starting in 1950 through to 1984 when the Mt Franklin Chalet closed?

Yes, the skiing at Franklin was very difficult. We didn't have any grooming material so our equipment and so our grooming consisted of side stepping up the slope and packing the snow and then skiing down and as the day progressed so the run got longer and longer. It was most unusual to have fresh snow at this latitude that wasn't soft.

Did you do a Christiana turn? Did you use a stem turn or what?

Stem turn, yes and Christie's turns towards, as we came more experienced, particularly after the influx of European refugees after the war. We had some very, good role models who were skiers from Europe who did a lot for the Club and really put character in the Club in those first years after the war and into the 50s. They taught us a lot of skiing, the skiing tricks and also the ability to ski jump and things of that nature. That particular group of European skiers made a big contribution to the Alpine Club.

In 1957 we made the big move to construct a transportable ski tow from a Harley Davidson motorbike which was quite ingenious and that operated for a number of years. It wasn't that transportable because it was very heavy and when we were host for the Balmain Cup in 1957, after dinner on the Saturday night, we convinced the 90 odd skiers that were staying in the lodge to pull the sled up on top of Mt Franklin so we could use it for the downhill events the next day. That was not a very popular task but it was very effective in getting the tow to the top and use it for the Balmain Cup downhills the next day.

Some years later, we were still using the Brumby Tow and we were able to upgrade to an old Austin A40, which we were able to drive up to the site, up to the Franklin then up onto the summit. That is now a rusty icon of our days at Mt Franklin and it's quite an icon for ski photographs.

Now did you eventually buy skis that were from overseas?

We had a sport store here called Ally Nish Sports and Ally was a good supporter of the club but it wasn't until probably the mid 50s that he started to stock skis. Prior to that, we were going to Sydney to get them. People would go to Sydney to buy a pair of skis from Paddy

Pallin; that was a very well known name. Then from the 50s, mid 50s on, Ally was doing a good job on skis and I bought a pair of Norwegian skis there from him for 30 pounds, \$60. They are now in the ski collection and are on display when we have open days at the shelter, the new shelter hut at Mt Franklin.

So did, did your skiing change with the new skis that you

Oh it certainly did.

How did it change?

It changed. Well we skied much faster and did much, much more turning and became much more competitive in what we did on the snow, whereas in the early days it was going down and snow plowing and turns, doing things with care because the skis were rough and the snow was rough because we had no grooming. As we went along and, of course, in the longer term, we changed. The Club is quite proud to have now 3 of it's members represent Australia in the Olympic Games. There was Ben Simms, who was a cross country skier, Sally Moten and Laura Peal was in the 2014 Olympic Games so she, on the aerial skiing, came 7th in that event.

So when you had to bring food, did you freeze everything?

No, most of it was dry food. And, of course, back in the 50s you didn't have capacity domestically to really freeze food. In many, most households had meat safes and ice refrigerators and things like that and it wasn't until later on that we became more affluent to have fridges which you could freeze things but it was dried food and on the big nights we came back a little bit.

In 1954 the Prime Minister's Lodge was going through a major renovation and the stove in the kitchen was being replaced. It was a magnificent stove, built in Geelong, of big heavy cast iron doors. It had 2 ovens, 2 hotplate storage areas and I suppose it was probably 6 feet x 3 feet in, on the surface, so with plenty of space and we used to, on big nights, we would be cooking, baking chicken, 20 chickens in the oven, for a big dinner. We used to have a hot water urn sitting on one end which we'd put the snow in, because if the tank, water tank was frozen we had to melt snow and get the water and unfortunately that was stolen.

One of our members, a farmer, was able to replace it and once again that was stolen and that touches on the problems that were happening in the late 50s and early 60s that vandals were attempting to do damage at the lodge. So our first step was to lock up the interior of the lodge and just leave the ski room open. Then we had to lock up the lodge itself and then we had to put on shutters on the windows to stop people breaking in in the windows.

In fact on one occasion the group of ANU students had gone down to Ginini Falls in the summer and they were overdue and so the parents rang up the police. The police, the Canberra Police went up there. They didn't have a map. They looked through the window and saw our mounted map on the wall of the area, so they broke the window and snapped the map off, across their knees to pick up the bit of the section of the board they wanted and then I have still the remains of the map, as a memento in my workshop next door.

So now, we might look at the, your trip which you led every year, the cross country trip and um was in 1962, the 24th, 25th of August and tell me all about that in detail.

That was, we were very young and enthusiastic in those days and we decided, a couple of colleagues, that we would attempt to ski to Bimberi which was well down the, on the ACT Brindabella range and the snow cover was good and once again it was deep and we skied

down on the road to Gingera and then at Gingera the road went downhill into the Cotter Valley, to the old ranger's hut at Cotter Valley.

So we left the road and moved up onto the ridge and it was like threading a needle getting your skis through the sapling gum trees and you had the option of either doing that or taking them off and walking knee deep in snow which also wasn't very pleasant. So our degree of speed of travel was somewhat limited to say the least and we camped that night some distance from Bimberi, got up about 4 o'clock the next morning, had breakfast in the dark and waited until for daylight to come and we set off again and we realised that we wouldn't get there so we returned to our camp.

I had just bought a new print of the military map of the area which showed the road from Gingera to the Cotter Hut was only about 300 feet below where we camped so we decided to drop down under this road and walk back. To our horror we discovered later that there was an error in the map and the road was one grid out of location and we had to drop over 1000 feet to get down. As a result, we didn't get back to Gingera until round about darkness at 6 o'clock at night.

What was the ascent like and what was your equipment like?

Oh well, we were mainly walking down then (laughs). We were below the snowline and interestingly we were coming around the foot of Gingera and low and behold there was some torch lights down about 50 metres below us and we gave a "cooee" and up came two schoolboys and we said "What on earth are you doing here?" and they said "Oh, my dad dropped us off at the snowline and we've been dragging our sleds along. We're going down to spend a week at Stockyard Creek Hut" and we suggested what were they doing down below old, sleeping under a big dead tree and got a fire going, I said "You know, there's the RMC Ski Lodge just 200 metres up the road if you want to go up there." "Oh no, we'll be right, we'll be right" and so we left them to their own devices and we finally got back to Franklin Chalet at 11 o'clock that night.

So what equipment, when were you, did you ski when you finally got up to the peak?

We didn't, we didn't get to Bimberi.

You didn't get there at all?

No. No, we didn't. We used our skis where possible but once we got down, coz we dropped so far down the ridge onto this incorrectly located road. We had to walk for quite a way. In fact, John Wandless had such damaged toes from coming down that distance in the ski boots, he was walking barefooted along the road (laughs).

What was your equipment, what was your clothing like?

I had homemade cross country skis and we had in those days, ski clothing wasn't that common around and so we all had jackets and woollen underpants then known as Jack Johnsons (named after the famous Australian boxer of the same name)." In the early days we were using a lot of military equipment from the disposal stores, the heavy woollen trousers and things like that. On this trip, we you know got clad in that sort of manner and yes so it was an interesting experience which we didn't attempt again.

And so you, your parkas were made of what?

Just Japara. At that stage quilted jackets hadn't been invented. Japara jackets, double Japara, some with little bit of padding in them but what you might call by those standards, fairly light weight.

And then, so did you go, did you spend the night at Mt Franklin?

No, we then drove back to Canberra.

You did? At 11 o'clock at night?

Alan: Yes

What was that like?

Oh, lots of what I called CD - character development (laughs).

Oh (laughs)

And yes. We knew the road pretty well and so we got back but we felt that to stay out overnight would only cause tension with our families in Canberra.

what do you remember as another ski tour where you did get on top of one of those peaks?

From 1957 through to 1973 on the 1st weekend in August, I would run an overnight ski trip to Gingera and spend the night at Pryors Hut which became a very popular event over the years and continued through until 73 when the snow conditions were such that didn't justify calling it a ski tour. I would have probably somewhere between 15 to 20 skiers there and enjoying the experience of touring and having a nice comfortable hut to stop in.

We always had to get rid of the marsupial rats from the lodge. It was interesting. On occasions we would drop some, say fat, from the cooking, some meat on the floor one year and next year we'd come back, we'd find the rats had chewed a hole through the floor to get all the nutrient out of that floor. I remember one famous occasion that we had a Danish girl with us, who was a strong member of the club and she and another lass were sharing the front room and all of the blokes were in the back room.

Was this at Pryors Hut?

At Pryors Hut.

And what year was this?

Oh be probably about 1958/59. And there was a very, very sort of European female voice saying "There it is, just throw the boot" (laughs) and so yes, it was interesting. One particular night was very, very memorable. It was a very cold night and we had, when we arrived we spent some, quite some time getting out gathering wood because there wasn't any wood near in the hut.

So we gathered a lot of wood, built a big fire and as the evening progressed we had a lot of camaraderie around the fire and lots of talk and slowly a rather offensive smell started to occur and people started to look sideways. Finally it got so bad that it became a topic of conversation and we decided to make a search of the room to see what the problem was and we discovered that during the summer somebody who'd used a kerosene tin as a toilet which

when we arrived was frozen solid but with the warmth of our magnificent fire, the rat thawed out and made its presence felt.

So you did the ski touring all the way through I guess 1984

Alan: No, ski touring, I must admit my last ski from Kiandra to Kosciuszko was in 1927. The very first tour of ski, transport, transition across there was in 1927 and the Kosciuszko Huts Association established a commemorative ski tour throughout the 1977 ski season issuing a Certificate to all skiers participating. You can see the plaque up there above the wall with the ski tour across there. After that I put my touring skis away.

What year was that?

That was 1977.

And was that successful?

Yes, very. That was a great experience to ski from Kiandra to Kosciuszko.

When did you start? What date?

It was late August and there were times when we were jocularly remarking this is going to be the last ski tour on the programme or the first ski walk on the programme (laughs).

So you had problems skiing the whole way?

We had to pick our way carefully. Some of the crossings under the creeks were highly exposed and there were no snow bridges.

Did you do it one day or?

4 days.

4 days and where did you camp along the way?

We camped at the Happy's Hut, Mackays Hut, Cesjacks Hut, White River Hut, you know, that's going back in my memories (laugh)

And you had the equipment that you bought in that last tour, ski tour?

Yes, yes.

So the skis were bought?

They were all bought, yes. But much more sort of realistic in today's conditions, Yes..

And your boots. What were they when you did that?

They were cross country boots.

Where were they made?

They were mainly made in Europe, yes, imported and Ally Nish would be stocking them, Paddy Pallin would be stocking them.

And what were your bindings?

Alan: Bindings were the standard cross country binding.

Edie: What was that? Cable? Could you lift your foot?

Alan: Oh yes, lift your foot. Yes, clip in. The toes clipped in. Heels free. Whereas before, early days, we had the Khandahar binding which had two, two hooks on either side so that you could either ski with your heel clamped down or ski with your heel lifting up. That was the pretty common, right through until the early 50s, the Khandahar binding.

And you had better clothing then didn't you?

Alan: Oh yes, yes.

In 1977

Yes, Canberra was very fortunate that in the mid 50s say a chap by the name of John Unger opened up a tailor's shop here in Canberra specialising in making ski clothing. I had a pair of trousers made by John and they had the unique feature of having a little zipper gusset just above the top of the boot which, so you undid your zip and when you sat down that you didn't belly out your knees of your ski pants. It was his particular contribution to ski clothing design.

In 1984 they decided that the Chalet, the Mt Franklin Chalet would be, would be closed. Is that right?

No, not closed, it was, because of the creation of the Namadgi National Park which covers all the southern ACT. The building was then in part of the park and our lease was foreclosed and it became a property of the ACT Government and we, the Club had agreed to maintain the Club at the cost of the government.

Interesting enough, the Namadgi National Park is a great feature of the ACT at this stage and back in 1963 I was approached by the National Parks Association of Canberra if I would lead a group of their members into the area in the southern ACT to determine the potential for a national park and so I took a group in there from Gudgenby across into Sam's Creek and up to Mount Kelly and that was the first introduction they had of the potential which then led through until the creation of the Namadgi National Park in 1982/83/84.

And what happened to the Mount Franklin Chalet?

Alan: The Chalet was locked up and available for the Club on open days and things of that nature. I think we were able to use it as a, as a club, we had the keys and locked up. The department had put a locked gate down about a half a kilometre down the track from the Chalet to stop the vandals coming in and that existed through until the bushfires of 2003.

There had been 3 major bushfires in the Brindabella Ranges since the lodge was built. 1939, 1983 and 2003 and tragically the 2003 fire burnt the lodge down and there was virtually nothing left and in fact I was interviewed on the ABC Radio the week after it was burnt down and I made a comment that "the old Prime Minister's Lodge stove was still sitting up there in isolation with all the ashes around. It's got 2 marvellous cast iron doors with

lovely embroidery on it.” And I said “you know it’ll be something we can remember it by” and I went up with the park to look at the damage the following week, with a group of the senior members and to my horror somebody had stolen the doors off the stove and so we were going to use that stove as a key piece to the memorabilia of the old Chalet .

I thought that they decided to close that Chalet because Namadgi was coming in?

Yes. It was under control and also the ACT Government was worried about water catchment areas and back, going back to the original construction in 1938 the Chalet is built right on the border between NSW and the ACT. And the Club was required to build the toilet, a big drop toilet on the NSW side so that wouldn't contaminate the catchment area on the ACT side. So if you wanted to go to the toilet up at Franklin, you had to go interstate. (laughs)

Now then what happened was the Canberra Alpine Club continued and they built lodges in Perisher and Jindabyne, is that true?

That's correct, yes. Yes.

When was that?

We realised that as the 50s went on, the skiers wanted to have the full use of the Kosciuszko facilities, tows and grooming and things of that nature and so the Club when I was President from 1956 through to 56/57 and when I took over as President, we had a membership of 60 people and I took an attitude of trying to publicise our activities so every Sunday night during winter I'd come back and I'd ring up the ABC newsroom in Canberra and tell them how many skiers were there, there were 50 or 80, 100 skiers there.

Then in the summer I'd been putting in reports on all our bushwalks in the Canberra Times and as a result when I stepped down in '57 we had over 200 members of the Club which was quite a significant increase which then gave us a platform to think seriously about going to Perisher and I myself, John Gdowski and Bruce Bray and Keith Storey went down in 59 and looked for sites and we selected the current site.

In 1960 on Boxing Day of 1960 we started our first work party. We had no power, no electricity, no water, no power, we had the dam, a little creek up behind Cronulla Lodge and have a hose for 200 metres coming down to fill us with our 44 gallon drum of water to make the concrete and that weekend, we were up there for a week through until New Years Day and our water, the creek ran dry. We used to have to go down to a cattle dam between our lodge and Telemark with 5 gallon drums of water and come back up the hill to fill up the tank.

It was a great challenge to plan to build a ski lodge with voluntary labour from members. At that stage, we only had 300 pounds in the bank account, \$600. We were sort of going, we used to joke about whether what sort of door handles, as we actually dug the foundations we were joking saying “What sort of door handles will we have?” - something quite irrelevant to the situation of digging there. There were only 7 of us there and we got the foundation down that particular period.

Then by the end of January we had our first A frame up and the building was an A frame about 7 metres wide and 20 metres long and it was 3 floors: ground, second, first and second. And we worked on it and they're very impressive. We only spent \$600 on wages, the rest was voluntary labour.

One of the big problems was we spent the wages to put on the roof, the Cliplock roof, which was quite long and we didn't have the fibreglass panels to fit in as windows and when we finally got the panels to fit in, in May. In the beginning of May, we discovered the roof had been put on upside down so that the overlap was at the bottom and not at the top so we had to spend the whole of one weekend pulling all the sheets of Cliplock off, turning it round and putting it back on. I was the poor guy who was sitting in the middle there screwing in the

Cliplock around from one way to the other. On the 22nd of April we had a very heavy snow fall, about 30cm which came through the building.

What year was that again?

That was 1961 and the snow settled into the ground floor with the concrete floor and all the lining board, vertical lining board in all the bedrooms and they all had to be pulled out because they all sucked in water and expanded and so had to get another 50,000 lineal feet of lining board and the building itself is as I say 3 storeys.

The bottom floor, the ground floor had a men's bathroom and a girl's/women's bathroom on the ground floor. The men's on the north side would get the sun in the morning when you were showering; the girl's were on the south side and there were one 2 bunk room and seven 4 bunk rooms. The 2 bunk room was used by the manager. Upstairs we had the lounge room and the kitchen and dining room.

In the early days we had a little, small store. There were no stores in Perisher and the top area was the loft area was available for sleeping accommodation and when it first opened we had something like 30 mattresses up there which gave us a good cash flow to help pay off our debts.

So when did, so that one, lodge was built and then today, does, is there still the Club and do they have a lodge today?

Yes, that's still at Perisher. And we've now had 2 extensions and the first one was 83 when we had to upgrade to bring it up to current fire standards and other Council requirements. That meant that we put a new wedge on the side of the A frame, which widened the base of it and we put bedrooms with ground floor and loft sleeping quarters in each, each of those cubicle, in each of those rooms and so the number of beds remained the same but was built to current safety standards.

That was 1984.

That was '83.

Then is that the current lodge you have now?

No then in 1999 we decided to put an extension on the side and that included a top floor of 2 family rooms and 4 twin double rooms, each with an en suite and downstairs the same number bedrooms with 2 bathrooms separate to the bedrooms and so we now have a lodge that has accommodation appropriate for our standards of living whereas before it was somewhat like camping indoors.

Now so do you, can you tell me where that is? In Perisher?

In Perisher, yes, you know the Telemark ski tow? Do you know Telemark Lodge? Do you know the Sundeck. Yes?

No.

The Sundeck Hotel?

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We're just past the Sundeck.

Oh ok

You've got the Sundeck Hotel then you've got the Telemark Ski Lodge, the t-bar going up and then you go round it and you come almost to the Kosciuszko Alpine Club, you turn off to the right and you come down and the Alpine Club is at the end of the ridge there. The reason why we selected that particular site was that in those early days of the 1950s the Sundeck was a very much a social centre for all the skiers as a result when the Sundeck closed at about 11 or 12 o'clock at night it was sometimes rather rowdy with people walking along the road going back to their lodges and so we decided to get as far away as possible from the road and ultimately, the t-bar went in which gave us great access in and out of the lodge.

Would you like to say anything else? I, I think we'll conclude now. The only thing is I guess the other lodge that you had something to do with or hut was the Pryors Hut and, and that was 1952.

Back in 1966 the NSW Government offered 5 blocks of land for lease for club purposes on Banjo Paterson Crescent in Jindabyne. I happened to notice the ad in the Sydney Morning Herald and looked at it and sort of worked hard on the Club and talked the Club into putting in a tender. We put in a tender at the reserve price of \$750/year and we were successful with that tender and in 1967 we built a 2 storey ski lodge down there on the lake foreshore with accommodation for 24 beds and in 2003 we had the offer to purchase the freehold which we did for I think \$115,000.

Then in 2008 the Council inspected the property which was designed for 24 beds and required us to bring the quality of the accommodation up to the standard and safety level required in the current restrict, regulations. We decided not to do that and we were forced to reduce the number of beds from 24 to 12 and we then had to make the big decision which was made last year, 2013, that we would demolish the Jindabyne lodge and rebuild.

The lodge is now under construction. It is expected to be finished by the end of July and it will accommodate 36 people in 10 rooms, en-suites and good, high quality standard. So that will be the next new base of the Club and so we are standing in a fairly proud and satisfied position at this stage, the Club.

Now what is the name of that lodge?

That is called Jindabyne Lodge - Canberra Alpine Club Jindabyne Lodge.

Well this has been wonderful. I don't know if there's anything more you want to add but I think this is just great.

I would just like to make one comment that when I first joined the Club and I was co-opted to the committee, I was at an early committee meeting in 1950 at the, one of the lounges in the Hotel Canberra which is an icon of Canberra at the moment. And the Hotel Canberra because we were a battling club trying to make contribution to society, they were happy to have us use one of their lounge rooms as a meeting place once a month.

I can recall that on one of the earlier meetings, there was a lot of discussion as to whether we could afford to buy one or two axe handles to help with the clearing of the Franklin ski runs. The axe handles I think at that stage were 75 cents each by today's terms and I look now at a club that now has 2 very significant ski lodges and worth multi million dollars. Ah, it has come a long way since those days of the Franklin in the 1950s.

Well thank you so much and I'd like to thank you from the Thredbo Historical Society and really appreciate this. It is wonderful to hear about everything.

Good, fine, thank you, Edie.

And would you mind if it was transcribed.

No, not at all.



Alan Bagnall, Whistler 1995