

Charles Anton (1916 – 1966) will be remembered for his contribution to Australian skiing and Thredbo. Charles Anton arrived in Australia in December 1938, after fleeing from Vienna, Austria, following the *Anschluss*.

An enthusiastic skier, his first skiing experience in Australia was at the Allied Services Ski Meeting at the Chalet at Charlotte Pass after which he joined a tour of the Main Range and Mt Townsend. This resulted in his vision of a chain of lodges across the Main Range.

By November 1950, he launched the Ski Tourers' Association and he was the founding President. His inexhaustible drive led to the erection on the main range of the Albina Lodge in 1951, Kunama Hutte in 1952, (destroyed by an avalanche in 1956), the Northcote Tow in 1953, and Illawong Lodge in 1957.

The destruction of Kunama Hutte, the loss of Northcote Tow by fire, and changing Kosciusko State Park policies, led to the formation of a syndicate of Charles Anton together with Tony Sponar, Geoffrey Hughes, Eric Nicholls and later Thyne Reid, to develop a purpose-built ski village in the Thredbo Valley.

Thredbo was to be that Village and opened for business in June 1957 with a small hotel called The Lodge, Crackenback Ski Club Lodge and a rope tow.

The Ski Tourers' Association then built and opened Roslyn Lodge in 1958. Next was Kareela Hutte in 1959, built adjacent to the Crackenback ski slope. Kareela was intended to be a ski lodge providing on-snow accommodation for 10. Finally with Perisher Huette and Falls Creek Huette in 1963, and Patscherkofel Lodge at Mt Buller in 1966, the Ski Tourers Association was reorganised on a national basis and became the Australian Alpine Club.

Charles Anton died in 1966 after contracting meningitis and becoming fatally ill on a trip to Lake Albina Lodge.

John Turner wrote in the Australian Ski Year book of 1967 -

“Charles was tireless, being actively concerned with schemes for better roads, for improving ski and tourist facilities, encouraging overseas visitors and ski teams, and opening up new areas so that a wider public might enjoy to the full the wonderful recreational possibilities of our mountains. He saw himself as a sort of catalyst, as a man to show the way and get things going. For this, he was admirably fitted with his ability to inspire and arouse enthusiasm, and his instinctive flair for publicity.”

Charles Anton – a genuine Face of Thredbo.