

Off Piste

Report of the Canberra Cross Country Ski Club AGM

The AGM was held at the Scout Hall in Turner on 25 September 2013. There was a small attendance which is hardly surprising now that the season is almost over. However, this meant the specially prepared AGM gluwain lasted the whole night!

The usual business of an AGM was efficiently dealt with.

A pleasurable part of the

meeting was thanking the committee members for fulfilling their roles in such an efficient and professional role. Special thanks to those outgoing committee members:

Bruce Porter, who has completed 3 years as President, and is constitutionally barred from standing again. Bruce has achieved a lot in the last 3 years, especially in relation to club governance and the development of strategic goals.

Ian Turland who did such a sterling job with the tour schedule despite the unhelpful weather. Ian is

taking up a posting in India at the end of the year, and we wish him well. (Yes, of course he could organise a club tour schedule online from New Delhi, but I imagine most of the tours would be in the Indian Himalaya).

Jenny Manning who kept the Committee on course with concise minutes of all meetings. Jenny and her partner are heading off to the coast, but will still be skiing with the club from time to time.

I am also leaving the committee because as

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Ken Moylan, Ian Turland, Bruce Barnett & Kim Hello skiing on the Ramshead Plateau near North Ramshead, 15 Sept 13. Photo: Alan Levy

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Newsletter Contributions

- Photos of trips, lessons, snow country, meetings or social events.
- Reports on tours, lessons and races and CCCSC events.
- Letters to the editor.
- Articles about XC skiing, snow conditions or related topics.
- Items to buy or sell.
- Please send emails to cccsceditor@gmail.com
- A November edition of the newsletter will be produced if there is enough content, otherwise this will be the final newsletter of the year.

The CCCSC XMAS Party will be held on Wednesday 4 December. See inside for further details.

Lodge Weekend on 11 & 12 October. See page 13.

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matters stand, it is unlikely I will be in Canberra next winter. I will remain on the committee until vacant positions are filled.

Committee members who are continuing are Margaret Mahoney as Treasurer, Bruce Porter as Secretary, Deb Purss as Instruction Coordinator, Jo-Anne Clancy as Racing Coordinator, Gale Funston as Membership Coordinator, Alan Levy is continuing as the Off Piste Editor, and Ken Moylan is continuing as Webmaster.

Steve Warild subsequently agreed to be the Touring Coordinator for next year.

Positions Vacant

The club currently needs to fill the key positions of President, Vice President and Meeting Coordinator.

The more people who are ready to volunteer, the more people who volunteer can rest assured that their commitment to the committee needs to be only for a season. Hop in and help!! It's very rewarding.

If interested, please talk to the committee members for further information on any of the vacant positions.

Lachlan Kennedy

AGM Gluwein recipe

Glue-vine
(Serves 6)

1 bottle red wine
100 gms caster sugar
2 sticks cinnamon
6-8 cloves
1/2 tsp nutmeg
Lemons or oranges slices
as it breaks down any bitterness

Don't boil otherwise it will go cloudy.

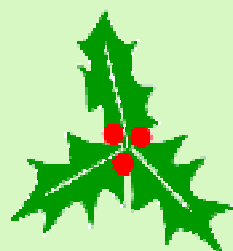
Cancellation of the last meeting of the year

Regretably the Committee has decided to cancel the last social meeting of the year (Wednesday 9 October) because we have recently been notified that the hall kitchen and bathrooms at the Turner Scout Hall are being renovated. Social meetings will recommence in May 2014.

XMAS Party

Wednesday 4 December

The CCCSC XMAS Party will be held on Wednesday 4 December at Lennox Gardens (on the lake shore behind the Hyatt Hotel) from 5:30pm. A club banner will be erected near one of the BBQs. This is a BYO food and drink event, but the club will provide some wine, orange juice and nibbles. So come along and say hello and goodbye to your ski mates till next year.



Trip Report — Grey Mare Range — 12 to 18 August 2013

Party: Stephen Davies (CCCCSC), Damien Aggio, John Croker, Paul Marsh (All NSWNSC)

Monday 12/8/13

We met in the morning at my place to share the ride in John's Outback. After introductions and waiver signing we attached my luggage pod, loaded up and got away for the long drive to Guthega Power Station. Backpacks on we left the carpark around 4:30pm aiming to overnight in Disappointment Spur hut. We were pleased and pleasantly surprised to have our skis on about 200m past the bridge. The snow was pretty dry and there was a gusty breeze blowing.

We crossed paths and had a quick chat with Paul Jennings and Paul Trotter who were coming out from their trip before moving on. An empty hut was reached shortly after sunset.

Tuesday 13/8/13

John proved by far the most organised and efficient getting ready (throughout the trip) in the morning which helped push the rest of us along a bit to get us underway by 9am. The snow was great, fresh and dry, with only the occasional firmer wind scoured sections. Once on the main road we passed a party of five on their way out, they reported crotch deep river crossings on their return from Grey Mare, this comment was to have serious implications for our own planned trip.

We lunched at Schlink hut where John instigated a small work-party clearing ice and spindrift from the steps, entrance and toilet. Further along Damien and I were to be tempted by a great looking run down towards Dicky Cooper Creek which was covered with some quality snow. After a couple of runs we headed off to catch up to John and Paul who had gone ahead. We then sidled around to the saddle at the head of Duck Creek by de-



Valentines Hut.

Photo: John Croker

parting the road about 200m past the quarry (next time I might try an earlier exit from the road to avoid a couple of awkward creek crossings). After the saddle we kept right down in Duck Creek before sidling around to Valentine hut, a far better option than trying to follow the route of the track which goes across the grain of a number of side creeks, meaning lots of avoidable ups and downs.

There was a lot more water flowing through Valentine Creek and other waterways than I'd seen when last here at Easter. An afternoon of searching both up and down stream revealed no dry crossing options and water running fast and deep. With three crossings between us and Grey Mare I was not at all keen to proceed, especially knowing the level could be up for our return trip with forecast showers later in the week. Plenty of lively debate ensured that evening.

Wednesday 14/8/13

The debate continued into the next morning. Ditching the trip objective and denting the hopes and wishes of some, the decision was made to keep dry feet and go for a day trip to Mawsons hut (its a tough role being trip leader at times like these).

We took the route along and up the un-named creek which runs SW, later detouring towards The Big Bend

before following Valentine Creek back towards the hut looking for any dry foot crossing, no snow bridges or safe rock hopping options were found.

The hut was empty after a party of four had left earlier in morning after a four day stay. We returned by heading straight up the creek from the hut, just getting onto the end of The Kerries before taking a right hand turn at the first saddle from which we descended into the north-westerly flowing creek and followed it back. The snow was pretty heavy and slow and did not have much depth to it. Lots of bushes and grass poking out.

Thursday 15/8/13

Overnight we had two claps of thunder nearby, accompanied by about 10cm of fresh snow. Today's target was a daytrip along The Kerries as far as Gungartan Pass in what was forecast to be the best weather of the trip. We were away by 9:30am, skiing up and along the ridge in some great fresh snow. The day, however, defied the forecast, being cloudy and quite breezy. Damien had us stop for 11sies in the cool breeze. John and I making the most of the photo opportunity presented by the great ice formations on the surrounding trees.

*" no snow bridges
or safe rock hoping
options were found "*

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Steve & Damien.

Photo: John Croker



On the way up the Kerries.

Photo: John Croker

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Proceeding across the top of The Kerries the weather became less hospitable - decreasing visibility and strengthening wind. Another objective was abandoned and we dropped off The Kerries to Schlink hut for lunch. It was here we met and spoke with a guy with a great job - paid to ski five days a week! As part of the National Parks baiting program he has to lay his baits (marked by pink fluorescent tape) every Thursday along the Aqueduct and road to Schlink and elsewhere the other four days.

From the hut Damien and I looked longingly towards the runs off Dicky Cooper Bogong and decided they needed some tracks on them. Yet another plan unravelled rather quickly as Dicky Cooper Creek wouldn't let us cross (without wet feet) so reluctantly we started heading back. This time, to get out of the wind, we dropped back into the same creek we'd followed the day before, arriving back at the hut about 4:30pm. As the snow had been going off all day, it was very slow and heavy by the time we got lower down the creek.

The night was clear for a change, with plenty of stars and a sliver of moon visible.

Friday 16/8/13

The morning began calm, clear and one-layer warm as we left fully laden towards Mawsons at 9:30am. Once there we met two separate solo travellers and had a quick lunch before heading

off up the Valentine to Tin hut. We arrived about 1:30pm and settled down for a second round of lunch.

Damien and I headed up to Gungartan for an afternoon tour. An hour or so to the top with the wind in our face strengthening as we got higher, it was very strong across the top. We ended up falling one summit short of the trig station but decided it could wait for another day. Phone reception on our peak was good. The reports from home informed us that there were severe weather warnings out for most of the time we were out, which may have helped explain why we had seen so few other people! We had a good quick 15 minute return ski to the hut on firm but slow snow.

We had some local company arrive early in the evening, just after getting into bed. As we had read of someone recently being bitten on the nose by this resident marsupial John did not hesitate

changing his bedding arrangements when the little fellow came out and eyed him off at short range, probably checking out his fleshy bites. The old bed frame was quickly off the rofters and set up for the opportunity to sleep alone.

It was very windy overnight and the sound of rodents gnawing away had me quiet concerned for some time, what were they destroying. A few torch flashes here and there revealed nothing. It was only later that I worked out the gnawing was actually a snowgum brushing against the corrugated iron wall of the hut.

Saturday 17/8/13

We had a very windy night with plenty of spindrift sneaking into the outer room and toilet. It was great to see National Parks had pro-

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"... the little fellow came out and eyed him off at short range"



Morning tea at Mawson's Hut. Photo: John Croker

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vided toilet paper but also a bit disappointing to see it sitting on the floor of the toilet covered in snow.

The skies had cleared by about 9am. We headed off aiming for Mount Porcupine around an hour later getting a nice cruise on good snow on the way. Fantastic views can be had from the end of this ridge especially out towards the east and south. Our enjoyment was abruptly interrupted when a bank of fast moving, very threatening clouds obviously dropping stuff appeared from over The Kerries racing in our direction. We were very soon being blasted by icy cold sleet along with much reduced visibility. This had us fleeing straight into it for the shelter of the hut. It also turned out to be a bit of a fizzer, only really hitting hard for about 5 minutes.

After lunch John and Paul decided on a quiet afternoon close to the hut whilst Damien and I went looking for some big runs nearby off the Brassy Mountains. It proved very heavy going even down the steeper bits and very tiring heading back up. My underlying fitness was certainly found wanting, struggling so much to get back to the top I didn't even contemplate another run. My younger fitter skiing buddy however managed more.

Sunday 18/8/13

The wind was blowing hard by morning, so no-one was interested in our planned exploratory Brassy Mountains day trip. There we were back to debating what to do next – should we have a hut day and hope for better weather tomorrow or just head out straight away? Again it proved difficult to gain consensus, our party of four regularly ending up two each way. The call was made to try for a forecast check first, so out we went looking for phone reception and an answer. The forecast was for 80km/h throughout the day peaking at 100+ km/h later and 80 km/h throughout tomorrow. We decided to go



immediately to try to beat the worst, heading out about two hours after the debate began.

Following the tree-line along Disappointment Ridge was damp, cold, very windy and challenging. Visibility became very poor at times so the GPS was out frequently to verify our position, this ensured some very chilled fingers as mittens were removed to click the small buttons. Dodging rocks and grassy sections, negotiating steep and cornice sided creeks in these conditions proved challenging with a couple of falls resulting. The party remained strong through these challenges as we moved forward slowly until crossing over through an open saddle midway between Whites River and Disappointment hut.

The wind was much reduced as we lost some height and entered the trees on the windward side, just as Damien and I had found last

year. The ski down to the Aqueduct provided a new set of challenges, as there are plenty of rocks as well as standing and fallen trees to negotiate on a reasonably steep descent with variable consistency snow, all while carrying a heavy pack on tiring legs. There were a few falls along the way.

Eventually we arrived back at the car about 4pm. After a quickly served, very satisfying meal an upstairs Thai restaurant in Cooma we headed home (I highly recommend their chicken banana curry).

Later at home, on checking Thredbo AWS records I discovered the winds had peaked at just over 100km/h whilst we were doing our traverse along the ridge! At least they didn't get to the 130km/h Damien and I had experienced last year.

Stephen Davies

Jagungal from Valentines Creek.
Photo: John Croker

“ The wind was blowing hard by morning”



Steve skiing down a slope. Photo: John Croker



Trip Report — Grey Mare Range & Jagungal Area — 30 Aug to 5 Sept 2013

Saturday 30/8/13

I had no takers for this extended joint club trip so there I was alone, packed and ready to depart Guthega Power Station at 2pm. My first struggle was holding my pack under the luggage scales - no wonder as it registered 27kg (excluding camera and skis). Perhaps a little on the heavy side - obviously there are some advantages to travelling with others. I departed in a gentle breeze with mostly sunny skies.



Grass-skiing the Brassy Mountains. Photo: Stephen Davies

Skiing started about half way to Disappointment Spur hut. I had a few things in mind for this trip, mostly exploring areas I hadn't been to in decades. With this in mind I left the road at the creek before the hut to head up and over the ridge, aiming to follow it to Tin hut. With the air temperature at 12 degrees the cover up the creek was very soft in places and great care was required not to fall through. There were also plenty of exposed rocks and trees to negotiate. Around 500m in it levelled off a little and opened up to become much easier travelling, at least until the snow crusted over higher up in the shadows. This provided some hazardous skiing conditions, especially lumbering along under the heavy load. Progress was slow and very cautious. The tent was finally pitched after the first stars had appeared. It might have been a lot easier if I had stuck to following my carefully plotted waypoints instead of going directly over the top of the ridge (Note to self, next time around not over). A beautifully clear, dead calm evening was topped off with a very tasty lamb and eggplant curry.

Sunday 1/9/13

A very sound, long sleep resulted in not getting away until 11am. It was a beautiful clear day with light breeze. 10 minutes out from camp my left ski came off - the cable nowhere to be seen! I returned almost to camp before locating it.

Trying to find and mark the perfect line around this eastern side of Disappointment Ridge in clear visibility proved no easier than the previous two trips in blizzard conditions. The combination of extended grassy patches and concealed terrain hidden by angle of view limiting good decision making.

Next a quick stop for lunch at Tin hut before heading off along the Brassy Mountains aiming toward McAlister Saddle. Numerous departures from my carefully planned route combined with periods of grass skiing put paid to that idea as progress became too slow. Despite this no walking was required. I eventually stopped and camped very high up on Mailbox Hill at 5pm. There were great views out to the east and good phone recep-

tion for reporting home. Ahead I could see a lot more grass to contend with before McAlister Saddle.

Monday 2/9/13

Although I was up by 7am I still didn't get away until 10am. Must make the effort to guy more tent cords next camp, as the gentle overnight breeze caused a fair bit of flapping fabric noise overnight. McAlister Saddle proved to be another two hours away, with snow cover progressively thinning along the way - increasing the amount of grass skiing and magnifying route finding problems. At least the weather was fantastic.

After lunch I left my pack on the saddle and headed off

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"It was a sensational night, dead calm and crystal clear"



Following the only snow along Doubtful Creek.

Photo: Stephen Davies

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towards Cesjacks hut. The plan was to follow Munyang Range to the hut but this was quickly modified to take into account the fact there was almost no snow anywhere along the ridge. There was, however, enough low along the western side of Doubtful Creek (the only place there was along the whole valley) so around and along I went. With just 700m to go the snow ran out and a full and fast flowing Doubtful Creek stood between me and Cesjacks. The prospect of having to cross had me quickly decide to keep my feet dry (probably no surprise to some) and return the same way to McAlister Saddle.

Back to the pack around 4pm I set up camp on the snow next to a large grassy patch. It was a sensational night, dead calm and crystal clear. There was a perfectly formed, smooth backrest shaped rock near the tent where I spent hours reclining in comfort and marveling at the sky, between taking yet more time lapse pictures and writing up my trip report.

Tuesday 3/9/13

Boring – I awoke to yet another calm and sunny day. A leisurely 9:30am departure had me traversing the Toolong Range towards Jagungal as a day trip. At least 60% of the neighbourhood was grass but I still managed to summit with only 200m or so off snow. Evident from anywhere high enough to get good views was the far better cover across the Grey Mare Range and areas further south.

Having not seen anyone else since Saturday I did a detour to have a chat with another lone skier I spied below in the headwaters of the Geehi River. Rob and his two mates were camped near the top of the Tooma River for the week. They were off recovering their stash of red wine located near Cesjacks.

I continued to the summit of Jagungal and reported back to home. When finishing my



Campsite on McAlister Saddle. Photo: Stephen Davies

phone call I noticed Rob heading my way, he'd decided to come up and join me. We had lunch together and spent the next couple of hours getting plenty of great turns in on the summit run. We caught it at its best, totally awesome spring skiing. That was the best bit of skiing on the whole trip, I really had a go and got really aggressive with telemarks. It makes such a huge difference knowing there is someone around in case of an accident.

Now past 3pm I meandered back whence I came, stopping to report in yet again on the Toolong Range. Today the air was a little hazy from some burning off over the last couple of days, with a light breeze springing up later in the day.

Some drama tonight - having spent plenty of time getting

to know my new phone I was down to about 20% charge, no problem I thought, that's why I had a solar charging system with me. After an hour I checked recharging progress to be stunned to see the charge had dropped down to 4%! I then tried charging AA batteries and my Steripen, these also refused to recharge.

Undeterred by this technical glitch I set up the camera on the tripod again and took a long star-trail sequence above Cup and Saucer Hill and Tarn Bluff. With the battery nearly flat a couple of hours later I was feeling old and tired so it was early to bed.

Wednesday 4/9/13

I was up in time to see the sun rise over the ridge, with yet another clear day with

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Stars above Cup and Saucer Hill and Tarn Bluff.

Photo: Stephen Davies





Alone in Tin Hut.
Photo: Stephen Davies

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light breeze. Strangely enough the PowerMonkey managed to fully recharge the camera battery overnight. Re-checking the USB devices, still no hint of those devices getting charged again.

I procrastinated for ages on how to proceed. Would Sue (my wife) get worried and send out the search party if I failed to report in again today, indeed would I be able to report in at all with 4% charge left? Should I head over towards the Grey Mare Range via Strawberry Hill as originally planned? The ever increasing (before your eyes) expanses of grass, ample melt-waters in the Geehi River, general shortage of snow bridges and phone problem con-

vinced me I should head back towards the Kerries where things looked a bit better and were not so far from the car.

Away by 10:30am I sidled around the ridge, following some broken drifts, aiming for the saddle just after the Mailbox. This proved a good choice, as despite one wet-feet creek crossing, several snow collapses into pools of water and what sounded like a pack of wild dogs mixed in with the wind, I managed to reach the saddle 90% on snow without losing any height. Here I had a very quick lunch break sitting in a strong cool breeze before following drifts along the lee side of hills aiming towards Brassy Peak. A photo detour from here out onto a point ensured, be-

fore again picking my way onward, this time lower down paralleling the Valentine. Numerous cautious creek crossings hoping the snow would hold and more grass skiing saw me arrive at an empty Tin hut at 3:30pm. Only one party of two had recorded their daytrip visit in the book since I last passed through. It was a quiet night in comfort and out of the wind, even better, the local resident marsupial failed to visit.

Another long star-trail sequence, this time with the tripod weighed down by a rock to help stabilize it against the wind. Disappointment Spur with Tin hut placed in the foreground was used to place the sky in context.

Thursday 5/9/13

I had spent a lot of time yesterday pondering just how much I might be able to get out of 4% phone charge. Prioritizing was in order, first I'd get a short, carefully worded SMS out to Sue outlining my plans, then check the weather and make one last phone call and I would do this from a spot I knew had good reception. So once set up 200m east of the hut I got the SMS away and two pages of weather before battery flatness set in.

Light showers and windy conditions were in the forecast. The prospect of wet grass skiing or telemarking the Kerries alone in heavy wet snow after days on end of carrying a hefty pack were not terribly inviting. Also, with batteries in my headlamp and Steripen running low and a dead phone I opted to head home early. Being spoilt with the previous brilliant weather may have also contributed.

The climb to Gungartan was mostly on snow but across to the next saddle there was barely any. Here the skis were very useful to walk across the bushes and small creeks but it was very slow going. Once to the saddle a short detour was taken to climb a prominent small rock

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Venus and Stars about Tin Hut and Disappointment Ridge.

Photo: Stephen Davies



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outcrop at the top of the creek on the other side. From here the panoramic views across the Rolling Ground to the Main range and around to the Grey Mare Range were stunning. Photos taken, it was a very slow pole assisted decent to the road before more of the same down to the Aquaduct track. This section was very tiring with frequent stops to take off or put on skis but there was more

snow along here than I anticipated.

It was great to get back to the car in time to drive home but very disappointing to be cutting my trip short, after all I was carrying out at least three days of food but had lots of great memories and hopefully photos as well. It was also great to see the police radar set up at the bottom of the chain fitting lane at Wilsons Valley (just before the 80 sign) as I pas-

sionately hate people who speed. Nice and friendly too, he waved and flashed his lights at me as I went past, no worries as I had checked my speed to only be 98 as soon as I had seen him. Then the thought occurred, it is a 100 limit along that section isn't it? To make matters worse, for life of me I couldn't recall seeing a speed limit sign since Guthega Road. Guess I'll find out soon.

Stephen Davies



Trip Report — The Rolling Grounds — 8 Sept 2013

On Sunday 8 September Margaret Mahoney, Peter Cunningham, Adam Lilley and myself headed down to the mountains for a ski trip. My original tour had been planned for the Ramshead Range, but following reports from Margaret of good skiing at Guthega the week before, we decided to head to Guthega instead.

After a stop for coffee at Nuggets in Jindabyne, we drove to Guthega, arriving around 9am. The weather was fine and there was still a lot of snow around, even after the very warm temperatures of the preceding week. The Guthega carpark was almost deserted and we only saw a few other skiers, and a group of snowshoers heading to Mt Anton, which included Kathy Saw.

Much of the snow around Farm Creek, up to The Paralyser and towards Illawong had disappeared during the week, and the dam was ice free with water flowing over the dam wall. But we were able to ski down the road from the carpark almost to the dam wall.

We walked across the dam wall and up to the start of the snow on the long ridge that heads up towards Guthega Trig. It was a warm day but an overnight freeze meant that the snow was surprisingly firm. The long slog up the ridge began, and I soon found myself lagging behind the others. I

took a slightly different route along the top of the ridge whilst the others skied across the slopes below me. We eventually regrouped at the top of the ridge near the trig point and had morning tea in the sunshine.

After the break, we continued on towards the top of the ridge leading towards the Rolling Grounds and Consett Stephen Pass. We were able to ski for a while but the

snow quickly ran out and we had to walk a few hundred metres to the next large snow drift. Generally there was little snow on the ridge tops and western and northern slopes, and it was more like an early October snow cover rather than early September.

Heading towards Consett Stephen Pass we had another very long walk across

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An ice-free Guthega Dam.
Photo: Alan Levy



Margaret Mahoney, Adam Lilley & Alan Levy near Guthega Trig.
Photo: Peter Cunningham



Peter Cunningham, Margaret Mahoney, Alan Levy & Adam Lilley above Consett Stephens Pass, with Mt Tate & Watsons Crag beyond. Photo: Alan Levy



Margaret taking the lower route, with Adam and Peter above. Photo: Alan Levy



Adam Lilley skiing near Guthega Trig. Photo: Alan Levy

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grass and had to make a decision whether to go to Tate West Ridge, which was my proposed destination, or towards the Rolling Grounds, which looked to have a much better snow cover. We chose the latter, and had a good ski on the south and east facing slopes that lead to the southern end of the Rolling Grounds.

After about 30 minutes of skiing we decided to climb up to the top of a ridge to see the views towards the west. We were close to Windy Creek and Consett Stephens Pass, and could see Mt Tate and Watsons Crag to the south, and Mt Bogong in the far distance. After a group photo we decided to have lunch amongst the nearby rocks.

After eating lunch we all laid down and had a nap in the sunshine, but then the wind picked up and it became colder, so we packed up and began the return trip back to Guthega. We initially had some good skiing on some of the large slopes and past large cornices.

Then we had a long walk up a grassy slope to the top of the ridge above Guthega Trig. We reached the snow and decided to take a different route back down the mountain on the south facing slopes rather than on the crest. I decided to ski down the Falls Creek gully but the other three stayed on the higher slopes above me and later skied down to meet me, but not after Margaret had had a fall and slid a long way down the steep slope. Luckily the softer snow in the afternoon sun prevented a longer slide.

We had a fairly good ski down the ridge back to Guthega dam. The snow was soft but not too gluggy. We had a final ski from the dam wall up the road to the carpark, and were back at the cars around 3:15pm. We had a short stop at the CAC lodge in Jindabyne, soon to be pulled down, and were back in Canberra around 6:30pm. Overall, a good days skiing on the rapidly diminishing snow at the end of a weird ski season.

Alan Levy

Trip Report - Thredbo to Perisher - An Ante-Kosciuszko Tour - 31 August 2013



On Saturday, 31 August 2013, Ken Moylan lead Marg Hayes and Arnold D'Bras on a ski tour from Thredbo to Perisher. Denizens of the Perisher Nordic shelter would know Marg as one of the caretakers and Arnold as one of the enthusiastic racers.

I was nominally the leader, but we were three experienced skiers and moderately familiar with the area, so route selection was somewhat consensual and maps remained unconsulted all day.

Route

Our original plan was to follow the tradition route of the Kosciuszko Tour - Thredbo to Perisher by way of the pole line and the Summit Road. By the time we had reached the Snowy River, the wide spaces and little gullies of Kangaroo Ridge were looking much more interesting than following the Summit Road, so there we went.

After morning tea, on the leeward side of the ridge, we continued our meandering way when Marg mentioned that we were getting near the old chairlift ruin, so we paid it a visit. Near the chairlift ruin are pole lines for Charlotte Pass. We followed one for a little way, but it didn't go the way we wanted, so we left it behind.

We found a lovely gully leading down to Johnnies Plain. It has no map name, but lies between Wright's Creek and Trapyard Creek. After Johnnies Plain, we more or less followed the back trail between Charlotte Pass and Perisher.



Marg Hayes on a hillside, soon to drop down the Bett's Creek plain. Behind her can be seen The Paralyser, Mt Perisher and Mt Wheatley.

Photo: Ken Moylan

Some time later, we reached the Betts Creek link trail. We were getting tired by now and the link trail promised and easy ski back along the Summit Road. But I had on my newest skis and wanted no road gravel anywhere near them, and Arnold had on his barely used 20 year old skis and they were too good to get scratched up, so we took the trail to Wheatley Gap and Rock Creek.

Most of the Rock Creek trail was still in the sun and not iced up, so the run down wasn't too terrifying and I fell only the once.

Best Bits

- We left Thredbo about 9:50 and arrived in Perisher shortly before 17:00. We took so long to ski the roughly 15km because it was one of those still, cloudless, beautiful days and we kept stopping to chat or take in the view or carve a few nice turns. We took so long that Bruce Wharrie was getting ready to call out someone to look for us.
- The gully we skied down to Johnnies Plain was delightful. It was mostly open and tree lined, but halfway down we came to a wall of trees. We thought there was no way through, but after picking our way through a gap found wide open glades to carve our way down.



Worst Bits

- Parts of the upper Snowy River were open water - in late August!
- Snow shoe tracks were thick along the Rock Creek trail — they made for pretty rough skiing.

Notable Bits

- Watching ski parasailors above Thredbo, in the upper Snowy Valley.
- We must have been out of mobile phone range for most of the day. Marg's phone beeped from several stored messages when we got to within a couple of hundred metres of Perisher's water supply storage pond. It had been otherwise silent all day.

Wax of the Day

Universal klister did the trick. I applied a layer at the start of the day and that was enough for the whole day.

It was a bit sticky in the morning, before the day had warmed up, but as we were climbing out of Thredbo that was fine, and was perfect the rest of the day. It stayed on until we had almost reached the bottom of Rock Creek, where the icing up of the snow had scraped off too much to leave enough grip.

For most of the day the snow was excellent — a thin layer of soft mush covering a hard base. We glided effortlessly and turned however we wanted. It was champagne ski touring.

Ken Moylan

Arnold D'Bras enjoying a good run.

Photo: Ken Moylan

"It was champagne ski touring"

Trip Report - Round Mountain to Grey Mare Range – (23) 24 to 27 August 2013

Bruce Barnett, David Poland, Ian Turland and I drove from Canberra on a rainy Friday night to the Tom Groggin camping area where we slept in the day shelter. The next morning, was sunny and clear. We drove up to the Olsen's Road turnoff to meet Corryong Bob – our taxi service to Round Mountain – at 8am.

We had an unpleasant shock when we discovered the locked gate at the head of Olsen's Road. Last year, we were able to drive right up to the head of Pinnacle Road. The locked gate added an extra 6km walk to our trip.

And then Bob turned up. After a bit of a discussion, we stuck with the original plan. Bob ferried us up to Round Mountain in his 4WD taxi, with his passengers nervously sitting in his vehicle as he gamely zig zagged through the deep snow. We stopped three kilometers short of the Round Mountain trail head.

After the complementary hot chocolate, coffee and sandwiches, we left Bob sitting in the back of his taxi, and set off up the road. We soon met his other passengers coming back from their trip. They were out for five days, and spent the entire time in the Round Mountain hut, stuck by the snow storms over that time.

As it was warming up, we



Group shot with Corryong Bob. Photo: Bruce Barnett



Upper Tooma River Valley. Photo: Bruce Barnett

were soon stripping off. We followed the Round Mountain trail, more or less, towards Dershkos Hut. Just before the Hut, Bruce, Ian and I took a slight detour to look down Pugilistic Creek. At the Hut, we settled in, and got the wood stove going. There were only two other parties at the hut before us this season. The hut warmed up quickly, assisted by the efficiency of the stove and the double glazed windows. It has to be one of the warmest huts of the Kosciuszko National Park.

The next day we headed off in the rising mist on the west side of the Tooma River heading south to a spur that would take us up to Ryrie's Parlour and then to Grey-mare Range. On top of

Ryrie's Parlour the cloud shrouding Mt Jagungal lifted for the big Reveal, just in time for lunch.

From Ryrie's Parlour we headed to a saddle where we dropped our packs to investigate the route into Pretty Plain Hut that David took last year. This route involved some pleasant snow leads but also unpleasant dense regrowth forest. We ended up shy of Jimmies Lookout.

Back at the packs, we decided to camp near Rocky Bogong rather than proceed to Grey-mare Hut. After setting up tents, we spread out to explore the surrounding little rocky knolls turning pink in the sunset.

(Continued on page 13)

*"We began our
traverse of the
Grey Mare Range"*

David, Monika and Ian near Round Mountain, with Mt Jagungal in the background.
Photo: Bruce Barnett



(Continued from page 12)

The weather on day three was cloudy with sun breaking through. We began our traverse of the Grey Mare Range, exploring the rocky knolls, cairns and trig points along the way. At several points along the Range we explored some spurs and, finally, we climbed Mt Grey Mare for a magnificent view east to the Main Range. Our camp, on the south side of Mt G, was a very pleasant little spot, with water and firewood on tap.

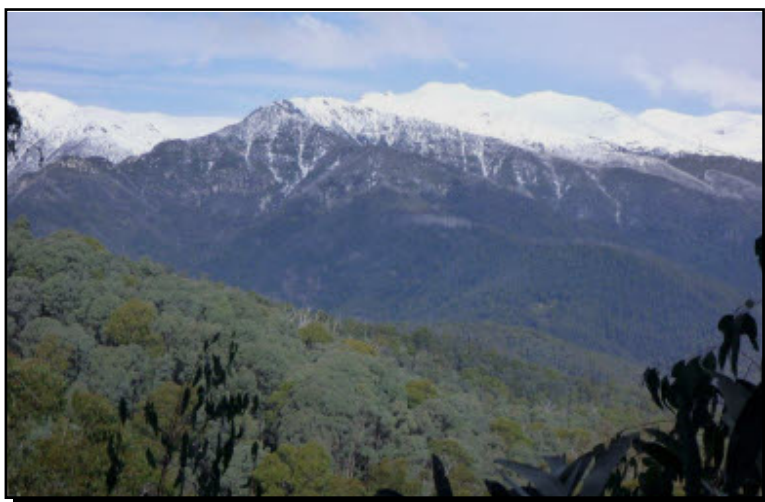
The next morning was perfect sunshine. After climbing the Granite Peaks for a view, we began our slow downhill descent towards Mt Pinnacle. This part of the trip was interspersed with interesting man made structures, including a communications tower. We had morning tea at the site of the Grey Hill Café, destroyed in the 2003 fires, which I remembered standing from a bushwalk in the 1980s.

We finally reached the point of the Pinnacle Fire Trail where it begins its 1000m descent to Olsen's Road. The snow ran out at 1450m and, thus, began our long walk back to the car. All up a magnificent trip in great company.

Monika Binder



Camp below Mt Grey Mare, David and Ian. Photo: Bruce Barnett



View of the Main Range from the Grey Mare Range. Photo: Bruce Barnett

Lodge Weekend — 11 & 12 October

An End of Season Lodge weekend is being planned for the Friday and Saturday nights, 11 & 12 October. Where: either on snow at Perisher/Charlotte Pass or at Rascals Jindabyne.

There is snow and to make sure it is still there and we get a good ski we are bringing the weekend forward by one week for the 11 & 12 October. The accommodation is yet to be confirmed and if suitable on snow accommodation can't be found then we will be staying at Rascals in Jindabyne.

In previous years the on-snow accommodation was \$40 per night per person per night. Rascals will be between \$28 to \$35 per night per person depending on the room and if you are sharing or on your own.

It is a shared meal for the Saturday night and great fun as always. Let me know if you are bringing starters, mains or desert.

Please contact Gale at ccscinfo@gmail.com to book onto the lodge weekend. I will need to know by Tuesday 8 October if you want to join. It would be better to know before this to confirm numbers for the accommodation.

Gale Funston

Trip Report — Etheridge Peak & Twin Valleys — 21 Sept 2013

On Saturday, 21 September 2013, Alan Levy lead Adam Lilley and Ken Moylan on a ski tour out of Thredbo to Etheridge Peak and Twin Valleys.

Route

From the top of Thredbo, we skirted North Ramshead, above the Snowy River, to Etheridge Gap.

After stopping at the lookout for morning tea we climbed Etheridge Ridge to the very top, and took in the view. After an uncomfortably icy descent to Rawson's Pass, we regrouped and debated where to go next.

Would we summit Mt K? Or will we head for Seaman's Hut?

After considering the state of the ice up high, we chose to take the road down to Seaman's Hut.

Whoo hoo!



Alan Levy and Adam Lilley running down the Summit Road from Rawson's Pass to Seaman's Hut. Photo: Ken Moylan

After lunching near the rocks above the hut, we strode over to the Twin Valleys and took in more views. Finally, we went as fast as we could back to Thredbo to catch that last chairlift down.

It was a satisfying day.

Best Bits

- The view from the top of

Etheridge Peak was excellent. We could see the entire Main Range, from Ramsheads to Tate, all in one long view.

- Skiing along the road down from Rawson's Pass to Seaman's Hut. It was fast and smooth.
- Sharing the appreciation of grip waxing skis with someone who was learning the techniques.

"We could see the entire Main Range"



Adam Lilley on Etheridge Ridge.
Photo: Alan Levy

Worst Bits

- Skiing down from Etheridge Peak. The peak has steep sides and was covered in a mixture of slippery ice and sticky fresh, which made skiing down very uncertain and unnerving. I feared my skis would suddenly run or suddenly stick and I'd fall and slide over the cliff and rocks below me. Ouch!
- Skiing back to Thredbo. The skiing itself wasn't bad, it was that I wasn't certain of catching the last chairlift down.

Wax of the Day

Fresh moist snow prompted me to apply a thick layer of red stick.

This was a bit too sticky to start with, but by the afternoon the snow had warmed and changed enough to require a thin layer of universal klister.

Ken Moylan



Adam Lilley and Ken Moylan waxing their skis with the wax of the day!
Photo: Alan Levy

Trip Report — Mt Stilwell, Kangaroo Ridge and Clarke East Ridge - 29 Sept 2013

On Sunday, 29 September 2013, Adam Lilley, Gale, Greg Lawrence, Alan Levy, Ken Moylan, and Matt Carkeet went on a ski tour to places west of Charlotte Pass.

Route

It was a 3km walk and ski along the Summit Road from the locked gate at Spencer's Creek to Charlotte Pass.

From there, we skirted around the top of the deserted Charlotte Pass ski resort to reach Mt Stilwell for morning tea.

We sheltered in the lee of Kangaroo Ridge and followed the snow down Merritt's Creek, over the Summit Road at the pole line and to a pile of rocks, out of the wind, for lunch.

There was one snow bridge across the North Arm of the Snowy River, which got us onto Clarke East Ridge.

200 vertical metres later, we rejoined the Snowy River to follow it for the final 70m drop to Foreman's Crossing.

The climb back up to Charlotte Pass and a cruisey ski back down to Spencer's Creek finished off the day.

Best Bits

- Skiing down Clarke East Ridge.

It went down an unexpectedly long drop.

I managed to practice my



Greg Lawrence, Matt Carkeet, Bruce Wharrie and Marg Hayes at the Charlotte Pass lookout.

Photo: Ken Moylan

smooth parallel turns for most of the way down, until I fell in sight of the party waiting near the bottom.

Thereafter it was workman-like telemark turns.

- Skiing along Kangaroo Ridge.

We were skiing along a long stretch of snow that butted against expanses of snow grass. It felt rather weird.

Worst Bits

- The wind. The wind.

It never stopped.

Wax of the Day

The snow is getting grubby, with dirt starting to come to the surface. It might soon be time to pull out the buzzy skis again, to get around the problem of too much dirt sticking to the wax.

The snow started as a mixture of moist, fresh snow and

icier old snow. I started with a thin layer of universal klister, to see how it would go. Around lunchtime, the klister was losing grip.

I considered putting on a thin layer of red or yellow klister, but instead chose to put on another layer of universal klister.

I was expecting that the day wouldn't get any warmer, so chose against the warmer klister.

The other waxing skier on the tour used a wider range of grip waxes. He started with yellow stick, then moved to purple klister. Later in the day, as the snow changed, he moved to red extra wet klister, which proved satisfactory for the rest of the day.

Ken Moylan

Adam Lilley skiing down a part of Kangaroo Ridge.

Photo: Ken Moylan



The upper Snowy River below Mt Clarke. Photo: Alan Levy

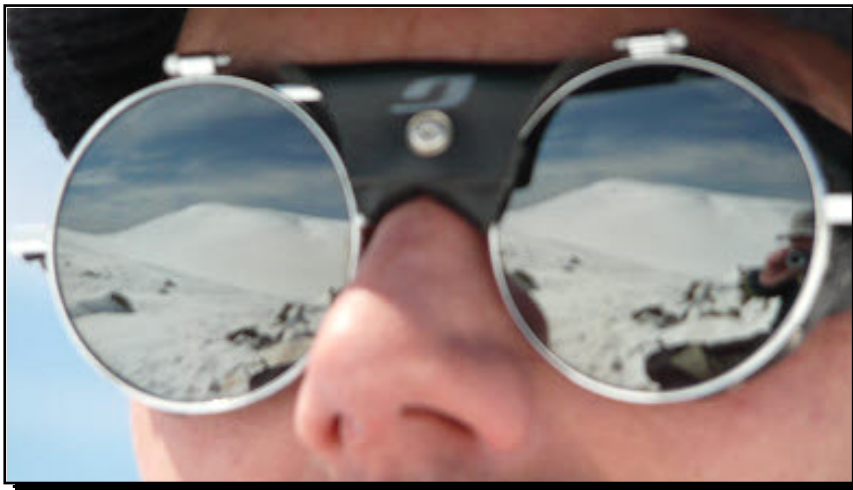
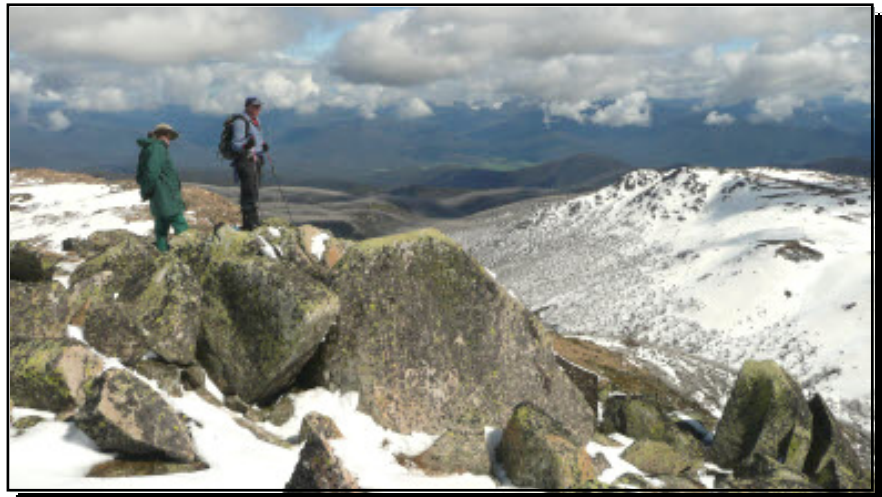




More Photos from the 2013 Ski Season



Kim Hello and Ian Turland
overlooking Leatherbarrel
Creek, from the top of
Ramshead Peak, 15 Sept 13.
Photo: Alan Levy

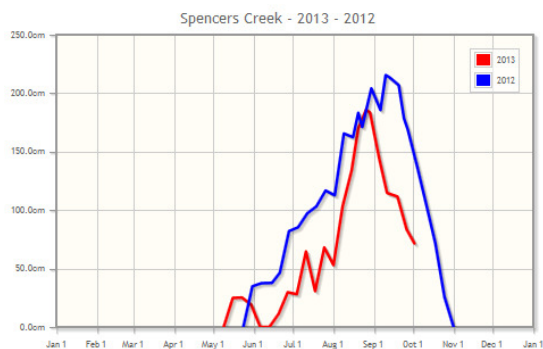


Reflections of Mt Kosciuszko.
Photo: Alan Levy

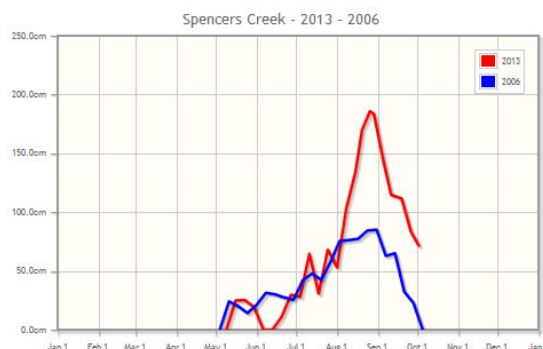
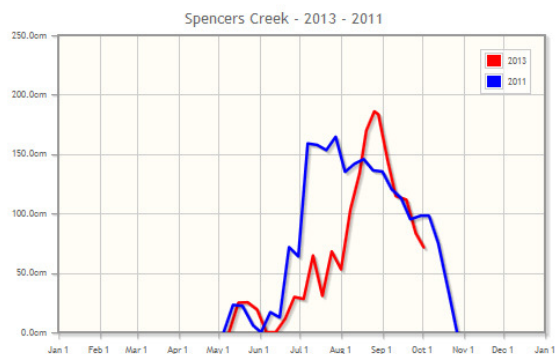
Adam Lilley, Matt Carkeet, Ken
Moylan and Gale Funston on
the upper Snowy River below
Mt Clarke, 29 Sept 13.
Photo: Alan Levy



Latest Snow Depth Charts

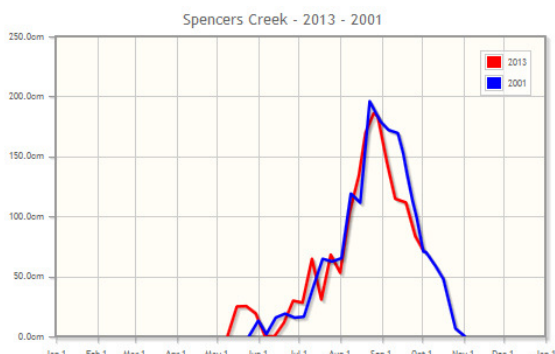


The snow depth is receding and is a few weeks ahead of the readings for the last two years.



2013 looks to be a close match for 2001, based on the chart at the right.

2013 has been better than 2006, which was the most recent really bad snow year.



For Sale 2014 KHA Calendar

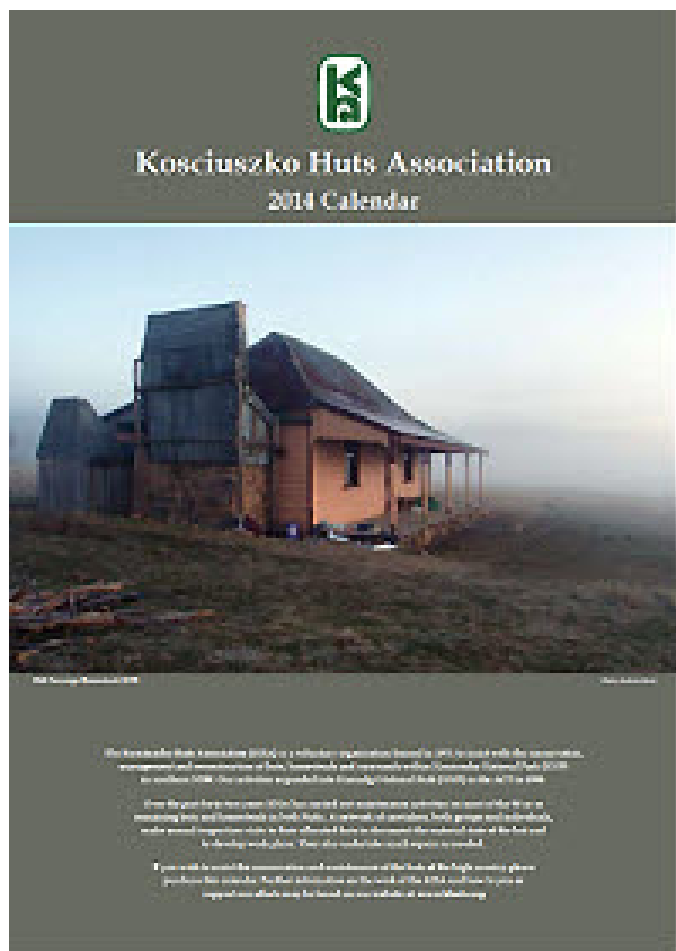
The Kosciuszko and Namadgi National Parks are meccas for photographers. Many stunning photos of the high country huts are captured by KHA members as they visit each of the Parks. See a number of these photos eloquently displayed throughout the calendar along with a brief description of the huts.

Calendars can be purchased in the following ways:

- Through the KHA website: www.khuts.org
- Contact KHA Secretary at admin@khuts.org
- Available at the NPWS Visitors Centres at: Tumut, Jindabyne, Khancoban and Namadgi Information Centre (no mail orders through Parks)
- At the Namadgi Information Day on 3/11/2013
- At the Geehi event on 23/11/2013

Cost:

Mail orders: KHA members - \$20
Non-members - \$20+ \$5 postage
RRP at outlets - \$20
Direct sales to members - \$20



TOUR PROGRAM (October 2013)

DATE	DESCRIPTION	LEADER
Saturday, 2 November	<p>A Visit to Mt Townsend</p> <p>Intermediate skills Rolling and hilly terrain Long distance</p> <p>Take the chairlift up Thredbo, walk / ski to Mt Townsend and, after a long day out, catch the chairlift back down. Great views guaranteed. Take in what inspired von Guerrard's 'View from the North East Summit of Mt Kosciuszko'. For a few years this has been my final trip for the season. It makes for a very satisfying end, with the emerging snowgrass mixing with the last snow drifts. This tour depends on there being enough snow and reasonable weather.</p> <p>Map: Thredbo Ski Touring 1:25:000</p>	

Please note that these tours are contingent on snow cover and other factors, including, where a leader is not already designated on the program, whether a suitable leader can be identified – the calendar is therefore subject to revision.

If you are interested in participating in a tour, please contact the tour leader where one is listed; where no tour leader is yet shown, you can indicate your wish to join the tour by emailing the tour coordinator on ccscstours@gmail.com. Please provide:

- your contact details (telephone numbers and address);
- transport situation (ie, whether you need a lift or can offer one – and, if the latter, how many passengers);
- and, if a leader is not already designated, whether you would be willing to assume a leadership role for the tour.

It is important that tour participants ensure that their abilities match the skill levels required by the tour – a description of the Terrain, Distance and Skill Level descriptors is provided under Tours/Tour Grading on the club's website.

Indications of a wish to join a tour should normally be made by 2.00pm on the Thursday before the tour, at the latest.

The Club's guidance on transport costs is contained on the Club's web site.



View from the top of Etheridge Peak, showing the summit of Mt Kosciuszko and the south ridge, 21 Sept 13. Photo: Alan Levy

Club Committee Contacts

President Vacant	cccscpresident@gmail.com
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Treasurer Margaret Mahoney	cccsc treasurer@gmail.com
Membership Secretary Gale Funston	cccscinfo@gmail.com
Tour Coordinator Steve Warild	cccsc tours@gmail.com
Instruction Coordinator Deb Purss	cccsc training@gmail.com
Kosciusko Tour Coordinator Jo-Anne Clancy	cccsc racing@gmail.com
Meeting Coordinator Vacant	cccsc meetings@gmail.com
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CANBERRA CROSS
COUNTRY SKI CLUB

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Fun and fitness in the snow



Club Snow Camping Gear for hire

The following gear which is owned by the Club is available for hire to Club members. These prices are cheap. The commercial hire charge for a 2-person tent is \$45 per week-end.

Tent (Macpac 3-4 person) - \$20/weekend ; - \$30/week

Trangia stove - \$3/weekend; - \$5/week

Snow shovel - \$4/weekend; - \$6/week



Club Safety Gear for use by Tour Leaders

The Club has two Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), two GPS units and some first aid kits which are available free of charge to members leading Club ski tours.

PLB (GMEMT410G)

Contact Alan & Steve

GPS (Garmin Etrex Vista HcX)

Contact Alan Levy & Ian

