

SHORTLAND ALPINE CLUB CO-OPERATIVE LTD

MULUBINBA LODGE

PERISHER VALLEY

KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

When we first began to use our lodge in summer in the 70's, many people would say "... after you walk to Mt Kosciuszko summit, there is little else to do in the Park ..."

Nothing could be further from the truth!

These notes are intended as a guide to the many varied activities which are possible when staying at Mulubinba in summer.

Many of the activities suggested will not be found in the information issued by the Snowy Region Visitor Centre in Jindabyne. However make sure you visit this Centre as they have a wealth of information and are very helpful. For a copy of the "Kosciuszko National Park Guide" ring 64505600 – they will post it and other brochures to you free. They also provide free a Summer Issue of Park Activities, walking trails and dedicated bicycle trails.

Most of the locations named are on the Hemma map of Kosciuszko National Park South. More detailed information is on the 1:250,000 maps of Mt Kosciuszko 8525, Jacobs River 8524, and further east, Berridale 8625. Each of these maps has 8 minor maps at 1:25,000. They can be purchased at the Snowy Region Visitor Centre in Jindabyne.

Activities are in 4 categories – Walks, Swimming, Drives and Cycling. These may be combined as there are many walks and drives

that will be enhanced by a swim in a refreshing pool, either during, or at the end.

When planning any activity, particularly on the Main Range, keep in mind that the weather can change dramatically and quickly. Always walk with water, food and a jacket in your back-pack. Hats are advised, even on cloudy days, and use plenty of sunscreen. Allow plenty of time for activities, particularly if children are involved, and start early to ensure you return well before dark. Check weather forecasts the day before any activity.

Degree of Difficulty Code For the Walks listed herein:

- 1 – Easy, little climbing
- 2 – Harder, some climbing but only short
- 3 – Very Hard, steep climbing
- 4 – Extreme, only for the Fit and Experienced

Acknowledgement – This booklet was originally compiled by Club Member John Connolly.

WARNING – BUSHWALKING IN THE ALPINE REGION CAN BE DANGEROUS.

Participants should exercise care at all times, be properly equipped and seek advice from experienced bushwalkers before embarking on any of the walks listed herein. Always let someone know the route you intend to follow and your estimated time of return, bearing in mind you should always notify the persons you have advised, of the your return. Shortland Alpine Club Co-operative Ltd encourages persons to participate in the activities described herein, however Shortland Alpine Club Co-operative Ltd, nor its' Directors and Members, cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or injury arising to any person participating in any of the listed activities.

WALKS FROM THE LODGE

Porcupine Rocks

1, approx 2.5 hrs, 6 km return

See NPWS brochure.

The track starts behind Rock Creek dam below Swagman Chalet.

Prussian Plain

1, approx 2.5 hrs, 5 km return

This is the flat area uphill behind the Lodge. It is scrubby in places and care should be taken with potholes in the gully areas, but the beauty of the snow gums and the solitude is worth the effort.

The Perishers

2 – 3, approx 2 – 4 hrs, 6 km return

This can be done in several ways.

The easy way is to get the Quad chairlift to the Back Perisher and then walk across the ridge top to Mt Perisher, which is only 170 m lower than Mt Kosciuszko. The views east and west are among the best in these mountains.

The harder way is to walk up the Back Perisher under the chairlift. There are summer service roads all the way up. Alternatively, drive to Perisher gap, 2 km along the Charlotte Pass road, and walk straight up under Eyre T-bar. This is a good way to see the sunrise from Mt Perisher. I did this with my 16 month old son when he was in his 'early waking' stage. Rabbits came right up to our feet while we sat on the 'off ramp' of the old Double chairlift. You have to be fit though – carrying a child on your shoulders up 180 m might test you.

Charlotte Pass

1, approx 6 hrs, 16 km return

A simple walk along the road, past crystal pools and streams. 8 km each way, and lunch at the historical and famous Chalet if you fancy.

Perisher Village and Smiggin Holes

1, approx 2+ hrs, 6 km return

The other lodges can be best seen on foot.

Blue Cow Lookout

2, approx 2 – 3 hrs, 6 km return

The summer service road to Blue Cow has now been designated as an official walk by NPWS. A nice but strenuous walk. Easy coming home!

WALKS FROM CHARLOTTE PASS

The Summit

1 – 2, approx 6 hrs, 16 km return

Always check the weather forecast. If there is wind it is always cold on the peaks. Cloud will block any views. Wear a hat in all weather! Up and back on the road from Charlotte Pass is the quickest way to the Summit from the Lodge. I have walked this with three 75 year olds, and the key lies in starting early (by at least 9 am) and taking your time. Take breaks and you can do it comfortably, even with young children. Good rest spots are Snowy River bridge (5 km), Seaman's Hut (6 km) and Rawson's Pass (7 km). The Summit has flat areas and rocks to sit on and picnic. If it is windy it can still be pleasant sitting behind the larger rocks. Note, it takes twice as long to walk up as it does to walk back, due to the 400 m elevation rise.

The Summit can also be reached by the Thredbo chairlift which gives you a shorter walk (8 km) but it is an hour plus drive each way. Also the long steel gridmesh walkway can be hard on your feet.

The Lakes Walk

3, approx 8 hrs, 22 km return

See NPWS brochure

Again, leave early and don't rush. This is one of the superb walks in Australia. 22 km sounds a lot but it can be shortened by leaving out the Summit and going straight north from Rawson's Pass. This will give you more time to appreciate Lake Albina and Blue Lake. In via Rawson's Pass seems the best way as this gets the more boring part of the walk out of the way early, but others will argue the reverse is better. Either way, the effort is well worth it. Take your swimmers, as a refreshing dip in the Snowy River is re-energizing before the final uphill (120 m) grind back to Charlotte Pass.

Blue Lake

2 – **1**, *approx 5 hrs, 9 km return*

This area has to be seen to be believed. A ‘cirque’ is a lake gouged out where, during the last Ice Age, three glaciers met before joining and going out as a single glacier. 400 m across and surrounded on three sides by cliffs, waterfalls and a hanging valley, it exudes a magical quality felt by children and adults alike. You cannot see Blue Lake from any lookout, so you must walk in. Again, take your time if there are very young or old. A picnic lunch is a must and you can cool your drinks in the snow drifts which last late into summer. Forget about swimming in the Lake – its’ 4°C icy waters will cramp up a swimmer in a minute. An interesting walk from here is downstream to Headley Tarn, a large kidney-shaped lake formed by a glacial moraine damming the valley. The way back is the same as the way in. Take your bathers for a refreshing dip in the Snowy River before the final climb back up the hill to Charlotte Pass. The water is cool, but not as bad as you may think, and on a hot day it is positively glorious. We gave our children their ‘King of the Mountain’ badges when they first did this walk at ages 3, 5, and 7.

Mt Twynam and Watson’s Crags

4, *approx 7 hrs, 14 km return*

This is an extension of the Blue Lake walk, but instead of dropping down into it, walk across level from the ridge leading to Blue Lake and walk up the stream which feeds the main waterfall above Blue Lake. This leads to a surprisingly flat marshy area (hanging valley) which has a rocky island sticking out of it. Beyond this, the climb becomes very steep up glistening streams and rock fields until the summit of Twynam is attained. Mt Twynam is only 32 m lower than Mt K and gives a magnificent 360° view of the main range. The Ramsgate above Thredbo is S of Mt K, craggy Mt Townsend is to the SW, majestic and solitary Mt Jagunal (the sleeping lion) is in the distant N, and below you to the E is Guthega Village and its ski slopes. An alternative route (if you are not going out to Watson’s Crags) is to head SE down to Little Twynam and thence S to the

bottom of Blue Lake. Care should be taken not to come in at the top of Blue Lake as this will bring you to sheer cliffs above the lake.

Watson’s Crags is to the WNW and it is an easy ridge-top walk across snowgrass to the top of the Crags. From here, steep cliffs drop down 1500 m to the Gheehi River, with Lady Northcote canyon and the Sentenial to the SW, and Siren Song Creek to the N. Return to Charlotte Pass is SE and then S to join the Lakes Walk track.

Kunama Ruins

1 – **2**, *approx 6 hrs, 8 km return*

Development of the ski resorts Thredbo and Perisher in the late 50’s/early 60’s was a spin-off of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme. Prior to that ski enthusiasts had many lodges scattered throughout the mountains. Time and the ravages of weather and fire have taken their toll on these bits of our brief history in the mountains, but only one has ever been destroyed by an avalanche – ‘Kunama’ – the aboriginal word for ‘snow’. Nestling in the glacial cirque below Mts Clarke, Northcote and Lee, and therefore very well hidden, the stone foundations and some metal building debris is all that is left of the lodge which was destroyed by an avalanche that hurtled off the NW slopes of Mt Clarke in July 1956, claiming the life of a young woman, Roslyn Twynam Welche. Her memorial plaque is on the foundations.

This site is easily reached by walking down from Charlotte Pass to the Snowy River, then due W past Foreman’s Hut ruin and along beside Club Lake Creek. About 1 km from the Snowy River crossing there is a line of tall black poles which can be followed to cut off a wide bend in Club Lake Creek below Mt Clarke. Just after the pole line, when the creek is rejoined, a beautiful waterfall and protected spot is reached, ideal for a picnic and swimming. The ‘falls’ are covered by a rock ‘ceiling’. Club Lake Creek goes on up to its lake below Mt Curruthers (to the N), but a larger creek veers SW. Keep going along this until the very steep slopes of Mts Northcote and Clarke are above you. The foundations of the hut are not evident until you are right on them. About 100 m to the W of the hut are the remains of a shed and engine of an old rope tow which gave these early ski enthusiasts lifting access to the unbroken steep slopes of Mt Northcote.

Return is the reverse. Or for the fit and adventurous, an interesting and strenuous circuit can be done by climbing the steep slope to the S, across the saddle between Mts Northcote and Clarke, and dropping down in to the gully that joins Rawsons Creek. Follow this E for 2 km to the Snowy River and rock hop back to your starting point. Or, from the saddle, you can follow the top of the ridge E across Mt Clarke and down past Foreman's Hut to the Snowy crossing.

Up the Snowy River

2, *for as far as you want to go, ?*

This is a delightful walk that can be as long or as short as you wish. After descending to the Snowy River crossing, head upstream, keeping to the river as the adjacent bush is very prickly and hole ridden in places. Rock hopping can be hard on your knees so take care. There are numerous unnamed waterfalls along here, and if you are quiet, you will see a lot of trout in the pools. You decide how far along the river you go, remembering the return will take the same time as going upstream. Downstream from the Snowy crossing can be explored in the same way.

Mt Stillwell and the Restaurant Ruins

3, *approx 4 hrs, 8 km return*

Mt Stillwell is the peak behind the Chalet village and oddly, is the same height as Mt Perisher, at 2054 m. It is easily reached by following the path up the ridge S from the Charlotte Pass turnaround, up past the top of the chairlifts and on to the Trig station. From this summit there are good views over all of the mountains. To the SE, the remains of a building high on a ridge of the Ramshead Range may be seen – you may need binoculars as these ruins merge into the surroundings more each year. The valley of Wrights Creek is between the Trig and the ruins, so veer SW and then E to the ruins to keep at the same elevation. If a direct line is taken, you will drop down into the headwaters of Wrights Creek, where there are a number of small pretty waterfalls, but you will then have to climb up again. This area is above the tree line, so walking is easy. Stick to the rocky surfaces to avoid damage to the plants.

The ruins are the remains of a chairlift that connected the Chalet with the Thredbo valley. Opened in 1964, a chairlift ran for 6 km in two halves from each end to this 'halfway' station where the engines and winding mechanism were housed. However a combination of semi-open chairs, 2000 m+ elevation and the bitter winds of the record snows of 1964 produced much derailing of the cables and frozen, stranded passengers high in the sky. Fortunately, no one died, but patronage dwindled and consequently the chairlift ceased operations after only two winters. It must rank as one of the great Australian engineering feats, but was sadly a huge white elephant and is a little known chapter in the history of these mountains. The top floor was a circular restaurant with 360° views and a central copper fireplace. It must have been unbelievably spectacular and its demise was sad indeed.

The way back can be the same as in, but to the NNW can be seen the remains of the cables and concrete pillboxes that were part of the infrastructure of the chairlift. Following these will take you down over Wrights Creek and back up the ridge directly above the village. The steep drop can be made from here down in to the village (very rough and scrubby) or you can skirt W back around the top of the chairlifts the way you came up. This is one of the best, but least known, day walks that can be done within easy access of a vehicle. Once the initial elevation to Mt Stillwell is gained, the walking is easy over beautiful snowgrass plains (no trees or pricklies) and pools, waterfalls and snowdrifts abound.

Thredbo Circuit

2, *approx 4 hrs, 9 km one way*

This is done with two groups in two vehicles. One group leaves their car at Charlotte Pass and walks to the summit. The other group does the same from Thredbo, via the chairlift up to Eagles Nest. Rendezvous and exchange of car keys and lift tickets can be at Rawsons Pass or even the Upper Snowy Plain (there is a pole line from the Snowy River bridge on the Kosciuszko road across to the track from Thredbo to Rawsons Pass).

Mt Townsend

4, *approx 8 hrs, 24 km return*

A long walk in a day, but this will amply reward the effort required as it takes you on to Australia's second highest peak, just 19 m lower than Mt K. However it is a far more dramatic peak as it is very craggy and drops away 1600 m in 5 km to the W, the Geehi River gorge to the NW, and the spectacular and beautiful Lady Northcote Canyon and Lake Albina to the E.

Access is quickest via the summit road to just past Seaman's Hut, where a turn NW down a ridge and across Rawson's Creek will bring you up on a saddle between Mt K and Mueller's Peak. From here a well defined track proceeds along the W slope of Mueller's Peak, climbing on and up to the spire of Mt Townsend.

From here, you can see forever.

Return can be via the way in, but since you are due E of Charlotte Pass (visible through Northcote Pass), a direct route may be attempted. Straight down to Lake Albina and back up to Northcote Pass is steep, dangerous, exhausting and exhilarating. This will bring you back to the Lakes walk track, and from there you can return on it, or continue E over Mt Clarke.

Guthega, via Twynam

3, *approx 7 hrs, 14 km one way*

This is an extension of the Mt Twynam walk, to Guthega. Turn ENE from the top of Mt Twynam down into Pounds Creek. There are a lot of boulder fields in this area and the creek is usually the easiest to follow. The Snowy River can be crossed at Illawong footbridge if you don't want to wet your feet, and it is 2 km from the bridge to Guthega village.

WALKS FROM GUTHEGA

Pounds Creek

2-3, *approx 6 hrs, 9 km return ?*

Start from the end of the road into the Guthega lodges (near bottom of Blue Calf T-bar) and walk along a rough track near the river. The river can be crossed where Pounds Creek enters it, or another 0.5 km upstream at Illawong footbridge. The terrain in this area is very rough and is easiest walked along the creek. How far you go up the creek is up to you. There are many small falls and delightful pools as the creek runs down from the peaks of Twynam, Anton, Tate and Anderson. About 2 km upstream from the Snowy junction the creek gets very steep and so does the climbing.

Mt Anderson

3, *approx 6 hrs, 12 km return*

An extension to the previous walk, this is up the steep headwaters of Pounds Creek, to the peak that overlooks this area. Strictly for the hardy.

Spencers Creek

1-2, *approx 3 hrs, 6 km one way*

An interesting walk following the Snowy River, then Spencers Creek, to Spencers Creek bridge on the Charlotte Pass road. Some scrubby areas but you can pick your way around these. Cars at each end help.

WALKS FROM GUTHEGA POWER STATION

The road which heads N from Guthega Power Station is a SMA road used in summer by maintenance vehicles up the Mungyang River valley, across the main range through Schlink Pass and down to Geehi Dam. This is the southern access to the vast snow plains of the Kerries and Jagungal wilderness, which stretch to Kiandra and Mt Selwyn in the north. These areas are magnificent for walking but are too far away for day trips, so the walks described in this section are to, or this side of, Schlink Pass.

