



Snobounds



*Newsletter of the Snowy River Ski Club Cooperative Ltd
Doorack Lodge at Guthega in the Kosciuszko National Park*

December 2022



The new bridge over Spencers Creek in the Guthega-Charlotte Pass section of the new Snowies Alpine Walk.

Guthega has a new epic attraction

This summer Guthega is on the map as never before. While other sections of the new Snowies Alpine Walk are still under construction, the 9km piece from Guthega to Charlotte Pass is fully open, giving us a wonderful new summer activity on our doorstep.

Not only is there a new section of track from Illawong up to Charlotte – built with environmental sustainability in mind – but the old section from Guthega to Illawong has been remade so it can withstand heavier use and end the erosion that was damaging the track.

A highlight of the new track is the magnificent new suspension bridge over Spencers Creek, which is a boon in both summer and winter – in the latter season offering new ski



Another record set: the new foot bridge over Spencers Creek is Australia's highest suspension bridge.

touring opportunities with skiers now able to make it over a previously difficult-to-cross creek.

This summer we will surely see many walkers through Guthega on the new track. Anticipating the influx, the new Basecamp Cafe in the Guthega ski centre is open daily from Christmas through the school holidays, and again at Easter so if you are spending time at the lodge there's a place to pick up a nice coffee or other food and beverages.

The other new sections of the Snowies Alpine Walk are not yet open but they are making progress.

The Perisher to Charlotte Pass section – which mainly follows the existing track from Perisher to Porcupine Rocks with a new track is being built from the Rocks to the Pass – is scheduled to be open by March. It would have been earlier but work was held up by bad weather and snow.

Work is also underway on the Perisher to Bullocks Flat section which goes down to the ski tube bottom station. This part of the track is planned to be finished by next summer.

The Snowies Alpine Walk also takes in two existing tracks – the 20km Lakes loop from Charlottes with spectacular main range views, and the Thredbo to Kosci track.

Note that the national park is doing a major program of walking track improvement over the summer and there will be temporary closures on some popular tracks, including the section of the Lakes walk above Lake Albina, the Charlottes Pass to Mt Stilwell walk, the Thredbo to Kosciuszko walk and the Dead Horse Gap track. However to minimise inconvenience there will be little or no work done in the major holiday periods – Dec 24 to Jan 9, and Easter (April 7-10). Check the NSW National Parks alerts on their website for the latest information.

Word from on high

By Tony Adams, board chair

El Nino certainly seems to be good news for us skiers as we have had an excellent season, with consistent snow from the opening weekend in June to the closing weekend in October. Elsewhere the story is not so good and on behalf of our club I extend our sympathy to all those affected by flooding, especially to any members and their families who have been impacted.



It was this sort of a snow season. The Perisher snow stake on August 19.

But the season was certainly one of the best. Perisher got the lifts rolling a week before the scheduled season opening on the Queen's birthday weekend and by June 15, two days after the season officially opened, the snow depth at Spencer's Creek was over one metre; and then it got deeper and deeper, peaking at 2.3 metres on September 20 and still over 1 metre when the season officially closed in October. Back country skiing was terrific through to November.

And skiing at Guthega, compared to elsewhere in the resort is also improving. The new chair has induced Vail, the resort owners, to keep Guthega open from the beginning to the end of the season, the days of Guthega being the poor cousin of the Perisher/Blue Cow/Smiggins/Guthega complex may be behind us.



Guthega's new café.

And what used to be pretty dreary vacant space at the bottom of the very long flight of stairs up to the carpark chair has been re-energised. The new café, in what is now the Perisher backcountry headquarters, has proved to be a winner. Good food, good service and good coffee attracted hungry skiers all season long.

The lodge was at maximum occupancy throughout the season and as usual provided us all with comfortable and cosy accommodation. But it is beginning to show its age. Minor leaks from the upper level windows are now persistent.

The new cladding, windows and doors, well-sealed and with double glazing will resolve these problems and I'm pleased to report that this project is well in hand. We have just received development approval, which enables serious discussions with builders to commence over this summer, with a view to getting the work done early next summer.

New carpets are programmed on the maintenance schedule for the next two years; we've decided to delay these until after the builders have finished the major project to avoid damage to the new carpets. Hopefully they will then be installed pretty quickly

Attention members

Without email addresses we can't send Snobounds directly to your associate members, so here's your chance to give them a Christmas present they will never forget. A free subscription! It's so easy. Just send the email addresses of your associates to srsc.snobounds@gmail.com and Snobounds will appear in their inbox every time it is published. It's a gift that will last forever.

You (and your associates) are also invited to go a step further and contribute to Snobounds. Share something about an experience at the lodge, in the Snowy Mountains generally, or about skiing/boarding in other places. Send photos too. Or if you don't want to write something yourself but have an idea for a topic that should be covered, let me know!

In the meantime Snobounds wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Tim Dodd, Snobounds editor, srsc.snobounds@gmail.com



The new walking track near Illawong.

and this, together with the bathrooms being progressively renovated by a volunteer member, will transform the lodge over the next few years.

On the Covid front, we seem to have got to the point where it is now a background issue, rather than dominating our lives. There is still a Covid-safe plan in operation for the lodge; we ask that people don't come to the lodge if they are ill and leave if they catch Covid whilst there.

These rules are really just common sense, and common courtesy to our fellow members. This position could change at any time with a Covid resurgence or some other bug, but we hope not. I will keep all members informed and on behalf

of myself and the Committee we thank all members for their patience and cooperation over the last few years.

I write this in Canberra we have just had a glorious spring weekend following what seemed like endless months of rain – so bring on summer, when our lodge is, of course, a great place to be. Originally and obviously conceived as a ski lodge, Doorack is increasingly being recognised as a summer destination and our summer bookings reflect this.

I encourage all members to take the opportunity of a relaxing mountain break before the hectic activity of the next ski season. The walking trail from Guthega to Charlotte Pass is now complete and I can recommend it for a great day out. The other links in the Snowy Walks network – Charlotte Pass to Perisher, and Perisher to Bullocks Flat – are under construction.

This year has seen the completion of the planning for the "Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct" – a NSW Government initiative that will see several hundred

million dollars spent in the mountains over the next several years. Some of the big ticket items around Jindabyne include a bypass road around the south side of Jindabyne taking off just past the dam wall and rejoining the existing road just before the Thredbo turnoff, upgrades to the centre of Jindabyne with improved connections to the lake, and a 500 hectare mountain bike adventure park with gondola access.

Proposed changes to the ski resorts include increased bed numbers in the alpine resorts (but not at Guthega), and improved car parking at Perisher, which is desperately needed. Not much change is proposed for Guthega. The structure plan recommends sealing Guthega Road westwards from the Guthega Power Station to Guthega Village. There is lots more detail which you can see at:

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Special-Activation-Precincts>.

Keep safe and well over Christmas and the holiday season. I look forward to catching up with you at the lodge over the summer and here's hoping for another winter like the one we've just had.

Get ready for next winter

Winter bookings for the lodge (for 5, 6, or 7 night weeks) will open on January 1. Send your booking requests to Iris Bramley on srsc.winter@gmail.com.

Unfortunately increased costs mean that winter accommodation fees will be higher in 2023. Below are the new fees for 5, 6 and 7 night weeks.

Fees for other stays in the 2023 winter season (eg weekends and shorter mid-week stays) will be notified soon.



Let your appetite be whetted.

2023 winter accommodation fees	Members and associates	Guests
In Sunday, out Sunday (7 nights)	\$140	\$490
In Sunday, out Saturday (6 nights)	\$120	\$420
In Sunday, out Friday (5 nights)	\$100	\$350

Register for the 2023 work party

The club's annual work party will be held on a weekend in next March or April. This is always a very enjoyable weekend and an opportunity to catch up socially with other members, although serious and important work is done! Jobs include cleaning and general maintenance and no special skills are required.

If you are interested in attending please email maintenance director Tony Slatyer on tony.slatyer.srsc@gmail.com. The date of the work party will be notified soon.



Left: The wombat warning sign on the Norwegian Trail. Right: Laura Vagne treats Gunter with mite killing solution.

Gunter the Guthega wombat

If you skied at the lodge this past winter you couldn't have missed this very obvious wombat burrow on the Norwegian Trail just above Guthega Ski Club.

It was the residence of Gunter the Guthega wombat, who made a permanent home in the area over the winter. No doubt our lodge pet, Wombie, was grateful to have the company!

Gunter co-existed successfully with skiers, although there was at least one reported near miss, according to the national park's Resort Round-up Newsletter, and fears grew that Gunter was not well. At the request of the park's Save Our Species team, a volunteer from LAOKO (Looking After Our Kosciuszko Orphans) rallied a group of animal lovers to find Gunter and give him a health check.

It took them five runs on the Blue Calf T-Bar to locate him and they found that he did indeed have a problem. He had signs of early stage sarcoptic mange – caused by a mite that burrows under the skin resulting in extreme itchiness. It leads to wombats scratching themselves until they bleed, causing major health problems.

Luckily LAOKO volunteer Laura Vagne had a remedy. She crept up on Gunter with a bottle of treatment solution on the end of a painter's pole. The elixir was successfully applied.

Hopefully Gunter is now mange free and will be able to enjoy the tranquility of Blue Calf (except during the ski season) for many years to come.



Snow gums affected by dieback on the Guthega to Illawong track.

Save our snow gums, they really need some help

We are all familiar with the sad sight of dead snow gums around Guthega, many the result of the 2003 fires which ran through the resort. But not all of the dead trees in the area are fire victims. Many, such as those along the Illawong track, are victims of dieback.

To help save the snow gums Dwy Jago of the Guthega Ski Club has co-ordinated with the national park to plant 500 snow gums seedlings in and around Guthega on Saturday March 18, 2023. Volunteers are needed and you are invited to come.

Activities will begin at 9.30am when a national park ranger will explain how and where to plant the trees. The park will provide the seedlings, mulch and tree guards and you need to come with sturdy shoes, long pants, a hat, a shovel, hand tools and gloves. A sausage sizzle is planned where an expert will talk about the local environment and explain what is known about the dieback threat.

If you would like to take part please email club horticulture officer Polly Adams on srsc.summer@gmail.com. Aside from benefitting our local environment, the tree planting day is also a great opportunity to meet and mingle with people from other Guthega lodges. If the weather is bad, Sunday March 19 is the back up day. Dwy hopes that snow gum planting will become an annual event.

Snow gum dieback – which is now widespread in the high country of NSW, the ACT and Victoria – is not fully understood. An immediate cause is the wood boring native longicorn beetle (*Phoracantha*), which burrows into the branches and trunk of snow

gums and ringbarks them. But it's not entirely clear why the dieback has accelerated in recent years.

Dieback has serious consequences. After a snow gum is hit by fire it will resprout from its underground lignotubers, as we can see everywhere in Guthega. But, for a snow gum, death by beetle is final. The tree does not recover.

ANU researcher Matthew Woodhouse, from the Fenner School of Environment and Society, has a major project underway to understand dieback, including the role of the beetle and other environmental factors, and to seek effective remedies. It appears the drought (which has now ended) encouraged the beetles to thrive, but forests are complex places and there may be many other factors which influence snow gum dieback. The bad news is that while dieback declined in wetter years in the past (such as 2010 and 2011) it quickly returned in dryer years.

Dr Woodhouse and his team have a website (www.saveoursnowgum.org) with more information about the project, which includes forms you can use to report areas of dieback you see in the mountains, and any sightings of the longicorn beetle.



Après le renovation: the new look ensuite bathroom in Room 9.

You'd better believe it!

Don't blink, this is real. Here are first pix of the Room 9 ensuite bathroom following the full makeover which Lyndon Costin gave the facility this spring. Lyndon, with assistance from Russell Smith, generously donated his time and considerable expertise to make the Room 9 bathroom better than new.

Two of the lodge's bathrooms have now been refurbished. Earlier this year Lyndon made similar improvements to the bathroom opposite Room 5. Thanks Lyndon, it's much appreciated.

The seven month ski season



Are you tired of winter? Doorack's balcony on September 19.

It's not that the lifts were actually open for seven months in 2022. They operated for a mere four, opening in early June and closing in early October. But ski lifts are not a requirement for skiing. The fundamental need is for snow and we had plenty of it in the winter, spring ... and now the summer ... of 2022.

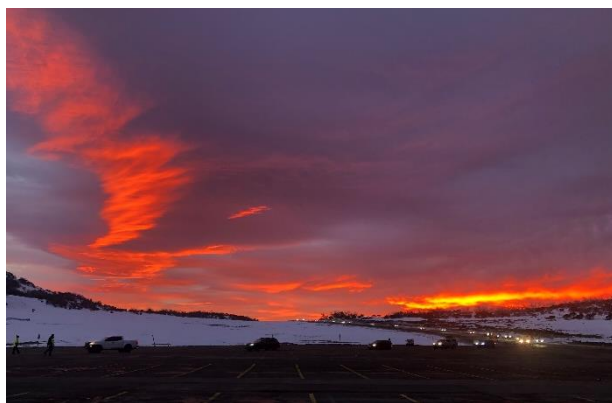
With the snowpack peaking at 2.3 metres peak in late September it took a long time to melt, leaving deep snow in the back country which even substantial amounts of rain couldn't shift. And in between the rain it kept on snowing. Now, toward the end of December, the snow cams still show substantial snow drifts on the main range. So bring on a white

Christmas and the hope of throwing a few turns on New Year's Day.

All in all it was a wonderful season and, after two years of Covid restrictions, more people than ever before took advantage of it. Resort infrastructure was stretched to the limit. On some days skiers at Perisher were parking on the road below Smiggins and, on weekends, it became the norm for the Perisher road to be closed just out of Jindabyne by late morning because there was no capacity to park more cars on the mountain. Refugees from Perisher flocked to Guthega for day skiing and were forced to park way down the road beyond the bottom of Parachute. Many of them got ticketed.

When the lifts stopped in early October, the crowds disappeared, but an enthusiastic band of back country skiers and boarders carried on. Several individuals (including the Snobounds editor) were lucky enough to get some beautiful skiing at Blue Lake in November – and the lake was still ice covered!

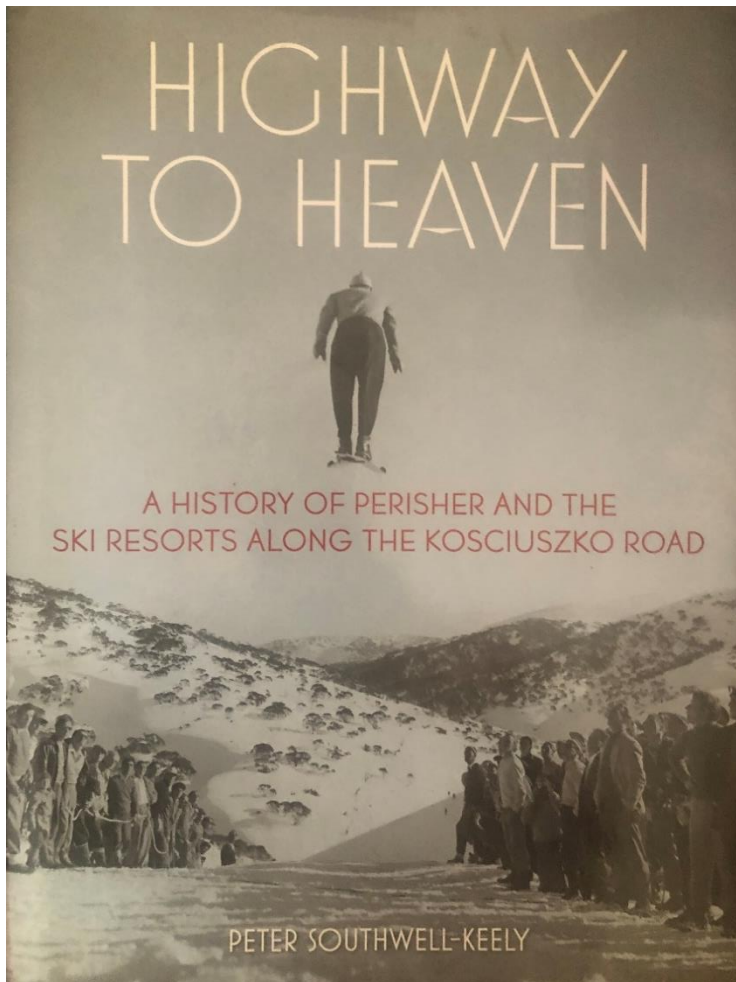
So yes, 2022 was a season to remember. It was well underway at the beginning of June and (for the diehards) it will stretch into 2023. That's seven months of the white stuff.



Left: Some people will do anything to get a park. Cars stream into Perisher before dawn on July 31. 6.56am to be precise. Right: Oscar Killick-Dodd skiing at Blue Lake in November. The lake is still ice covered.

The mystery of Guthega's classic photo

Something is not right with our resort's iconic image. Tim Dodd investigates



This is an iconic Guthega photo, taken at a ski jumping competition in the very early days of the resort in 1953.

An influx of Norwegians had arrived to build the dam and power station, and they brought their favourite pastime with them.

They built two jumps at Guthega and Tormod Lillejord set an Australian ski jump record of 51.5m that year, which possibly still stands. Could it be him in the picture? We don't know.

Over the years the photo has captured the imagination of generations of skiers. It has a remarkable composition, the skier set against the sky, framed by the spectators, commanding their attention.

When I first saw it on the wall of the Guthega Inn I wondered where it was taken. Proprietor Nick Kennedy assured me it was at Guthega. In fact, he said, he was there as a boy, at that very jumping competition.

But exactly where at Guthega? The hill, and the mountains behind, were like nothing in Guthega which I knew.

I continued to be puzzled when the photo appeared on the cover of the book *Highway to Heaven* by Peter Southwell-Keely, an extremely absorbing history of the ski resorts of the Perisher range. (We have a copy in the lodge.)

But then, a light bulb moment. I had a theory. Had the photo been printed back to front, and reproduced that way all these years? Was that why it was unrecognisable?

Now I had a mission. Find the location of the jump, take a picture, and compare it to the mirror image of the book cover.

See the result on the next page. The mystery is solved.

Flip the book cover and it all makes sense.

The jump is on the other side of Farm Creek looking towards the Burning Log. It is in an area which was, at that time, clear of trees, and is steep enough for jumping with a sufficiently long run out.

The shadow on the right of the flipped book cover is the steep drop off that is on skiers left near the bottom of the Blue Calf T-bar. One of the fascinating things revealed by the photo is the relative lack of tree cover on Blue Calf in 1953. It is now far more wooded.

The dam, which was then under construction, would be visible in the 1953 shot except that it is blocked by the jump spectators on the left, whose eyes are fixed on the skier.

There's a stream of people walking down the opposite hill toward the jump. Or possibly they are walking back to the construction village, which was later mostly removed.

Hard to see in this picture, but very clear if you look at the cover of the book, are huts and electricity poles on the far side of the valley on the ridge of Blue Calf. Three huts in that location were left behind when the dam was completed in 1954. They provided accommodation for early Guthega skiers and were the predecessors of Kyilla, Tate and Tiobunga lodges.



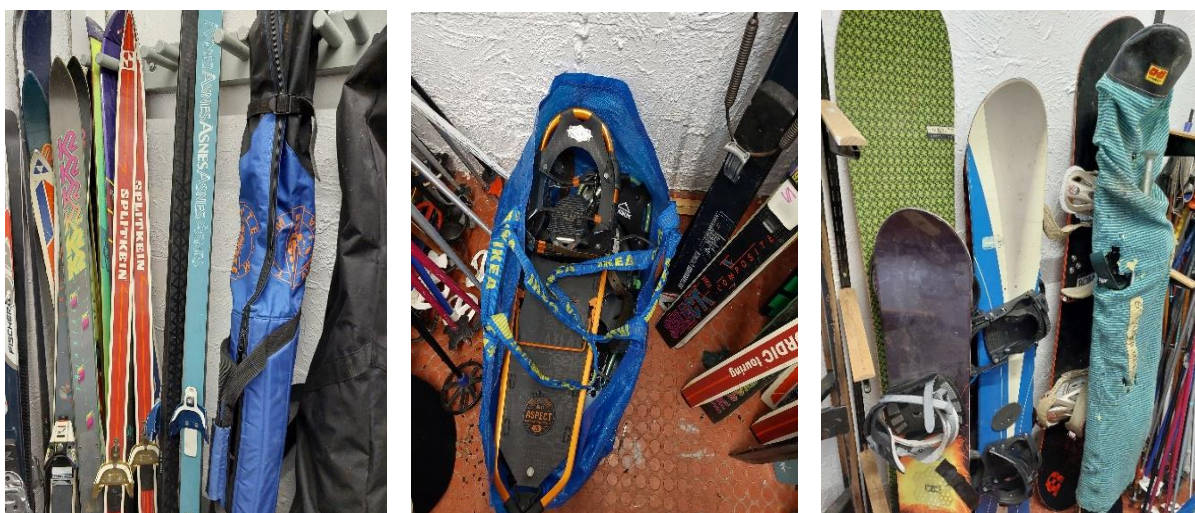
Top: The reversed book cover is a suddenly familiar image, a fascinating look at Guthega in 1953. Bottom: Today's Guthega has many more trees on Blue Calf.

Memberships: arrivals and departures

Four memberships have changed hands recently:

- Dennis Roantree's share is transferred to Kim Roantree
- Irena Hesterman's share has gone to Bill Jones
- Sophie Nelson's share is now with Emily Walter
- John Tyler's share has gone to Beth Slatyer

Welcome to all new members and we wish all the best in the future to departing members. A reminder that if you wish to sell your share, or you or someone you know wishes to buy a share, let club secretary Matthew Barnard know on srsc.secretary@gmail.com. Matthew keeps a register of potential buyers and sellers, and can help match one with the other.



Some of the ski gear left in the lodge, now stacked in the ski room.

Are you missing something?

As foreshadowed in the June 2022 Snobounds, the large amount of ski gear which had accumulated in the alcove next to the Drinker's Club room has been cleared out and is now in the ski room.

The lodge doesn't have space for long term storage of ski equipment and we would like you to take home anything which is yours at the first opportunity.

All skis, boards and salvageable boots (that is, not rat eaten) which remain, will be taken to Tony Slatyer's house Canberra in March or April 2023. Tony will continue to make every effort to locate owners of the equipment so please get in touch with him if you think that something of yours is there. Contact Tony on tony.slatyer.srsc@gmail.com.

On the first Saturday in May whatever equipment is left and not identified will be sold at the ACT Ski Association ski sale and proceeds will go to the club. However any unclaimed poles will be kept at the lodge in a corner of the ski room for people to use over the winter.



The party arrives at Illawong. The first look, for me, inside the historic lodge which was originally built in the 1920s.

Twynam in the backyard: my week at Illawong

Tim Dodd lived out a dream and spent a week at Illawong Lodge

So many times I've skied or walked past Illawong Lodge and wondered how it would be to stay overnight in comfort in the back country, rather than in a tent. This past winter I had the good fortune to find out.

A couple who are long time skiing friends of mine were invited to Illawong last winter by people they know who are Illawong members. A vacancy appeared in the party and I was lucky enough to be invited to join.

It felt odd to be arriving at Guthega and, instead of going to Doorack, donning a pack and skiing down to Farm Creek to cross the bridge and head up the Snowy River.

I didn't have to carry too much. Included in the Illawong accommodation cost is access to a huge and varied amount of long-life food which members and friends of the lodge pack in each Easter. You only need to carry the fresh food you want to consume during the week – as well as alcohol, because Illawong doesn't have a



Top: Looking back to Guthega from the entrance room. Bottom: Space in the lodge is used well.



Left: The kitchen has lots of working space and a huge amount of storage. Right: Curtains offer privacy in the bunkroom.

Drinker's Club! You can eat very well from what is in stock. You must, of course, carry all your rubbish out.

The lodge itself has four main rooms – entry, lounge-dining, kitchen and bedroom (with eight bunks) – plus a shower and separate toilet. Originally built for skiers by the NSW government in the 1920s and called Pounds Creek Hut, it was expanded in the 1950s to add the entry room and lounge area that faces toward Guthega. The lodge is of minimal size, but space is used well and it's not cramped. It has the feeling of being on a small ship, where a lot of thought has gone into storing everything that's needed, but nothing more than what's needed.

The lodge is there today because of the remarkable and dedicated effort of its members who have improved it over the years. It hasn't been simple. Once they could use horses to transport materials and then, for many years, they used boats on the dam which could move things halfway to Illawong. But boats are no longer permitted so the choices today are Shank's pony or a helicopter. Understandably, they usually opt for the former.

It has taken perseverance, ingenuity and careful planning to upgrade Illawong over the years, and the lodge has kept pace with changing requirements for environmental sustainability. Power for lights, a water pump and phone charging comes from solar panels, with a generator as emergency back-up. Water comes from a small dam up the hill. Gas for cooking, heating and hot water is from gas bottles hauled in at Easter time. But not much room heating is necessary because of excellent insulation. Grey water goes into a trench and the toilet goes to a septic tank which periodically has to be emptied by said helicopter.

Bonnie the draught horse is whimsically revered. Bonnie carried in building materials for the 1950s extension and one of her leg bones decorates the bookshelf. She also lives on in the club's coat of arms and part of her harness, restored by a saddler, hangs over the lounge door.

Staying at Illawong, you don't feel far from Guthega. The dam is in view. But the vibe, with no vehicles and few people, is substantially different. You really are in the alpine wilderness and the focus is not on the downhill slopes, it's on the slopes reaching up to

Twynam which you can see from the lounge windows and which you soon begin to think of as your back yard.

For ski touring, it's perfect. The swing bridge over the Snowy River (the second one built by Illawong members in that spot) leads up to Twynam, Blue Lake and the main range. Opposite (on the lodge side of the river) is the Paralyser. And the new suspension bridge over Spencers Creek gives easy access to Mt Guthrie.

Conditions on top of the main range were dicey that week. Rain had fallen and then froze, which produced rime. The surface was like millions of little frozen marbles which tinkled harmoniously as you skied but could be treacherous if you fell.

I was grateful that I had recently acquired a set of alpine touring skis and boots. The Illawong week was the first time I had used them for longer tours and their width (as wide as downhill skis), with heels that can lock down, made the rime much safer.

Lower down the snow was lovely spring corn. Skiing down to Blue Lake was heavenly, as were the runs through the trees back to the swing bridge. Back yard recreation was never so good.

The club's new postal address

Our secretary Matthew Barnard reports that, because Australia Post is closing its Civic Square post office in Canberra, the club's postal address has changed. The new address is:

Snowy River Ski Club Co-op Ltd
PO Box 4011
Manuka ACT 2603

Any mail already sent to the old address will still be collected.



Top: On the Illawong coat of arms the fish is jumping, and Bonnie the horse is memorialised. Bottom: Our meals, mainly prepared from lodge stocks, were instagrammable.

Recycling now includes organic food waste



The national park has issued lodges (including us) a new compost bin for organic food waste. The bin is in the kitchen and needs to be emptied regularly (ideally daily) in the food organics bin (also labelled “cooking oil”) which is close to the other bins near the Guthega ski centre.

We are very supportive of recycling and commend the park for introducing this new scheme. But we also need to be mindful that that our native rat population will feast on food left overs so please take care and use common sense when carrying out organic waste recycling.

Here is the park’s advice on how to sort waste into the correct bins.

Food organics	Mixed containers	Paper and cardboard	Landfill garbage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bread and pastry ➤ Cereals and flours ➤ Meat, poultry and bones ➤ Seafood (no oyster or scallop shells) ➤ Bamboo cutlery ➤ Teabags, coffee grounds, paper sugar sachets, and wood stirring sticks ➤ (No clear liquids) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Glass bottles and jars ➤ Steel/aluminium cans Aerosol cans ➤ Plastic soft drink/milk bottles and detergent bottles ➤ Ice cream tubs ➤ (No takeaway coffee cups; no hot chip tubs; no foam food trays; no broken glass) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clean paper and cardboard ➤ Clean cardboard food trays ➤ Nothing smaller than a credit card ➤ (No waxed cardboard, milk or juice cartons; no takeaway coffee cups; no food napkins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Food wrappers ➤ Takeaway coffee cups ➤ Lids ➤ Foam containers ➤ Soft plastics ➤ All other general waste that can’t be recycled

Board contacts

Board position	Contact	Phone	Email
Chair	Tony Adams	0438 571 511	srsc.president@gmail.com
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Winter booking officer - Winter bookings and cancellations	Iris Bramley	0402 202 563	srsc.winter@gmail.com
Treasurer - Fees, reimbursements, lockers	Susie Kluth	0438 663 104	srsc.finance@gmail.com
Secretary - Membership and shares	Matthew Barnard	0449 263 521	srsc.secretary@gmail.com

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