

THE BALMAIN CUP – THE FIRST 50 YEARS

(Booklet published in 1983)

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The inscription on the Balmain Cup reads "The Balmain Cup Inter-Club competition 1933". The competition appears to have been abandoned during the war years from 1941 to 1945 and it was cancelled in 1982 due to lack of snow, but apart from these breaks the Balmain Cup has been held regularly since 1933. 1983 therefore marks the 50th anniversary of the Balmain Cup, which is, incidentally, the oldest interclub skiing competition in Australia.

To commemorate the anniversary this booklet has been prepared to record some of the background and history of the Balmain Cup.

In the preparation of the booklet, reference has been made to past copies of Ski Year Books, records of the Southern District ski Federation, Tate (SMA) Ski Club and Canberra Alpine Club.

In addition, valuable guidance and material has also been received from Lucy Hawkins, Joan Ferguson, Mike Brent, Cooma Historical Society, Bruce Haslingden, Roger Torpey, Jim Pattinson and Hugh Darby.

The assistance of the above persons and organizations is gratefully acknowledged.

THE BALMAIN FAMILY

The Balmain Cup was donated originally by Arthur Balmain who ran a motor transport business in Cooma from the early 1900's, ferrying passengers between Cooma and the snowfields, as well as the South Coast. He had originally been on the land before he entered the motor business. The Bega branch of the Balmain Brothers was set up later and run by Arthur's brother Billy.

The Cooma branch operated until 1953 from premises, which are now occupied by the Monaro Country Council, while the Bega branch became a Holden dealer and is still trading today.

Arthur Balmain originally donated a number of trophies for skiing competitions held by the Monaro and Cooma Ski Clubs, including the present Balmain Cup. He was at one time patron of the Cooma Ski Club and his family were involved in all spheres of activities of these clubs.

The Balmain family have now left the Cooma district, however a grandson has served in the area in recent years as a ranger and still visits the snowfields from time to time.

COMPETING CLUBS

The Balmain Cup is awarded for interclub competition between ski clubs having their headquarters in the Southeastern district of New South Wales.

Ski Clubs competing in the years before the war included Cooma, Kiandra, Monaro, Bega, Adaminaby, Snowy River (Jindabyne) and Canberra.

In the post war years other ski clubs from Canberra, including YMCA, Guthega and Jagungal (ACTP) joined the competition. Clubs from Berridale, Talbingo and Bungendore competed on odd occasions and clubs such as Selmer and Cabramurra took part while activities on the Snowy Scheme were at their peak. The SMA (Cooma) Ski Club, now Tate ski Club, has participated

regularly since the early 60's. Other clubs such as the Queanbeyan Leagues, ANU and Duntroon have competed for a year or so and then dropped out.

A list of the clubs that have competed in the Balmain cup, with an indication of the years that they competed, is included in appendix 1.

ORGANIZATION

In the first few years of the Balmain cup the competition was organised by the Monaro and Cooma Ski Clubs. In 1937 the Association of Ski Clubs of the Federal Capital Territory and Southern NSW was formed and took over the responsibility for organization of the southern Districts Sports (including the Balmain Cup) until the war.

After the war the organization of the Balmain Cup was shared in turn by the competing clubs on a more or less ad hoc basis until the present Southern Districts Ski Federation, as we now know it was formed in 1948. Ski Clubs within the Southern Districts Ski Federation now share the responsibility for organization the Balmain Cup on a rotational basis.

From the beginning until the present day the organising clubs have relied on and appreciated the help and support provided by staff of the various resorts for setting of courses and the provision of transport, accommodation and other facilities.

EVENTS

At present the Balmain Cup is awarded on the basis of the best overall performance in Slalom, giant slalom and Cross Country events.

Teams of six now compete with the four best times to count. In some earlier years teams may have been smaller due to difficulties in getting the teams together and then getting them through the course without crashing (often with serious consequences).

The performance is now assessed in terms of percentage points based on the fastest team receiving 100% and other teams receiving lower percentages inversely proportional to their respective total times. FIS points were used in some earlier competitions.

It would appear that the format for the competition has been much the same since the Balmain Cup was first held, although the course have changed considerably in character. The original slaloms were more open than those now set and instead of a giant slalom a downhill event was held with only a few checks. It may be that a jump was included in some years and in other years the cross-country (langlauf) was not held.

Since 1960 the venue for the Balmain Cup has been either Guthega or Perisher although prior to that date the venues were many and varied, including Mount Franklin, the Chalet and Kiandra. Before the mid 50s of course participants were not limited by ski lifts and therefore the races could be held on any convenient slope.

Pre war it would seem that the Balmain Cup was often held in conjunction with other events, usually lasting over a week or so. These events were usually held around the Hotel Kosciusko or the Chalet.

SKIERS

Even though the Balmain Cup is a team's event, there are nevertheless individuals who, by their consistent performance, deserve a mention.

The standard of skiing has always been very high and some of the top skiers in the Balmain Cup have represented Australia in the winter Olympics.

In the 1930's names like Roger Torpey and Joe Snowden featured prominently, while in the 1940's Jim Pattinson and Tim Ingram made their mark. In the 1950s Bruce Haslingden, Gordon and Billy Day, Danny Collman, Auden Fristad and of course Kore Grunnsund came to the fore. In the 1960s and 1970s saw the Guthega boys Tony Lindner, Othmar Dorfer, Kurt Glanzig, Helmut Frei, Karl Guenther and Heimo Thaurer virtually dominating the alpine events, while Cooma Club with Ross Martin, Otto Pinkas, Ken Baxter and Kore Grunnsund gave them some pretty stiff competition with their cross-country performances. Some fine individual performances were also recorded by David Pitchford and Jim Box but they weren't good enough to lift their team into the top place, which has virtually reserved for Guthega and Cooma Clubs since the early 60s.

Some of those who featured in the 70s are still going strong in the 80s but there are many up and coming young skiers ready to unseat them from their positions. Some of these include the children of the former top skiers. With this situation it would appear that the high standard of competition will be maintained for many years to come.

RESULTS

It was hoped that a complete set of result of the Balmain Cup could be obtained and presented in this booklet. Unfortunately this has not been possible but the winners in those years for which results are available are shown in Appendix 2.

Perhaps as a result of publishing this booklet more results may be forthcoming in which case it would be possible to fill in the gaps.

STORIES

As with all things associated with the snow, the Balmain Cup brings back its share of stories, some funny, some serious. A few of these are reproduced below but there are many more that no doubt could be told.

- 1964 was one of the heaviest snow years on record and the big snowfalls actually started during the weekend set down for the Balmain Cup at Guthega. The cross-country had been held on the Saturday with snow steadily falling and the competitors and officials had retired looking forward to good snow for the following day. When the next day dawned the snow was good, in fact too good. The road was closed and it was impossible to move from Guthega. Some people managed to ski out to Guthega Power Station on the Sunday to meet cars coming from Cooma: others had to ski out to the Hotel Kosciusko over the next few days. The snow just kept on coming and the Summit Road beyond the Hotel Kosciusko and the Guthega Road remained closed for several weeks. The cars that were buried under some feet of snow were eventually freed several weeks later. The remaining events for the Balmain Cup were held later in the season.
- In early times the poles for the slalom and downhill events were much shorter than the present. The rules for the competition were also a bit more flexible. It wasn't absolutely compulsory to ski between the poles: if you missed one a 12 second penalty was given, if you straddled one it was only a 6 second penalty.

- Many of the Balmain Cups have been held in doubtful weather conditions and usually it required some incentive and sustenance to encourage officials to stay out under such conditions. On one occasion after a particularly long cross-country event, one of the officials was eventually put to bed with a suspected overdose of malaria.
- After 50 years the Balmain Cup itself is now looking a bit battered and has obviously suffered somewhat during its annual outing, especially during the year it was 'stolen' from Guthega Club. It was, however, recovered eventually and restored to its rightful owners.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

The past 50 years have seen great developments in skiing. Skis are now virtually all manufactured from synthetic material instead of being hand made from wood. Boots are made of plastics not leather. Ski lifts now take the alpine competitors to their starting positions and the course are set using machines. Electronic timing permits times to be recorded to the nearest 1/100th of a second.

At different stages of this development on 44 occasions in the past 50 years ski clubs in the southern areas of NSW have got together to compete for the Balmain Cup.

The competition, team spirit and sense of fun that was obviously present from the first meetings has persisted through those 50 year and is still with us today.

Let us hope that in spite of developments and changes, which will no doubt occur, in the future, the Balmain Cup will continue to be held in that same sprit for at least the next 50 years.

APPENDIX 1 – COMPETING CLUBS

<u>Club</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>
Monaro	Pre-war
Cooma	Pre-war, 1946 – 1982
Kiandra	Pre-war, 1946 - 1951, 1957 – 1958
Adaminaby	Pre-war
Snowy River (Jindabyne)	Pre-war, 1945 - 1955, 1957 – 1962
Bega	Pre-war
Canberra Alpine	Pre-war, 1946 – 1982
Bungendore	1949
Talbingo	1952 – 1954
Berridale	1952
Selmer	1952 – 1954
SMA (Tate)	1954 - 1956, 1961 – 1982

YMCA (Brindabella)	1956 – 1982
Cabramurra	1957 – 1961
Guthega	1962 –1982
Queanbeyan Leagues	1970
ANU	1971
ACTP (Jagungal)	1972 – 1982
Duntroon	1978

APPENDIX 2 – RESULTS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Host Club</u>	<u>Winner</u>
1933			
1934			
1935	Hotel Kosciusko	Cooma	Monaro
1936			
1937	Mt Guthrie		Adaminaby
1938			
1939			
1940	Pipers Gap		Snowy River
1940 - 1945	The War Years		
1946			Kiandra
1947	Kiandra	Kiandra	Kiandra
1948	Perisher		Kiandra
1949	Mount Franklin	Canberra Alpine	Kiandra
1950		Jindabyne	Jindabyne
1951			Kiandra
1952	Guthega	Selmer	Selmer
1953		Berridale	Selmer
1954	Perisher		Cooma
1955	Guthega	SMA	Jindabyne

1956	Guthega	YMCA	Jindabyne
1957	Mount Franklin	Canberra Alpine	Cabramurra
1958	Kiandra	Kiandra	Kiandra
1959	Cabramurra	Cabramurra	Cabramurra
1960	Perisher	Cooma	YMCA
1961	Guthega	SMA	Cabramurra
1962	Guthega	YMCA	Canberra Alpine
1963	Perisher	Canberra Alpine	Guthega
1964	Guthega	Guthega	YMCA
1965	Perisher	Cooma	Cooma
1966	Guthega	SMA	Cooma
1967	Guthega	YMCA	Guthega
1968	Guthega	Guthega	Guthega
1969	Perisher	Canberra Alpine	Guthega
1970	Perisher	Cooma	Guthega
1971	Guthega	Tate	Guthega
1972	Guthega	YMCA	Guthega
1973	Guthega	Guthega	Guthega
1974	Perisher	Canberra Alpine	Guthega
1975	Perisher	YMCA	Guthega
1976	Guthega	Tate	Guthega
1977	Guthega	ACTP	Guthega
1978	Guthega	YMCA	Cooma
1979	Guthega	Guthega	Cooma
1980	Perisher	Canberra Alpine	Cooma
1981	Perisher	Cooma	Cooma
1982	-	-	Insufficient snow