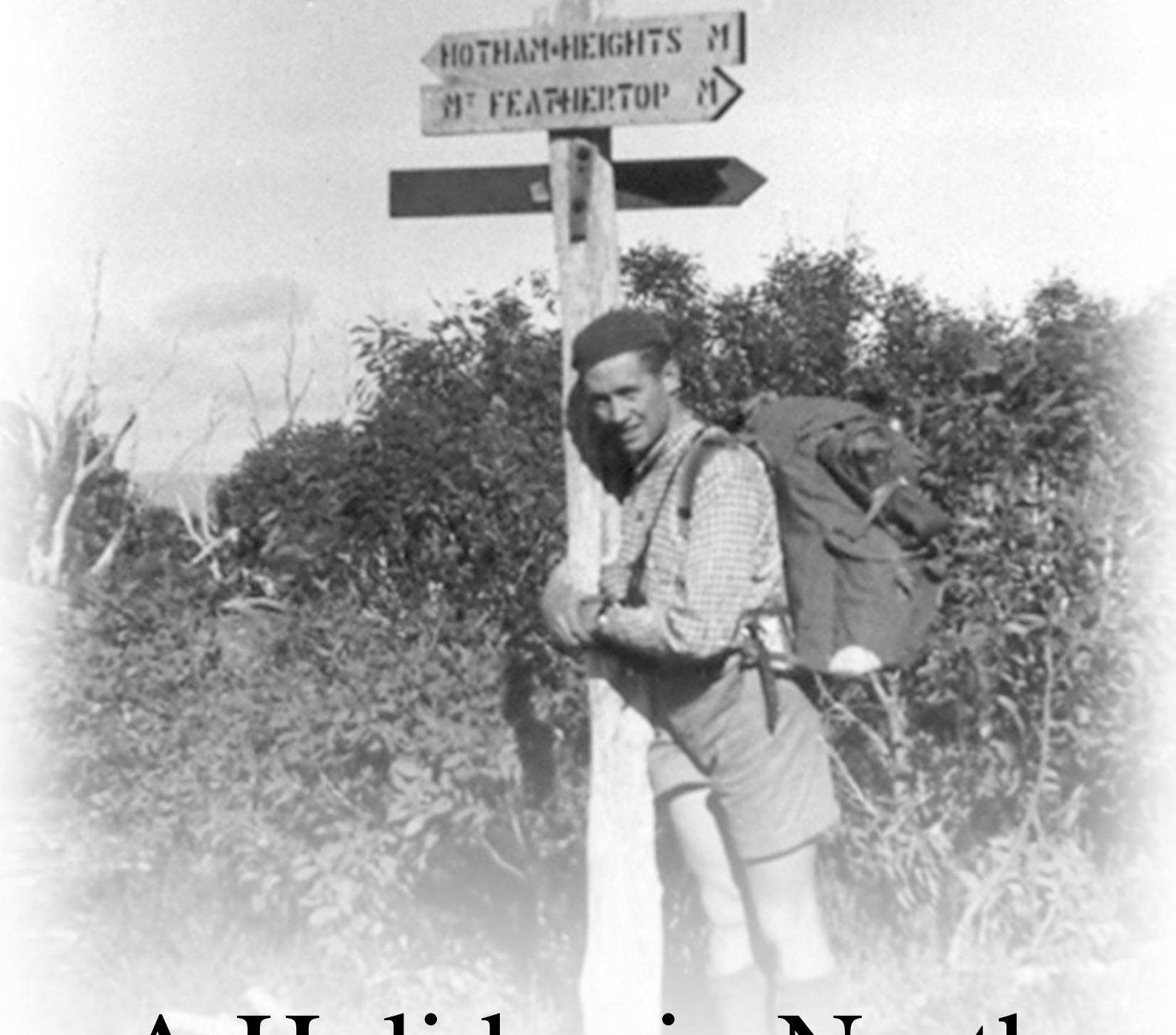


# Alan Wilson Diary



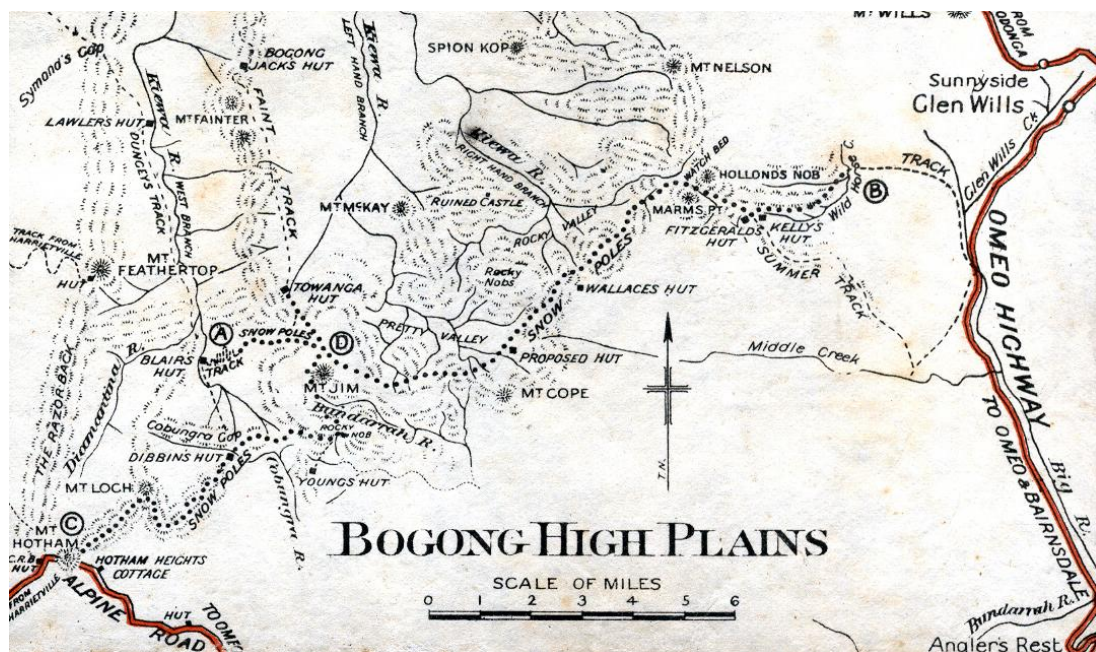
## A Holiday in North Eastern Victoria

Prepared by Bob Wilson

# ALAN WILSON'S DIARY

## of a Holiday in North Eastern Victoria

### May 1 to 14, 1937



*Frank Schroder*



*Eddie Jones*



*Alan Wilson*

**Saturday, 1 May 1937**

Caught the 4.40pm train from Spencer Street to Wangaratta with Frank Schroder and Eddie Jones.



*Frank, Alan and Eddie at Spencer Street*

Arrived Seymour at 6.20pm. Had a stand up steak & kidney pie. At least Eddie and I found 2 baby's high chairs on which we sat until they were removed from us. Arrived at Wangaratta at 8.50pm.

Companions in carriage consisted of a Dry Cleaner (Bill Payne) from Brown's Dry Cleaning Co, an Italian from Mildura bound for Townsville Qld to work on a sugar plantation and 2 others bound for Albury. A case belonging to the Italian fell from the rack onto Eddie's head.

At Wangaratta changed into service car of Parlour Saloon type which contained holiday makers bound for Ovens Valley townships. Also two hikers bound for the High Plains. The car went a round about way through Whorouly, Myrtleford, Porepunkah, Bright to Harrietville. Arrived 11.45pm and pitched camp on the Ovens River with other hikers. Turned in at 12.10am

Frank's pack 64 lbs - pounds weight (29kg), Eddie's 50 lbs (23kg) and mine 60 lbs (27kg).



**Sunday, 2 May 1937**

Frost in night. Ground temp 34°F (1°C) and 38°F (3°C) in tent. Difficult job lighting fire owing to scarcity of wood and wet wood. Had steak and coffee for breakfast and left at 8.40am. Height 1,500 ft at Harrietville.



*Morning scene at Harrietville*



*Crossing the Ovens River*



*Leaving in the misty morning*

Climbed up the spur to Feathertop arriving at the Victorian Railways' Bungalow 5,600 ft at 12.30pm. Packs very heavy going up spur. The other two hikers had arrived ½ an hour earlier and were having dinner (lunch) on our arrival. They decided to remain and camp in hut above Bungalow.

*Right: Alan on the Feathertop Track*

*Below: Looking towards Harrietville*





*On the track to Feathertop*



*Feathertop Bungalow. In 1928, the Victorian Railways purchased this small tourist house on Mt Feathertop, 44 miles (71 kilometres) from Mt Buffalo. Providing accommodation for 24 guests, The Bungalow served as an adjunct to The Chalet at Mt Buffalo (also owned by the V.R) for snow sports. This Bungalow was destroyed by bush fires in January 1939.*



*Eddie and Frank at the Feathertop Hut*

We climbed on leaving hut at 2.15pm and reached Little Feathertop at 3.10pm and deposited our packs at the saddle. Here we obtained excellent views of the Razorback to Hotham. Climbed onto Feathertop and obtained views of Mt Fainter, Mt Cope and Kiewa Valley. Height 6,267 ft. Left 4pm for top and climbed spur to the Twins. Track sidled round the Spurs. Arrived at Razorback Hut at 5.45pm dusk.



*Panorama of The Razorback*



*Eddie on top of Mt Feathertop*



*Alan on the summit*



*Mount Feathertop*



*Eddie & Frank on the Feathertop Saddle*



*Mt Buffalo seen from the Razorback*



Frank and I went a fair way down for water whilst Eddie lit fire in hut. Stew for tea followed by two brewings of tea.

Weather had been very pleasant, bright and sunny, although cold when we stopped. Mist and clouds came up as we left Feathertop and barometer was falling. Packs felt very heavy all day and we were all tired. Eddie went to bed first at 8.30pm.

Views throughout the day were splendid. Razorback Hut contains no bunks. Slept on floor on leaves.

10 miles for the day.

### **Monday, 3 May 1937**

After a comfortable night, arose at 7.30am. Porridge, ham and cocoa for breakfast. Left at 9.30am in brilliant sunshine and proceeded along Razorback.



*Razorback Hut*



*A look at the map and a rest*



*Razorback*





*Alan at signpost on Razorback....*



*and getting a drink*



*Razorback*



*Looking back to Mt Feathertop*

After proceeding a little way heard a lyrebird. The track skirted on east side and views of Mt Loch were splendid. Dropped down Big Dipper onto the Hotham road and passing Diamantina hut, followed the snow poles to the summit of Mt Hotham, a barren flat top.



*The road to Mt Hotham*



*Mt Feathertop seen from the Hotham road*



*Eddie and Frank on top of Mt Hotham*



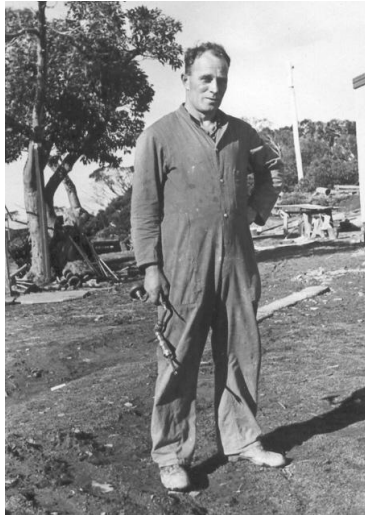
*Hotham Heights Chalet seen from Mount Hotham*



*Hotham Heights Chalet*

Reached Hotham Heights at 1.30pm and saw Eric Stewart. Phoned up Mother. Had dinner outside. Deposited a fair bit of food here for Frank and I to pick up on our return. Left 2.30pm and followed track and snow poles to Mt Loch where we left our packs and climbed to the top. Sun went in and it was fairly chilly. Followed snow poles down to Dibbins Hut on Cobungra Creek dropping over 1,500 ft from the time we left Mt Loch.

Dibbins Hut was fairly comfortable with 2 decker wide bunks, being a log hut with bark roof. Frank and Eddie made the first damper and burnt it too! Darned my torn plus-fours. Went to bed at 10pm. Temperature 48°F (9°C) in hut at bed time. Frost outside and clear starry night. 10 miles.



*Left: Eric Stewart*

*Below: Clouds and the distant ranges*



*Eddie looking to Mount Loch*



*Alan & Eddie on the summit of Mount Loch*



*Dibbin's Hut*



## Tuesday, 4 May 1937

White frost outside. Temperature 38° F (3°C) in hut. Left Dibbins at 9am and had a long climb out following numbered snow poles to skirt round Mt Jim across flat grassy plains with occasional patches of snow gums. Lunched on the slopes of Mount Cope. Eddie caught a small fish in creek after lunch. Came across several snow and rain gauges used by the SEC. After lunch climbed onto Mount Cope. Excellent views in all directions. Sun shone brightly and it was quite warm.



*Looking across the Plains*



*Eddie & Frank at a small creek*



*Mt Cope*



*Snow gum on the Bogong High Plains*

*Right: Snow gum near Mount Jim  
Below: Gnarled snow gum on the  
Bogong High Plains*







*Eddie resting. Note hob nails on boots*



*Snow gum near Mount Jim*



*On the Bogong High Plains*

Followed snow poles onto Cope Hut and got there at 3.40pm. Made an entry in the Visitors' Book. Proceeded across plains and climbed between Marm Point and Hollands Nob following snow pole line and arriving at Fitzgerald's Hut at 6.10pm after dark. Old Fitzgerald was in occupation with his dog 'Yapper' and horse. He was making a final round up of cattle before the snow.

After a good stew for tea and several drinks we sat and listened to him yarning round the fire. At 10pm we decided to make a damper and using Fitz's camp oven and 5 lbs of flour, we made a huge one which took 1½ hours to cook. Went to bed at 11.30pm and slept in bunks. Wind got up during the night.



*Eddie with a small fish he caught*



*Approach to Mount Cope*



*Frank on the summit of Mount Cope*



*Pretty Valley*



*Wild brumbies in Rocky Valley*



*Cope Hut*

*Right: Rock Cairn on the Plain  
Below: Eddie and Alan signing the Visitors'  
Book at Cope Hut*





*Fitzgerald's Hut*



*George "Dad" Fitzgerald*



*Frank with damper made the previous night*

### Wednesday, 5 May 1937

After an early breakfast of porridge, ham and Vitogen, old Fitzgerald saddled up his horse and acted as our guide. He took us up over Mount Nelse where the wind blew very hard. The weather at this stage looked bad. From Mt Nelse our route lay north west to west out to Timms Lookout overlooking the Big River. We obtained an excellent view of the whole of Buffalo and the Buffalo Plateau. Mounts Fainter and Feathertop were under cloud.

Fitzgerald descended a fair way down the spur to the Big River and at 4,409 ft had lunch with us. We left him at 1.35pm rounding up two or three stray calves which had wandered down to the river, and pushed through thick scrub down. We reached the river at 2pm at 3,400 ft and then began the big climb out over the other side. The first 1,500 ft were through thick scrub and took us two hours, after which the spur opened out onto a cattle pad. We saw four of Maddison's cattle at 5,000 ft and had a stiff climb to 6,300 ft where we struck the new snow pole line leading to Cleve Cole Memorial Hut in Camp Valley 5,800ft, nearing completion. 3 chaps were at work and made us very welcome.



*George Fitzgerald rounding up a stray*



*Pointing the way ahead*



*George at Timm's Lookout*



*George Fitzgerald with his dog "Yapper"*





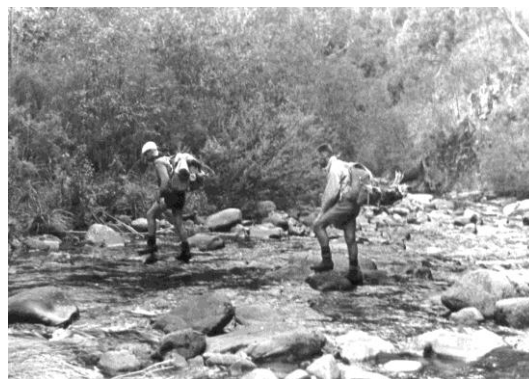
*Above the Big River Valley*



*George Fitzgerald riding in the bush*



*Descending through snow gums to Big River*



*Crossing the Big River*



*Timm's Lookout from Mt Bogong*



*Big River Valley from Bogong West Peak*



*Climbing the west peak of Mt Bogong*



*Snow poles on Mount Bogong*



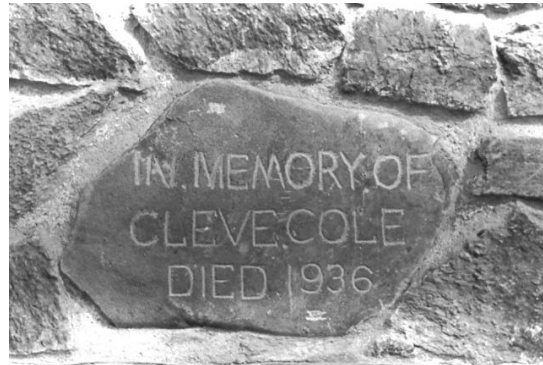
*Camp Valley*



*Building the Cleve Cole Memorial Hut*



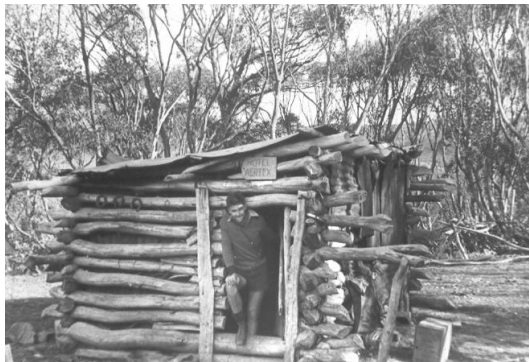
*Cleve Cole Memorial Hut*



*Memorial to Cleve Cole who perished on a ski Tour in the winter of 1936*

### **Thursday, 6 May 1937**

Slept in until 9.30am after yesterday's strenuous climb. Frank and Eddie both with colds. Had a late breakfast. Sun still shining although very windy. Frank and Eddie walked down to Howman Falls and Aertex Hut (Maddison's) Camp Valley whilst I stayed in hut and wrote a letter. Before we left the hut at 1.30pm we each laid a stone in the wall of the hut. Followed the snow pole line to the Cairn on Bogong 6,508 ft and then commenced the drop down the Staircase Spur to Mountain Creek 5.10pm. Followed the creek down as far as Coopers where we camped. Two of Cooper's dogs came round the camp and stayed by the fire most of the evening. Tea consisted of stew and rice potatoes. Windy night.



*Aertex Hut*



*View on top of Mount Bogong*



*Left: Alan & Frank on top of Cairn at Mount Bogong  
Below: Descending Staircase Spur*



*Left: Alan descending Staircase Spur  
Below: Staircase Hut, Mount Bogong*



*Left: Mount Bogong from near Cooper's  
Below: Coopers Creek Camp*





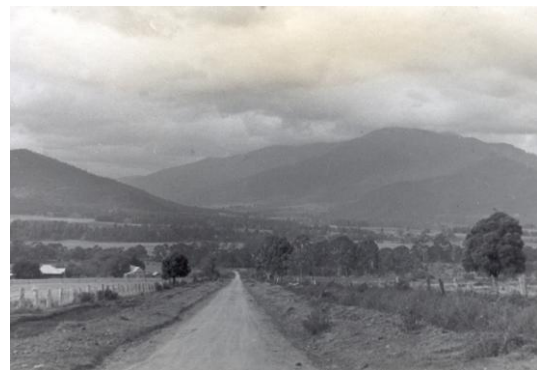
### **Friday, 7 May 1937**

Broke camp at 9.15am and struck road to Tawonga beyond Coopers. Arrived at Tawonga Hotel at 10.30am. Here Eddie left us and boarded a service car for Bright which would connect with a train getting him back to Melbourne the same evening. Frank and I went to the Store and rang our people.

I purchased a pullover and added to our food supply, figs, dates, bread, sweets, German sausage, cheese together with Thursday's Sun and Argus. At the Hotel here, the Hotel Keeper let us have 2 lbs of sausages.



*Mount Bogong from the Keiwa Valley*



*Mount Bogong seen from near Tawonga*



*Tawonga*



*Maize crop in the Kiewa Valley*



*Alan & Frank leaving Tawonga and Eddie*



*Signpost near Tawonga*



Leaving at 12.15pm we commenced our trip to Mt Fainter walking three miles to Tawonga South. Here we had to cross the Kiewa River by a Flying Fox. During the crossing, Frank trapped his hands in the pulley and cut them. On the other bank we met two horsemen who gave us directions on how to find the track up the spur. We left them at 2.50pm with the weather looking anything but bright and commenced a long steady pull up the spur. It got very cold and the wind became stronger. At 6pm we reached a stockyard at 4,000 ft (approx) and pitched our tent between the stockyard fence and a huge woollybutt tree. We lit a fire the other side of the tree and had to go down about 100 yds to a small spring for water.

The sausages we obtained were excellent and we made drinks of Vitogen Coffee and Tea. We retired to bed at 8.30pm and lay down reading the newspapers. It rained and blew heavily during the night.



*Kiewa River*



*Frank crossing Kiewa River on Flying Fox*



*Camp at Madison Stockyard*

**Saturday, 8 May 1937**

As it was raining heavily, we did not break camp until 10am and this without breakfast. We climbed out of the woollybutts and it commenced to snow. At 5,000 ft and 11.30am we reached Bogong Jack's Hut where we decided to stop for the rest of the day and night.

We lit a fire and cooked the rest of the sausages, having Vitogen and coffee to drink. We then set about making the hut comfortable, chopping a good supply of snowgum with an axe we found in the hut. It still snowed and at the present time of 3.30pm the ground is white outside the hut door and wind is blowing fog over the hill. Bogong Jack's Hut is very old and constructed of palings with a shingle roof. It is very draughty and the wind blows through the cracks under the door. Had stew for tea and then darned socks. Erected screens on the bed to stop the wind.



*Mt Feathertop seen from Madison Stockyards*



*Looking to Niggerheads from Stockyards*



*Bogong Jack's Hut*

### Sunday, 9 May 1937

Left 9.15am and climbed through snow over Fainter, round South Peak over the Niggerheads. Saw a huge hare in the snow. At 12.15pm sighted Tawonga Stockyard and dropped down. Could not find the hut but assumed it was below the Stockyard. Had lunch in the snow. Light snow falling and fog about. Followed unnumbered snow poles round Mt Jim and dropped down to Dibbins, arriving 3.30pm. Changed from plus-fours to shorts here and commenced the steep climb out.

At Mt Loch darkness approached and heavy fog made it difficult to pick up snow poles. Snow about 8 inches (20 cm) to one foot (30 cm) deep here. Struck the Hotham road at 6pm and arrived at Hotham Heights at 6.20pm. Had dinner and yarned with Eric Stewart. Eric got us each a hot bath which was welcome. Had coffee and biscuits for supper at midnight by a log fire. Slept between sheets for a change. Phoned Mother.



*Near Mount Fainter*



*Alan approaching Mount Fainter*



*Alan resting in the snow*



*Frank on Mount Fainter*



*Footprints in the snow*



*Alan following the snow pole line*



*Looking to Mt Cope*



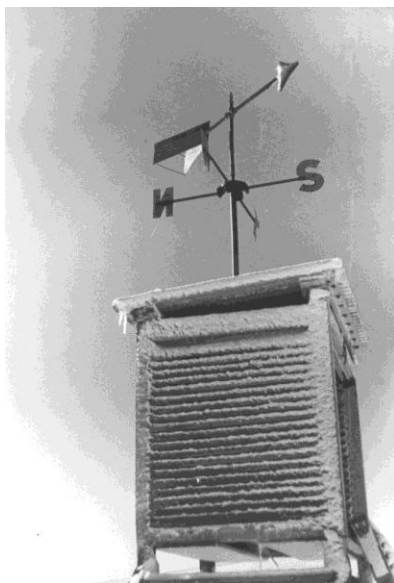
*Dibbins Hut*



### Monday, 10 May 1937

Arose at 8am. Bacon and egg for breakfast. Purchased butter, sugar, cheese, eggs and jam and repacked more food. Left at 11.30am and proceeded down road towards St Bernard. Snow now frozen hard. Fog came up and wind blew. Passed Diamantina Hut and reached Blowhard Hut for dinner (lunch). Melted icicles from the roof for water. After dinner, as the weather was bad we decided to stay on for the night. Ate most of the afternoon. Made two dampers, also a welsh rabbit. The eggs were a change of diet. Had a huge fire of snowgum. Went to bed at 8pm.

*Right: Signpost at Hotham Heights  
Below: Hotham Heights Chalet. The Victorian Railways assumed the tenancy in 1932, of the CRB hostel as an extra adjunct to The Chalet at Mount Buffalo. It was destroyed in the bush fires in January 1939. It was partially rebuilt that year and sold in April 1952 to the Ski Club of Victoria.*



*Left: Weather Station at Hotham Heights  
Below: Mount Hotham road*

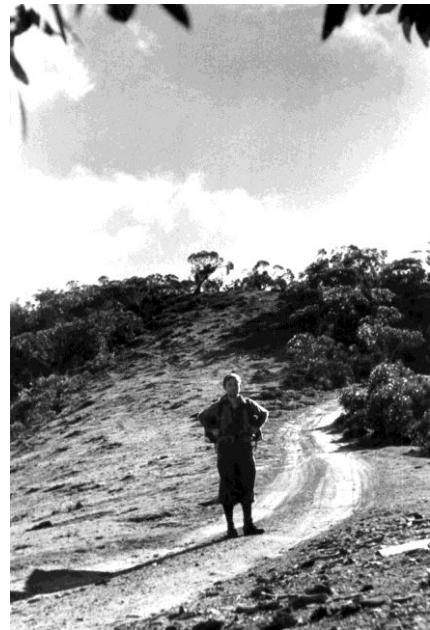


*Right: Mount Hotham snow covered  
Below: Mount Loch with Mount Feathertop  
Behind as seen from Mt Hotham*



*CRB Patrolman McMahon near Mount Hotham*

*Right: On the road to Mount Blowhard  
Below: Alan and Frank ready to leave Mount  
Hotham*



### **Tuesday, 11 May 1937**

Got out of bed at 6.30am and made an early breakfast. The sun rose bright and early, and the day looked good, making an early start for us, at 8.30am. We proceeded down the road to St Bernard where we stopped at the Hospice and had a drink with Barney Rush, the proprietor. We decided then to change our route and instead of crossing the Barry's (Barry Range), to come back over Dargo High Plains and through Dargo down to Stratford.

Followed the ridge south along an old road. Passed some old mining machinery on the roadside. Views of The Twins, Mt Murray and the Barry's as far as Howitt excellent. Warm walking in the sun. Dropped down about 300 ft off the road for water for lunch.

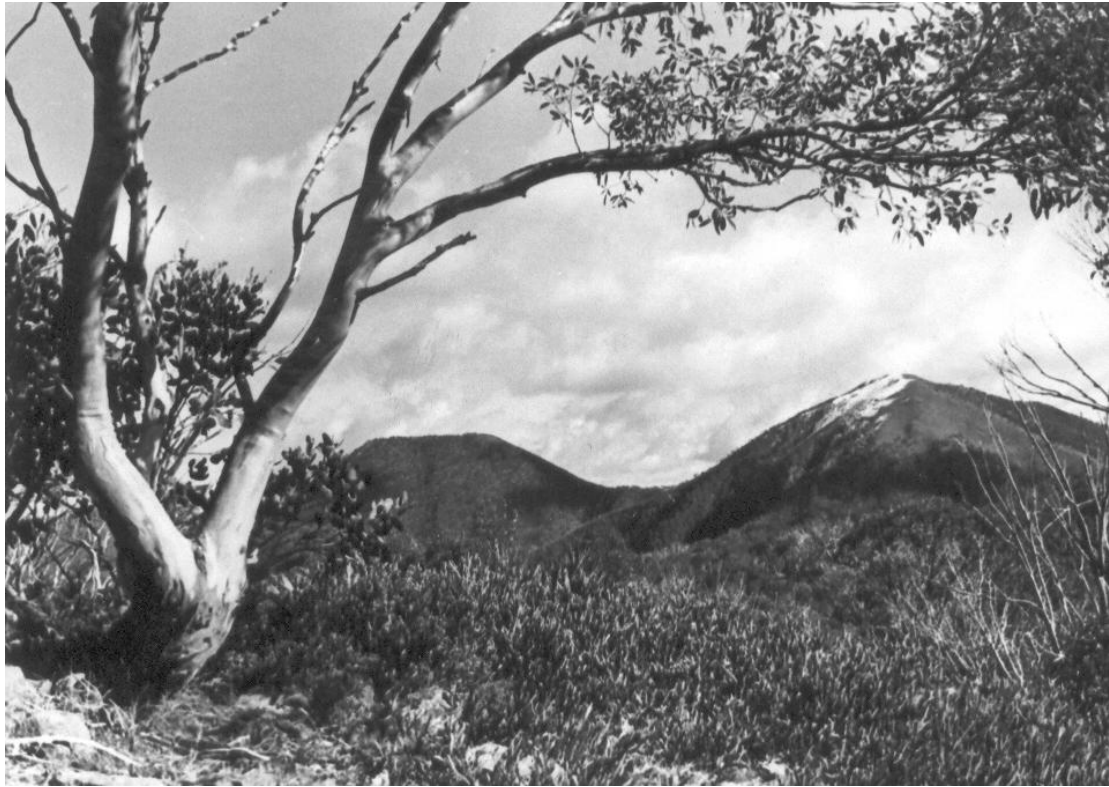


*St Bernard Hospice*



*Frank with old road sign*





*The Twins*



*Snow covered range seen from Mt St Bernard*



*Old mining machinery near Lankey's Plains*

After lunch, we were walking along the road when we heard a man whistling behind us. Soon a man on horseback and two dogs overhauled us. It turned out to be Carl Wraith of Harrietteville who was going down to the Dargo Plains for a final muster of cattle. We walked along with him across Lankey's Plain. The snow at this level (5,000 ft) had almost melted away. Carl was followed by Tom Bibby of Harrietteville who was bringing up the rear with more cattle.

We decided to camp with them in their hut, having walked 17 miles (27 kms). We made a huge stew in their camp oven putting in ham, potatoes, lentils, onions, macaroni and two soup powders. Yarned most of the evening round the camp fire. We decided to stay on a day to get some photos of the muster. Took a flash photo round the fire. Slept on stretcher beds and spent a most comfortable night.



*Cattlemen Carl Wraith and Tom Bibby*



*Gow's Hut on Lankey's Plain*



*Carl Wraith and Tom Bibby*



*Tom Bibby*

**Wednesday, 12 May 1937**

Awoke with a heavy frost on the ground and a cloudy sky. Light snowflakes fell and so did the temperature. Porridge, toast and coffee for breakfast. Both Frank and I had a shave whilst Tom and Carl went out after cattle. Frank had sprained his ankle slightly coming off Bogong and now began to feel it. He applied hot compresses and took the opportunity to rest same. Jim Kinley, one of Treasure's Stockmen came over to help with the muster.

Snowed on and off during the day. At 4pm the sun shone and I was able to take photos of the cattle being driven over the plain, also of Tom Bibby and Jim Kinley riding at the gallop.



*Jim Kinley from Treasure's Station*

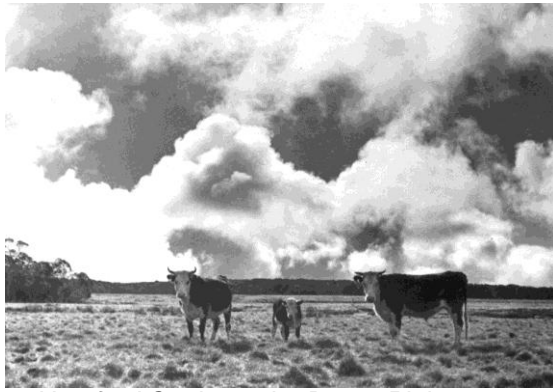


*Carl Wraith's Horse*



*Hereford Cattle on the Dargo Plains*





*Hereford Cattle on the Dargo Plains*



*Salt lick on the Dargo Plains*



*Mustering cattle*



*Tom Bibby at the muster*



*Droving cattle over the Plain*



*Tom Bibby*



*Jim Kinley and Tom Bibby*

Amusing incident of Tom Bibby trying to round up an emu. He set off at full speed and gave chase with three dogs and the emu travelling all out. Round the plain they went with the dogs barking and Tom drawing closer. At last, the emu had only a 400 yard lead but it managed to elude his pursuer by running into a clump of snowgums.

At night, we had a full hut for Jim and Jack Treasure joined the party and this time we made the camp oven full with stew. Tinned fruit followed then the inevitable campfire yarns and experiences. At 10pm the two Treasure boys and Jim Kinley mounted their horses in pitch blackness and set off at the gallop across the plain to Treasure's Station, two miles away.

Frank and I, as on the previous night, were accommodated with two camp stretchers and slept well.

**Thursday, 13 May 1937**

Arose at 7am. Carl got breakfast whilst Tom caught the horses and saddled them. At 8am the two horsemen set off for Lankey's Plain and the stockyard, beginning the homeward trek of 23 miles to Harrietville.

Frank and I washed up and tidied the hut and followed on at 9am. At 11.30am we caught up with the cattle, 109 of them. There would have been 110 only a huge bull had broken out of the stockyard during the night. Tom Bibby with two dogs rode ahead of the slow moving column of Herefords to prevent them stringing out.



*Walking the Dargo Track to St Bernard*



*Walking the Dargo Track*



*Following the cattle towards Harrietville*



*Cattle approaching St Bernard*

Carl Wraith led his horse at the rear. The cows with calves were last and gave a lot of trouble, frequently turning on the dogs and kicking them. At 2pm we reached St Bernard Hospice, 10 miles, and there joined the main Omeo-Harrietville road and commenced our descent. It was very nippy in the wind and Frank and I donned plus-fours over the shorts and put on warm pullovers and jackets.

It was a slow job walking behind the cattle and we were glad when, at 5pm, Carl Wraith's brother overhauled us in his truck. He had been up to Hotham Heights and was bringing back a load of building material, also Keown, Chief of the Vic Railways Refreshment Services.

He drove us into the Star Hotel Harrietville where we all partook of a rum and raspberry drink. We had a good meal and sat in front of a huge log fire in the bar parlor, listening to arguments between Chivers the Hotelkeeper, Keown and Vic Wraith. They imbibed frequently during conversations. Frank and I retired to bed as early as we had to leave at 6am on Friday. There were hot water bottles in the beds.

### **Friday, 14 May 1937**

Awoke at 5am and left by bus for Wangaratta at 6am. Drizzling rain farewelled us. At 8.30am we arrived at Wangaratta and had two breakfasts in the Railway Refreshment Rooms. The Second Division of the Sydney Express left at 9am and we had as a travelling companion a Naval man from the "Waterhen" named Ashley-Browne.

Arrived at Spencer Street at 12.40pm and so completed the holiday.



# A Holiday in North Eastern Victoria



Prepared by Bob Wilson