

# ORMOND SKI CLUB



## NEWSLETTER

May 2010

*The "Odds and sods fixing stuff work party" issue...with photos!*

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### The AGM

The new committee:

President: Meg Casey

Secretary: Tom Nairn

Treasurer: Rohan Hodges

Membership: Geoff Markley

Bookings: Ash Tuck

Food: Katherine Seal

Recruitment: Ginny Spring

Newsletter: Ross Cutler

**The bank:** The club has about \$130K in the bank and if we run to budget will accumulate approx \$70K more. That means we will be in a position to renovate in 2011-2012. The plan is to draw up some rough sketches and put them up in the lodge for people to talk about.

**The Troedel-Robson show at the AGM:** At the meeting foundation president Andrew Troedel together with Andrew Robson put forward a motion without notice to ask the committee to investigate whether the current membership arrangements suited the club now and into the future.

They also proposed another motion asking the committee to revisit the matter of work party credits.

The motions stimulated spirited discussion. Both Messers Troedel and Robson are life members who have served the club solidly for more than forty years. No-one would ever question their good will and commitment toward the club. But here were two life members suggesting that the club might give up the notion of life membership and indeed ask life members to pay fees.

The debate that followed was echoed later at the committee meeting in April. While it is true that the club forgoes some membership income from the life members it is also true that without the original

capital injection provided by the life members the club would likely not be here. The life member's capital provided the backbone that enabled the club to borrow the funds from the National Bank of Australasia (it was in 1968-9) to build the lodge.

Troedel and Robson argued that to facilitate the original formation of the club life memberships were offered. To encourage construction of the lodge accommodation discounts were offered as an incentive to attend. They spoke in support of the notion that the club had met its obligations to members in these areas. These elements could be abolished over a period of, say, five years.

Several members spoke to this effect. Others mentioned that although the life membership amount seems relatively little now, in 1969 \$400 was a lot of money. Len Allen recalled borrowing the funds from an aging aunt and taking a hundred years to pay the money back. However the weight of opinion both at the AGM and at the committee meeting was that the life members essentially cost the club nothing. In addition many of them pay subscriptions for their wives. Important as they have been to the club there are not all that many life members. The club has about 320 members of which 53 are life and honorary life members.

Further the club values the contributions and engagement of the life members. The thought of alienating them through an action that might be described as penny pinching is an anathema to many. Some saw it as a potentially ungenerous act belittling to how the club sees itself.

It was not lost on the committee that, in the unlikely event that it was inclined, changing the articles and getting the matter through a general meeting of the club would be very difficult. Possibly something worse than the great spa spat of the last century.

The debate about work party credits was equally vigorously contested. Troedel and Robson thought that credits from work party contributions might be available for a certain period. People enjoy going to the mountains and to the work parties. Perhaps the discounts create an unnecessary drain on the budget. Leigh Heard argued that the discount is relatively

small beer compared to the time and cost of the work party contribution and he for one appreciates the input from the members who built the hut and continue to maintain and renovate it. He does not begrudge the discount. There are relatively few high discount members and even fewer who actively and frequently use the club so the impact of implementing this measure on budget may be small.

In response to the motion that passed at the AGM the committee is looking at the numbers from the club's data bases and will come to a decision regarding a response over the coming months.

**Bookings:** Members will recall last year that bookings in a couple of peak periods sold out in hours. To avoid this unseemly rush and enable members to book a place in their own lodge before guests, the committee staggered bookings. Now general bookings are open to pretty much anyone who is financial. While bookings slowed in the first weeks as members made their choices, by the time guests had booked the club was up from 700 bed nights to 1100 bednights. This is within past expectations. Our budget for the year is about 1800 beds and there are still weekend spaces available most weekends.

The staggering of bookings has been successful but we also suspect that Ash Tuck, in speaking personally with members about their group booking needs has managed a fairly painless arrangement that has meant most people can take their guests skiing from the lodge in a week that fits their timelines.

**From the Membership officer:** There are still some members who haven't paid subs! No subs paid = not being able to book. Please contact the Membership Officer if you have any questions. [general@ormondskiclub.com.au](mailto:general@ormondskiclub.com.au)

**Member area on Website:** A reminder that the Members' area on the website is accessed using your email address as your user name. You need to be able to login to the Members' area to book the Lodge. If you don't have a login, please contact the Membership Officer.

**Lodge availability during the ski season.**

The lodge availability page on the website shows real-time how many bednights are booked for each night. During the ski season, if bednights become available due to a cancellation, these will be posted on the website so be sure to keep checking the website if you're wanting to book at a time when the Lodge is currently fully booked. You can also contact the Bookings Officer to go on the waiting list for your preferred dates so that in the event of cancellations, you can be added.

**Lockers:**

The Club purchased three new lockers and these have been allocated. If you want to be added to the waiting list for a locker, please contact the Membership Officer to go on the waiting list. If you are no longer using your locker, please advise the Membership Officer so it can be re-allocated.

**Work parties – Anzac day:**



There was steady rain, biting wind and 16 tonnes of wood to be moved before things got very seriously wet. Piece of cake but we did miss the Anzac day service. Swinburne and McKewan would not have been impressed.



Kelly Tuck, (Aka Roxy) with kindling.



Job partly done: Ash Tuck and Andrew Baker.



Team wood Neil Stabb, Roxy and Karral Miller

Members will find a reorganised sound system and shelves, new couches and seating configurations. The rec room has new toys. We have fixed things that stopped working, firmly attached basins and rails, fixed doors and heaters and will install new bunk beds and rails. Bunk room #7 has been renovated and it is now a 4 bed room (double plus two bunks). Keep this in mind when booking. We will, this year, have new coffee tables made by member Neil Stabb.

There will be a tradies only work party later in May but those wanting work party days can join the big clean on opening weekend. Kelly, Andrew and Nathan have already degrotted the stoves.

**Students' week:** President Meg Casey and Ginny Spring recently spoke with current Ormondians about Ski week and club membership. We want to make ski week fun and we want it to be inclusive. The committee is mulling over the options. Ski week is the club's major recruiting drive and returns the club annually to its roots. Renewal is something the club has managed successfully over its life and students' week has been an important part of this.

**Wireless internet** access will be available in the hut this year. Your editor laments the possibility of the lodge dining room tables resembling Qantas club tables but it was pointed out that people are just as likely to be sharing their skiing photos and that the editor can be damned unsociable reading his paper or when he snores in front of the fire.

**The survey:** The quick and dirty synopsis is that while only 19 people responded most of the respondents are happy with the lodge and its fees. There was strong support for new carpet but little support for ensuites. Wireless got the nod (11-7) but TV even in the rec room went down 12-3 (undecided =4). Of some interest was that people were happy for members to be levied in terms of compulsory bed nights to finance club improvements (11/5).

Many members added helpful and insightful comments. A sample follows:

- "Reduce numbers during peak times"
- "A commercial coffee machine"
- "An OH&S friendly kitchen with a dishwasher that works and new stoves"
- "A reading room, quiet area for people who need to catch up with work – they might stay a day or two longer if they could."
- "More wind protection around the spa"
- "New ceiling upstairs" – (probably a given –ed)
- "Safety rails for bunk beds" – being done!
- "Return copies of old log books to the hut"
- "Provide more comfortable bedrooms so I don't have to climb up to the top bunk"
- "No laptops in the dining area"
- "Make sure all the heaters work" – it's been a problem but we have had a plumber in several times over the summer.
- "Improve the food handling"
- "Decent water glasses" - honestly we do try
- "Make the rec room nicer" - Done
- "Stop the doors from slamming"
- "Employ a manager"
- "Ormond is like no other lodge – long may it continue"
- "Get rid of the spa" (who said the spat was dead?)
- "Affordable, communal, comfortable skiing"
- "Change the position of the front door"
- "Find the club photo albums"

"Proper tidy up of tools area"

**If you've lost the downstairs fridge:** *it's in the laundry now...we now have three new lockers*

### **The Mountain: MHRMB:**

#### **Site rentals**

A synopsis of a on open meeting with the MHRMB....from Geoff Markley who attended. There was a lot of discussion regarding the site rentals and the valuations. The main thrust of the club representations was that the Valuer General valued all sites using the same formula with no distinction between commercial and non-profit member lodges. RMB response was that this was laid out in leases, the leases didn't differentiate between site usage and every club had signed the lease. Therefore RMB (which isn't a party to the lease arrangements) couldn't really do anything.

- There was mention that one club had inserted in their new lease agreement a clause which said that if a club is a non-profit club, if it ceased to operate it couldn't then on sell the lease to a commercial lease. This was removed from the final lease but added legal costs.
- Seems like average legal costs for lease renewal is around \$2,500.00
- Alpine Resorts Working Group has also raised directly with the Minister and Alpine Resorts Council the inequity of treating all leases the same.
- Annual Report

Key financial item was that the "New Hotham" project (re-routing of the road and major development) has been shelved. The financials showed amounts of \$232k in 2008 and \$891k in 2009 were written off. These were the accumulated assets of the work done on this project. If the New Hotham project gets restarted, then these would be returned as assets. RMB will keep all planning permits current so they don't have to re-apply at a future stage.

As RMB have spent approx. \$1m per year on assets since 2004, this means a large depreciation bill and this is reflected in the reports.

- Heavenly valley toilets
- The new toilet block at the top of the Heavenly Valley chairlift will be open for this season. The current drop toilets next to Snake gully hut will be closed. An issue was raised if beginners went up the Heavenly quad how they would safely get down – Mother Johnson's is the only way. \$520k spent on the toilet block which includes all the footings and preparatory

works for the future stage 2 of a new restaurant on the site.

- Walks: Work is continuing on the Aqueduct, 3 huts and Dinner plains walks. Aqueduct and Dinner plains walks will be finished by end summer 2010/11. Dinner Plan track is dual use – bikes/walkers with the other two walkers only.

**People:** **Wayne Stott** at Wildwood makes excellent plonk. I was reminded just how good when Wayne asked me to clean out his ski locker. There were three bottles of wine to share with the work party. It was like a little ceremony – as each bottle was opened we offered a toast to Wayne; 1999 Chardonnay, 2000 Cab franc (fruit exploding) and a cleanskin shiraz to die for – it was a 2002 Wildwood. It is a pity skis and boots don't improve with age like the plonk. Wayne is duelling with prostate cancer. Members will be pleased to know that his spirits are high and his palate in good shape. We wish him well.

**Simon Tranter** is progressing well from his pancreas and kidney transplant operation of last October.

**Pip O'Donnell** is back from Canada and has moved to Sydney (working for Shell I think). **Fi Setchell** has gone radio silent again - toss up whether it is the lovely Jan-Paul or her MBA keeping her busy.

*Every picture...team Hodges 2010Chamonix*



Team Nairn Setchell at Chamonix

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