

The Silver Brumby Club History 1962 to 2011

The Silver Brumby Club did not grow from the traditional group of bushwalking, scouting, alpine touring enthusiasts coming together to form a ski club. In fact the club was formed in 1990, following the refurbishment of the empty Silver Brumby Lodge, as the first public offered private lodge in Thredbo by purchasing shares by interested skiers. The buildings early beginnings were as a commercial lodge built for John Hughes in 1962 by Bela Racsko and has the same roofline as the Thredbo Hotel. John Hughes, an Englishman who had served in the Royal Air Force, had the distinction of being shot down over the North Sea. After the 2nd World War he served in Cypress and was able to indulge in skiing there.

In 1960 Hughes and his wife Pam arrived in Australia from England. In 1961 Dick Dusseldorp and his Lend Lease company purchased the Thredbo Head lease from the original Kosciusko Thredbo Ltd company founded by Tony Sponar, Charles Anton, Geoffrey Hughes, Eric Nicholls and Andrew Thyne Reid after they gained a 99-year lease from the Kosciusko State Park Trust in 1957. John Hughes came to Thredbo as Dusseldorp's first Thredbo manager reportedly selected because of his military background and some familiarity with skiing.

After one year he left the company, but in that time John and Pam had fallen in love with the village and mountains and decided to make Thredbo their home. So they commissioned Hungarian Architect and local builder Bela Racsko to build a commercial lodge for them, that they would manage and make their home. The lodge went up quickly and guests started arriving in what was still a fledgling village.

One of the early guests was Elyne Mitchell of Corryong, a regular visitor to Thredbo and a well known skiing identity and author of the Silver Brumby series of books. With Elyne's consent the new Lodge was named "The Silver Brumby".

Cees Koeman of Kasees Lodge was a neighbour as was Dawn Lucas (Pam Hughes sister in law) of Alpenhorn Lodge, all of whom developed a close neighbourly bond. Dawn, now 92, resides at Merimbula. The lodge contained a large open fireplace which formed a central focus of social activity and harmony in the lodge for its guests.

The Hughes' son Martin (one of 5 children) arrived in Australia in 1973 after 12 years service in the RAF, and took up management of the lodge with his wife Sally. They were to manage the lodge for 8 years before departing for Arrowtown in New Zealand. Martin and Sally now reside at Michelago. Another son, Tony was to manage the lodge for a few years before John decided to put the Lodge on the market. In 1988 the building was purchased by John Dalley who planed to demolish it and build apartments on the site. John and two partners had recently built Kirwin Apartments in Jindabyne and were building the new Lantern Apartments to replace the Lantern Lodge. Work on the Lantern Apartments was running over budget and it was decided it was not viable to proceed with construction of apartments to replace

the Silver Brumby even though design for them had been prepared. An associate of the partners, Brent Dallow, who had spent many years in and about Thredbo, suggested that they turn the then empty building into a private lodge and sell memberships.

Plans for refurbishment dated 30th November 1989 were prepared by John Lane, a Cooma architect. The building was stripped to the frame but with the fireplace remaining in tact.

Brent Dallow prepared the prospectus and began selling membership shares. The club's first season was in the winter of 1990 and Brent Dallow became the first chairman of the Club. In 1994 Malcolm McDonald was elected chairman and a management committee of Heather Mead (bookings) Stephen Schinagel (maintenance) John Murray (maintenance) Annie Erhardt (management/member liaison) Brett Sterling-Levis (secretary) Ann de Vos (treasurer) was formed. David Kennedy, John Beale and Bob Parcel were elected to the committee 1995.

The current Chairman, since 1995, is Brett Sterling-Levis with Ian Chamberlain, Stephen Schinagel (maintenance), Ann de Voss (secretary, management liaison) John Beale (treasurer) and Bob Parcel (race club) being the current committee.

The first lodge managers in 1990 were Caroline and Richard Jones who came to the lodge from Karel's Lodge on the Alpine Way. They were followed by Sonia and Tony Davidson in 1992, coming from Crackenback Cottage. Emma and Nick Chavanne have been managing the lodge since 2002. They came to the Lodge from Muniong Ski Club in Smiggin Holes.

It was not long after 1990 that it became known in Thredbo that the Silver Brumby was a new ski club in Thredbo and in 1992 the club entered its first seven member 'Team Brumby' in the Thredbo Interclub. Interest in recreational ski racing fast developed in the club. A Team Brumby has entered the Interclub every year since and will celebrate 20 years of racing next season. The largest team entered to date was 23 in 1995 with the best result so far being 2nd Champion Club achieved in 2005.

Since 2000 children of club members have been participating in the Thredbo Junior Interclub as Junior Team Brumby. To date their best result has been 3rd place achieved in 2002.

To encourage further participation in recreational ski racing in 1997 the club commenced a race week program and joined with Berghutte Ski club to race together informally as a lead up to the Interclub. From this racing, as well as the competition with Berghutte, the Club Championships for fastest male, fastest female and fastest on handicap were commenced.

In 2007 the race with Berghutte was formalised into the Berghutte – Silver Brumby Challenge, racing for the Val Parcel Challenge Trophy, a restored ski from the 1950's

donated by Val Parcel. This event is somewhat unique as it is a two run best split top five total of racers from each club. This has become a special event with eager competition to have the trophy in their club.

The lodge has 53 beds with ensuite and TV facilities for each room. It provides catered breakfasts and a 3 course dinner during the winter months and the summer holidays. It is open year round with self-catering available in non-catered periods proving popular for members to enjoy the alpine areas outside of the ski season. Our dedicated Lodge managers have enabled us, in the early years, to have more summer guests than the Thredbo Hotel!

Members Bob Parcel and Aileen and Richard Bomball are all strong supporters of the Thredbo Historical Society and this winter arranged a dinner at the Lodge during their race week to celebrate the 150th anniversary of skiing in Australia, at which THS members, Frank Prihoda and Christina Webb were guest speakers.

