

THREDBO ALPINE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 85 | August 2024



Kurt Lance - 2024 Faces of Thredbo

Ron Finneran lost the full use of both his legs and his right arm after contracting polio at 20 months old. He took up skiing in 1972 in Thredbo, managed the Nastar races and in 1978, with Canadian ski instructor Bruce Abel and Australian ski instructor Nick Dean, he formed the Australian Disabled Skiers Federation, now Disabled Wintersport Australia (DWA).

He retired as Executive Director of DWA in January 2010 after 31 years in the role. After receiving his OAM in 2005, he stated; To have had just a small part in profiling the abilities of people with disabilities, be it in recreational activities to the very elite in Paralympic sport, has been an enormously rewarding experience. It all started in Thredbo!!

Presidents Report

The two Faces of Thredbo for 2024 are Kurt Lance and Ron Finneran. TAM is preparing for a huge night, where we can celebrate their lives and contributions.

Dinner and festivities will be located in the Thredbo Kosciuszko Room on Monday 2nd of September. We hope to see you there. Randy & Errol

Kurt Lance is a child of the Holocaust, champion skier, soldier, pioneer of the Australian ski industry, mechanic, successful businessman, refugee, survivor. His life is captured in his biography, *Flame Of Leviticus*. His good mate, Tommi Tomasi will speak on his behalf.



Ron Finneran - 2024 Faces of Thredbo



THREDBO ALPINE MUSEUM

2024 GALA

WINTER DINNER

& Faces of Thredbo Awards

A Fabulous Night of Mirth, Merriment & Celebration!

Celebrating the lives and contributions of

Ron Finneran and Kurt Lance

PLUS Super Raffle with heaps of prizes • Live Auction with special items up for grabs • Surprise Entertainment • Nostalgic Video Presentation: Randy's magical compilation of Thredbo's Yesteryears.

DINNER

Two-course dinner with a complimentary first drink. For dietary requirements, allergies, or special requests, including creating your table of 10 please email: randy@hotshots.net.au

DATE & TIME

Monday, 2ND SEPTEMBER 2024.
Doors open at 5:30 PM for a 6 PM start.
Event concludes at 10 PM.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP OFFER

Exclusive membership offer available when booking online.

VENUE

Kosciuszko Room

DRESS CODE

Dress to Impress!

FOR A GOOD CAUSE

All proceeds raised on the night will go to the Thredbo Alpine Museum Foundation.



Last year's Faces of Thredbo awards were presented by Stuart Diver. See the photos from the event!



Zoe Young Artist

Bernti's Mountain Inn



The Denman HOTEL-THREDBO



Candlelight Lodge



BOOK ONLINE:

Click: www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/events

The Longest Chair Lift - Ranger Station to Charlottes Pass

Audio file Transcript - Edie Swift Interviewer

Today is the 13th of March 2024 and I'm interviewing Jim Eddy, the owner of the Jamberoo Ski Park in Jamberoo, NSW.

The Jamberoo Action Park as it is today was Jamberoo Ski Park when it was formed in 1980. Started out as a dairy farm

Rob 'the owner' was happy but being a dairy farmer and milking about 100 cows a day, after a year of operations, the then Minister for Agriculture a bloke called Don Day, reduced the milk quotas on Jamberoo and took it to the North Coast. So lost about 22% of the income for the farm. It made the farm virtually unviable as a dairy farm losing that sort of income.

He looked around at the other forms of agriculture to pursue, to try and make up the deficit, because that income was needed to pay the debt off the farm. He tried a few things. He tried Chevrolet cattle and that was too slow and wasn't producing enough income. So he had to come up with an alternative. A brother from Wollongong, a very keen and very good snow skier was Peter Fyfe. Peter saw a film called Green Snow, which was the Italian Olympic team, skiing down some slopes in Italy on grass skis in the summer.

Peter came up with this idea and then came to Robert and me and showed us the film, it looked fantastic. It looked like they were having a lot of fun and being able to ski pretty easily. So we imported a dozen pair of skis and gave it a go and invited friends and everyone was having a good time.

So we decided to establish the first grass ski park in the world actually. And that became Jamberoo Ski Park.

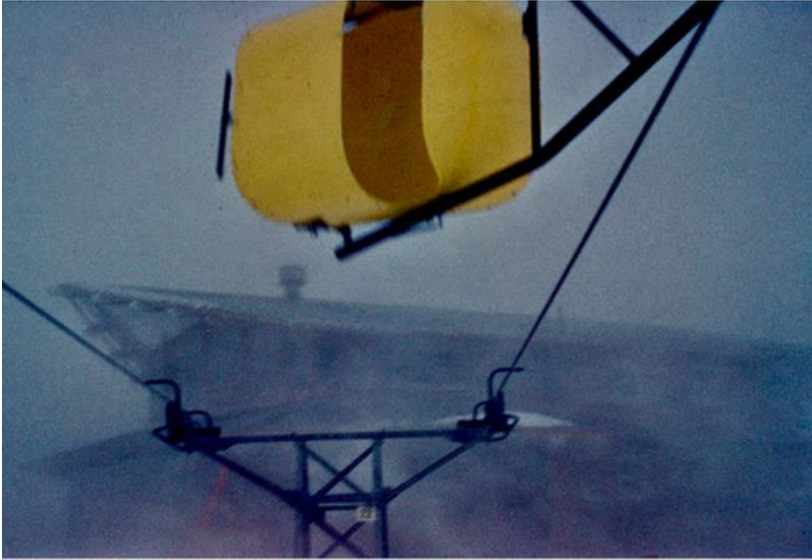
The interesting thing about it was that it had never been done before commercially and it was on a dairy farm, which coexisted with cows, because the milking had to continue. We started with about 30 pairs of skis and hire boots and started a business out of an old garage shed at the farm and it took off!

We got an article in the Sydney Telegraph and people started to flood into this dairy farm and tried grass skiing and so we just kept on buying more skis. After about six months we had about 130 pairs of skis.

We then decided to put a development application into Kiama Council to get the thing approved so that we could continue to grow and buy a chairlift a restaurant and a car park.



The Longest Chair Lift - Ranger Station to Charlottes Pass



the infamous Chalet to Alpine to Way Chairlift on a windy day in 1964 (Author collection)

We went on an interesting journey because we went around to all the finance people that we knew to try and get money to invest into this but no one would take it on.

They were all too frightened to take on this idea of grass skiing, so we ended up going to the Development Bank, which was the Australian Development Bank and one of the conditions on the application was you had to be refused by all other forms of finance!

We could answer that in the positive, so they decided to lend us the money

We then looked around for a chairlift to build and we found that there was an old disused chairlift in the snowy mountains between Charlotte's pass and the Ranger station at Thredbo.

This chairlift was actually an old Muller chairlift located between the Ranger station. It was 3 components that went up from the Ranger station at Thredbo to Stillwell Mountain and then across the top of the mountain range and down to Charlotte's Pass. It worked in two ways. One was to transfer people from Thredbo to Charlotte Pass and back again.

Because the road to Charlotte's pass wasn't very good, it operated also as a ski lift, so people could ride it and then ski to the bottom. It was a very ambitious project! It was the longest chairlift in the world as it was about 5 1/2 miles long, a huge construction, ending up being £1.2 million in those days. I think that today's equivalent of about \$50 million, so it was a huge undertaking to build it.

It opened on opening weekend of ski season 1964. Unfortunately, there were a number of problems with it; one was the length of it which made very difficult for it to be viable, being 5 1/2 miles long. What's most important, it needs to be an easily groomed slope so that it caters for all ranges of skiers, from the beginners up to the experienced.

Topography had to be good, but this was built across a mountain range, so it went through two valleys, and had a lot of flat ground, which wasn't suitable for skiing.

It was also in the most exposed area in the mountain ranges of Kosciusko, so it suffered winds that were more than 100 kilometres an hour.

As it was a long a journey to sit in a chair, people would freeze before they got to the end of it. On the high wind days they ended up building fibreglass shrouds that went over the chairs to protect people from the wind. But they acted like a big sail, so when the wind really got up, these chairs used to do cartwheels on the hauling rope.

The Longest Chair Lift - cont...

It was, you know, terrifying!

Kosciusko Chalet, who was the company that was commissioned to build the chair, ended up going into administration in 1965, because the chairlift was not viable, they borrowed too much money than needed because there was a restaurant at several stations and needed about 25 people just to operate this chairlift.

With the company going into receivership, they abandoned the whole project and left the National Parks and Wildlife with a chair lift hanging across the mountain range.

NPWS looked around for people to try to get rid of it and take it off the mountain! They didn't have any success at that, so it sat there for quite a long time.

We got introduced to it by a fellow called Murray Copsey, who owned Snowfield contractors. He had an engineering Company, and their role was to build and maintain chairlifts in the in the snow. NPWS approached him to help get rid of the chairlift but ended up auctioning it.



Jamberoo Action Park @Jamberoo NSW

Murry made a bid of \$10,000. With no guarantees about removing it, he just said, look, there's some parts on there that were worthwhile purchasing, so I'll buy the chairlift. So he went in with the team and dismantled the chairlift and transported it out of the park by helicopter.

At that time we started a relationship and he said, I can design something for you and build it at Jamberoo, so we agreed to a price for Murray to do that and build and design a grass ski park, and we built in a record time of about four months, with all the components. We modified the chairs a little bit as we didn't need the fibreglass shrouds. We built it on our site at Jamberoo, been operating now since 1980, carrying about 20 million passengers over about 40 odd years, both grass skiers and tourist traffic toboggan riders.

So that's the history of the chairlift and establishing our grass ski park, now Jamberoo Action Park.

For the full transcript of this Audio Story, on the Longest Chairlift, click on our TAM Website. The above transcript is a summary of Edie Swift interviewing Jim Eddy and has been edited for our TAM Newsletter.

FACES OF THREDBO HONOUR BOARD

Recognises those who have made significant contributions to skiing and or the development of Thredbo as an alpine resort.

Those honoured are recognised below;

2014

Leonhard Erhartert
Barry May
Michael Milton
Sasha Nekvapil
Frank Prihoda

2015

Charles Anton
Dick Dusseldorp
Cees Koeman
Tony Sponar
Tommy Tomasi

2016

George Freuden
Geoffrey Hughes
Andrew Thyne Reid

2017

Elyne Mitchell
Rudi Schatzle

2018

Albert van der Lee
Bela Racsko

2019

Ludwig Rabina
Wayne Kirkpatrick

2021

Kim Clifford
Bob Arnott

2022

Michelle & Heinz Reichinger

2023

Steve Breathour
Ian Foster



IN THE MUSEUM - Book Review

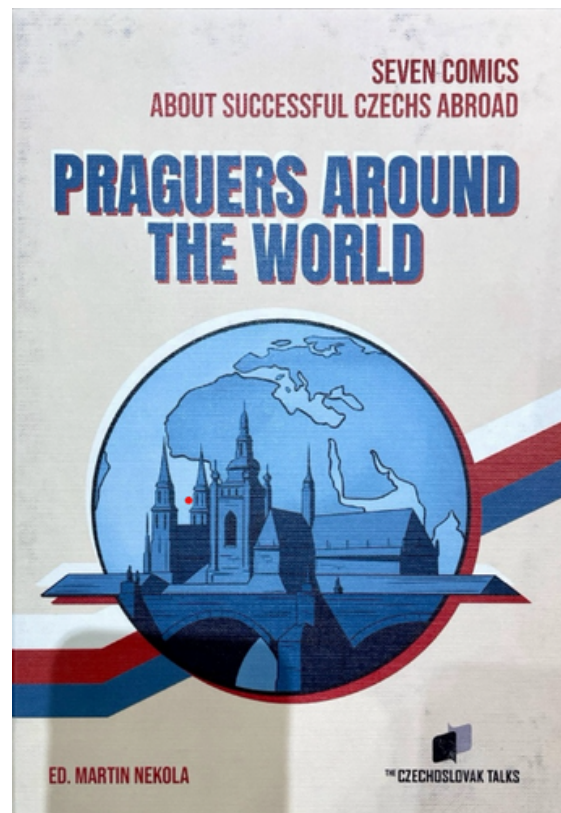
Czech Footsteps in Thredbo

'Praguers around the world' Hardcover Comic Book

Martin, a social historian from Prague was invited by the Embassy of the Czech Republic to visit Australia in 2020 to attend TAM's 'Czechs Footsteps in Thredbo' meeting, and as we know the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic intervened, so alas, the meeting never happened.

In Martin's own words about the book. Dr. Martin Nekola is a historian from Prague, Czech Republic who has been doing research on the notable Czechs abroad for many years. He runs a project called the Czechoslovak Talks (www.czechoslovaktalks.com/en), collecting inspiring life stories of those Czechs who left the country and settled in various countries all over the world, including Australia. He prepared three graphic novel books to make the topic more attractive for younger generations. The second one, 'Praguers around the World' was published in Prague in 2020 and presents, among others, the fascinating story of professional skier and Thredbo legend Tony Sponar (1920-2002).

Such a classic comic book is a great way to introduce your kids, or grandkids, to some of the most intriguing societal AussieCzech alpine history.



Introduction

It is now 73 years since George Day and his family left their positions as managers of the Chalet at Charlotte Pass. In the meantime, the sport of skiing, the ski industry and ski resorts have evolved to such an extent that a skier from the 1930's or 1940's, returning to earth today, could scarcely believe the changes that have taken place. Thus it is easy to forget all our current progress has been built on the backs of pioneers such as the Days.

IN THE MUSEUM - Book Review cont....

George and Eva Day managed the Chalet at Charlotte Pass from 1932 to 1949 when it was one of only two ski resorts in the Kosciuszko area, the other being the Hotel Kosciusko, and all the major championships, alpine and nordic, state, national and international occurred at the Chalet. It was a time of great development during which George and Eva faced several extensions of the Chalet, the building of the "ski hoist", the Chalet fire and rebuild, problems of oversnow transport, building the spur road to the Chalet, rebuilding the "ski hoist", lost and injured skiers, unbooked skiers and the war years. During this time George became the best alpine skier in Australia and produced a triple alpine Olympian, son Bill, and two Australian representatives, son Gordon and daughter Margaret.

After leaving Charlotte Pass the family became heavily involved in farming, first at Talbingo and then at Tumut and Wantabadgery before George and Bill finished up at Wagga Wagga training horses while Gordon and wife, Nonie, and their children managed properties at Junee and Young.

This is a story of a very successful pioneering family with its roots firmly embedded in the snow and its branches in the land.

Note: Peter's book can be purchased for \$30 through the Thredbo Alpine Museum and the Perisher Historical Society.



THERE ARE ONLY LIMITED COPIES AVAILABLE, IT MAY BE WISE TO ACQUIRE YOUR COPY SOON, AS IT COULD TAKE SOME TIME TO REORDER AND SHIP FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC. IT'S EASY - JUST TO SHOP DIRECTLY AT THE THREDBO ALPINE MUSEUM DURING YOUR VISIT OR GO ONLINE TO OUR NEW WEBSITE - THREDBOALPINEMUSEUM.ORG.AU

Our Volunteers & Feedback

David & Kim
Adelaide SA
Nice!

Eleanor & Joshua
Canberra
Love it!

Celina
Argentina
Beautiful

Coates & Lambe
Carindale QLD
Very Interesting :)

Mariani & Ronaldo
Marsfield
Cool :)

Kris
Thredbo
Best Ski Museum Ever :)



Deb & Dawn
Ballina
Interesting Stories

Eleanor & Joshua
Canberra
Love it!

Nathan, Owen, Siana
Sydney
Cool!

Matthew
CHHS NSW
Cool!

Kerry
Cronulla
Interesting, thank you!

Annette
Wahroonga
Fun to look at!

Launch of the new TAM Website

Launch of the new TAM Website incorporating the TAM “Collection”

It has been many years in the making, but we have finally brought the extensive TAM Collection to our members and wider readership.

This collection was started pre 2000 by one of our long-standing members Mr Graham Holloway and it has grown under the expertise and curation of Christina (Chrissy) Webb.

The collection was always digital in nature, but the software did not lend itself to broad dissemination. This has now changed with the new website.

One of our priorities now is to start taking pictures of each item to add to the more than 3500 items curated under a number of categories and subcategories.

Changes within the website include a simpler membership payment system, a donation button for the Foundation, quick links to Facebook and Instagram and of course access to the Collection.

We have excellent coverage of the Faces of Thredbo, and the various stories in the History of Thredbo which makes for great reading.

The site is very computer and mobile friendly so feel free to review on your mobile and desktop. The Gallery area will continue to grow with themed photos as well as videos. We have also incorporated a much-improved search button, so please feel free to explore.

Check us out on www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au

Obviously, this is very much a work in progress, and we are using a recent grant to pay for some much needed data entry.

The Committee would also like to take this opportunity to thank Chrissy Webb for her many years of dedication to the Collection and just acknowledge that she will be very much missed.

Andrew Koczanowski
Committee Member



Events & 2024 TAM Committee

Please note the on-line shop gives a 10% discount to members via a Promotional code "Member2024".

In the future the Committee would like to see more regular FB and Insta stories promoting specific subjects or items from the Collection.

Monetising some items from the Collection will also be looked at, with member discounts being heavily promoted. I.e. Photos or videos will be made more readily available via our online shop.

All this social media takes time and effort, as well as recruiting volunteers to man the physical Museum. If anyone feels able, or has the time, or simply wants to learn more about social media, please feel free to contact your committee.

We need you and want you.

Andrew Koczanowski
Committee Member



TAM COMMITTEE

Co-Presidents: Errol Hanlon 0439 646 313
Randy Wieman 0408 453 632

Vice President:

Wayne Kirkpatrick 0184 766 484

Secretary: Maureen Roberts 0490 365 987

Treasurer: Raylene Jarvis 0414 679 409

Committee: Alan Fredericks 0417 401 403

Andrew Koczanowski 0401 958 321

Judy Lenne 0419 973 306

Brian Farmer 0428 619 788

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Randy Wieman, Alan Fredericks, Kris Laird Hardman

If you have a story for the newsletter, please email it to Alan @ alanf@bigpond.com

2 September 2024

TAM Dinner and Faces of Thredbo Awards

Kosciusko Room Thredbo Alpine Hotel

8th, 9th, 10th November

AASHA Conference Falls Creek Vic

Saturday 16 November TAM Annual General Meeting Thredbo

Venue will be emailed to TAM Members

We thank our team of community volunteers that have enabled the doors to be open throughout this winter season.

Membership & Opening Times

Become a TAM member today

Individual, Family, Lodge & Corporate memberships available.

TAM MEMBERSHIP FEES 2024/25

Individuals

1 year \$45
5 years \$225
10 years \$450

Family

1 year \$60
5 years \$300

Group/Club Lodge

Annual \$220/year

Corporate

Gold: \$1500/yr
Silver: \$1000/yr
Bronze: \$500/yr

**Membership payments direct deposit
Thredbo Alpine Museum
BSB 032 728 Acc. 106314**



<https://www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/membership-payment>

Winter Opening Times

12 – 4 pm

OPEN DAILY subject to volunteer availability

TAM Membership 2024 renewal now due....support our local Thredbo Alpine Museum now and renew your membership now.

Business/Corporate Membership is available too!

Become a TAM member today online

<https://www.thredboalpinemuseum.org.au/membership-payment>



INVITATION

Contributions for the newsletter from the TAM membership are very welcome.

Please forward them by email to Alan Fredericks: alanf@bigpond.com