

BRINDABELLA SKI CLUB'S TIOBUNGA LODGE – GUTHEGA FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW

An Historical Perspective 1951 - 2008

As part of the redevelopment of Tiobunga, Heritage Reports were prepared for the Committee for the Principal Certifying Authority in connection with requirements relating to the Development Application for the redevelopment of Tiobunga. The material below is a composite and amended version of these reports. It covers two periods - the years 1951 to 2007 during which Tiobunga was purchased and several extension and refurbishments were undertaken; and the years 2007 to 2008 during which old Tiobunga was demolished and the new Tiobunga was built. It is considered that this material might be of interest to members as an historical record of the various phases through which the lodge has gone since the Club first acquired it in 1955.

1951 TO 2007 – ACQUISITION, EXTENSIONS AND REFURBISHMENTS

Historical Background

The original Tiobunga Lodge was one of a number of cottages which, together with a series of barrack style buildings, were erected by Selmer Engineering Pty Ltd, a Norwegian company which had won the contract to construct the Guthega Dam and the Guthega Power Station. The cottages were erected around 1951 to house the company's engineering and administrative staff and their families during the construction of the dam. The barrack style buildings were designed to house the company's workers.

The cottages, in modular component form, were brought out from Norway because of the shortage of building materials in Australia following the end of World War II.

Following completion of the dam all but three of the cottages and all the barracks were removed by the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority (SMHEA). These three cottages were later destined to become the homes of the Snowy Mountains Authority (SMA) Ski Club (now the Tate Ski Club), the then YMCA Ski Club of Canberra (now the Brindabella Ski Club [BSC]) and the Sydney University Ski Club. Why these three cottages were left in Guthega whilst all other buildings were removed is unknown. Perhaps members of the nascent SMA Ski Club were able to convince the Authority that they needed one of the cottages to operate in the snow fields.

Acquisition of Tiobunga

The then Vice-President of the Club, Doug Anderson, negotiated with the SMA to obtain one of several huts becoming available at Guthega, Mungyang and Island Bend. On 24 May 1955, the SMA officially offered the Club Hut "C" at Guthega, the centre cottage of the three remaining buildings in the area. The three cottages were located on the same terrace on the western slope of Mount Blue Calf. The lease charge was \$368 per annum. Guthega was an area the Club had visited for the first time in August 1952.



Photo of the original Tiobunga taken very shortly after the Ski Club took possession of it circa 1955¹



Photo of Tiobunga circa 1956

¹ All three cottages were of a similar design and their colour was that of weathered Baltic pine.

Expansion

The Guthega cottage was not, however, the Tiobunga of 2007. There were two six-bunk rooms, a two-bunk room off the kitchen, and crawling room for 8 or so in the ceiling. There was little competition for the ceiling accommodation which was either freezing cold on arrival during winter, or appallingly hot during the course of a winter weekend, and certainly never comfortable. The original lounge room, measuring 10' x 12', accommodated up to 20 people in overcrowded conditions. With a roaring open fire this generated a cozy togetherness and often as not became unbearably hot in winter.

As the Club's membership grew, the limitations of the lodge's accommodation soon became apparent. In the summer of 1958 – 59, the Club extended the lounge room of Tiobunga 16 feet to the south of the then existing building to overcome the problem of overcrowding.

The photographs below show the various stages of the project's progress.



Opening the original lounge room towards the south - summer of 1958 - 59



Installing the - ceiling summer of 1958 - 59



Putting the finishing touches to the extension – Easter 1959



Photo of Tiobunga circa 1959 - 60 after the extension of the living room (Sydney University Ski Club Lodge on the right of Tiobunga²).



Photo of Tiobunga circa 1959 - 60 after the first extension to the south

The general location of the three lodges is shown in the photograph below taken around 1963 after all their external walls had been painted from their original drab weathered Baltic Pine colour.



Photo of SMA Ski Lodge (left), Tiobunga (centre) & Sydney University Ski Club Lodge (right) circa 1963

As the membership of the Club increased, it became evident that it needed to provide additional accommodation for its members. This could only be done through the construction of an additional lodge

² The Sydney University Ski Club moved to Thredbo in the early 1960's thus leaving the building vacant.

somewhere. The question of where to build, however, was not an easy one to resolve. The difficulties of access to Guthega, the deficiencies of uphill transport and the lack of ski instruction at Guthega made many members wish to build at Perisher or Thredbo. After much deliberation, a decision was taken to build at Guthega. The result was the construction of Kyilla Lodge 1959 and early 1960.

The decision to build Kyilla was critical to the next phase in the development of Tiobunga. With the improved accommodation available in Kyilla, there was a growing dissatisfaction amongst members of the Club with the sub-standard accommodation provided in Tiobunga.

In addition, the then Kosciusko State Park Trust indicated Tiobunga to be unsightly, structurally unsound, and a contravention of the Trust's building regulations. It declared that Tiobunga had to be brought up to the Trust's standards within five years.

The result was a decision by the Club to refurbish and extend Tiobunga. The Club approved plans for a single storey structure which would extend south onto part of the area then occupied by the Sydney University Ski Club lodge. The Club successfully tendered for the then vacant University Ski Club Lodge and the right to demolish it. Much of the material from that lodge was subsequently used in the extension and redevelopment of Tiobunga. Re-development work on Tiobunga Lodge commenced in the summer of 1962 – 63.



Dismantling the Sydney University Ski Club Lodge - summer of 1962 – 63

From leased accommodation for 16 in 1959, the Club went to two lodges accommodating 47, in 1963.

The building programs of 1960 - 1963 had tied the Club firmly to Guthega, but the old problems - lack of ski instruction, lack of uphill transport and difficulty of access remained. Ski instruction had always been a major problem. In 1960 a member discovered Walter Spanring, an instructor from Austria, who had just arrived in Australia. He was invited to join the Club and come to Guthega that year. He provided more assurance of steady instruction than could otherwise have been possible. He was responsible for teaching several generations of older and young Guthega skiers.



Tiobunga in the early stages of its redevelopment - summer of 1962 – 63



Completed Tiobunga - circa Summer 1965 - 66



Completed Tiobunga With an added Stone Work entry area & Furnace/Store Room - circa Summer 1995

Following the extension of Tiobunga in the summer of 1962 – 63 several subsequent internal refurbishments were undertaken in order to meet new fire regulations and to make the lodge more comfortable for members.

The Temporary Roof

In the late 1990s the Club commissioned a structural engineer to undertake a survey of the structural integrity of Tiobunga with particular emphasis on the lodge's roof. In his report the engineer indicated that Tiobunga's roof was not strong enough to support the weight of snow that could build up on it under certain snow conditions. Under these conditions, the lodge could be rendered structurally unstable. Such conditions could arise when a substantial cover of snow on the roof became saturated by rain – a condition which could prevail "at a statistically high occurrence". In addition lateral loads caused by snow creep down the hill behind the lodge could become severe thus exerting excessive pressures on the walls on that side of the lodge.

As a result, under the terms of its lease and its 'duty of disclosure' to its insurer, the Club was obliged to advise the National Parks and Wildlife Service and its insurer of the developments. The Club was therefore compelled to close the lodge to members for the 2001 ski season to ensure the safety of its members.

Following consultations with a structural engineer, the Club decided that a short term solution to the problem would be to erect a temporary roof over the existing lodge to alleviate the snow build up behind it. This proposal was put to the National Parks and Wildlife Service which agreed to it subject to a condition that the Club rebuild Tiobunga as soon as possible.

Following the construction of the temporary roof the Club, was in a position to re-open the lodge to accommodate its members for the 2002 ski season.

Below are a series of photographs showing the structural framing and completed temporary roof over Tiobunga.



The temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof structural framing looking East from the main road circa – 2001



The temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof structural framing looking West from hill behind Lodge - circa 2001



The completed temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof looking East from the main road - circa 2002



The completed temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof looking South from outside Tate Ski Club Lodge - circa 2002



The completed temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof looking North - circa 2002



The completed temporary Tiobunga Lodge roof looking North - circa 2002

The Significance of Tiobunga to the Development of the Skiing Industry and the Development of the Guthega Ski Resort

From a very early stage in its existence the Club welcomed and included amongst its members a wide range of people including migrants from a variety of nationalities – Norwegians, Swedes, Hungarians, Czechs, Dutch, Swiss, Finns, Poles, Italians, Germans, Austrians and other nationalities. Many of these members had worked in the construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

These migrant members soon became active in almost every aspect of the Club's activities. Many of them were skilled tradesmen who made significant contributions to the Club's building projects and the general development of the Club. Tiobunga played a significant role in the integration of these migrants into the Club and the community generally.

As mentioned above one such member was Walter Spanring. His continued presence in Guthega was to provide a lasting impact in the development of skiing in Guthega and in the development of Guthega as a ski resort. His attachment to the area and his vision for its future, in which he invested such a considerable amount of money, time and effort, must be acknowledged as giving a great boost to skiing in Guthega and Guthega as a ski resort. He operated a rope tow on the northern side of Tate East Ridge until it was destroyed in a violent thunder storm. He subsequently built a T-Bar on the southern side of Mount Blue Calf. He was responsible for the construction of a 'café/coffee bar' at the bottom of this T-Bar. It later became 'The Burning Log Café'. He was involved in the establishment and management of the 'Guthega Hotel'. He later installed a second hand T-Bar on the southern slopes of Mount Blue Cow and thus opened up the well protected 'Cow Pasture' area to skiing.

The many other Austrians who became members of the Club subsequently decided to form their own ski club and to build a lodge in Guthega. This thus was the origin of the Guthega Ski Club and their lodge – the Guthega Lodge.

By this stage, many Club members had married and started families. The children of these members began to frequent both of the Club's Guthega lodges on a regular basis. Tiobunga was particularly popular as it was on the one level which a suitable environment for young children. A number of the Club's older members found the accommodation of young children not to their liking because of the children's sometimes boisterous and rowdy behavior. These members decided to establish their own lodge at Guthega and this was the origin of the 'Blue Cow Ski Club'. So that the Brindabella Ski Club was the catalyst for the formation of two new ski clubs in Guthega together with their accompanying lodges.

These developments were all achieved as a direct result of the Club having established its home at Guthega and its early heavy reliance for accommodation in Tiobunga.

The Historical, Aesthetic, Technical/Research and Social/Associational Attributes of Tiobunga

The historical attributes of Tiobunga have already been addressed above.

In so far as the aesthetic attributes of the Tiobunga are concerned, the building can hardly be said, to be or to have been attractive from an architectural point of view. However, what Tiobunga may have lacked in aesthetics, it more than made up for this as a functional, comfortable and intimate lodge with a capacity for generating a general feeling of warmth and welcoming hospitality, particularly in the living/dining room areas.

As to Technical/Research attributes, the only issue which could possibly be considered to fall into this category is the geotechnical survey work which had to be undertaken prior to commencing the construction of the temporary roof over Tiobunga. The geotechnical work entailed drilling test holes (to quite considerable depths on the terrace) before concrete foundations could be poured for the erection of the vertical steel H piers. This work was required in order to ensure the stability of the roof's piers.

On the Social/Associational attributes, it can be said that the existence of the lodge and the Club resulted in many marriages between members. Many lasting friendships have been made between members of the Club. In addition, it has provided members with the opportunity and benefit of associating and

socializing with a very wide and disparate social group of people – ranging from tradesmen, to senior Commonwealth Public Servants and to a range of professional people who by and large treat each other with consideration, respect and as equals.

Consideration to the Use of Any Existing Building Materials or Components/Items Within Tiobunga in Memory of the Historic Significance of the Lodge and Its Contribution to the Skiing Industry

In the past, some members have considered the possibility of incorporating elements of the existing building into the redeveloped Tiobunga. One item suggested, over social drinks, has been the possibility of using some of the radiata panelling in the Lodge's living room area on one or more of the walls in a new lodge. However, because of the current stringent fire regulations to which the new lodge must now conform this is not a possible.



Tiobunga Living Room showing Radiata Wall Panelling - circa 1985



Tiobunga Living Room showing Radiata Wall Panelling - circa 2005

The Club has given consideration to including one or other of the two existing historic dining tables and their accompanying bench seats (both of which can be seen in the two photos immediately above) in the dining room of the new lodge. The dining tables and bench seats were made shortly after the major southern extension to Tiobunga in 1962 – 63 by a then early member of the Club. Significant discussions about the Club and world affairs generally have taken place between members of the Club at these tables during meals and post-meal socialising. It is possible that the smaller of the tables and its accompanying bench seats could be located in the downstairs lounge room of the new lodge. *(In fact these tables form an important feature in the new dining room in Tiobunga).*

In addition, it is more than likely that the old historic ash ski jumping skis and the cross-country ski skins currently on the walls of the dining/living room areas (see the left hand photograph immediately above) will be incorporated in the wall decor of some areas of the new lodge.

As to Tiobunga's contribution to the skiing industry reference has been made above to its indirect role in the formation of two offspring ski clubs and lodges and to its introduction of Walter Spanring to Guthega.

Although the following may only be of peripheral significance to Tiobunga's contribution to the skiing industry, it should nevertheless not be overlooked. The Ski Club, largely through the availability of accommodation in the lodge, was responsible in fostering and sponsoring members of the Club to participate in a range of skiing championships, national, Inter-Dominion (between Australia and New Zealand), Olympic and in Australian ski training squads. These covered both alpine and nordic championships. A number of the Club's migrant members participated in a number of Australian National Skiing Championships where they acquitted themselves extremely well. The 1957 Balmain Cup team consisted of three Australians, a Czech, an Austrian, an Italian, a Norwegian and a Pole and our 1964 winning team contained members from Poland, Finland, Japan, Norway, Hungary (and even Australia).

Hal Nerdal (a Norwegian) who joined the Club in 1958 won the NSW (1958, 1960) and National (1959, 1960, 1961, 1962) Nordic Championships and represented Australia in the 1960 Olympic Games at Squaw Valley in the USA. Robbie Kilpinnen (a Finn) won the National Langlauf Championship in 1963-64 and in 1964, set a record of 8 hours and 11 minutes in cross-skiing between Kiandra and Mt Kosciuszko. Bev Hannah was a member of the Inter-Dominion Team in 1961 and in 1965 Mark Dudzinski became the youngest person selected for this team, after chalking up an impressive set of wins at various junior championships. Later Heather Minty showed great promise as a competitive skier. In 1969 she was selected in the Inter-Dominion Team. She won the NSW and Australian Junior Championships in 1970 and in both 1969 and 1971 and was selected to train with the Australian National Ski Federation (ANSF) squad in Europe. She came fourth in the Commonwealth Games Ladies slalom held in St Moritz (1971).

The Club also sought to improve its skiing standards without having to rely on imported skills. A Junior Scholarship scheme initiated in 1961, and Junior Training and Junior Championship in 1967 were steps in this direction. Regrettably due to the lack of parental interest the Junior Training program lapsed in 1970. The lapse of this scheme was even more regrettable because it was the Club's example which was subsequently followed by the Australian National Ski Federation, and by some other clubs with great success.

Guthega is ideally located as a jumping off point for ski touring on the Main Range and other areas. This was one of the attractions which drew the Club to Guthega in the first place. In the past touring was more an activity in the Club than in most others, spurred on in the early days by a lack of uphill transport facilities. Touring on the Main Range in the early days was limited by the lack of shelters and the Club, inspired by a number of its members, urged action to repair and stock the old stockmen's huts on the Main Range. In 1966 Tin Hut was repaired by the Club and other huts were made habitable. Organised ski tours started in 1964 and the result was a great increase in the touring fraternity.

In 1957 the Club together with the Canberra Alpine Club were instrumental in the formation of ACT Ski Council, one of the four bodies affiliated with the ANSF. The Club still plays an important role on the Council.

OCTOBER 2007 TO OCTOBER 2008 – TIOBUNGA DEMOLITION OF AND ITS REDEVELOPMENT

Old Tiobunga - The Pre-Demolition Phase

Prior to commencement of the demolition of the lodge, a substantial amount of furniture and fittings in the old lodge had to be removed and stored in the Club's Kyilla Lodge. The purpose of this was designed to salvage as many as possible of these items for use in the new lodge (eg tables, bench seats, etc). The photographs below show the removal of these items. Some items such as mattresses which were not recyclable due to health consideration were discarded.



The Gutting of the Internal Area of the Old Tiobunga (ie Stage One of the “During Removal” Phase)

Work on the demolition of the old lodge commenced in early October 2007. During the internal gutting of the lodge a number of items of historical value were uncovered. When the radiate pine walls of the Living/Dining room were removed, the Baltic pine walls of the original Selma cottage were exposed. The timber on these walls was found to be in pristine condition. Some this timber was salvaged with a view to incorporating some of it in the new lodge in the form of rails for coat hangers, etc. In addition some of the original Norwegian wall insulation was also uncovered. A piece of this was salvaged with the intention of framing it and hanging it on one of the walls of the new lodge as another of many mementos of the old lodge.

The photographs below show these pieces of memorabilia being “cannibalized” from the old lodge.



As a lead up to commencement work on the actual demolition of the lodge, the builders gutted its interior. The photographs below show the gutted interior of the lodge. The photographs immediately below are of the old dining/living room area.



The photographs below show the area formerly occupied by the bedrooms of the lodge. The removal of the interior walls in the former bedroom areas of the lodge was possible because these walls were self standing and not load bearing.



Various Stages of the Demolition Phase (ie Stage Two of the “During Removal” Phase)

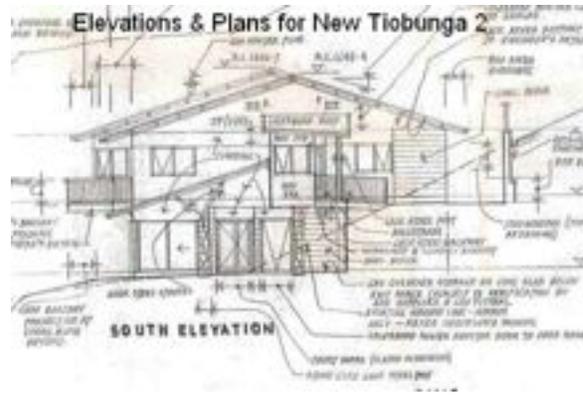
Once the internal walls had been removed demolition of the old lodge commenced. Below are a series of photographs showing various stages of the demolition process.

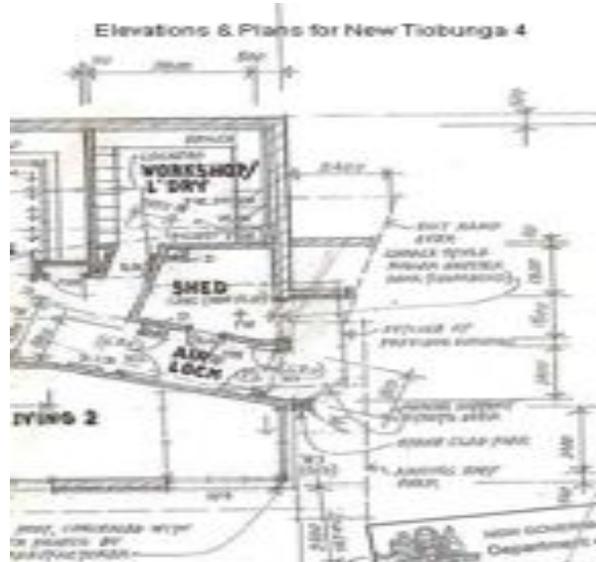
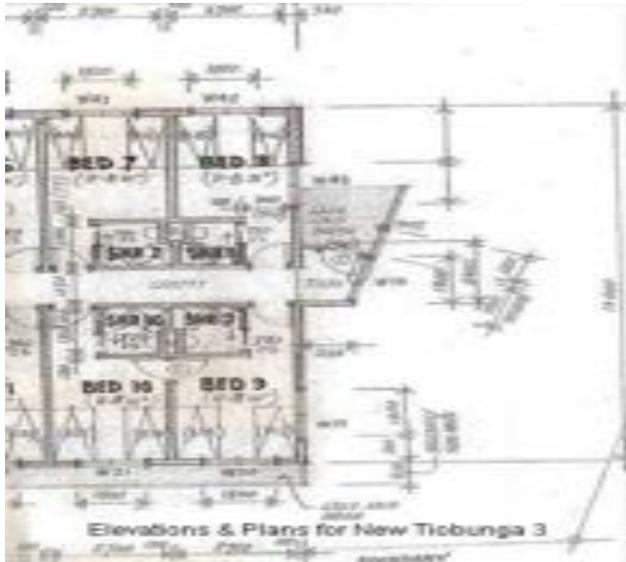




Selected Drawings of the New Lodge

Below are a number of selected drawings of the southern elevation of the proposed lodge together with partial ground and first floor plans of the southern end of the new lodge.





Selection of Photos of the Preparation of the Foundations for the New Tiobunga (ie Stage Three of the “After Removal” Phase)

Below are photographs of the preparation of the site for the commencement of the construction phase of the new Tiobunga.

One of the significant problems associated with the construction of the new lodge related to the need to provide piers down to lengths varying from **X** metres to **Y** metres. The need for these piers was a safety issue associated with the requirement to stabilise the site. The photos shown immediately below show the builders preparing the pier holes.



During the early preparation of the site for construction to commence, a number of problems were encountered. A considerable amount of rain fell in the Guthega area during early work in preparing the site. This was exacerbated by a substantial amount of water outflow from the uphill side of the site. These two factors resulted in sections of the site (particularly in the south-east corner) becoming water logged and literally turning these sections into a quagmire. This resulted in some delays in preparing the site for the pouring of the ground floor concrete slab. The extent to which water logging affected the early construction phases is demonstrated in the photos below.



Some additional problems also arose when Guthega received several fairly heavy snow falls during October and November.



Following resolution of the water logging problem preparation of the site for the pouring of the ground floor concrete slab proceeded relatively quickly. Photos showing these phases are shown below.

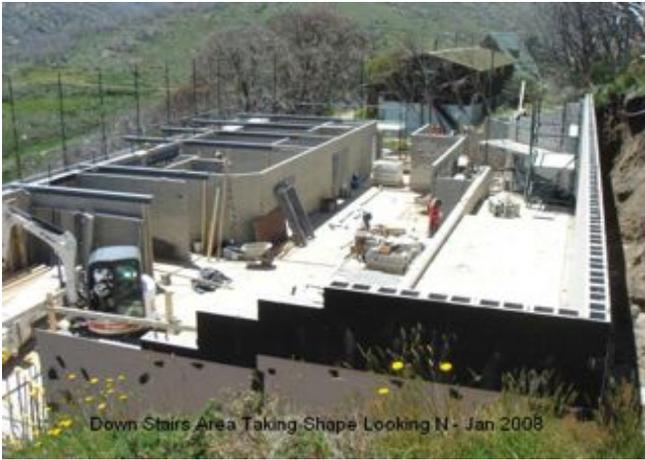




Once the ground floor slab had been poured construction work on the ground floor area proceeded relatively quickly. The photos below show progress on the ground floor walls, etc.



Once the ground floor slab was pour and allowed to set, erection of the walls of the downstairs area of the lodge was able to proceed. Photos of these stages of the construction are shown below.





With the ground floor walls, etc having been erected, work was able to commence on preparatory work for the laying of the concrete slab of first floor of the lodge. The first two photos show the laying of metal supports and reinforcing mesh. The later photos show progress on the erection of the first floor wall framing, cladding, etc.





FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM WALL FRAMING LOOKING SW - FEB 2008



Wall Framing & Corridor on First Floor Looking S - Feb 2008



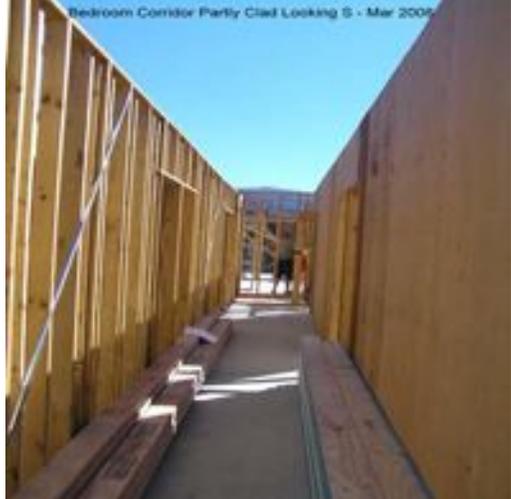
KITCHEN WALL FRAMING LOOKING SE - FEB 2008



Wall Framing for Bedrooms First Floor Looking SE - Feb 2008



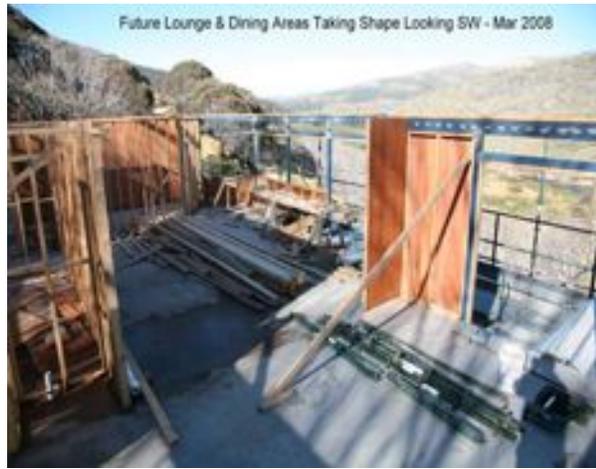
Planned Living & Dining Room Areas Looking NW - Feb 2008



Bedroom Corridor Partly Clad Looking S - Mar 2008



Future Bedroom Party Deck Looking W - Mar 2008



Future Lounge & Dining Areas Taking Shape Looking SW - Mar 2008



The Lounge Room Nook Looking S - Mar 2008



Portion of Dining Room Taking Shape Looking NE - Mar 2008



Northern Portion of Kitchen Taking Shape Looking E - Mar 2008



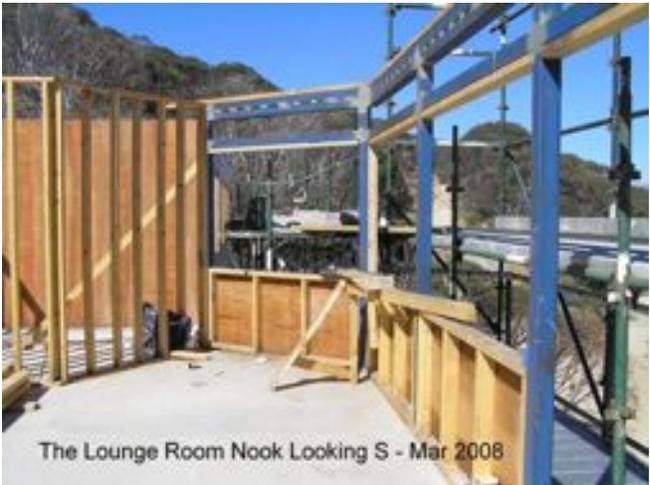
View of Western Part of Future Dining Room Area Looking NW - Mar 2008



Staircase Lounge Room in Course of Construction Looking N - Mar 2008



Staircase Lounge Room in Course of Construction - Mar 2008



The Lounge Room Nook Looking S - Mar 2008



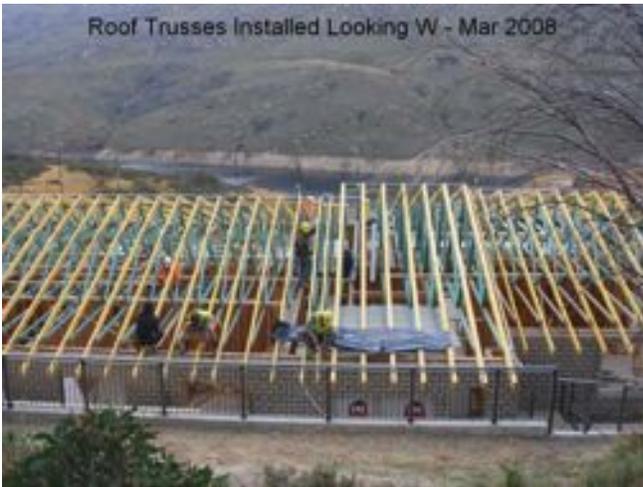
Partially Insulated Walls of First Floor of Lodge Looking NW - Mar 2008



REAR WALL WITH RETAINING WALL - MAR 2008



REAR WALL AREA 1ST FLOOR LOOKING S - MAR 2008







Selected Photos of the Interior Furnishings of and Exterior of the New Lodge





Stored Furniture in Lounge Room - June 2008



Lounge Room Furniture Set Up 1 - June 2008



Lounge Room Furniture Set Up 2 - June 2008



THE FIRE PLACE - JUNE '2008



Wardrobe in Bedroom 1 - June 2008



Wardrobe in Bedroom 2 - June 2008



FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM IN SW CORNER OF LODGE - JUNE 2008



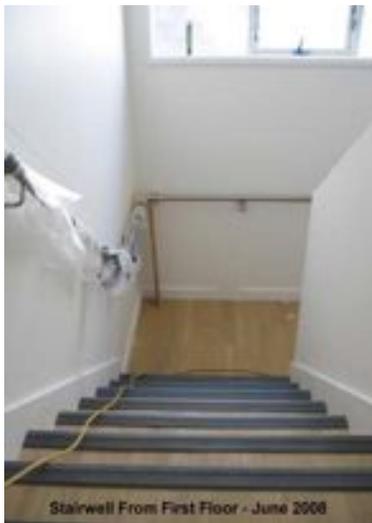
Typical Bedroom En Suite - June 2008



Typical Bathroom En Suite 2 - June 2008



1st Floor Corridor to Bedrooms - June '08

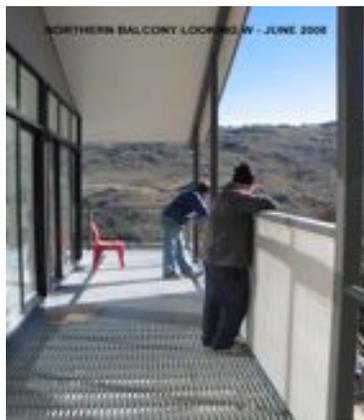


Stairwell From First Floor - June 2008



Downstairs Lounge 1 Incomplete - May 2008







Selected Photos of the Official Opening of the New Tiobunga - Saturday 4 October 2008

Although the new lodge was in use during the 2008 ski season following the granting of an interim certificate of occupancy, a decision was taken that in light of the need to make lodge habitable before early July 2008, there was insufficient time to hold a formal opening ceremony of the lodge before then. It was decided that the opening ceremony would be deferred until the "end of season weekend" in October. On Saturday 4 October a group of some 60 members of the Club gathered in the new lodge to celebrate the formal opening of the lodge.

As has been past Club practice on the occasion of the opening of a new Club lodge, a traditional "lodge opening cake", in the form of the new lodge, was made by Dorothy Brown.

Below is a selection of photos of the activities on the official opening day of the lodge, together with the ceremonial cutting of the "lodge opening cake".



