

THE THIRROUL SKI CLUB LTD

EARLY HISTORY

8th April 1969. A formal request from an enthusiastic group of snow skier members was made to the Board of Thirroul Leagues Club requesting approval to form a social club to be known as Thirroul Leagues Ski Club.

On 4th May a formation meeting was held, a steering committee elected , annual subscription of \$1.00 set and a weekend bus trip to the snow organised for 12-13th July.

A General Meeting was held 8th June seeking members. A new committee was elected and plans were laid for a ski fashion & film night, two social nights and another weekend bus trip to the snow. An interim constitution was adopted.

The first Annual General Meeting of Thirroul Leagues Ski Club was held 26th October. The word Leagues was dropped from the name to permit calling of debentures which at a meeting on 28th October were set at \$70, \$50 first year then two further annual payments of \$10.

At an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting on 30th November the Committee's attempt to increase the annual subscription from \$1. To \$3. was defeated. First newsletter was produced 8th December. Social dinner-dance at TLC 12th December and water ski day on the Shoalhaven River, in the rain, 18th January 1970.

At a Committee meeting on 20th January a reply was received from Kosciusko Park Trust advising that the Trust could not lease any site pertaining to building a ski lodge if any outside companies or groups held more than one share, or a controlling interest in that club.

Continuing social activities, another water ski day on the Shoalhaven 8th February, in the windy rain, and a BBQ on 20th February, in the rain.

On 10th March the Committee adopted a document "Memorandum & Articles of Association" drawn up by Wollongong Solicitor Barry Bolt. The new name of the ski club became "The Thirroul Ski Club Ltd", a

company limited by guarantee and registered under the Companies Act. Debentures – “interest free loans” in one payment were to be called.

On 20th March a team of 3 committee members , by prior arrangement , met with Park Trust Ranger Jim Govan to inspect available lodge sites available for lease in Perisher Valley. Of some 15 sites inspected the most attractive was Site 152, just up the road behind “The Man “. In passing, Ranger Jim pointed out to the team an existing ski lodge “MARANATHA” which was for sale for \$50,000. The following week a team member photographed site 152 for reporting back to committee.

Within days a letter was received from Jim Govan to advise that Maranatha Ski Club were most anxious to sell at a lower figure than his previously quoted \$50,000 and if interested phone their architect John Playoust in Sydney. When phoned, John Playoust described the interior of Maranatha in detail, could not quote an exact selling price but suggested the club make an offer, which he would submit to his club’s Board, and so the wheels of good fortune started to grind slowly.

At an extra-ordinary meeting on 19th April the club’s inspection party delivered their detailed report with the recommendation to acquire Site 152 on which to build a ski lodge. While Maranatha Lodge was mentioned it was suggested the club open negotiations with an offer to John Playoust of \$20,000. Payment of members debenture was called and an account was then opened at the Commonwealth Bank with \$330.

Social events continued with a dinner-dance at the Leagues club 25th April, Ski fashion & film night on 15th May and a weekend bus trip to the snow 27-28th June.

On 10th July, two committee members who were at Perisher called by Maranatha, lodge did not appear to be habited even though it was a bumper snow season.

Extra-Ordinary General Meeting, 12th July, Memorandum & Articles of Association, approved of by Park Trust were presented to members and the Club was informed by letter “that Site 152 Perisher Valley had been allocated to another party”.

On 13th July an offer of \$28,000 for purchase of Maranatha was phoned through to John Playoust. He mentioned that Mr Don Macdonald at Cooma also had a key for inspection.

On 18-19th July two of TSC's members called at Maranatha and met Don Macdonald and Solicitor Kevin White.

A social BBQ and dance was held at Austinmer Bowling Club 25th July, it didn't rain.

On Tuesday 28th July at 1.00 pm. the clubs representative officially met with Solicitor Kevin White (acting for the Mortgagor in Possession and member of Maranatha Ski Club) at Maranatha so as to be able to report back to TSC's committee. Kevin White stated that the Mortgagor was prepared to sell at \$35,000 and as TSC was offering \$28,000 he could possibly carry the additional \$7,000 short term.

On 5th August the club confirmed in writing their offer of \$28,000. Phone calls to Kevin White over the following 23 days seeking a response brought delaying responses. On 31st August the club's Solicitor Barry Bolt received a letter from Park Trust, "I would now advise that this party has abounded its proposal to build on this site and it is now available for allocation to The Thirroul Ski Club Ltd if this is so desired". A letter was received from Kevin White dated 28th August to advise he had another buyer interested in Maranatha at \$45,000, subject to finance. The Club instructed Barry Bolt to obtain the Lease of Site 152.

On 8th September the Committee decided that rather than lose the possibility of buying Maranatha the club should increase its offer to \$35,000 and increase debentures from \$70 to \$150. Notices of motion to increase debentures were sent out to all members to be voted on 18th October. A donation of \$116. from Thirroul Leagues Club to cover costs of preparation of Articles of Association was gratefully received.

On 7th October the club confirmed in writing to Kevin White their offer to purchase Maranatha at \$35,000.

The club announced, on 12th October, that it was now to purchase Maranatha Ski Lodge, the "other buyer had not been able to proceed due to insufficient finance. The news was announced in Wollongong's "Express" newspaper 14th October.

At the Extra-Ordinary meeting on 18th October the proposal to increase debentures/interest free loans to \$150 was approved by members. Two days later three of Committee visited the Commonwealth Bank seeking to borrow \$18,000 – repayable \$12,000 at end of 1 year and balance over 6 years

@8.25%. A hypothetical Balance Sheet had been drawn up based on a similar ski clubs existing operation.

31st October 1970. Official Maranatha inspection party of some 16 members, committee, wives, husbands. Kevin White and family were also present to answer any questions. The team went over the building drawing up lists of perceived "jobs to do" to make it operational next snow season. The Club received the Contract to purchase Maranatha on 10th November. On 21st November a social BBQ was held at Austinmer.

First Annual General Meeting on 6th December annual subscriptions were increased to \$8 p.a. or \$4 half yearly. Size of Committee was increased from 8 to 12.

On 18th December a dinner dance was held at Thirroul Leagues Club. As of 1st January 1971 there had not been any reply from the CBA so alternate avenues of finance were sought from various Banks.

The Contract of sale to purchase Maranatha was signed on 11th January, deposit of \$3,500 paid, but our Solicitor was instructed to hold back on exchange until finance was approved. Club asked members for additional loans @8%, \$500 was received, later amounts of \$100, then two lots of \$50. On 13th January a letter dated 12th inst from Commonwealth Bank's Head Office stating unable to assist with finance. Not to be deterred an immediate approach to Bank of New South Wales brought a glimmer of hope.

On 22nd. January The Wales were prepared to loan \$20,000 repayable as follows - \$10,000 plus interest @8.25% repayable at 31st December '71 then quarterly payments of \$1,250 over 2 years @8.25% but provided the loan was secured by members personal guarantee to \$20,000 plus a guarantee by the Thirroul Leagues Club of \$10,000. The latter was not possible as the Leagues Club was not involved and was contracted to the Commonwealth Bank. The Wales were adamant that further substantial guarantoring was necessary to secure a loan.

The Clubs target for membership was 220 and during January and February excellent coverage was obtained on WIN TV and local newspapers.

At the end of January the CBA account was closed and opened at the Wales with \$10,846.02. A local senior businessman Mr. L. Brown offered, for a small fee, to replace the guarantoring in lieu of the Leagues club.

On 17th February the final loan approval proposed by the Bank of New South Wales was:

1. \$10,000 be gaurantored by Mr L Brown until 31-12-71, for a fee of \$250.
2. \$20,000 be gaurantored by 16 individual club members.
3. Club repay\$10,000 plus interest @ 8.25% on 31-12-71.
4. Mr L Brown, on 31-12-71 pay the Wales the remaining \$10,000 of the loan, he then becomes Club's Creditor @ quarterly payments of \$250. Principle repayable at 3 months notice.

26th February, social BBQ at Austinmer and it rained.

By 1st March a Booking Officer had been appointed who had visited Illawarra Alpine Club's Booking Officer for advice on a system to accept a flood of bookings for the clubs first snow season.

Contracts for the purchase of Maranatha were exchanged on 5th March, but still subject to the Minister for Lands approval.

Still on the social scene a water ski day on the Shoalhaven, 14th March, and a movie party at the "Regent" theatre Wollongong on 20th March.

The Vendors Solicitor was contacted on 24th March and established that the club had "complete access to the Lodge at any time", so the first members working bee of 14 was organised for 26th & 27th March, during which the front door locks were changed. The Catering Officer visited food suppliers in Cooma on 29th March to establish a credit rating for the snow season.

The Committee appointed a resident manageress/chef on 7th April, Mrs Dianne Schafer.

Again on the social scene 24th April – at the "Bunch of Grapes" at Coogee & the "Slavia" at Darlinhurst. A ski fil night at the "Vista" theatre Woonona 23rd May and a BBQ at Thirroul 5th. June.

On 8th May an inquiry was received from 35 member strong Kiandra Co-Op Ski Club, alias "the bushwackers" whose ski lodge had been resumed were anxiously seeking to transfer membership to an active club and were deemed most acceptable.

On 7th June the Wales loan of \$20,000 @ 8.25% was taken out to pay for Maranatha Ski Lodge of which the club had already taken possession.

11th June 1971, long weekend, official start of the snow season, first seasons guests started arriving at Thirroul Ski Club's Maranatha Lodge, Perisher Valley.

As at 31st December 1971, the club had experienced a profitable trading season, membership of 220 closed, loan of \$20,000 repaid to the Bank of New Wales and a \$5,000 overdraft established.

During the early years from '71 it was the volunteer members at working bees that made Maranatha functional – by paying for their own transportation and food, and by taking back home, for washing and ironing, bedspreads, curtains, and blankets.

Noel Way

