Adventist Alpine Village

Photo courtesy of Milton Hook.

Adventist Alpine Village, Australia

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist*, the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Adventist Alpine Village is a camp and conference center owned and operated by the South New South Wales Conference in Australia. It hosts the annual camp meeting of the conference as well as several specialized camps. It is located in the Snowy Mountains of Australia and provides a variety of accommodation options for

families and groups to enjoy this unique environment.

The Need

During the 1950s and 1960s Loren Tinworth, a Seventh-day Adventist businessman, was in the habit of taking his young family and others from his church to vacation at Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains. They would tent below the snow line, water ski on the lake, and snow ski up in the mountains. It was spartan at times, but they preferred not to lodge in the comfortable hotel because that atmosphere, especially on Sabbath, was not conducive to Christian behavior. A park ranger suggested that Tinworth should explore the possibilities of acquiring his own church facilities, similar to camps run by Boy Scouts.[1]

Exploratory Moves

Tinworth met with Lance Butler, Australasian Division treasurer, to begin planning for a dedicated camp, sponsored and owned by the church for the primary benefit of Adventist youth. For that reason, the Youth department of the Australasian Division was invited onto a small committee. They were joined by a representation from Tinworth's colleagues of the Adventist Business and Professional Men's Association (ABPM) on the understanding that the anticipated facility would cater for some disadvantaged youth and folk with disabilities. Butler visited an alpine camping facility in Sweden to gather ideas and assess requirements.[2]

Committee members made a search of the Snowy Mountains area and found one site, Round Hill, the most attractive. It was located a short distance to the southwest of Jindabyne township and was under control of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority. Tinworth learned that Round Hill sat within a large expanse of land that could be rezoned for youth purposes at a reduced price. He approached two other church groups, gained their cooperation to tender when the land was subdivided, and then negotiated access to the Snowy Mountains Commissioner to seek high level approval of his plans.[3]

The commissioner seemed stern. Tinworth entered his smoke-filled office and was met with the words, "What makes you Adventists think you know all about drugs?"

Tinworth countered, "Adventists have a good track record in that respect."

"Well," said the Commissioner as he leaned over his desk aggressively, "I have a kid at university. I know he is on drugs but won't take any notice of me."

Tinworth calmly replied, "You have no right to ask that kid to stop smoking his pot and whatever else he smokes because you can't control your problem."

The commissioner rocked back in his chair and said, "You don't put any sugar on it, do you!" From that point onward, the two men became firm friends, and all obstacles for the land sale were removed. The Australasian

Division paid A$100,000 for the choice position on Round Hill.[4]

Improvements on Site

By drilling deep through the granite mantle, developers found a plentiful supply of suitable water and pumped it to a storage tank on the hill that fed the entire property by gravity.[5] ABPM volunteers designed and built the plumbing on site. Roadwork was commenced in 1987, and the following year a ranger's residence and workshops were constructed. At the same time, building began on 11 self-contained residential units suitable for a total of 80 people. The commitment to the disabled and disadvantaged was honored by special modifications in four of the units.[6] Eighty visitors attended the official opening on May 7, 1989. The main access road was appropriately named Tinworth Drive in honor of Loren Tinworth.[7]

The site was further developed with the addition of a convention center. By 1991 A$1.6 million had been spent on this timber and stone building that included an auditorium, a lounge, dining and kitchen facilities, seminar rooms, and an observation tower.[8] The auditorium could seat 300 people. The builders, Pluim Construction Company, erected the lounge around a large open fireplace that engendered a cozy indoor atmosphere for the winter months. It was officially opened on November 10, 1991.[9]

The South Pacific Division operating policy for the village outlined a board of management that included seven Youth directors from three levels of administration. This ensured that the church youth were given preferential bookings for the use of the facilities. On-site rangers were employed to take bookings from church members and the general public, do maintenance work, and guarantee the property was kept free of hard drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.[10]

Change of Ownership

In July 2012 the South Pacific Division sold the complex to the South New South Wales Conference in whose territory the village was located and who was well placed to use it whenever needed for conventions.[11] Ninety powered sites for caravans were added, together with a shower, toilet, and laundry block. Outdoor tennis, basketball, and volleyball facilities were provided in addition to an outdoor chapel, a children's playground, and a small animal farm with sheep and alpacas. Accommodation is offered in 12 self-contained chalets, 12 self-contained cabins, and a budget dormitory within the convention center. A maximum of approximately 240 people can be housed at any one time, with the addition of those in camp trailers.[12] The establishment operates at a profit, a tithe being paid to the South New South Wales Conference.[13]

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NOTES

1. Glynn Litster, ed., "Adventist Alpine Village," *Sev-Ad News*, September 2000, South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, New South Wales, box: 586, Folder: "Sev-Ad News 1995–2002."

2. Loren R. Tinworth, "History of Round Hill Adventist Alpine Village," May 7, 1989, personal collection of Noeleen Tinworth.

3. Litster, "Adventist Alpine Village."

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Tinworth, "History of Round Hill Adventist Alpine Village."

7. Max Townend, "Alpine Village Officially Opened," *Record*, June 24, 1989, 10.

8. "Alpine Village Opens Stage Two," *Record*, January 18, 1992, 10.

9. Raymond Coombe, "What Are Adventists Doing at the Round Hill Estate?" 1991, personal collection of Noeleen Tinworth.

10. *South Pacific Division Working Policy* (Wahroonga, NSW: Australasian Conference Association, 1990), 211–213.

11. Linden Chuang, "New Owners for Alpine Village," *Record*, September 15, 2012, 5.

12. "Accommodation," Adventist Alpine Village, accessed May 11, 2018, https://www.alpinevillage.com.au/accomodation.

13. Gavin Howie, email message to author, June 5, 2018.