

Vic Alps Interpretation notes

Euroa

- Pop'n approx 2800
- Located in the Goulburn Valley, so area very flat, but Strathbogie Ranges close by
- Name comes from Aboriginal world in old local dialect meaning "joyful"
- Major Thomas Mitchell camped on banks of the Seven Creeks here during his 1836 expedition
- First PO opened Jan 1, 1854, as the township was settled
- Claim to fame = the National Bank robbery by Ned Kelly in 1878
- Much of areas wealth once came from sheep but not it comes from horse studs
- Roughly midway between Melb & Albury
- Contains several retirement villages, one HS & 2 PS
- Town was bypassed by a deviation of the Hume Hwy in 1992
- Services V-Line trains

Myrtleford

- 275km NE of Melb; 46km W of Wangaratta
- Located in the Ovens Valley
- Pop'n approx 3200; largest town in the Alpine Shire
- Area inhabited by Aboriginal people for 1000s of years prior to European settlement; groups visited the Alps in summer to hold ceremonies & gather the nutritious Bogong Moths that shelter in region
- Settlement began in early 19th C, with Myrtleford first being a remote cattle run known as Myrtle Creek to start with
- When gold was discovered in the Buckland Valley, 1000s of diggers had to cross Myrtle Creek on their way to the goldfields; a small township developed at this fording place, with the name Myrtleford consequently adopted
- PO opened on July 26, 1858; road through town was then called Buckland Rd, but now the Great Alpine Road
- Agriculture, timber & tourism are important industries
- Tobacco growing was major industry for many years, but closed down in 2006
- Today, wine grapes, hops, walnuts, chestnuts, blueberries, raspberries, cherries, apples, kiwifruit, olives, vegies, beef/dairy cattle all farmed in area
- The Happy Valley Ck flows through town centre, the Ovens River & Buffalo Rivers flow close by & Lake Buffalo is located 21km to the S
- Has 3 schools, a public hospital & a weekly newspaper
- Hosts a number of festivals throughout the year – Myrtleford Bush Market held annually on 1st Friday in Jan, Myrtleford Festival, held over Labour Day Weekend since 1971, the La Fiera Italian Festival to honour high proportion of locals with Italian heritage, held in May, Golden Spurs Rodeo (2nd longest running Vic rodeo) held early in the year
- Frequent frosts on clear nights, highest rainfall in the Winter, snow rare
- Notable residents: AFL's Gary Ablett Snr & Sam Kekovich, Olympic skiers, Malcolm & Ross Milne, Oz cricketer Merv Hughes, Chloe McConville, Oz racing cyclist & former cross-country skier

Bright

- Located at SE end of Ovens Valley; 319m above sea level
- Pop'n approx 2300
- Area explored by Hamilton Hum & William Hovell in 1824, naming the Ovens River
- Town first known as Morse's Ck, but was renamed in 1861 in honour of British orator & politician, John Bright
- First PO opened in 1860 as Morse's Ck but was renamed to match town name in 1866
- Gold deposits found in nearby Buckland River = influx of people
- As deposits diminished, Chinese miners arrived to sift the abandoned claims
- Tensions over their success caused the violent Buckland Riot in 1857 = deaths of many Chinese miners & the fleeing of 2000
- Riot eventually quelled by Beechworth police from 80kms away
- Rich cultural heritage here, with many locations & street names being traced to present day residents
- Main industry since start of 21st C is tourism, with much focus on the autumnal colors of the European trees planted in the area = major cultural event is Bright Autumn Festival
- Has been center of paragliding festivals & comps due to large number of launch sites in area
- Many tracks in area for exploring the alpine scenery & finding native birds/animals
- Popular over summer with pop'n swelling, esp after Xmas, due to consistently warm, sunny days
- Close to Vic Alps & various alpine NPs – Mt Bogong 1986m (highest peak in Vic); Featherop 1922m (2nd highest)
- Railway station preserved as local history museum; 95km Murray to Mountains RT runs from Wang to Bright, via Myrtleford & Beechworth (side trip)
- Snowfall & frost common in winter; summer is warm with mild-cool nights
- Not uncommon to see platypus in waterways, wombats & echidnas in the bush, large range of birds
- Area popular for fishing, mountain biking, road cycling, etc
- Hosts the annual Buffalo Stampede – a cross country running event of either 26, 42 or 75km
- Local attractions include farms, wineries, historic sites, orchards, restaurants, touring, etc
- Hosts regular markets & festivals, art exhibitions, cycling events, music conventions, film festivals

Falls Creek Alpine Resort

- An alpine ski resort located in the Alpine NP, 350km by road from Melbourne
- Lies between an elevation of 1210 & 1830m above sea level
- Skiing possible on Mt McKay (1842m), accessed by snowcat from the resort
- After WWII, the Kiewa Hydro Scheme started in the Kiewa Valley by SEC of Vic
- The first ski lodge was built in 1948 on land previously used for summer cattle grazing in the natural alpine grasslands, by workers from the scheme
- The first lift, a rope tow, was built in 1951 & the first chairlift in Oz was built here in 1957
- Falls Creek PO opened in June 1958, with telegraph & telephone facilities only until 1964
- The high plains in area were used for summer grazing from 1851-2005, when Vic Govt did not renew grazing licences due to concern re: environmental impact of cattle on the fragile alpine env
- Some cattlemen's huts still survive, some of which we will visit
- Beginner/intermediate friendly, with about 80% of resort dedicated to these types of skiers/boarders
- Snowmaking is necessary sometimes, with water from the nearby Rocky Valley Lake
- Hosts some international events for both boarding & skiing
- Features 4500 accommodation beds, a large number of restaurants, bars, clubs, etc

- Some apartments privately owned, but the resort's management requires that they are available to hire when not being used
- Also serves as a summer base to explore the region
- Snowline is 1100m; Average snowfall is 4m; Average days open in winter is 128
- 65km of groomed cross country ski trails (21 total); longest is 21km

NED KELLY

- One of Oz's greatest folk heroes
- has been memorialised by painters, writers, musicians and filmmakers alike
- More books, songs and websites have been written about Ned Kelly and the Kelly Gang than any other group of Australian historical figures
- born at Beveridge in 1855, the first-born son of an Irish Catholic couple
- His father, John 'Red' Kelly was an ex-convict who eloped with Ellen Quinn, an Irish 'bounty migrant', from Van Dieman's Land to Port Phillip
- The Kellys settled in the Victorian ranges north of Melbourne, eking out a living on the edge of the squatter's rich lands
- Red Kelly supplemented his income by horse stealing, was arrested & gaoled, & died before finishing his sentence
- Ellen moved the family to a slab hut at Eleven Mile Creek in the NW of the colony where Ned became the main breadwinner, taking jobs as a timber cutter & rural worker - ringbarking, breaking in horses, mustering cattle & fencing
- Ned grew up with the tales of bushrangers & at age 14, was arrested for stealing 10 shillings & announcing he 'was going to be a bushranger'
- A year later, Kelly was charged with robbery under arms, but freed due to lack of evidence
- a few months later he was back in the lockup for assault
- Ned's real troubles with the police began when his mother was arrested for aiding & abetting in the attempted murder of Constable Arthur Fitzpatrick
- She was sentenced to 3 years hard labour for assaulting a police officer, even though the officer's testimony was dubious
- Ned was so enraged that he made a hide-out, with his brother Dan & their mates Joe Byrne & Steve Hart,
- The Gang relied upon their network of friends
- The police were determined to hunt down the Kelly Gang, and in October 1878 a party of four police with heavy arsenal were sent out from Mansfield
- Their camp at Stringybark Creek received a surprise visit from the Kellys, with Ned commanding 'Bail up! Throw up your arms'
- Constable McIntyre surrendered but Constable Lonigan went for his revolver, before being shot dead by Ned
- When the other two police appeared & Sergeant Kennedy reached for his revolver, he was mortally wounded
- Constable Scanlon was then killed trying to drag his rifle from its holster
- The gov't's reaction to the Stringybark Creek murders was swift and severe
- Within ten days of the murders, the Berry Government had enacted the *Felons' Apprehension Act 1878*, and called on Ned Kelly and his brother Dan to surrender or be declared outlaws under the Act's draconian provisions, which authorised any citizen to shoot a declared outlaw on sight

- The Vic Govt also committed a major outlay in public funds to the Kelly hunt & combined with NSW to increase the reward for the gang's capture to £8000, the fourth increase in the reward in the space of just four months
- After more murders & bank robberies, the Kelly Gang had their 'last stand' in Glenrowan, in 1880, where they took 60 hostages in a hotel
- The Gang established a base at the Hotel, determined to fight it out with police when they came
- Kelly planned to derail the train carrying the police, but this was prevented by a school teacher, let out of the hotel, who flagged the train to a halt
- Led by Superintendent Hare & assisted by local Constable Bracken, the troopers attacked the Gang in the hotel
- Superintendent Hare and other police officers were wounded when the Gang shot at the police
- The townsfolk were allowed to leave the hotel when there was a lull in the fighting
- Ned was shot in the arm and thumb, & retreated to the bush, from where he hoped to attack police from behind
- Knowing that the Felons Apprehension Act meant they could be shot, the Kelly Gang all wore suits of steel armour, made during the previous year
- Despite this, Joe Byrne was shot in the groin and died; Dan Kelly & Steve Hart were shot dead, & the hotel was burned to the ground by the police.
- As dawn broke, Ned Kelly, in his armour, approached the police from the rear & began shooting at them with his revolver, despite his wounds
- After half an hour, he was shot in both unprotected legs
- A wounded Ned was arrested & charged with the murder of a policeman
- Ned Kelly was tried and convicted of the murder of Constable Lonigan at Stringybark Creek
- In gaol, Kelly wrote a long letter to the authorities demonstrating the discrimination against poor Irish settlers
- Despite public protests, the judgement of Redmond Barry prevailed
- Kelly spoke the immortal last words 'Such is life' & was hanged on 11th November 1880 at Melbourne Gaol