

# B.C. MOUNTAINEER



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**2012-2013**

**2013-2014**

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**Cover photos:**

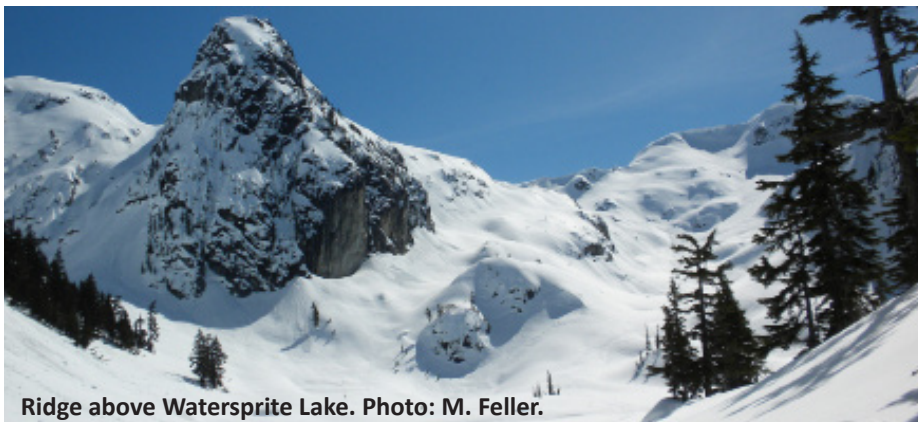
**Front Cover:** Dave Scanlon, the club's most recent honorary member, in the Bendor Range (see p. 58)  
Photo: E. Zenger.

**Inside Front Cover:** Evan Howard on the approach to Mt. Pitt (top); evening at the second camp on the Harrison Lake to Whistler traverse (bottom) (see p. 39). Photos: A. Palmer.

**Inside Back Cover:** Mt. Waddington from Mt. Munday N Pk. (see p. 74). Photo: D. Hughes.

**Back Cover:** Club member, Ravil Chamgoulov, holds the BCMC banner on the summit of Mt. Everest in May, 2014, having successfully completed his quest for the seven summits, mostly solo.  
Photo: R. Chamgoulov collection.

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Ridge above Watersprite Lake. Photo: M. Feller.

## THE BC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

### Club Philosophy

The British Columbia Mountaineering Club is an incorporated society founded in 1907 which celebrated its centennial in 2007. Its pioneer members did much of the early exploration and mapping of the then unexplored mountains near the young city of Vancouver. Most of the mountains in the lower mainland of B.C. were first climbed by BCMC members.

Today, the BCMC is dedicated to the enjoyment and exploration of the mountains, valleys, and alpine regions of British Columbia through activities such as climbing, hiking, backpacking and ski touring. The primary mode of travel is by foot. Mechanized transport is secondary and is generally restricted to access only. The club feels that pedestrian access allows the greatest appreciation of the mountains with the least impact.

In addition to direct involvement in the outdoors through trips and camps, the Club is active in conservation, trail and hut construction and maintenance, mountain safety, and education.

The club has assisted in publishing several guidebooks, including Kevin McLane's "Alpine Select" guide, the Alpine Guide to Southwestern B.C., 103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia, 109 Walks in British Columbia's Mainland, A Climber's Guide to the Squamish Chief, Guide to Climbing in South-western British Columbia, and the Stein Valley Wilderness Guidebook. Club members regularly act as volunteer instructors in basic summer and winter mountaineering courses offered by the club to its members.

The club has been very active in conservation land use issues almost from its inception. The existence today of Garibaldi Park is a direct result of the discovery and exploration of the area by the Club. Starting in 1913, BCMC members petitioned the provincial government requesting protection of the area as a park, and in 1927, the Garibaldi Park Act was proclaimed. More recently, in the 1970's it was a club member who first drew the attention of society to the values of the Stein Valley. During the 1980's it was club members who were most active in defending the interests of wilderness ski tourers against commercial heliskiers. In the 1990's, club members were involved in B.C.'s Protected Area Strategy and have been instrumental in the establishment of Pinecone – Burke and Tantalus provincial parks, as well as others. Today, club members are actively involved in attempts to protect some areas against the intrusion of motorized recreation, particularly snowmobiles. The club continues to play an active role in land use issues relevant to B.C. mountaineering and generally trying to maintain opportunities for non-motorized mountain recreation.

### Club Trips and Activities

The Club runs a website ([www.bcmc.ca](http://www.bcmc.ca)) in which its various activities are described.

The most important function of the Club is the running of an extensive schedule of different grades of hiking, rock and ice climbing, and ski touring and snowshoe trips. Usually, a variety of overnight and day trips is scheduled each weekend throughout the year. These trips are all free and are also open to prospective members.

Club members organize yearly summer climbing camps/expeditions to various parts of the province.

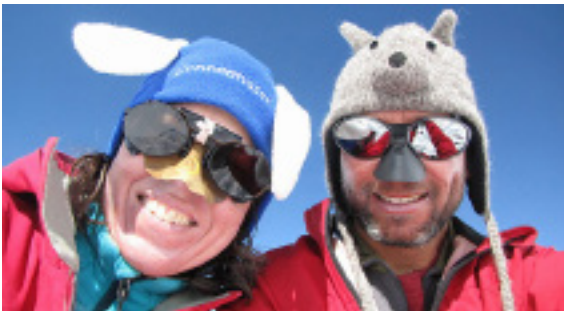
Numerous climbs, many of them first ascents or new routes, have been made in such areas as the Kakwa, Kawdacha, and Monkman areas, N. Rockies, Lake Lovely water, the more remote parts of Garibaldi park, Stein valley area, Ape Lake area, Mt. Waddington area, Mt. Fairweather, Bendor Range, and the Selkirk Mountains.

Occasionally, expeditions are organized by the club to more remote areas such as in Alaska or South America, or to Canada's highest mountains (most recently to Mt. Logan in 2010). Extended hiking trips are also organized, within the last few years to the South Chilcotin mountains, Tweedsmuir park, Jasper National Park, and the Mt. Edziza-Spectrum Range area.



**Club members dress appropriately on ski trips, as illustrated here on Mt. Logan. Photo: D. Scanlon.**

through June on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, in the upstairs room at the ANZA Club, corner of 8th Avenue and Ontario Street in Vancouver. The meetings are informal and the chairs comfortable. Beginning with general club business, there is usually a slide show, film, or talk on some aspect of mountaineering. In the past we have also featured product demonstrations by local mountaineering stores, auctions, and equipment swap meets. Refreshments and cookies are served. Beer can be obtained from the licenced premises below the meeting hall. At the November social the Club conducts its Annual General Meeting. De-



**This category of membership, as observed on a club trip, is undefined. Photo: D. Scanlon.**

The ski touring program occurs throughout the winter and spring. This has included a Christmas ski camp as well as spring ski camps to such areas as the Lillooet Icecap, Kokanee Glacier, Bridge Glacier, Fairy Meadows, Columbia Ice Fields, Stanley Smith - Lord Glacier area, Franklin Glacier, the southern Chilcotin and the Homathko icefield.

Rock climbing practice is held midweek during the summer months. Beginners can receive instruction and more advanced climbers can hone their skills. Rock practice is held in the evening at Lighthouse Park, Murrin Park, the Chief, or Smoke Bluffs.

In winter, mid-week night skiing has been organized at local ski hills.

To help the beginner in developing his or her climbing skills, the Club organizes instruction courses and from time to time organizes training climbs. The purpose of these climbs is to allow people to gain experience on roped climbs.

The club's trips programs are given in its electronic and printed newsletters and on the club's website. Members on the club's email list receive frequent trip updates.

### **Social Events**

Social gatherings are held monthly from September through June on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm, in the upstairs room at the ANZA Club, corner of 8th Avenue and Ontario Street in Vancouver. The meetings are informal and the chairs comfortable. Beginning with general club business, there is usually a slide show, film, or talk on some aspect of mountaineering. In the past we have also featured product demonstrations by local mountaineering stores, auctions, and equipment swap meets. Refreshments and cookies are served. Beer can be obtained from the licenced premises below the meeting hall. At the November social the Club conducts its Annual General Meeting. Details of these events and other special activities are announced in advance in the club's monthly printed and electronic newsletters and on the club website.

### **Membership**

The BCMC has several categories of membership: active, associate, youth, life, senior, and honorary. Persons interested in joining the Club can obtain further information by contacting the Membership Chair ([info@bcmc.ca](mailto:info@bcmc.ca)), viewing the website, or by attending a club social event. Club social events and

trips are open to non-members as well as members.

### Library, Archives, and Publications

The Club maintains a library with an extensive collection of books, photographs, guidebooks, and periodicals on mountaineering. It is open to use by members and details about the collection and its use can be obtained by contacting the Club executive or from the club website.

The club archives, spanning well over 100 years of mountaineering history, are probably the largest set of mountaineering archives in B.C. They are now housed in the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, where they are available for viewing.

The Club produces ten issues per year of its newsletter. The newsletter contains club news, trip schedules, access information, trip reports, and other news. This journal, the B.C. Mountaineer, is produced every two years and contains accounts of recent climbs, camps, expeditions, photographs and articles about mountaineering, natural history, studies of mountains, and other material.

### Huts and Shelters

There are five BCMC huts, all of which are open to the public and are free to club members. Huts in Garibaldi park were donated to the public.

Club huts and their general locations are:

HIMMELSBACH: Russet Lake, Garibaldi Park

MOUNTAIN LAKE: Mount Sheer, Britannia Beach

NORTH CREEK: North Creek, Lillooet Valley

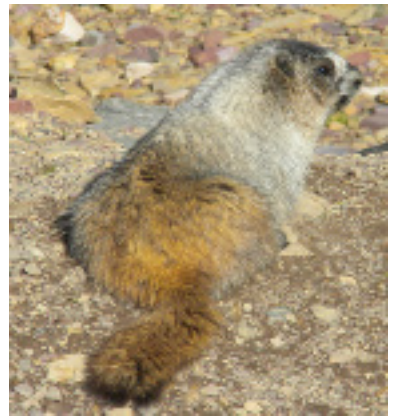
PLUMMER: Claw Ridge, Mt. Waddington

WEDGEMOUNT: Wedgemount Lake, Garibaldi Park

### Conservation Guidelines

In order to conserve the alpine environment and species in it, such as those in the photos, Club trips try to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Pack out all garbage.
2. Where toilets are not provided, select a screened spot at least 50 metres from any water and dig a hole 15 to 30 cm deep. Cover the hole with soil and ground cover. Keep water sources free of contamination.
3. Alpine life, whether flora or fauna, is fragile and not in abundance. Plants and animals are not killed unless in an emergency.
4. Stay on trails and do not cut corners on trail switchbacks to avoid erosion.
5. Light small campfires. Use only dead wood and remove traces of the fire site. Ensure that fires are properly extinguished. Do not light fires in alpine areas or in areas where fires are not allowed.
6. Camp in forests or on non-vegetated areas to avoid damage to meadows, lakeshores and streambanks.



**Marmot and Whiskey Jack. Photos: M. Feller**

**A short walk and ride in the Wakhan Corridor, Afghanistan – June – July, 2012**

Brian Wood

This trip happened by pure chance and with no planning on my part. I accidentally heard about an upcoming trip to the Wakhan Corridor (WC) of Afghanistan, which was a portion of one of the historical “Silk Routes” to China and allegedly travelled by Marco Polo. This area is in north eastern Afghanistan and connects with China through valleys and high passes, and is remote from the fighting in the “newsy” areas of Afghanistan. Back in the mid-1960's while attempting to hitch-hike from England to Australia I had planned to visit the WC area, but nearby wars had closed some of the surrounding countries, forcing abandonment of the trip and any future plans of ever going to the WC. Suddenly, almost 50 years later the possibility of a visit to the WC arose from nowhere, which just shows you should never write off old plans. The trip was organised by a British adventure touring company called “Secret Compass” and this trip was advertised on their website ([www.secretcompass.com](http://www.secretcompass.com)) as “Ice Caves of the Wakhan”. The trip was short of participants and I had less than two months to get visas, immunisations, plane tickets, medical and evacuation insurance, etc. which I amazingly completed in time. The main party consisted of six not-so-young folks from Metro Vancouver, namely Eric and Ehleen Hinze and Peter Devisser whom I have known for decades, and Andrew Pike, John Stubbs and Carl Stevens whom I first met at the airport.

We flew to Istanbul where we met three Brits of the Secret Compass, namely Ade, the chief, Simon, his second-in-command, and James, our medic. From here we flew to Dushambe, the capital of nearby Tajikistan, after about 20 hours of travelling. Here we met the last member of our party, Akbar, an American who had flown in from Moscow, but he left our group after a few days due to illness, so we didn't know much about him. Tajikistan had been occupied by the Russians for many years and Dushambe was quite developed with good roads and a well organised bus service which we used for a little exploring. Meanwhile our leaders bought food and organised all the things that were necessary for our trip – it was great to leave these endless details to professionals. For two days we drove the very exciting and rough Pamir Highway (we were all glad not to be driving!) and then crossed the border, over the Panj River into Afghanistan. After very lengthy border formalities we were down-graded from the relatively modern 4 WD SUV's of Tajikistan to the much older 1990's era Toyota Land Cruisers of Afghanistan with their amazingly skilled (and reckless?) drivers. The roads were much worse in Afghanistan, as were the guest houses, but everything was bearable. After two more days of driving and many hours of waiting for clearance from territorially-challenged local officials we arrived at Sarhad-e-Broghail, a village at the end of the road. This village was almost car-less and was located in a pleasant, wide, flat-bottomed, and farmed green valley surrounded by the magnificent peaks of the Pamirs, the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush, many of which are over 6000 m.

The next day our leaders sorted out loads of gear and food and the corresponding numbers of pack animals and their handlers. Because there are no permanent villages further up the Corridor, we had bought most of our food in Tajikistan, and this consisted mainly of flour, oatmeal, dried milk, pasta, rice, lentils, beans, tuna, eggs, cheese, and jam and other spreads. We brought our own flour as the villagers do not have any food to spare and the flour would be made into flat bread in the village ovens. Some of us had a wash and did laundry in hot springs, and this was followed by watching the famous Afghan “game” of buzkashi. For this game a goat is freshly beheaded to serve as a “ball”, and men on horses chase each other around a patch of rough land to get a hold of the goat and drop it in a goal area. We were told this game was invented to improve their horsemanship and to toughen up the horses, and in this they really succeeded. It makes upper class English polo players look like a bunch of wusses. To keep their hands free for warding off attackers (no



need for reins and no holds barred), the rider tries to carry the goat by squeezing the goat's body between his thigh and his horse's flank, while other players try to grab it, or unseat the rider. After about 45 minutes the goat is totally dismembered and the person with the most "goals" is declared the winner. There did not seem to be any teams or rules and I was amazed that the players or the horses did not break any of their limbs. The goat did not fare so well and various body parts of the goat lying scattered around the play area would presumably be cleaned up by the village dogs.

Early the next day 4 donkeys, about 12 horses and 1 yak were loaded up with about 2 weeks of food, propane cylinders, tents and personal gear for everyone, including the many "Wahki" animal handlers, our cook and "fixer/translator". At about 6.30 am our ragged caravan left the village to head towards the first pass, following for several kilometers a good trail which ran parallel to an impressive series of irrigation ditches which fed the green agricultural fields of the valley below. By about noon we had lunch on top of a pass at about 4300 m in a chilly breeze surrounded by magnificent peaks under sunny skies. We then descended to a deserted sloping "meadow" by a creek where we pitched our tents while our cook and his helpers made dinner. The campsite was in a narrow valley at 3550 m so the sun soon disappeared behind the peaks. It then quickly became cold so we retired to our tents by about 7 pm.

The first day was a typical day of our 12 day trek and we soon got into the routine with minor variations. We arose with the sun, usually before six, and ate a quick breakfast of oatmeal porridge and tea in the chilly air while the handlers loaded the animals. We walked and/or rode the animals for a few hours, followed by lunch sometimes on a high cool pass for views, or in the sun by a raging river. We then walked/rode for a few more hours until we came to a camping spot. Sometimes we camped in a remote meadow, as on the first day, and sometimes we camped by an animal herders' temporary summer settlement. Usually there was very little wood for fires at the campsites, so if the handlers were to cook their meals they usually cooked them over dried animal dung fires, whereas our cook used a propane stove. On most days a few of us would not be very hungry, probably due to the unappetising food and minor stomach upsets, so there always seemed to be some left-over food for the animal handlers, which made us feel better.

In spite of the concentration of animal droppings, I usually preferred camping by the summer settlements as we could then examine their stone shelters, which were impressively sturdy but could still be wiped out by avalanches. Sometimes the settlements were occupied by several families which was special for us as we

could then meet the locals and live among the animals, so it was a bit like camping on a farm. Sometimes the settlements had a few yurts, which were ancient and effective tents with cylindrical walls about 2m high supporting a shallow conical roof. A yurt had a collapsible frame made of thin boughs which were covered with animal skin or felted animal wool, so it was reasonably easy to carry on the animals to fresh pastures as needed. These settlements were not year-round villages as they were used for a while to take advantage of the local fresh summer forage for goats and sheep. Their kids loved to pose for our photos, and then would giggle when they saw pictures of themselves. Some of the women did not cover their faces and did not mind being photographed, which contrasted with some women we saw in the bigger places we visited. Campsites



**Walking up the trail, heading towards Dalriz Pass.  
Photo: B. Wood.**



Scenes from the “walk”, including Akbilis Lake (top right), heading towards Garumder Pass (second top left), and the last camp before Sarhad on the way back (second bottom left). Photos: B. Wood.

were usually between 3500 m and 4500 m, so on most nights we were in the tents early in the evening to avoid the cold.

Some of our party rode the animals most of the time, while others preferred to mix riding with walking at a nice pace carrying just light day packs. We had to cross many very cold and rushing side creeks and sometimes wider rivers, and for this we tourists rode the animals for safety and comfort while our handlers forded the rocky creeks and rivers often in bare feet. I felt a little guilty riding the animals to save walking and using them as “self-propelled bridges” to save getting wet feet, but our trip provided good employment and other goodies for desperately poor people which made me feel somewhat better. I preferred riding a yak to riding a horse as a yak is so much stronger and seems much steadier on its feet when fording creeks. Some creeks had strong currents and rocky beds and I was usually dreading being drowned or crushed by a fallen animal during these crossings. Sometimes the trails had so much loose rock, or were on such steep hillsides that we could not use the animals, but when things were that tricky everyone was happier to trust their own feet, not the animals' feet.

The animals added a real sense of adventure to the trip, and in general I thought all the animals were wonderfully obedient and willing to work hard for you. However, the handlers had no such sentimental feelings, and would treat them harshly when they were being loaded with gear and if they did not do their bidding immediately, which was rare. Yaks were controlled by a coarse rope loop passing through a hole in their nasal septum, so they were usually very docile in spite of their size. I took a video with my cheap “point and shoot” camera as my stead carried me effortlessly over rough rocky terrain while one of the handlers was playing an Afghan dance tune on his pipe. Playing this video at home makes me feel like I was participating



The walk continues. Photo: B. Wood.



Scenes from the trail between Dalriz Pass and Sarhad, showing significant animal use of the hillside. Photos: B. Wood.

in a National Geographic travelogue.

After a few days of actual trekking we came to the remote settlement of Bozai Gumbaz (BG) which is immortalised in the book “Stones into Schools” by Greg Mortenson - an American who gave up mountaineering



High peaks and settlements were not that common in the region, but could be encountered. Photo: B. Wood.

to establish the Central Asia Institute (CAI) which helped build over 130 schools, first in Pakistan and then in Afghanistan. The schools were for teaching isolated village children, mostly girls, who would not otherwise get an education. In BG there were a few yurts and stone houses and the best looking building by far was one of the CAI well finished white stone schools. It is truly amazing that this school was built in such a remote location in 2009 considering that the settlement had been a Russian army outpost decades before. BG was occupied by a “clan” of Kirghiz immigrants/refugees which was run by a chief wearing a tall hat and who seemed to have absolute power. At BG we knew we had entered another “jurisdiction” of the WC, and that we could not use our original local Wakhi men and their animals to take us on the final section to the Ice Caves. So, after a short traditional farewell dance and goodbyes, most of our faithful Wakhi handlers and their animals left for home.

The jurisdictional issue was further complicated as the chief was stalling and would not supply us with enough of his clan’s animals and handlers to carry our gear, and the few animals he supplied were very uncooperative. This stalling was probably because he was making money having us sleep in his yurt which was interesting and nice and warm, but these delays were costing us valuable time as we were already behind our schedule. So, when the negotiations stalled again we had a brief “standoff” with lots of arm waving and shouting by our fixer, our guide and another English speaking guide who just happened to arrive at that time. With no change in the chief’s position, after a short discussion we decided to change our plan to go back to Sarhad a different way and thus miss our original objective, the ice caves. The Kirghiz clan thus lost out as we used very few of their animals to leave their territory and go towards another pass for one night camping with them. The next day we were “rescued” by some of our friendly Wakhis who turned around and came to our campsite bringing additional yaks and handlers from another of their settlements. The different way back proved to be quite exciting as we had to cross a high broad pass which had so much snow that the yaks and horses had trouble making headway. It was sad to see the animals wallowing in deep snow up to their bellies. Eventually it all worked out well and we returned to Sarhad, the beginning of the road back to Tajikistan. Before saying farewell to our faithful animal handlers we donated a lot of our hiking gear and clothes which they really appreciated as many of them had so little.

Looking back almost a year later it really was an amazing trip that will be hard to beat as we saw and stayed with such exotic people, used their animals and trekked through spectacular scenery. A real plus was that for nearly two weeks in the mountains we had no real rain, the flies were negligible, and the only guns we saw were carried by the police or army. If you want a real challenge, Secret Compass are planning to repeat much of our trip as a mountain bike trip, with the last few days being self-supported. Now that promises to be a real adventure as I read that the 60 km trail from Sarhad to BG ascends and descends a total of over 6000 m, and that is not the end of the trip!

### **England, Coast to Coast – 30 May – 9 June, 2012**

Ed Zenger

The concept of a walk across the top of England was the brainchild of the late Alfred Wainwright, possibly England’s best known writer of walking guides. Wainwright was a complex personality; he would disappear for days on end into the countryside, re-emerge to write up his notes of his walks, eat a meal with his long-suffering wife and then vanish again into the mists atop the fells. He was disdainful of sign-posting and when he produced his book on the ‘Coast to Coast Walk’ in the early 1970s he made it clear that this was not a track, delineated by signposts, but rather a suggestion of ways in which walkers could traverse the country,

with no hard and fast trail to follow.

The walk makes use of a series of some marked trails and some less obvious ones. The route marking is eccentric at times and non-existent at others, but what are clearly designated are the start and finish points – St. Bees in the west and Robin Hood’s Bay in the east. Convention requires walkers to dip a boot in the Irish Sea at St. Bees and pick up a pebble from the beach. At the end of the walk you dip your boot in the North Sea and drop the pebble on the beach at Robin Hood’s Bay. But since Leslie is a polar bear swimmer she jumped into the North Sea in her hiking clothes, including boots, which didn’t dry out until we got home 6 days later. I happily also threw my walking stick, which I cut along the way on the first day, into the ocean. We used an accommodation and baggage moving service; that is to say our luggage was transported each day ahead of us and we stayed in pre-booked accommodations each night, walking with a day pack only. Most people do this. The baggage service was \$10-per day and the accommodation booking was \$65 total – well worth it.

We elected to do the walk in eleven days; the average is fourteen, mad men do it in seven and some amble along and take three weeks. One can do whatever one wants. You can make your own itinerary.

We took the train from Coventry north to Carlisle. (In England, always buy the train tickets at least a day before you travel. It is a lot cheaper). Here we had to change to a narrow gauge line which took us southwest to St. Bees. We had time to explore the town and find the start of the trail. Next morning we set off from there on a clear sunny day.

The first four days of the trek are in the Lake District. Some say it’s the most beautiful part of the British Isles, but also fickle where weather is concerned. We started to walk north on top of the cliffs above the Irish Sea, through beautiful sheep pastures. The trail started to creep east after the St. Bees lighthouse in the direction of our ultimate destination. We passed many little towns where farmers were busy shearing their sheep. From Cleator we ascended our first English hill, the Dent, with a grand height of 352m and with beautiful views back to St. Bees, the Irish Sea, and the cooling towers of a nuclear power plant to the south. After a few more hours of pleasant walking we arrived in Ennerdale our first overnight stop.

The next day started with the legendary full English breakfast. We were presented with two huge rashers of bacon, two fried eggs, a slice of fried bread, mushrooms, tomatoes, two sausages, and a slice of black pudding, toast, coffee, marmalade, jam and honey. First I could not figure out what this black pudding was. Leslie watched me closely when I took my first bite (she knew!). Well that was the first and last bite of that stuff. The rest I thoroughly enjoyed,



**Starting above the Irish Sea (top); ascending the Dent (middle); Leslie on the Dent (bottom). Photos: E. Zenger.**

despite the huge cholesterol intake.

From Ennerdale we walked along the shore of Ennerdale Water in a light rain and chilly wind. First stop for a very welcome hot coffee was the Black Sail Youth Hostel, generally considered as the most remote of its kind in Britain. Then it was up into the clouds, clambering over slippery rocks and crossing creeks on stepping stones. There were five of us – an Australian, an American, an Englishman, and our party of 3. It was not a place to walk alone, with no signage other than cairns, which were difficult to spot in the fog. There was much discussion about the route to follow to the high point, the aptly named Grey Knotts (600m). The weather improved quickly after we started the descent to the Honister Slate Mine, where we stopped for another coffee. The outside of most houses and barns in this part of England are built with slate rocks from mines like this, giving them a drab gray look. Building codes are very strict. Renovations have to be done in the same old style. These buildings last forever. The farmers, when they cleared the land for pastures, used these rocks for sheep fences. You can see these 1.5m high walls all over the countryside – up and down hills for kilometres.

The Australian, Jim, had the same trek schedule as us and we agreed to walk together for the duration of the trek. Jim is the author of the book “The Bibbulmun Track”. He walked it twice. It is 936 km long from Perth to Albany in Western Australia. He warned us about his navigation (dis)ability – In Perth he is known as ‘Wrong way Jim’. As it turned out he was actually a great fit guy and fun to walk with.

We stayed in Rosthwaite for the night. Next day we started with an English breakfast again. I tried to be clever and requested no black pudding, so they gave me extra sausages. That was the last English breakfast for me! Beyond Rosthwaite we walked up a nice valley, with some little waterfalls, to Lining Crag. From the pass we could see our route way in the distance on the other side of the valley, but first we had to drop down to Grasmere and then slog up to a nice little lake – the Grisedale Tarn. A good place to rest, eat and enjoy the scenery. From there it was all downhill through sheep pastures and some little settlements to our next B&B in Patterdale. Leslie started to get some bad blisters. The sheep farmer at the B&B gave us a lot of sheep’s wool to stuff into the boot around her blisters. He was sure it would help. That day we walked 23km and did about 1000m vertical. The White Lion pub proved to be a great place to recharge batteries and get ready for the hard slog to Shap the next day.

From Patterdale we set out across the moors to Shap via the highest point of the trek, Kidsty Pike, at 784m. First port of call was Angle Tarn, not difficult walking but finding the way through a mishmash of unmarked tracks was less than simple. Here we had to use the compass for the first time to point us in the right direction.



Looking back to Rosthwaite (left); Grisedale Tarn (right). Photos: E. Zenger.



**Angle Tarn (left); Beak Hill on Cleveland Way (right). Photos: E. Zenger.**

On the way to Kidsty Pike the weather deteriorated until we were walking in a white-out, but luckily no rain as we climbed. The wind increased on top of the ridge and the fog became thicker until keeping sight of the guy in front became difficult. A few quick pictures, in a white-out, and we headed down – no need to hang around. Soon we got out of the fog and reached Haweswater Lake, and after a long trek along the Lakeside, the ruins of Shap Abbey were a welcome sight, as was the Kings Arms pub in Shap itself. We did 24km and about 800m vertical that day. Leslie's blisters got worse and she could not walk the next two days. She got rides with the 'Sherpa Luggage Van' with no extra charge so she was able to see some extra towns!

Then we were out of the Lake District and the guidebook said the signage would be more consistent. Not too difficult, one imagined. On to Kirkby Stephen, a flat walk across the moors and through pasture land. The English spring day started with a temperature of four degrees, which eventually rose to a scintillating eight degrees. Couple this with a high wind across flat moorland – thank goodness for windproof jackets.

The latter part of the walk was through beautiful buttercup meadows, in which we missed a turn. We talked too much and did not pay attention to the map. Once we realised our mistake we could have backtracked but we made a detour to Crosby-Garret and to Kirkby Stephen from there. We had to walk about 3 extra km. The signage through all this was very consistent, in that there was hardly any. Accommodation was in a little private B&B run by a nice elderly couple. They served us muesli with yoghurt, toast, butter, and jam for breakfast. No black pudding.

On to Keld. This section of the walk crosses the border from Cumbria into Yorkshire and the Pennine Hills, the watershed between the east and west of England. Watersheds mean bogs, treacherous bright green areas of plant life and mud. Wainwright offers various routes, but urges walkers to visit the Nine Standards Rigg, a curious set of cairns set high on Hartley Fell. Their origin is obscure, but the varied construction and the intricacy of the stone work are fascinating. Some are almost 5m high. The three different routes for this part of the trek are designated red, green and blue. This was their meeting point, politely described in the guidebook as mire. It is here that the watershed occurs; from then on rivers ran to the east, towards the North Sea, rather than west into the Irish Sea. This was our shortest day – 18km. We were about at the half way point of our trek.

From the restaurant in Keld we had to phone our B&B host so he could pick us up in his old rattling land rover. The rough bumpy gravel road led us to a nice old farmhouse, built with Slate. The wood burning stove in the little suite was all prepared to light a fire and to get the chill out of the room. Also dinner and breakfast were prepared for us. We only had to heat it up. The next morning, after breakfast, the host drove us back to Keld and we were on our way to Richmond, the largest town en route, a pleasant walk along moors, pastures and rivers. The B&B in Richmond was again on a nice farm with nice green fields and horses grazing.



**Stone circle fences.****Photo: E. Zenger.**

Richmond to Ingleby Cross was perhaps the least interesting day of the walk, with lots of fields full of wet grass and stinging nettles. The highlight was the White Lion at Danby Wiske, roughly the day's halfway point – a lovely pub that opened just as we arrived, the landlord explaining that “we keep an eye out for walkers”. Good English tea and pie made up for



the drab morning.

We arrived at Ingleby Cross in the late afternoon. The accommodation there was one of the highlights of the walk, Park House B&B, set in the glorious countryside of Arncliffe Woods - wonderful hospitality, with great hosts. Beverly was not surprised that we did not want a full English breakfast. She told us the story of offering a full English breakfast to a Coast to Coast walker shortly after she had taken over the business. Fixing her with a steely stare, the lady announced, “I never want to see another full English breakfast.” She served us fruit, yoghurt and a choice of excellent hot fare, shared between an American, a Swiss, an Australian, two Canadians and three Englishmen, a truly international gathering, all walking the Coast to Coast route.

From Ingleby Cross we pick up the Cleveland Way for half a day. This made life easier as the Way was very clearly signposted and well-constructed. Long stretches were on flat, well placed rocks. Many sections of the trail were on ridge tops with beautiful views down to nearby towns and farms. Accommodation that night was at a very isolated farmhouse called Beak Hills. This was the only time we had to walk off the track – about 1 km downhill. Leslie had the opportunity to go grocery shopping with the host lady in the nearest town, about 15 km away, while I had time to read up our next day's walk. The lady served us the best dinner of our trip, with lots of home grown vegetables, salads and venison.

The following morning we set out for Glaisdale in a drizzle. Conditions gradually got worse until we were walking in heavy rain, driven into our faces by a strong wind. So much for walking west to east to keep the wind on our back! The vagaries of English weather prevailed. Fortunately route finding was not a problem there. We walked on a dismantled railway track until we reached “The Lion”, a huge inn with two roaring log fires and filled with wet, steaming walkers of all nationalities.

Suitably refreshed we pressed on, the weather improved and we reached our destination, the Arncliffe arms in Glaisdale, in the late afternoon in sunshine after walking across the wonderfully named Great Fryup Moor – memories of breakfasts!

A good night's rest was had by all and then our final day dawned. Unsurprisingly it was raining. We had seen a lot of mud, but the final day presented us with a mud extravaganza. We slid out of Glaisdale and eventually slithered and sloshed our way to that day's half-way point, a 20m waterfall known as Falling Foss where an enterprising soul had set up a stall selling hot drinks and snacks with tables sheltered by huge umbrellas. Fortified by mugs of steaming hot coffee, we climbed up the river bank – another long stretch of slippery



**Robin Hood's Bay (left); the North Sea (right). Photos: E. Zenger.**

mud.

The next few km were no stroll in the park, with two bogs to cross and a long walk around the headland. The first bog was bad. We had to zig-zag all over the place to avoid getting too wet. The second bog we had been advised would be worse, so we took a route around it - an extra few km but on dry ground. Here we spotted the North Sea and the port city of Whitby, where Captain Cook learned seamanship. The end of the track was in sight. The final 3km were along cliffs above the North Sea, a pleasant walk in sunshine and the small town of Robin Hood's Bay soon appeared way below. It did rain a few times on our walk, but we always dried out towards the end of the days and we never arrived wet at our destinations.

All that remained now was to go down to the beach, dip our boots, or body, in the North Sea and drop our pebbles, lovingly carried from St. Bees. A surprising round of applause greeted us as we walked past the Bay Hotel, where several walkers we had encountered in various places along the way were enjoying some alfresco refreshment.

The Bay Hotel is home to Wainwright's Bar, named after the great man himself. Here, walkers who have completed the route are invited to sign a special visitor's book.

So, the trip was over. We walked about 320km in 11 days and did 6957m (22825ft) vertical, up & down, through some of Britain's most beautiful countryside. We walked across three National parks. The Lake District, Yorkshire Dales & North York Moors. The longest day was 39km and the shortest 18km. An account like this can only scratch the surface in describing the beauty of the trek and the camaraderie of fellow walkers. We walked most of the way with 'Wrong way Jim' whose company was an absolute pleasure.

All the arrangements were made through 'Sherpa Van' on-line well in advance. Their service was excellent. Our luggage always waited for us at the end of the day. We paid for the accommodations when we got to each place. As with any trek, preparation is essential. A good guide book, two maps, (Coast to Coast West & East), a compass, light hiking boots, a good jacket and some cash are required.

Party: Ed. Zenger, Leslie Zenger, Jim Baker.

### **Around the Wildstrubel in the Bernese Alps – July, 2013**

Michael Feller

A heavy rain storm in June, 2013, played havoc with the Pyrenees and nearby mountains, so, after another superb trip, despite having been thwarted from achieving our objectives there, Evelyn and I moved on to the Bernese Alps, where we planned to hike from Leukerbad to Crans by circumnavigating the large Wildstrubel

massif, climbing a couple of peaks en route.

Train, then bus, took us to Leukerbad, a very pleasant thermal spa town surrounded by huge spectacular cliffs. Early the next morning we cheated and took the cablecar the 800m up to Gemmipass, which had an ugly hotel but was the gateway to superb alpine country, with the eastern end of the Wildstrubel massif rising up to the west.. From Gemmipass we began hiking, heading northeast, initially down to a large lake (the Daubensee) then around this, taking many photos of alpine flowers, before descending slightly to a



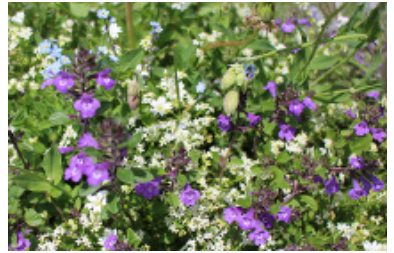
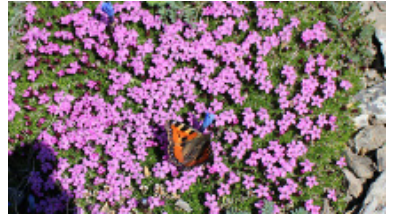
**The snowy high peak of the Wildstrubel from Gemmipass to the east (top); heading down to the Daubensee (middle); heading up to the Wyssi Flue (bottom). Photos: M. Feller.**

mountain hotel – Hotel Schwarenbach, a delightful old (built in 1742) 3-story stone building nestled between cliffy peaks.

This was our destination for the night, but as it was only midday, we had lunch then set off up a hiking trail to the ridge west of the hotel. This trail had also been affected in places by the previous month's heavy rain storm, but in true Swiss fashion, it had already been rebuilt so everything was in order. We then wandered north along the ridge up to its high point – the Wyssi Flue, taking numerous photos of yet more alpine flowers. Unfortunately clouds obscured some of the best views, but we did get a view of the first part of our route for the following day.

After an excellent dinner, sleep, and breakfast, we set off back up to the ridge in fine weather, then descended the other side where we encountered steep snow covering sections of the trail. Despite our modest elevation (around 2300m) snowmelt in the mountains in this part of Europe had been delayed so, as earlier in the Pyrenees, higher trails were often snow-covered. Hugging a cliff we then traversed above a small herd of alpine ibex (Steinbock) surveying the valley and hikers below. With cameras poised, we continued on, dropping into an upper valley then ascending up to the main spine of the Bernese Alps – there an open rocky ridge at about 2550m. We had planned to ascend a nearby peak, the Tschingellochtig hore, which was only 150m higher, but it turned out to be a 5th class vertical spire.

Lunch was spent admiring it and the first part of our route the following day, laid out at our feet beneath our lofty perch. The east peak of the Wildstrubel (Grossstrubel), over 3240m, dominated the southwestern skyline. After lunch we followed the trail up to the base of the spire, before it began a steep descent beside the spire, easing off to a long



A Steinbok's view of the world (above); some flowers also seen in the BC mountains - mountain avens, moss campion, forget-me-not, and *Penstemon* (right); Evelyn heading up to the main spine of the Bernese alps, leaving the Steinboks behind at the base of the prominent cliff (bottom). Photos: M. Feller.





**Views from the crest of the Bernese alps - the Hotel Schwarenbach hidden behind the ridge in the middle of the top left photo; the Tschingellochtig hore (top right); the route down the scree ridge to Engstligenalp (right centre of bottom photo) then from Engstligenalp up the basin to the Ammertepass (low point in the skyline ridge) with the Wildstrubel left of the pass. Photos: M. Feller.**

steady descent along a very open and scenic alpine ridge, down to a broad alpine valley – Engstligenalp. There, around 1950m was our next mountain hotel.

After another pleasant night with great meals, we headed southwest up the Engstligenalp basin, climbing up the final snow slopes to the 2443m Ammertepass. This pass lay on a rocky ridge heading northwest from the Grosstrubel. We headed up the ridge for several hundred metres until our trail descended, and disappeared, down the steep southwestern side. Rockfall had obliterated a portion of it, so we gingerly scrambled down what appeared to be the logical route for a trail. We weren't too far off, rejoining it in a critical spot as it descended a series of ledges and gullies through a major cliff band. Below the band we encountered our first party for the day then had lunch near a cascading creek in a spectacular valley full of large blocks from previous rockfalls, with the middle peak of the Wildstrubel (Mittelgipfel) soaring above us – similar to scenery in Washington's North Cascades. Technically, the descent to our lunch spot, with sections of class 3 scrambling, was the most difficult of the trip.

We did not dally as we had some distance to go, starting with a descent through lush flowery alpine mead-



**Hard to avoid getting lost at the Ammertepass (left); heading up the ridge from Ammertepass to the Grosstrubel (right). Photos: M. Feller.**

ows, then conifer forests, to a popular hiking area around 1300m in a valley above the town of Lenk. There a restaurant provided us with refreshment before we continued, climbing up through forest to extensive grazed grasslands to a broad 1860m pass with a closed hotel. Eyeing the ominous weather we hurried on, only to get caught in torrential rain a short distance from a barn, beside which we sheltered with some cows until the storm passed over. Our trail continued down through conifer forest until we reached an open meadow valley around 1500m. One kilometre up the valley, beside a paved road, lay our next hotel – the hotel Iffigenalp.

After a welcoming hot shower and drying out, we sat down for the best dinner of the trip. While having dinner we watched the farmyard saga outside as the farmers from the adjacent building tried to round up cows, then pigs, then goats, none of whom apparently wanted to be rounded up. Instead they went in all directions, the cows being really fond of licking the cars in the car park, possibly to pick up mineral salts adhering to the cars.

After a restful night followed by another superb breakfast, we left early on what was our last and longest day of the trip. Our trail immediately began to climb steeply up the valley side south of the hotel. A small group of goats wanted to climb up with Evelyn – all the way until a gate barred their way about 300m above the valley floor. The gate also marked the transition from steep conifer forest to vertical cliffs with ledges and gullies, along which our trail travelled with Swiss precision. At around 2000m and back in the alpine, the trail found some meadows and the gradient lessened. At 2430m we reached a pass (the Rawilpass) with a side trail heading to the Swiss Alpine Club's Wildstrubel hut, with the Wildstrubel massif now well to the east. A large glacier with an unenticing name (Glacier de la Plaine Morte) lay between the ridge above the hut and the Wildstrubel. The glacier lay on the French side of the ridge; Until Rawilpass, to which the ridge lead, we had been in the German-speaking part of Switzerland; it was then time to switch languages.

From Rawilpass our trail traversed almost horizontally for over 2 km along a broad, hilly, partly snow-clad valley. A quick lunch stop at the edge of the valley's headwall was followed by a steep descent, including through a tunnel, down to very popular meadows above a large reservoir (Lac de Tseuxier) to which a paved road provided easy access. A stream cascaded straight out of some limestone cliffs on the hillside above the lake. Our trail traversed the slopes above the reservoir, at one point steep avalanche snow creating a problem for those without proper footwear (we were then hiking with many parties). Near the dam wall we located our trail down, then descended steeply with only one other party in sight. For about 6km we



**The trail cut into cliffs above Iffigenalp (top left) and through rock above Lac de Tseuxier (top right); heading down to Lac de Tseuxier (bottom left); waterfall from an underground stream in limestone near Lac de Tseuxier (bottom right). Photos: M. Feller.**

traversed steep slopes through dense forest, sometimes hugging cliffs, sometimes ascending steep gullies or ledges on cliffs, handrails assisting. Eventually we reached the outskirts of the ski resort town of Crans, well to the south of the Wildstrubel. This was our final destination, about 17km from Iffigenalp.

So, why visit the European mountains when they offer fewer opportunities for solitude, wildlife viewing, and wilderness? Well, they are mountains I haven't previously visited, they offer interesting cultural experiences, and, importantly, there are fewer hassles with people whose activities spoil my experiences. B.C. mountains may have a lot, but they are increasingly filled with people who selfishly ignore rules, such as snowmobiling or mountain biking in foot access-only areas, or taking dogs into supposedly dog-free areas or dogs off-leash when they should be on-leash. I encounter these people everywhere in B.C.'s mountains, particularly in national and provincial parks. In all my travels in European mountains, I haven't encountered anyone breaking rules (other than camping where camping is not permitted), which makes for a predictably enjoyable experience. The government and land management agencies in B.C. have been in no hurry to enforce compliance with rules to protect non-motorized recreationists, as exemplified by snowmobiling in the Cheakamus valley area. B.C. has something to learn from Europe, in this respect.

Brian Wood

At the BCMC Social meeting in April 2013 I heard Martin and Esther Kafer, honorary BCMC presidents, tell the story of their ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2012. They were part of a team which participated in the annual premier fundraising event of the Alzheimer Society of BC (ASBC), called the 2012 Ascent for Alzheimer's. Not only did they raise over \$24,000 for the ASBC, they were also recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records for being the oldest man and oldest woman to climb the summit which, at 5895m, is the highest peak in Africa. I had always wanted to visit the African wildlife parks, and combining a visit to parks with a climb of Kilimanjaro to support a worthwhile cause gave me a good excuse to go there. Although there are good hiking trails to the summit with no technical difficulty, climbing Kilimanjaro is a challenge due to the altitude and weather, but to me the really big challenge would be to raise the required \$10,000 in donations for the ASBC. Here it should be added that all the donations raised go to the ASBC, and the participants pay all their own expenses for the trip.

I paid my trip deposit and the Kafers recounted their various fund raising events, which made me even more dubious of my ability to collect that amount of cash, especially as the ASBC is not a high profile charity like the Cancer Society or the Heart and Stroke Fund. Much to my amazement, even before the start of the trip by some incredible strokes of luck and some work I managed to collect the \$10,000 in donations, permitting me to sleep better as I was getting worried. After some early drop-outs and late joiners our team eventually consisted of eight people within an age range from early 20's to early 70's, a five-decade age spread. Some of the team had experienced a close family member having Alzheimer's disease and/or dementia, but that was not my experience, thank goodness. Our certified Canadian leader/guide, Sue Oakey-Baker, had led 14 previous ASBC teams up Kilimanjaro, and she was determined that no one in her team was going to die in the attempt, and that most participants would get to the summit. Consequently she encouraged us to get into shape for the trip by going on some short practice day hikes. She then lead us as a team on longer day hikes, all of which gave us a chance to get to know each other.

In late September, the ASBC team flew to Tanzania and started the climb via the longer and gentler northern



**Mwenzu Peak and surrounding vegetation. Photo: B. Wood.**



Rongai route (5.5 days up), to provide ample time for acclimatisation. On this route, we met fewer people than on the more popular and shorter southern routes, so I would recommend it. The ascent was made much easier by having a small “army” of local porters to carry our tents, food and fuel, while we carried just warm clothes, water, minor personal things, and snacks for day use. This use of porters was similar to my recent trek in Afghanistan and I fear I might get accustomed to this “pampered trekking” because it might be hard to return to being self-sufficient and carrying my own gear and supplies. Our well maintained trail slowly gained elevation and passed through unusual vegetation zones of giant heathers and strange cactus/palm-like plants called “groundsels”. We twice camped near strange caves formed from collapsed lava tubes, and then camped for two days to assist acclimatisation at scenic Mwenzi Tarn (4300m) close to a jagged



**Camps, including Kibo hut (bottom) on the approach to Kilimanjaro. Photos: B. Wood.**

volcanic sub-summit called Mwenzi Peak. To this point far we had been blessed with sunny weather but as we left Mwenzi Tarn and traversed a saddle towards the final high camp at Kibo Hut (4700m), clouds were gathering about the summit and we could catch only glimpses of our final ascent route to the crater rim. On the saddle we passed portions of a wrecked aircraft which had tried to crash-land there years before - a very sad tale. We had lunch at Kibo Hut, where there were more people than we had seen for days. Lunch was followed by a final check of our gear and water supplies, then relaxing followed by an early dinner. During a short nap that evening we experienced our first storm on the mountain with thunder and lightning and wind-driven snow - not very conducive to sleeping.

At about 10 pm I crawled wearily out of our tent and found 5-8cm of accumulated snow at our campsite. This snow prompted three members of the party to abandon their summit attempt. At about 11 pm the remaining five of our team, together with Sue and four local guides, set off with headlights following a line of headlights of other climbing teams in front of us as they wound their way up the zig-zag trail towards Gilman's Point (5690m) on the crater rim. The walking pace was very slow - “pole, pole” as they say here - and the surrounding darkness and thin cold air gave the climb a somewhat ethereal feel. Along the trail we passed groups of other climbers resting with their local guides, and most looked very tired, so we did not feel we were the only weary ones. We arrived at Gilman's Point the next day at about 6.30 am as the sun was rising over the low clouds, and the views all around us were spectacular in the early morning light. This seemed to energise some of the party. Many folks

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consider getting to Gilman's Point is far enough and after sad farewells one of our team turned around there to return with one of our guides. The remaining four team members plus three guides and leader Sue followed the undulating and very scenic trail to Uhuru Point (5896m), the real summit, arriving there around 8 am. Those of us who started the final climb had been very lucky as the well maintained trail was not too slippery and the fresh snow turned the normally red, grey and brown rocky summit area into a winter wonderland. The remnants of the steep walled glaciers located near the summit were spotlessly white and shining in the equatorial sun. The contrast of glaciers and snow so near to the Equator seems strange to me, but of course this contrast occurs elsewhere in the world. At times we had the summit area to ourselves which was great for photographs, and after drinks and snacks we reversed our route back to Gilman's Point and here our guides insisted on taking some of our day packs so as to save their clients from extra effort. We were too tired to argue with the guides and anyway it made them feel much better: what rationalisation! When descending the zig-zag trail we came across a sick climber and his guide, one of those whom we saw resting on the way up, but this time the climber was unconscious and seemed in very bad shape. Sue tried to convince the guide that the climber should be taken down immediately but nothing happened while we were near. After leaving the sick climber we avoided much of the zig-zag trail by "sliding" down hundreds of metres of fine gravel scree which was now free of snow and much quicker than using the trail, but it was very tiring on our legs.

Back at Kibo Hut around noon we had lunch, packed up our gear and then continued our descent. As we left



Heading for the summit. Photo: B. Wood.



**Scenes from the summit area of Kilimanjaro, including the remnants of a glacier (right bottom) and Brian (third from right) holding the banner on the summit (left bottom). Photos: B. Wood collection.**

the hut we saw the sick climber being evacuated on a single-wheeled stretcher in which the stretcher frame was supported by a motorcycle rear wheel and sprung suspension struts - a wonderful example of efficient African improvisation. We slowly descended the quite busy and popular main Marangu trail to Horombo camp at about 3700m where we had dinner and exchanged further stories of our climbs. It had been an energetic day which started at 11 pm the previous day and involved ascending about 1200m followed by descending about 2200m. We all slept well that night in spite of the wind-driven rain hammering on the tent. The next day dawned beautifully clear and we had some magnificent views of the vast plains below us and the mountain above. After the usual good breakfast we leisurely descended the very wide trail which eventually passed through dense bush where we saw a few monkeys and flowering epiphytes on moss-covered trees. Our trip finally finished at the park entrance and headquarters where we were trucked back to our base hotel for very welcome showers and clean clothes at about 5 pm. The whole party then gathered together and we had farewell drinks and speeches and the team gave our sincere thanks and service tips to the guides and porters. The guides and porters had a raffle of some of our trip clothes and gear which we were not taking back with us, which was followed by the guides, porters and even our team singing and dancing, at least as much as our tired bodies would allow. The team and Sue then had a formal farewell dinner where we discussed our immediate future plans, many of which included wildlife safaris. Thus our African ascent came to a very satisfying and happy ending, and I am impressed at how well the party supported each other and accomplished so much in such a short time of meeting each other. I cannot say enough about how our leader Sue, and the guides and porters, made our trip so enjoyable, and how their conscientiousness and helpfulness ensured that everyone arrived back safely with happy memories. Their

hard work and the hard work of our team, not only in climbing but also when fundraising with the help of the Society and other volunteers, left me feeling that everyone had done a terrific job of which all could be proud. Now that the 2013 trip is finished, perhaps BCMC members would like to join the ASBC team on future Ascent for Alzheimer's trips (see [www.ascentbc.ca](http://www.ascentbc.ca). for details).

### **A visit to the Sipapu in the Little Colorado River Gorge – 21 April, 2013**

Peter Gumplinger

We had just completed a three-day hike of the Thunder River/Deer Creek Loop on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, eaten some much needed nourishment at the Cliff Dwellers Lodge near Lee's Ferry, and now we were running late to get to our next trail head. All we had was some printed access information with a sketchy map from [www.hkhinc.com/hikes/littlecolorado/kelsey.htm](http://www.hkhinc.com/hikes/littlecolorado/kelsey.htm), and the certainty that our 2WD rental car would be faced with some rough roads. The maze of jeep trails was difficult to predictably navigate, especially so close to sunset. Dead reckoning helped until it got dark. At times, we found ourselves backtracking from dead ends and driving around in circles like we were trapped inside a Hopi maze. By chance, one last dirt track led over an embankment to a parking area and three full size pickup trucks. We assumed this was our objective and because it was so very windy outside, prepared to sleep for the night in the back of our station wagon. I fell asleep mulling over the question why there were so many trucks at this obscure location. The answer came in the morning. We found the start of a trail, all right, but no foot prints. All three trucks were identical in model and color and all had US government license plates which led us to suspect that our parking area was also a helicopter launch pad for some type of government employees.

Our trail, well cairned and trodden, led across a short rolling section of the Painted Desert to the far end of a deep cleft. The spot where it plunged off the mesa was marked with multiple cairns so we became confident that we had indeed slept near the edge of Salt Trail Canyon, a deep about 10km long intersecting canyon that enters the Little Colorado River Gorge (LCRG) from the east and within about 3km of the travertine dome thought to be the Hopi's Sipapu. An ancient route descends this gorge to salt deposits near the river. It is steeped in Hopi traditional lore. The Tapeats Sandstone cliff far below hold deposits of salt that are



**Petroglyphs on the approach (left); hiking beside the Little Colorado River (right). Photos: P. Gumplinger.**



**Peter at the bottom of the bottom of the steep section (top); Silke resting before the final climb (bottom). Photos: S. Gumplinger (top), P. Gumplinger (bottom).**

550 million years old – remains of the Tapeats Sea. Since prehistoric times, people have made this precarious journey, following a trail marked by petroglyphs and offering places, and returning with their heavy burdens. A man who arrived home with the precious salt was considered very brave, for he had also ventured close to the mystical underworld. These traditional pilgrimages are still important to the spiritual practice of the Hopi today.

Our route into Salt Creek Canyon went down steep and rugged terrain and we had to constantly establish the existence of the next cairn. They were often difficult to discern from the overall rubble heap. We always succeeded in the end without having to backtrack but this slowed our desired progress considerably. We had no time to lose for we hoped to visit the mystical Sipapu and return the same day. We only stopped briefly to check out some impressive petroglyphs. Near the bottom of the initial descent the route followed a distinct bench above the dry creek bed on river left. This simpler geography allowed us to move faster. About half way to the river the trail descended, crossed the creek then climbed the other side to another sandstone bench, which was interrupted by several extensive erosion fans. As we

neared the Little Colorado River the entrance to a final steep drop off was marked with two large Hopi stone cairns. The pristine deep canyon was green with lush vegetation.

At the base of Salt Trail Canyon, apparently near the salt deposits, we stumbled right into the middle of a large camp with people. It turned out we had blundered into an Arizona Game and Fish Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service encampment. The confluence of the Little Colorado and the Colorado rivers is a rare habitat for an endangered fish species. The largest remnant population of humpback chub



**At the top of the steep section (top); easier hiking (below). Photos: P. Gumplinger.**

now survives there. The people were there to study the fish which includes catching them with fish traps and tagging them. The lead scientist was surprised to meet anyone, especially from Canada, and explained to us that we had just hiked the oldest known continuously used trail in the Americas. He also described to us his trail network along the river which we must follow if we hoped to reach the Sipapu. We thanked him then charged off in haste.

We soon found that the banks of the Little Colorado River were thick with Tammies and Catclaw. It was quite the thrash for the first several hundred meters and impenetrable, had it not been for the scientists'

underpass. At one point, though, we missed it and believed that we had to cross the somewhat flooded river. I tried, but the water was very deep. The Little Colorado River was a chocolate milk color just as it was on my first visit to the Sipapu, 33 years earlier, hiking up from the confluence while on a private raft/kayaking trip down the Colorado River. Thankfully, the senior scientist had come behind us and directed us again to the correct river ford. It was easier walking along good trails on the west side. We hurried on hoping that after each new river bend our destination would come into view. Finally, about 3km the way we had come along the river and about 5.5km upstream from the confluence, the Sipapu appeared

to be a strange apparition on the eastern bank some distance away, nothing more than a rounded pile of red dirt sitting at the base of a large canyon wall. In reality, this is a place of great spiritual significance for the Hopi people. It represents their birthplace. The Sipapu is an old mineral hot spring or perhaps it was a geyser once. It is a round dome of deposited travertine, almost perfectly round, roughly 10m diameter and 7m high. On top of the Sipapu was a hole, 2m in diameter, that contained bubbling water about 2m below the surface. The small recessed bubbling hole symbolizes the portal through which the Hopi's ancestors first emerged to enter the present world. Hopi pilgrims have adorned the inside wall with tiny ceremonial feathered arrows. This unique geologic feature is also the inspiration for the Pueblo Indian concept of the "kiva". On my first visit so many years ago now, it seemed this fantastic Sipapu was guarded by a spirit. I was then also in a rush to see it and return in time to continue down-river with my paddling companions, and just



**The sipapu. Photo: P. Gumplinger.**

as I finally saw the Sipapu, a cricket jumped right into my eye. It hurt and I lost a contact lens. I now expected something similar to happen at any moment. We had yet to cross the Little Colorado one more time to get over on the east side. Nothing happened but my second visit was also a similar kind of spiritual experience for me.

The Hopi are said to have emerged into the current Fourth World from the previous Third World. There are many emergence myths and places of protection in North America but probably the most famous is this Hopi Sipapu. Most Pueblo Indian traditions agree that this current time period is the "Fourth World". The prior three worlds were destroyed by fire, ice and flood. Before the world cleanses itself at the end of a particular world and life is destroyed to start anew in the succeeding world, only those people who are pure of heart are led underground to be cared for by their Maasaw (Earth Guardian). They remain there during the cataclysms occurring above ground until it is safe for them to reemerge and repopulate the earth. The Maasaw extended a bag of seeds, a water gourd and a planting stick and offered welcome provided they forever honored the earth and cared for her. Thus, the Hopi became farmers and thereafter have respected the land.

Our hike back to the canyon rim was uneventful. The large Hopi cairns provided a welcome resting and hiding place in the heat of the mid afternoon sun. We had to stop, rest and drink many times until late in the afternoon when we finally tackled the final climb. Thankfully, the biologists had allowed us to take as much of their drinking water as we wanted. We made it out to the highway and a gas station before darkness and an empty tank, stopped for burgers on Route 66 in Flagstaff, and caught the flight home from Las Vegas, all within 12 hours of emerging from the bowls of Marble Canyon, as this part of the Grand Canyon is called.

The confluence of the Little Colorado River with the Colorado River has recently become an area of contention. The late-coming Navajo Nation, who arrived less than a hundred years before the Spanish, have been in political control of the location for many decades. Unlike the Hopi, who live on a reservation within the much larger Navajo reservation, the Navajo do not hold the Grand Canyon as their most sacred site. The Navajo have recently and quietly signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a Scottsdale developer, Confluence Partners LLC, to investigate the possibility of building a multi-million dollar resort above the confluence of the two rivers. The project, called Grand Canyon Escalade ([grandcanyonescalade.com](http://grandcanyonescalade.com)), is planned to include a complex of luxury hotels, restaurants, shops, RV park and a mile-and-a-half tramway that would ferry visitors 1000m down to a restaurant on the canyon floor. This project aims to attract 3 million visitors a year and possibly as early as 2015. Such a development would desecrate the Hopi's nearby Sipapu. In response, a grassroots group, Save The Confluence ([www.savetheconfluence.com](http://www.savetheconfluence.com)), vows to defeat the developers' plan and instead build a new Navajo economy based on the cultural strengths of the tribe.

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### **The Wave in the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument – April, 2011**

Rick Sheppard

THE LOTTERY - The only way to gain access to this unique geologic feature is by permit and this must be

obtained through a lottery administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There are two ways that one can participate in the lottery. If you are able to pinpoint an actual date on which you would like to go, you can enter the lottery on line six months before the date you want to hike. Or you can go to the local BLM station near the Wave the day before you wish to hike and enter the lottery then. Only ten people are drawn at each lottery for a total of twenty people per day. Groups of up to four people can be chosen on each draw until the maximum of ten is reached. The local lottery is held the day before the hike at the BLM Paria Contact Station located about 50 km west of Page on Highway 89. This may have changed so confirm all details on line- Google 'The Wave, Arizona' to get to the website.

There is a large Glen Canyon National Recreation Area campsite just outside of Page and two others close to the Paria BLM station- the Whitehouse Campground and the Stateline Campground. Keep in mind that the whole world knows about the Wave so needless to say it can be a little difficult to win a permit. Lots of luck!! And also keep in mind that the area is well patrolled and the fine for getting caught in the area without a permit is close to \$700!

**THE ALTERNATIVE** - If you are at the BLM station and you didn't win the lottery, there is a pretty spectacular alternative to assuage your disappointment! Buckskin Canyon offers some beautiful features similar to the Wave as well as a slot canyon. You can start at the south access through Wire Pass (this trailhead is the same access as that for the Wave), and then turn north and hike along the canyon until it changes into a wash or you can do it in reverse. Some sort of a shuttle will be needed- vehicle, bicycle or hitch hiking is necessary to complete the journey. The BLM station can give directions or check out the route in the guide book (Canyon Hiking Guide to the Colorado Plateau- Non-Technical 5th or 6th edition available at most National Parks or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices or stations. This is a must if you plan to explore a lot in the canyon lands).



**THE HIKE** - The day before, while we were at the Paria BLM winning the lottery, there were snow flurries and the weather was quite cold. Although this kind of weather does occur occasionally it is not typical for that time of year. We were relieved to find that the forecast for the day of the hike called for mostly sunny weather with intermittent high cloud. As we

started the hike in the late morning the temperature was around 18°C with mainly sunny weather... the forecast was right on and the conditions were perfect for hiking. We hiked past spectacular beige and pink sandstone formations - the Coyote Buttes were particularly outstanding - pink tepee configurations sculpted into fantastic shapes looking rather like swirled soft ice cream cones. The hike had very little elevation change along



**The approach. Photo: R. Sheppard.**





**The Wave. Photos: R. Sheppard.**



the route until the final ascent up into the Wave. And it was easy to walk on the mainly smooth slick rock with occasional rocky outcroppings, so there were many opportunities to take in the vastness of the broad landscape that lay ahead.

The Wave itself looked like fluid motion frozen in time but instead of the watery blue of an ocean wave it was streaked in various shades from cream to ochre to pink. We ascended the wave to observe other amazing striations finally reaching a high point. Looking back, the striations appeared to flow rhythmically back down to the Wave like water swirling down a drain. Looking back, we could see the route we had taken earlier past the Coyote Buttes. We stopped at a vantage point to have lunch not wanting to leave this fantastic landscape. However, reluctantly we finally departed back the way we came, completely satisfied that we were incredibly fortunate to have experienced such an amazing geological formation.

Participants: Kreg Sky, Barbara Durant, and Rick Sheppard (organizer).

## IN AND AROUND BC

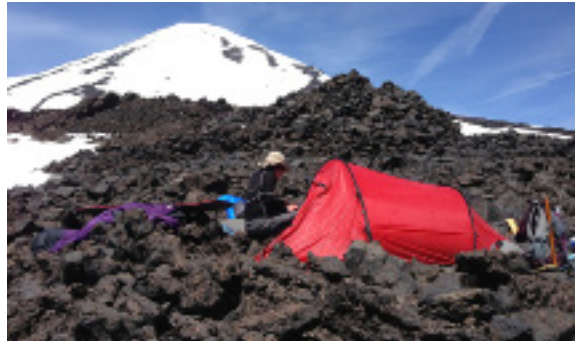
### SOUTH COAST MOUNTAINS and CASCADES

#### Ski ascent/descent of Mt. Adams (3743 m), Washington State – 14-15 June, 2013

Carl Douglas

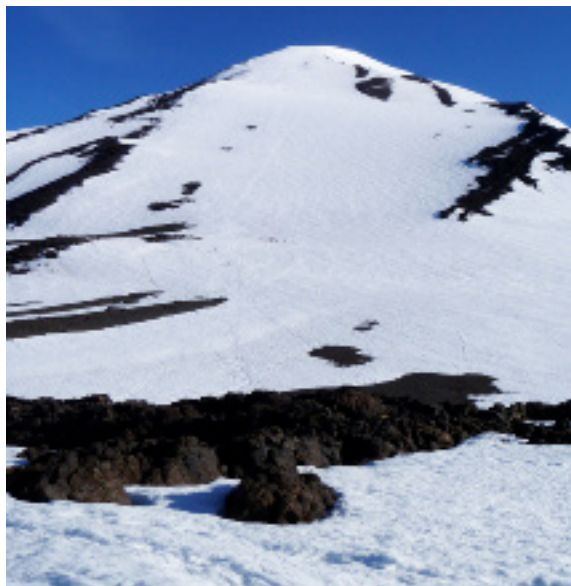
On June 14, 2013, five of us set out for a ski up (and down) Mt. Adams, the second highest of the Washington Cascade volcanoes, on a joint BCMC-ACC trip. For trivia lovers, Mt. Adams is a classic, heavily glaciated stratovolcano that last erupted around 550 BC, and saw its first ascent in 1854 and first ski descent in 1932. There used to be a mule trail to the top, aiding in a mining operation. Today, it is a very popular spring ski objective, particularly via the moderate South Rib (Suksdorf Ridge) that avoids any glaciers yet offers a consistent 25-30 degree pitch for over 1000 vertical metres. Also, Mt. Adams lies entirely within the Mt. Adams Wilderness Area (western half) and the Yakima Indian Reservation (eastern half) so that, despite the ease of access, no motorized means of transport are allowed on the mountain, just skis, boards, and/or boots. Having been up the other four Washington volcanoes, most multiple times, somehow the summit of Adams had eluded me and I was delighted to have 4 wonderful, energetic and experienced ski companions on this late spring adventure.

In the fall of 2012 a major fire hit the approach area for the South Rib, and the standard approach (road and trail) was closed throughout the spring due to safety concerns, complicating access. Fortunately, about two weeks before our ascent the road and trail were reopened. We arrived at the Trout Lake Ranger station mid-afternoon on Friday, 14 June, under clear and sunny skies, with a forecast for high pressure holding for at least one more day. So, armed with our Mt. Adams Volcano permits and “personal hygiene” kits including bags and bulls eye targets for solid waste (to be carried out), we set off through the blackened forest in the afternoon sun with our skis on our packs and glorious views of the volcano’s massive hulk above us. Soon we hit enough snow (1-2 km from the trailhead) to put on skis and skin up the rest of the way over well-compacted snow to a high camp. Only a few parties were ahead of us; the bulk of the weekend skiers would arrive the next day, many from nearby Portland and Vancouver WA. We aimed for the standard camping area, dubbed “The Lunch Counter”, at around 2400 m (800 m ascent from the trailhead). We located a series of flat snow-free platforms on a lava ridge near the Lunch Counter, and settled in to cook dinner among the



Mandana and Chloe about to start (top left); heading up to camp (top right); camp (right); Mandana near camp (bottom). Photos: C. Douglas except top right - C. Tergiman.





Aaron heading up (top left) towards the false summit (right); the party on the summit (below from left to right) - Aaron, Thomas, Carl, Mandana, Chloe. Photos: C. Tergiman except bottom right - C. Douglas.



jagged black rocks of the ancient lava flow, watching the sun set while enjoying views of Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson in the far distance, and the dry Columbia Basin desert to the east.

Up and off moderately early under clear skies on Saturday, we skinned up the hard snow, then made good use of ski crampons on the way up the 30 degree South Face to the 3553 m False Summit (“Pikers Peak”). An hour later, around 11 am, having traversed the mostly flat summit plateau, we reached the summit (3743 m). Mt Rainier appeared to the north and we enjoyed a brief stay on the brisk and windy summit before skiing down icy slopes back to Pikers Peak, and the main event – our 1000+ m ski descent down the South Rib to our camp, followed by a continued ski descent to the cars. The sun was strong, but even the south



**Mandana and Carl on the descent. Photo: C. Tergiman.**

slopes were still somewhat icy, so we elected to bask in the sun with a growing crowd on Pikers Peak, waiting for the snow to soften. One by one, groups began heading down, many choosing the steeper SW Chutes - next time that would be our choice, but our high camp was not in a good position for that descent route. At about 1 pm we also pointed our skis downward, and it was everything we had anticipated – a fabulous long and

consistent run on firm corn snow, seeming to last forever. We stopped occasionally to admire each other's turns and rest burning thighs (at least I did), found our camp, and continued to the cars, arriving by late afternoon. We de-briefed at the Full Sail Brewing Company pub in Hood River, overlooking the Columbia River, and were so pumped that we briefly considered heading to Mt. Hood, tantalizingly close, to continue our ski adventure. Well, next time – instead we began the long drive through the Columbia Gorge and on to Vancouver (BC), dreaming of coming back and attacking the SW Chutes another year.

Party: Mandana Amiri, Chloe Tergiman, Aaron Snider, Thomas Price, and Carl Douglas.

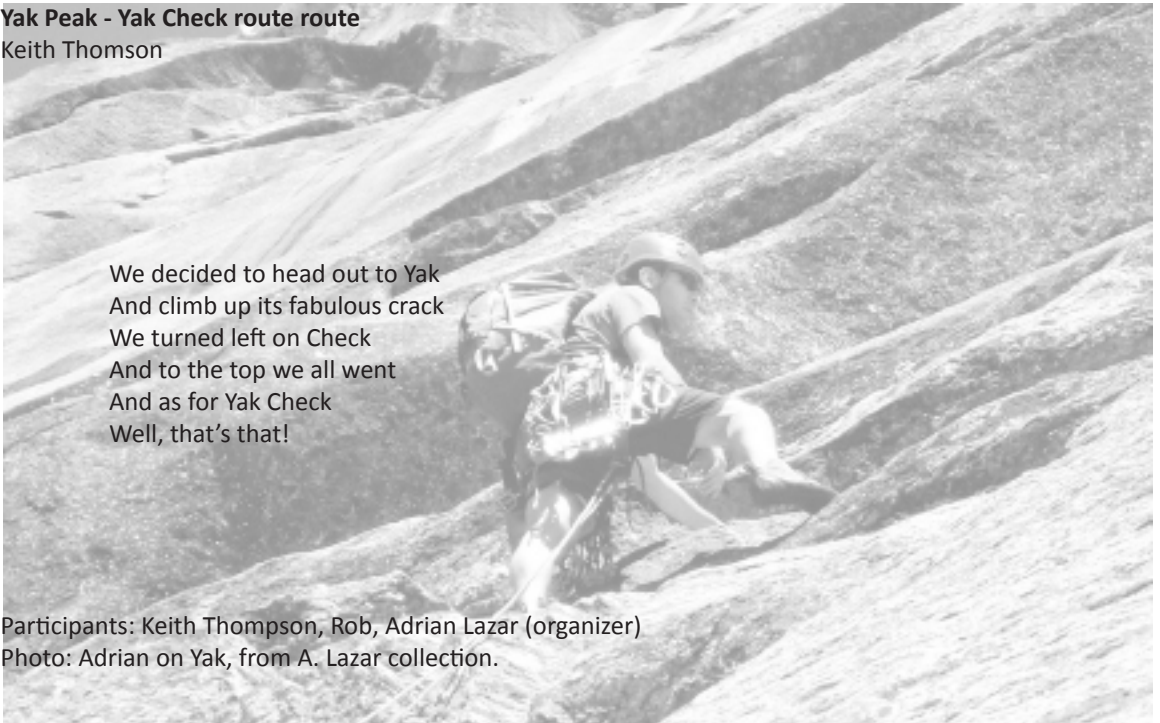
### **Yak Peak - Yak Check route route**

Keith Thomson

We decided to head out to Yak  
And climb up its fabulous crack  
We turned left on Check  
And to the top we all went  
And as for Yak Check  
Well, that's that!

Participants: Keith Thomson, Rob, Adrian Lazar (organizer)

Photo: Adrian on Yak, from A. Lazar collection.





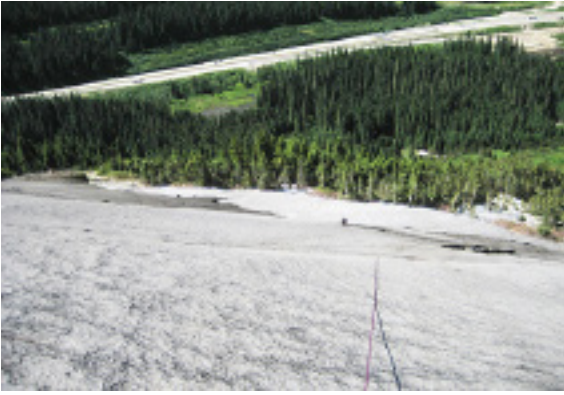
Climbing the Yak Check route; Keith belaying Rob (left), Rob climbing (middle and right). Photos: A. Lazar collection.

#### Yak Pk – SOMWOW route – 1 August, 2011

Paul Olynek



On a holiday Monday, four of us traveled to Yak Peak to climb two of the popular granite routes. While Cormac and Adi climbed Yak Check, Cynthia and I made our way up the route called “Seven One-Move Wonders Of the World” (SOMWOW)... a 5.7+ 15-pitch slab route. Overall it was a fun route and a great day of climbing. Most pitches were more runout than I’d expected. Cynthia is a good climber but preferred to second all the runout pitches, so I lead almost every pitch. Total climbing time was about 8hrs and we were tired by the time we reached the summit. For comparison, if you’ve lead “Over the Rainbow” on the Squamish Apron then SOMWOW will seem relatively easy - if it’s dry.



Ascending the SOMOW route on Yak, with Paul (bottom left) and Cynthia on top (bottom right). Photos: P. Olynek except for bottom left - Cynthia.

### Harrison Lake to Whistler Village. A traverse through legends! 11-24 September, 2013

Adam Palmer

After Climbing the Fire Spires on the Terrarosa Glacier in 2010, and then in 2011- traversing from Harrison across the Stave Glacier to the upper Pitt River, Evan's and my next objective would be to traverse from the



North Harrison across the Misty Ice Fields to Whistler, via the upper reaches of the Cheakamus. This 2013 two week mountaineering trip was the final instalment in our trilogy of trips that consisted of exploring some of the most remote reaches of Garibaldi Park. This unsupported traverse from Harrison Lake to Whistler Village while climbing Sill Peak, Snowcap Peak, and Mt Pitt essentially led us on a path that not many have taken since that 'nostalgic' era of mountaineering in British Columbia during the 1970s'.

On day 1, we started our approach on foot from



Near camp on day 1 (top); looking towards Terrarosa Lake (middle); on the ridge to Terrarosa Lake (bottom). Photos: A. Palmer collection.

the Fire Creek FSR spur above Fire Lake after being dropped off around 1:30pm via Harrison West FSR on September 11. With a short ramble through an old cut block and thin forest, we reached the sub-alpine tree line in less than an hour. We hiked along the grassy meadows and tarns along the ridge that separated the Terrarosa Glacier from the ridges west of Fire Lake. We set up camp at the first large tarn around 7pm which put us close to where we would drop down to Terrarosa Lake the next day. On day 2 we headed towards Terrarosa lake where we set up camp for the night in a location that gave





**Evan and Adam on the ridge leading to Terra-rosa Lake (top); Terra-rosa Lake (bottom). Photos: A. Palmer collection.**

us access to an exploratory trip we wanted to do down in the upper Stave before heading up along the ridge paralleling the Stave Glacier. Rather than going up the headwall as in our 2011 expedition to Pitt Lake from Harrison, we chose to climb the long 'never ending ridge' which gave us access to Terra Alba and the Misty Icefields. A long day finally brought us to the shores of Terra-rosa Lake, this time at the North end of the lake, near the outlet. This stopped us from going further as we spent the night devising a plan of how to cross that mini canyon of rapids.

On day 3, we set up a dynamic 30m bag hauling system, which would allow us to cross on some rocks and logs, then climb along the canyon wall, while making a final long leap across the outlet

stream. It worked very well! We then descended down into the upper Stave region. While the others took a break before ascending the headwall of the ridge paralleling the Stave Glacier, Evan and I headed off for an hour to explore some lakes and canyons we first spotted on the 2009 recon trip and again on the 2010 Fire Spires trip. The valley consisted of a series of beautiful lakes and small waterfalls with surrounding meadows tucked in behind our ridge paralleling the Stave Glacier. We reached a high camp on a sub-peak of the ridge that evening and set up a beautiful camp on some slabs with some nearby 'pools' in which we could swim.

On day 4, we continued on up and over the high point of the ridge, where we made great time, considering the numerous ups and downs. It probably would have been faster to go directly up the glacier, but nevertheless we came to a short cliff with no safe way to down climb with 30kg packs, so we set up a short rapp and descended into the alpine bowl before climbing back up to final peak on the ridge, where we set up a high camp overlooking the Stave Glacier on the Terra Alba.



**Camp on day 3. Photo: A. Palmer collection.**

On day 5 we made our way over to Sill Peak, and summited by late afternoon. It was a beautiful little peak that Evan and I had spotted from Stave and Misty Peaks in 2011. After climbing Sill, we descend morning.

On day 6 it was a no go! Stormy and rainy! A day of



Evening at the day 4 camp. Photo: A. Palmer collection.



Adam and Evan above the Stave Glacier. Photo: A. Palmer collection.



Clockwise from top left - Looking back at the Terrarosa area; approaching Sill Pk.; ridge above Stave Glacier; on the Misty Icefield; mist on the Misty Icefield;

Chris above the Misty Icefield. Photos: A. Palmer collection.



ed back onto the Misty. This ice field is quite possibly one of my favorite geological landscapes in the province. The extremely blue pools of water, the craggy ice, and crunching under our feet as we walked across, made us feel like we were walking on some distant frozen planet somewhere else in the solar system! We then found ourselves heading towards the Snowcap Icefield. Negotiating some large crevasses, we had to take an alternate route across this final section of the Misty by way of a rocky ridge to the east, then back onto the ice field. Thunder clouds were encroaching on us, and we 'bee lined' it to a camp above the ice field but below the Snowcap which would give us quick access to the ascent of the Snowcap Icefield next



**Hourglass Lake. Photo: A. Palmer collection.**

reading and watching Star Trek original series Episodes, Buck Rogers and Battlestar Galactica TV episodes on my iphone while we waited out the storm. We would periodically listen to the rain hit the walls of the tent, and every time we detected an easing off in the precipitation, we would peer outside the vestibule and look at the Misty Icefields from our perch above it. Every time we did this, all of us would describe the scene in a new creative way, in awe of its beauty. It was such an exquisite site, especially as we could see the 10,000 year old ice exposed and raw, and free from any snow!

On day 7 we woke up to some clear weather, and started our ascent up the Snowcap ice field. Some steep ice and crevasses warmed us up with some low angle climbing in the morning. Beautiful! We reached the approach for Snowcap Peak by noon and summited around 2pm. We found the 1959 BCMC Kodak film canister along with the summit notes and names of people on the trip. There were 2 separate trips, a month apart in 1959! After climbing Snowcap, we descended down to Snowcap Lake via Staircase Glacier. Descending down, a loose rocky ridge with car sized boulders slowed our pace and destroyed our nerves, especially as chunks of ice broke off the Staircase Glacier thundering down in front of us. Breaking off and smashing like a star fighter blasting asteroids was the only thing that came to mind as I carefully focused on each step, giving it all of my energy. It was a dramatic descent, with all our hearts and nerves stretched to the max. We reached Hourglass Lake in the evening and decided to camp above it rather than at Snowcap Lake, as darkness was almost upon us.

On day 8, we hiked to Snowcap Lake, and crossed the natural land bridge to the other side for our basecamp

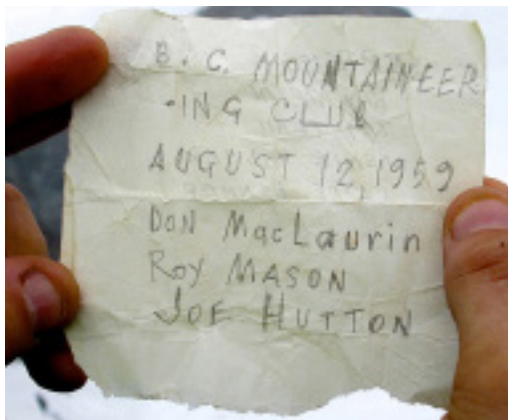


Asher above Snowcap Lake (left); the land bridge across Snowcap Lake (right). Photos: A. Palmer collection.



Approaching Snowcap Pk. with the Staircase Glacier (bottom right) and the peak itself (bottom left). Photos: A. Palmer collection.





From the Snowcap Pk. summit register. With the death of Don MacLaurin earlier this year, all members of this BCMC party are no longer with us. Photo: A. Palmer collection.



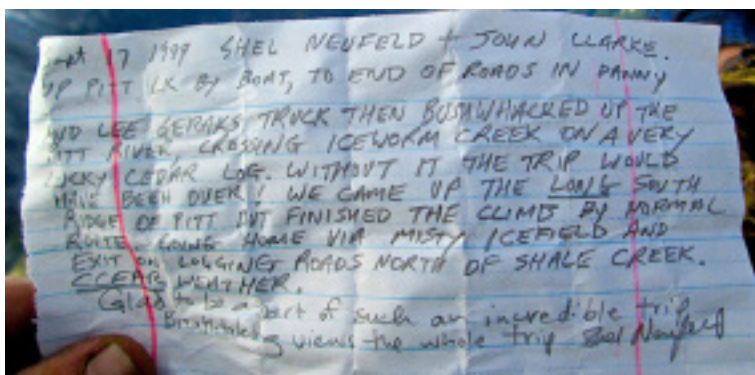
on Roller Coaster Ridge, by Tuwasus Pass. There we set up camp before departing to climb Mt Pitt. In the early afternoon, after setting up camp, we departed for the infamous Mt Pitt Summit. We reached the summit of Mt. Pitt at 5pm via a complete traverse over the ridge to the east summit, down climbing a short section around a pillar of rock then climbing up a chimney crack onto the final ramp, then up to the main peak. On the way back, we bypassed the chimney and climbed the wall up and over the East Peak. We returned back to camp at 10pm. Chris had stayed behind for the day and had fought off grizzlies that were reportedly trying to take over our camp, so he said! On day 9 we descended down into Tuwasus Pass, and reached the forks in the north and east creeks by early evening, setting up camp in a forested section off the main water channel. We had had relatively easy travel as we stayed along the upper banks of creeks and former debris flows from the high country, avoiding any thick bush that we knew was soon to come.

On day 10, we headed towards the Pass, back up and over the next valley through the bush, slowly making our way towards the alpine under Mt. Sir Richard and Veeocee Peak. If we had clear weather, this area would serve as a basecamp for climbing the two. The plan of staying there for a few nights to climb Sir Richard and Veeocee soon was abandoned as the temperature started dropping and heavy rain and low visibility descended upon on us.

On day 11, we woke up to rain showers again, so we decided to see if we could wait it out for some clear weather while spending the day in the tent to recharge and refuel. We ate a lot of food, and went over the maps to develop our exit strategy to Whistler.

On day 12, we woke up to snow and low visibility so we decided to get the hell out of there because if we waited any longer, a metre of snow would make travel slow and difficult through the pass. As we approached the higher bowl, we hit solid snow, and a metre or so of snow on the ground. As we descended we passed across the toe of the Forger Glacier, which only had a light dusting of snow on it but posed no navigational problems as we were mostly

**Camp for Mt. Pitt (top); Solitude Glacier near Mt. Pitt. Photos: A. Palmer collection.**



on rock through the lower pass. Slowly making our way down to the low country, the temperature increased enough for the snow to turn to rain, but we were soaked and chilled completely through so needed a break. We hit the river bank, made a fire and ate some lunch while attempting to dry off. After an hour lunch break, we made our way further down into the upper Cheakamus River Valley, skirting the river bank and then moving out onto a wide, sandy, open gravel section where we made camp for the night.

On day 13, winding in and out of the forest and back and forth onto the river bank, we made our way to Cheakamus Lake and eventually hit a wide open meadow by early afternoon. The thick grasslands at the head of the lake came into view so we knew we were close to the lake. We found the lakeside trail in the late afternoon, and took a lunch break once we were a couple of km from Singing Creek campground. After we refueled, we charged on through the campground, and onto the wide trail along the lake. The first people we saw in two weeks were at the 3.5km mark along the trail and we spoke with them for a few minutes. They graciously offered us a ride from the trailhead to Whistler. However,

**Mt. Pitt (top); Asher on the East Peak of Mt. Pitt (middle); John Clarke and Shel Neufeld's summit entry on Mt. Pitt (bottom) (see BC Mountaineer 2000 for an account of this ascent). Photo: A. Palmer collection.**



**Tuwasus Pass (top left); on the Terra Alba Glacier with its red algal snow (top and bottom right); the damp party at the Cheakamus trail (bottom left). Photos: A. Palmer collection.**

once we reached the Cheakamus Lake trailhead parking lot around 4.30 pm, we had cell service and called Whistler Taxi to come and pick us up. The next couple of hours were spent eating, cleaning, and hot tubbing at Whistler Village Inn and Suites. Kevin and Sheena picked us up the next day.

This trip is dedicated to those who were there before us, during that true era of exploration by local mountaineers in this region in the 1960s, 70s, and 1980s. I grew up reading about these guys and their week(s) long trips, and in awe. While most of the world is caught up in reading about high altitude mountain ranges across the world and athletes are sponsored to complete new speed records, we here, right in BC, have had some of the most daring, skilled and courageous mountaineers exploring in our backyard, putting up routes on peaks that didn't see first ascents until the 1960s, 70s, and 1980s- truly magnificent and legendary. Walking across the Misty Icefields, I am truly grateful that such a magnificent geological landscape is so close to my home, and that I have had the opportunity to explore it. It was almost as if John Clarke was walking beside us as we crossed that thing.

Participants: Evan Howard, Kelly Legros, Asher Knee-Rintel, Chris Malcomson, and Adam Palmer (organizer).



## Mt. Habrich - Life on Earth route

Keith Thomson:

To Mount Habrich it seems, one must go, at least once  
Though the approach to be candid, makes one feel like a dunce

But thither we went, to climb Life on Earth  
A fine climb we are told, in a land with no dearth

To Shannon Creek you can drive, with a four by four ride  
Thanks to Sea to Sky Gondola, and their dynamite guys

Easy pickings you think, with a much shorter amble  
But the hike from the valley is a bush bashing scramble

Having failed to get lost on the way to the rock  
We wasted some time, finding the start with the book

But at last up we ventured, on the spicy first pitch  
Which as it turned out, was a little bit rich

It had sporty run-outs and some gritty trade  
And felt plenty committing for the advertised grade

Pitch number two was the same kind of fusion  
With some more runout stuff and a funky conclusion

But the day at this point was advanced and our fear  
Was that further persistence would result in missed beer

So we rapped and demounted this forested bump  
And gave some thought to return for another day's romp

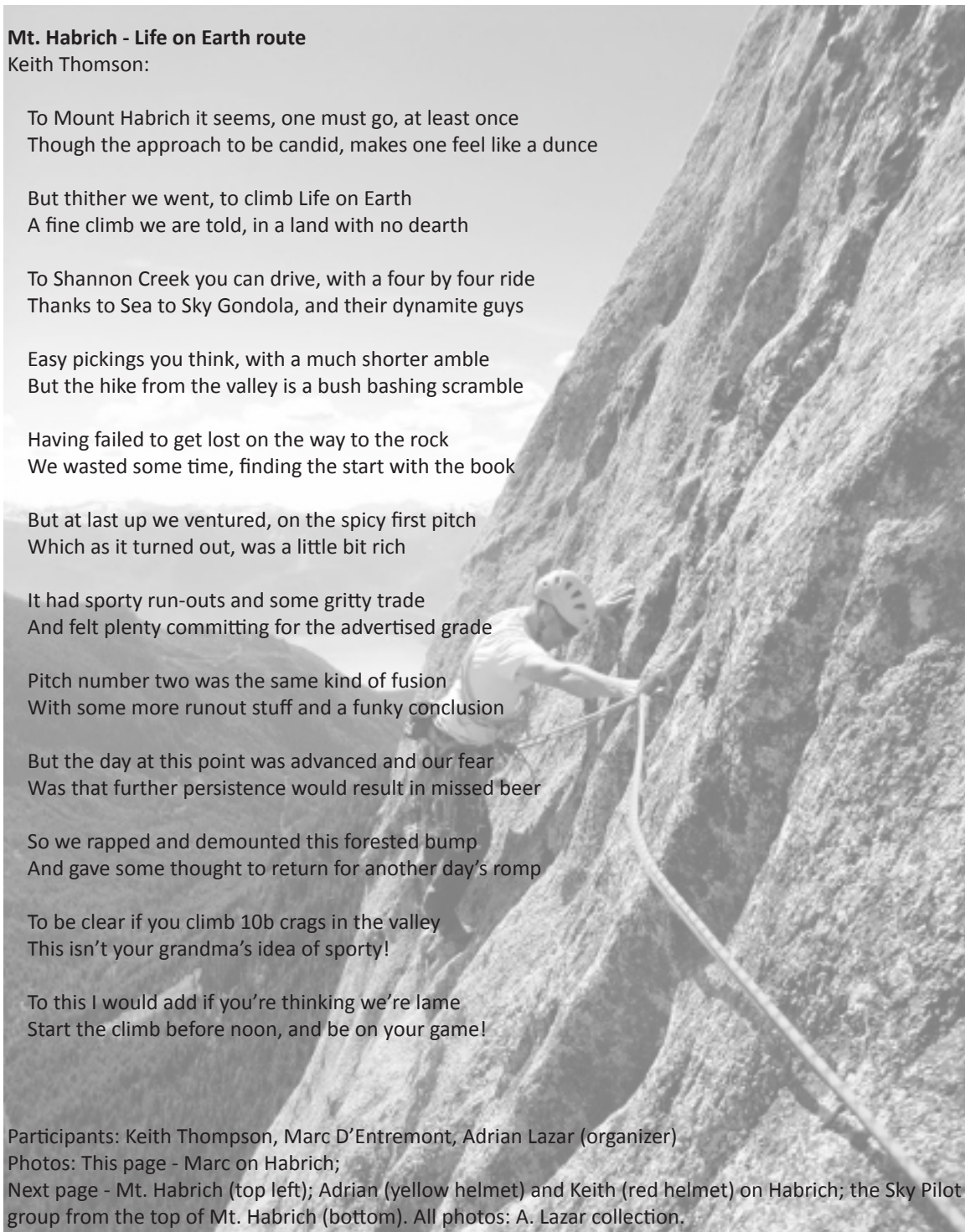
To be clear if you climb 10b crags in the valley  
This isn't your grandma's idea of sporty!

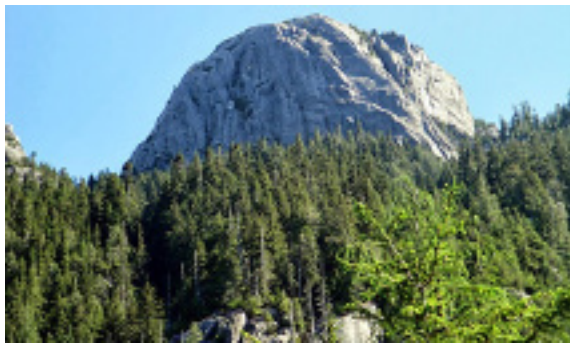
To this I would add if you're thinking we're lame  
Start the climb before noon, and be on your game!

Participants: Keith Thompson, Marc D'Entremont, Adrian Lazar (organizer)

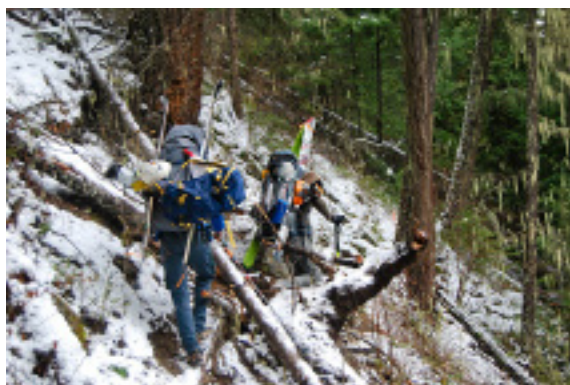
Photos: This page - Marc on Habrich;

Next page - Mt. Habrich (top left); Adrian (yellow helmet) and Keith (red helmet) on Habrich; the Sky Pilot group from the top of Mt. Habrich (bottom). All photos: A. Lazar collection.





Lizzie Lake is a great destination for its wildly remote, easy ski touring peaks nearby, and also a less crowded cabin in which to stay. The access is somewhat difficult; you would really earn getting to this area for its brutal approach. Due to a low snow pack in 2013, going through the alders was difficult on skis with a heavy backpack. I knew it was a great destination because I ran the trail in summer; however, I did not initially express my interest in a trip there due to work commitments, but after some persuasion from Adrien, I decided to join the group.



I decided to join the group.

We left Vancouver on the 25th at 6am, driving in Adrien's crammed Subaru with all our gear.

The plan was to skin up on the first day to the hut, but it didn't happen. We decided to take the bypass trail higher up instead of crossing the creek. Adrien had chosen to wear his ski boots on the approach while Ben, Alex, and I had our approach shoes. The bypass trail was narrow and steep. We didn't put on our skis until 6-7km on the logging road. As we had expected – it was very tiring getting through the slide alder.



The approach to the cabin. Photos: D. Perez.

We reached the lake just when the sunlight faded out. At this point, I didn't know if I misunderstood Adrien's plan about crossing the lake. The actual trail starts north of the lake and gradually ascends to the ridge below Whisky Lake, contouring southeast into the upper Lizzie Creek valley. I took the lead and crossed the lake, heading towards its southern end. We started ascending, following the creek on the north side. Our chosen route was a big mistake. We were sucked in through deadfall and steep terrain for skinning. After some difficult postholing and slow progress, navigating through deadfall, the group had had enough and decided to camp in the ravine. I protested and wanted to keep going, but I was overruled by the group. We were less than 1km away from the hut, according to my GPS. I wasn't a happy camper that night. Adrien had his 2 person tent which he shared with Alex. Ben and I had chosen to sleep in our bivy bag. I was drenched from sweat and my bag was getting heavier from the rain. I was so tired that I fell asleep right away in my warm sleeping bag. I woke up twice during the night because of the rain and snow bombs that kept falling on my bivy bag.

The next morning we woke up to blue sky, promising a great day ahead. We proceeded to the cabin but



Lizzie lake cabin. Photo: D. Perez.



A late day. Photo: D. Perez.

once we reached it the weather started to crap out. Ben, Alex, and I went to get some turns, hoping to bag a peak. We went up to Tabletop and Anemone. The wind picked up once we hit the col. We made the summit of Tabletop in a whiteout. We didn't stay too long at the summit and went back down to our skis. We had only 45 minutes of daylight to get back down to the hut. We skied down in a whiteout but had a great view once we descended below the clouds.

It was nice to have the hut to ourselves with all the stuff we needed to dry after skiing. Just like a Christmas tree, it was well decorated. Every corner of the hut was decorated with our wet clothes, gloves, skins, etc. We brought more than enough

food to refuel every night. On the third day, the weather did not change - this time it was snowing and the visibility was much worse than the previous day. Adrien decided to stay at the hut while the other 3 of us went back to bag Anemone. We followed our track from the day before. From the col, it took us an hour to get to the summit of Anemone. Skiing down in a whiteout made me dizzy. We skied back down to the hut and had lunch. The weather

improved slightly, Adrien joined us to scope out our route for the next day. We went up to Long Lake and stopped at the west shoulder of Long Peak. col to the summit of Tynemouth. Ben and I skied all the way up to the summit while Adrien and Alex boot



**Changeable weather on a spur of Long Pk. (top photos), then heading up and down Arrowhead Pk. Photos: D. Perez.**



On the fourth day, we lucked out with the weather. The goal was to bag Tynemouth, Arrowhead, and Long Peak. We followed our track to Long Lake, veered off around SE of Rainbow Lake toward the South Face of Arrowhead. It clouded in when we got up to the summit. We all took turns skiing down the south face. Once we were at the bottom, we proceeded on the windswept rocky bluffs of Arrowhead and Tynemouth



**Ben, Adrien, and Alex on Tynemouth. Photos: D. Perez.**

initely a great trip to end the year with friends.

Participants: Adrien Thevenet, Ben Shewan, Alex Romanciuc, Dean Perez

### **Whitecap Mtn. (2918m) – 18-20 May, 2013**

Peter Gumplinger

The Hurley Road to Goldbridge had been plowed for the Victoria Day long weekend. The weather forecast was decent so nothing stood in the way of a repeat of an earlier trip on the same weekend 15 years ago, in 1998, when Silke and I first met. We asked a few friends to come and join us for the anniversary, meeting early at 6am at the church, where the seven of us piled into two cars. The road across Railroad Pass was really rough but we made it to Goldbridge and the local store where I stocked up on beer, intending to stash it in Piebiter Creek so we could consume it upon our return on Monday. We then proceeded to drive the Kingdom Lake FSR for 19.2km to the trail head for the McGillivray Pass Trail. The road was considerably smoother than was the Hurley. The trail head had a nice level 2WD parking area about 100m up from the main road.

packed the last steep pitch. We didn't have time to bag Long Peak. Ben and I settled for a much smaller objective – we went up Tarn Peak, a minor bump west of Long Lake. We arrived back at the cabin for our last night shortly after dark, then we all had a great time hanging out and eating all of our extra food.

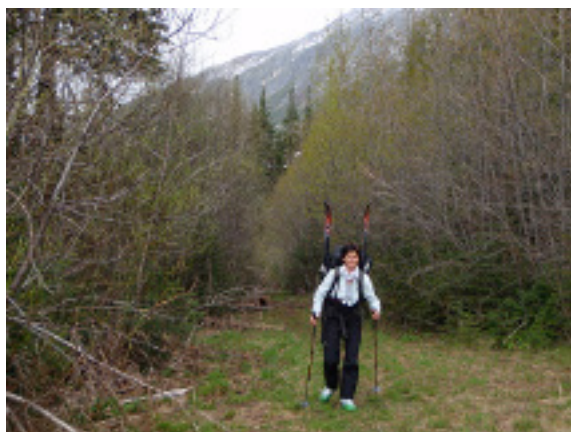
We packed up our stuff on the 5th day and headed home. The descent back to Lizzie Lake was much worse than I expected. Navigating through deadfall is much harder when gravity pulls you down. Ski-

ing out through slide alders on the logging road was quite entertaining for me and Alex. I had fun watching Alex get frustrated every time he bailed. He often talked to himself in Romanian whenever he got strangled by alders. Adrien's boots fell apart; the tongue broke off and the locking mechanism at the back of one of the boots failed to work so he had trouble walking in walk mode. It was 6km of suffering for him to the car.

The Lizzie Lake area is a great place to explore. I wish we had had a better weather window to explore the area but it was defi-

The turnoff was easy to spot after the 19km marker and just past the bridge across Piebiter Creek. A sign by Whitecap Alpine Ltd. advised of their tenure area and implored snowmobilers in a most friendly tone to refrain from visiting their lodge. The Standard Creek road was a little grown in by alder. At the far end of the clearcut a swath left the road straight ahead. This has seen work during the last 5-10 years but was still very awkward. It was best to go through the switchback and gain a second road just a little higher up (the two would join). This was cleared for horse traffic (Chilcotin Holidays) and smooth sailing. Snow started at about 2/3 of the way up to the decrepit cabins. There were many bare spots through the swamp and up the hillside, especially on the south and west facing slopes. We camped in McGillivray Pass near a rivulet. Alexis skied up toward Standard Ridge primarily to investigate how to connect entirely on snow tomorrow's route to the col beside Mt. McGillivray.

We got up early and were on our way by 6am. The Harscheisen (ski crampons) came in handy although Greg



**Silke on the overgrown Standard Creek road. Photo: P. Gumplinger.**

made equally fast progress on foot carrying his skis. Puffs of low clouds greeted us at the col, obscuring any views of our objective and its huge SW face. Good skiing took us to near the base of the face and with luck we found one more snow-bridge to get across the main arm of Connell Creek. The smaller second arm took more effort to cross and then we thrashed through some dense trees and steep bare meadows to gain a snow bench below more bare and steep slopes above. We boot packed for about 600m elevation gain before we were able to skin to near the still obscured summit.

It was lightly snowing when we left the skis behind and proceeded on foot to find the summit. The ridge area was wind scoured and showed lots of rocks.

The summit was marked by a cairn with a long sun-bleached stick poking out of it.

With no visibility and a bit of wind, we didn't linger and returned to our skis. The snow hadn't softened very much and was in great shape.

On the 1200m descent we first skied wide open slopes and then the right-most (west) snow gully down the precipitous lower flank. The gully had a huge entry funnel, was relatively shallow, but was quite steep, so most of us skied it with great care. The sun came out just as we reconnoitered a different way to cross the minor branch of Connell Creek. We stopped for a well-deserved break and lunch.

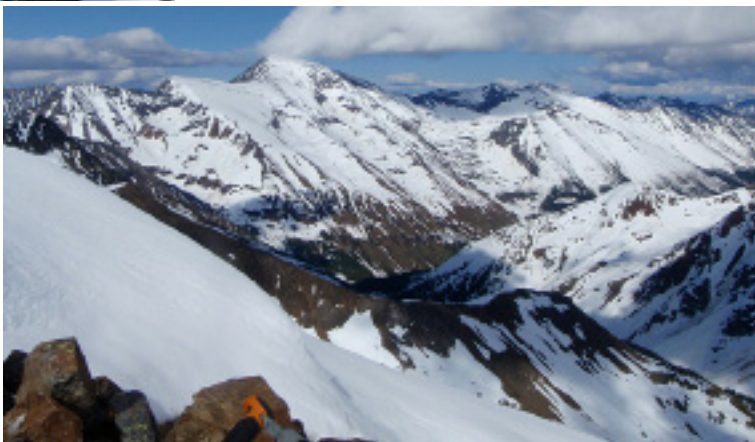
The better route took us from the



**Camp at MacGillivray Pass. Photo: P. Gumplinger.**



snow bench a little into the head of the side valley where a snow bridge gave access back to the main valley floor. Alexis, Greg and I decided to climb Mt. McGillivray from the col, first on foot, then on skis for a little way, then on foot again up its SE-Ridge. Greg carried his skis right to the summit. As on the previous day, the evening was nice, sunny and warm when we arrived back at camp after a 12hour day. I had hidden a bottle of German Sekt in the snow in the hope that we could celebrate the occasion of our second ascent of Whitecap. I revealed it so we all had a few sips of it with home-made coffee cake.



On Monday the troupes were not keen on doing much more than visiting the nearby Whitecap Alpine lodge. Some managed to skate ski to it and back again. The ski and hike out was uneventful. The cold beer at the cars tasted good and the long drive home was broken up by dinner in Squamish. On a different note, we saw evidence of recreational snowmobile tracks, over much bare earth at first near the parking lot, all the way through McGillivray Pass to the lodge (closed on April 30th).



**Clockwise from top left - high on Mt. McGillivray; looking towards Mt. Truax; Whitecap Mtn. above Connell Ck. valley; Alexis, Mary, Silke, Peter, and Greg at camp. Photos: P. Gumplinger collection.**



According to John Baldwin's guide this is supposed to be a non- motorized area.

Participants: Alexis Guigue, Chris Trautman, Mary Hearnden, Dan Carey, Greg Stoltmann, Silke and Peter Gumplinger.

### **Whitecap Mtn. – 16-18 May, 1998**

Silke Gumplinger

Thanks to the BCMC's posted trip schedule on their website, I was able to get excited about joining their most interesting trips during my half-year stay in Canada, even before my departure from Germany. On arrival in Canada, I soon attended my first BCMC Social. I learned about bears, how to behave around them, and how to distinguish between a grizzly and a black bear - the grizzly will catch you before you can reach safety up a tree while the black bear will climb up the tree and catch you there.

I used the meeting to make my first contacts and tour plans. And so I got the chance to join Darren's long weekend (Victoria Day) trip to Whitecap Mtn. However, there were a few problems to solve first. I needed ski touring gear and I had to allay the concerns of the other participants that I might not be able to keep up. It was suggested that it would be preferable if I started with an easier trip. Eventually though Peter vouched for me and told Darren (trip organizer) that he would stay behind with me if I didn't keep up and held up the group. I rented the touring gear from a local store so nothing was then in the way of my very first Canadian mountain adventure.



Looking down the MacGillivray Ck. valley on the 2013 trip. Photo: P. Gumplinger.

The meeting time was set for 6am on Saturday morning. That meant that I had to get up at 4:30am and be ready by 5:45am. Was I glad that Peter Gumplinger came to pick me up because I am not normally communicative at such an early hour, and certainly not in English. He was originally from Munich and hadn't completely forgotten his German. We arrived last at the meeting place only a few minutes after 6am. All were there already and all were totally keen to go ski touring! Our troupe comprised Darren Quist as trip organizer, Erich Hinze, Ken Saunders, Trevor Lumley, Bill, Jesse Puddicombe, Peter Gumplinger and myself. Everybody had four-wheel drive cars, pickups and trucks. 4WD was indispensable because near the end of our approach the route went over rough forest service roads far from civilization. When finally even the toughest 4WD could go no further we parked the vehicles, shouldered our packs and skis and started off. We were able to put skis on after half an hour and continued through untouched wilderness to our intended base camp, where we pitched our tents and then proceeded to carve benches, tables, kitchen and seat corners in the snow. Pure luxury! We climbed the nearby 'Haus(tent)berg' in the evening with grandiose views across snow covered mountains. The snow on the descent was ideal; at the top a little corn, below was firm and better than a piste.

We left camp on Sunday at 7am for Whitecap Mtn. The route went up over a saddle, downhill through a wild valley, then finally a steep climb. We carried skis because it was easier to make progress on foot. I was glad I had proper ski touring boots because downhill boots would have been torture.

Arriving at the summit nobody was talking anymore about me not being able to keep up or holding up the group. My first ski summit in Canada! After 11 hours we were back at camp and everybody was pretty tired. After supper we made a little evening ski excursion. We, that was just Peter and I, because the others had incomprehensibly little incentive. The ascent in the evening sun was very beautiful. However, skiing down the snow surface had started to freeze over and the skiing was the sh... As well, the slope was rather steep so that I lost control and almost collided with Peter. Nothing much happened, no damage to persons and material. From their vantage the rest of the group had a laugh.

We had originally wanted to climb Mt. McGillivray the following day but the weather had changed so nobody got out of the tents in the morning. Even I didn't have much energy left to climb McGillivray because the preceding day's tour had been pretty strenuous and impressive. On the way home I saw some more of British Columbia - Fraser Canyon, Hells Gate and more. All in all it was a fantastic weekend.

### **Bendor camp 2012 - never say never again**

David Scanlon

The Bendor Range, again! The Hurley forest service road, again! A flat tire, again! Stopping at Pioneer Petes in Goldbridge, again! Well, as the saying goes, been there, done that. The thought occurred to me more than once - why am I doing this again? Am I a glutton for punishment, or do I just want to give club members the opportunity to go on a camp, to someplace that they wouldn't ordinarily visit. Well, the latter of course! You maybe thought otherwise?

The first camp I had into this area had 29 BCMC members. The next year there were another 12. I originally said on the trip schedule that the number of participants for this trip was going to be unlimited, but, as time went by I started remembering the logistics from that first trip. Remembering those 29 people spread out over kilometers of wilderness. ARGH! So with that thought in mind I cut off the number of participants. Sorry guys, next time?

When checking out the access road prior to the trip we came across a slump on the road where a small

amount of soil had slid across the road blocking it – nothing that a couple of shovels couldn't handle, so I brought 2 of them with me. Since I'd been there last though there had been some traffic in the area and by the time we arrived it was worn down enough that we were able to cross over without doing any shoveling at all. A bit of bottoming out though. Once past this point the water bars started. They weren't overly big being more of a nuisance than anything.

Whenever going on a trip like this, where there is the possibility of the unknown happening, I usually take along my chainsaw. And I did this time. I would never want to come out from a hike to find that a tree had come down blocking the road behind us. An interesting bit of road information came from a phone call to the Cascades Forest Service office. They said that the second bridge on the Truax Road was "condemned". they weren't sure just how far from the road's end it was so we couldn't find that out until getting there. But condemned? Just full of no useful information! At the parking lot I told everyone about this bit of information and we chatted about it for a bit but the end result of that was to carry on and deal with it when we got there.

After all of us arrived safely in Goldbridge with NO flats, we proceeded to have lunch in the local eatery. It is sad to say that with the mine again operating in Bralorne it appears that business in Goldbridge had fallen off. No more gas could be had in Goldbridge. During lunch the matter of the "condemned" bridge came up again. The feeling was that the Forest Service had to say that for legal reasons, in case something happened, and that if it really was in that bad shape, they would just have taken it out and closed the road at that point. So what did we do? Upon arriving at the bridge there was a warning sign, we stopped and got out and looked at it and just carried on and drove over it. 2.1km after this we came to where there had been a slide and the road was blocked by the trees left over from it. There were lots of trees. Remember the chain saw? It was suggested to start cutting through it. No way. I didn't have enough gas to even start to clear them. There was way too much, so we parked there. This caused us an extra 2km hike in to the trailhead and that added up to only 20 minutes or so. Not too bad.

The hike into the first camp took 4 1/2 hours. Remember the big snow pack that year? Our Truax Creek crossing was a bit of an adventure. When we came to it the water was quite high. Geoff Zenger crossed over on a log, barely making it and having to jump the last bit. He lost his balance near the end. No one else followed him. The rest of us waded across. Then came the crossing of a smaller creek. Even that one was a challenge but again no one fell. The next slope was the hardest, being steep and rocky. After that the hike in wasn't too bad. We had a bit of down, then across the outlet of Verdi Lake, then back up to level ground again. There were even bits of tape from past trips to be found. Surprisingly enough there were still large snow patches along the lake shore to cross. That in itself



Hiking in to the first camp. Photos: D. Scanlon.



**Hiking in to the first camp (top). Photo: E. Zenger.  
Pioneer Pk. (bottom). Photo: D. Scanlon.**

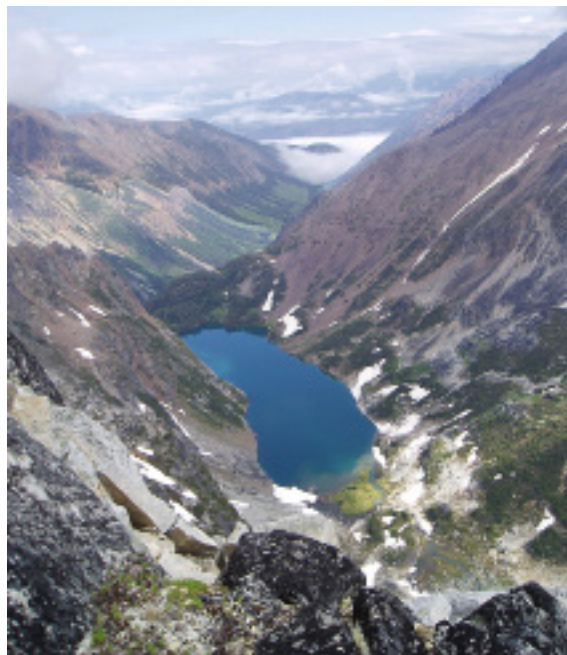
walk and saw 6 mountain goats! Way to go Ed.

It turned out that no one had brought an alarm clock, except me. So guess who had to wake everyone up every morning, whether or not they had to get up that early themselves? Yeah, me! Tuesday morning I woke up the keeners at 6am. Clayton, David, Andre and Geoff were off to Williams Peak. Ed and Brittany were going to Boulder Pups, myself to Scary and Black Diamond, and John, Jenny and Louise to Ginger Snap. On Black Diamond I found our cairn and summit register from the 2001 camp. Cool. Ed and Brittany had a fun time together and the others had fun just tooling about. There was one small shower this day with otherwise

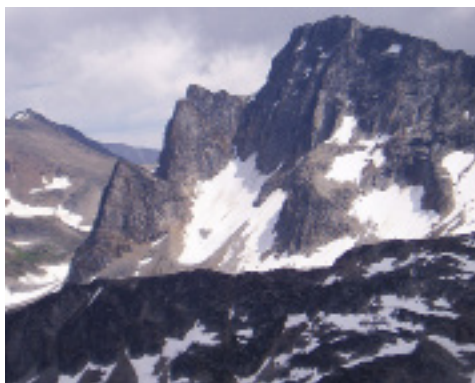
wasn't too bad but for one patch, if one was to slip one would end up in the lake. Thankfully no one did. We were to camp between 2 small lakes. Upon arriving there we found the upper lake was still frozen over and half of the lower one also. This time I was about 3 weeks earlier than previous trips into the area and with the big snowfall there was still quite a bit of snow around. The good thing was no bugs.

The next day Clayton, David, Ed, Andre, Geoff and Brittany left for Mt Bobb. Others went to Ginger Snap with John and I heading to Bendor Peak. Unfortunately John turned an ankle and we turned back. We had a cloudy day and one small shower on our return.

Then the night and day of doom! It poured all Sunday night and all day Monday and Monday night. Sunday night there was quite the rock fall and you know how that sounds when you are in your tent, wakened from a deep sleep? It seemed as though it was coming right at me and it was quite disconcerting. It did wake most of us up and was the topic of discussion the next morning. It did quit raining for 2 hours Monday about 5pm and we all took advantage of the lull and ate. Then it started up again finally ending before morning. During this lull Ed went for a



The first camp, some of its inhabitants, and the sur-



rounding country, including "Black Diamond Mtn." (on right of 2nd bottom photo above) and "Scary Mtn" (to left of "Black Diamond" Mtn. above and bottom right photo).

Photos: E. Zenger, except bottom left - D. Scanlon,



sun and cloud. Bob and Serena left that day and were going to camp part of the way out down by Verdi Lake.

Wednesday was the move camp day. Some camp members had other commitments and time constraints so had to leave so it ended up with just 4 of us carrying on over to camp 2. Ed, Andre, Clayton, and me. We said all of our goodbyes down at the steam crossing. The guys crossed the creeks again to go to the cars for more food and fuel, then we crossed the creeks again to start the hike up to camp #2. Again no one fell into the creek. We stopped for lunch on the way up near the old mine workings and I gave the guys the tour of the area. The old donkey engine, the cook house, the bunk house, the old cable car, where the adit was much further up the mountain-side, and a look at the old roads carved into the rock. Those old timers were one tough lot!



The hike up to camp #2 is much easier than that to camp #1. It is just a tad higher but with a much more gentle approach. The only glitch, if you can call it that, was another crossing of Truax Creek. We made our own bridge from downed trees and that was that. And this was where we were hit with a shower. We pretty much just said to heck with it and just carried on in the rain. Did I say shower? Wrong, it just plain rained. It did stop and we dried out as we walked. But arrive at camp we finally did and camped on beautiful meadows at the same place as in the past, in a great valley between 2 streams with Truax right in our faces and other snow covered peaks behind. The next day we hiked up Truax to its 2880m summit for lunch. This was to be the highest summit on the trip - slightly higher than Williams at 2790m and Mt. Bobb at 2840m. We then carried on and completed a horseshoe hike by going up the Adze, Double Bitted, and Quartz Crystal summits. We

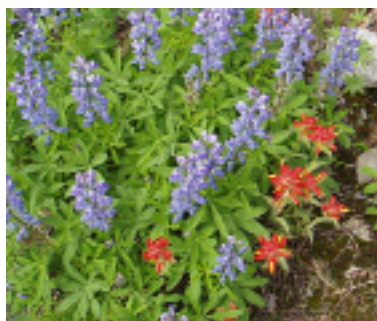
**Ed, Brittany, and Geoff (top) and Brittany (bottom) in and around the first camp. Photos: E. Zenger collection.**

did stop for a time on the southeast slope of Quartz Crystal seeking some crystals, as in years past, but



Clockwise from top left - Camp 2; on "Adze Pk." with "Maddick Pk." behind; summit cairn on "Double-bitted Mtn." requires support; looking south from camp 2 towards "Stone Wheat Thin Mtn." on right and "Goat's Throne Mtn." on left; Pioneer Pk. from "Goat's Throne Mtn.". Photos: E. Zenger.





Looking down to Verdi Lake from Mt. Truax summit (top left); looking down to camp 2 near Truax Lake with “Big Chief” on right, “Stone Wheat Thin” in centre, and Pioneer Pk. behind (bottom left); some of the flowers seen (moss campion, lupins, Indian paint brush, and fleabanes (right). Photos: E. Zenger.

didn't find any large nice ones. There were signs of other people having been there looking for some as the area was quite disturbed and any good crystals on the surface were gone. It was here that Ed and I went back to camp and Clayton and Andre decided to carry on and climb Big Chief Mountain. The way back down to camp from where we separated was straight down the scree slope; then a fun, fun glissade on snow to the bottom then a short hike over to our tents. After the others returned they said that Big Chief was quite a challenge so they were a bit tired from their day. Tired but happy and happy is good.

The next day we all went down past the outlet of Truax Lake then headed up the steep snow to Goat's Hairy Col and it was there that Ed said that he was going to stay behind and climb Goat's Throne. Andre and Clayton were going to head west for Pioneer Peak and I was going to go part way with them to try for Fergusson Peak, a place that I hadn't been to as yet. The 3 of us then left and half way up we separated. Andre and





Clayton went south and climbed Pioneer Peak, and I turned north towards Ferguson, but I stopped near the summit. I deemed it to be too risky for myself alone and backed off. I got close, real close and was actually following a goat trail, being blown away by where they went. It was way too risky for me to scramble on alone. I did find an old mining post on a rocky outcrop and a bottle with writing in it from a 1976 geological survey though and that was an interesting find.

Andre and Clayton were quite pleased with their Pioneer hike and found my and John Sapac's names in the summit register from my 2001 camp. The names before that were from 1957 and prior to that from 1936! All still in good

**Some of the party, from left - Clayton, David P., Andrzej, David S., Louise, Jenny, John, Geoff, Brittany, Ed. Photo: D. Scanlon collection.**

shape. On our way back the 3 of us also went up Goat's Throne and then had that long fun steep glissade down, back across the Truax Lakes outlet, which is the start of Truax Creek Proper, and back to camp. The talk that evening was about what to do next. We knew that Ed had a flat tire to deal with when we got back to the cars, and we had accomplished just about everything we had set out to do, so it was decided to head home a day early.

The hike out took no time at all and we were soon back at the cars. Ed changed his flat so that was OK and we were ready for the drive home. Remember all of the rain we had and the high creeks? Well one thing we joked about was whether or not that "condemned" bridge would still be up. It was! At Goldbridge Ed had his flat fixed, we had a last lunch together and headed home.

So this was my 7th time into the area. John kept kidding me that an era was coming to an end as I said that this was my last time into the area. As Arnold said. "I'll be back." Me. Not likely!

The players were: Andrzej Jarzabek, Bob Woodhouse, Serena Levy, Brittany Zenger, Geoff Zenger, Ed Zenger, Clayton Dunham, Jenny Faulkner, John Halliday, Louise Hooley, David Percival, and David Scanlon (organizer).

## CENTRAL COAST MOUNTAINS

### T5: The Southern Chilcotin Ranges traverse of 10-18 August, 2013

Karl Ricker

The Southern Chilcotin is an area of multi-coloured mountain slopes and serenely enchanting alpine hiking on myriad old trails that are an ever-lasting lure. If you do one trek, you are guaranteed to be hooked for

many more. The area was a scene for mining, superseded by a bit of periphery forestry, a constant parade of outfitters and their string of packhorses that have been there for over 100 years, a recent invasion of hard-core rough and tumble mountain bikers, the off-and-on natural history expeditions and camps and, as of lately, the arrival of heli-skiers, operating out of the Tyax Lodge at Tyaughton Lake, roughly 15km north-east of Goldbridge. Mountaineering and ski touring in the area is second fiddle to all of the above, but we maintain a presence, using Tyax Air's float plane to support our multi-day traverses on foot or ski. Recently, the float plane has no longer been refitted with skis for winter and the helicopter at the lodge is now used for the longer ski tours.

Thrown into the above milieu is the land use designation for the area – the many interests competing for more than their expected share of the area. The controversy has probably simmered for more than a century but became very publicized by the 1970s and it has had its nasty political moments ever since. The northwest sector (Lorna Lake and down-valley therefrom) is in the designated Big Creek Provincial Park, which still provides grazing rights to the big ranchers located to the north. The remainder of the area, after many a battle, became the shakily-defined “Spruce Lake Protected Area” out of which a smaller provincial park was created with boundaries fluctuating according to the party in power at Victoria. Currently, there are small signs at many passes indicating the latest park boundary. Complicating matters, however, are long-held private property ownerships on the entire west side of Spruce Lake and another two parcels on the northeast corner as well. These are horse-oriented owners who have considerable influence on how the “park” is used. So, hunting for big game is still allowed; they want mountain biking abolished, and “parks” is sympathetic to their viewpoint. But, the mine lobby wants “their” ground back and the cows continue to graze in the sacred lands of Graveyard Valley which the First Nations claim is their exclusive terrain, although it lies within neighbouring Big Creek Provincial Park. So far the heli-skiers are welcome, as are other motorized users between November and April, but the float plane stands to lose a lot of business if the mountain bikers are shut out. Bikers are air-lifted to Spruce, Warner and Lorna Lakes throughout the summer, and a few are taken as far west as Taseko Lakes for the multi-day rides back to Tyax Lodge. As our trip unfolded most of these issues were confronted in one way or another, leaving us more than perplexed if the conflicts can ever be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. At present, the horse lobby holds the trump card but the other users probably provide more tax revenue to the government who currently are doing very little on-site work in the area. According to one property owner at Spruce Lake, there was more trail maintenance when the B.C. Forest Service managed the area.

The trek organized for 2013 was the fifth over the last ten years for the BCMC. Brian Wood led the 2003 trip and I the subsequent four. To be frank, the onset of computer registry for trip participation has been a pain in the butt, and it has made it more difficult to secure confirmed commitments to join the trek. For those who could not be bothered to phone me and did not post a phone number in their query I refused to respond. Ignoring those who were trying to dodge a long-distance phone call there were eleven potential participants, two very comfortable plane loads and one less than the maximum allowed by B.C. Parks to set out from Lorna Lake each day. Lorna Lake is barely inside Big Creek Provincial Park which can be trampled any summer day by 100 or more cows, or an outfitter party with 20 plus horses! Well, we gave the park's staff a break. Last minute cancellations reduced the party to one comfortable plane load of five, plus a dog weighing in at 41.5 kilos. But Chilko carried his own 12 kilo pack, did not leave the trail, or chase any bears! The others boarding the plane were Dave and Adrienne Hughes, Jeff Nairn, Doug Lonsborough and myself – average age 60.5 with Adrienne being on the median. All but myself were working in financial-legal circles, and all were in darn good shape – two being marathon runners. Luckily, I had been working at the Neil Colgan Hut for 9 days, the highest alpine hut in Canada at a shade below 3000 metres. That acclimatization gave me a chance to keep up – usually.

The trek was organized to be a 9-day effort with four objectives: (1) enter the “forbidden” Graveyard Valley, exiting via Little Graveyard pass with an ascent of Red Hill (2569 m) at the pass; (2) spend an entire day peak bagging around the upper Lizzard Creek basin from a camp at nearby Deer Pass; (3) ascend “Stegosaurus Mtn.” en route to Windy Pass and collect a good specimen of *Lewisia*, a bitter root, to confirm a species identification by an expert botanist (in 2005 our collected specimen was destroyed in transit); and (4) exit the trek by way of Cinnabar Basin (instead of Pearson Creek) ascending one or both summits on its rim. The schedule would give us a mid-trek rest day. However, only the first objective was met. Vehicle problems deferred the departure by 1.5 days. Peak bagging out of Deer Pass was cancelled when the weather changed, dictating we traverse to the Sheba ridge crest route before it socked in. On our way to Windy Pass, the weather did indeed close in and hence the side trip to collect the plant was bypassed. And as it turned out, we were likely too late to collect a floral specimen that year. The following day saw worse weather, complete white-out and rain. With no chance of ridge hopping into Cinnabar Basin, the exit went through Pearson Creek’s old mine road which, on a drizzly day, turned out to be quite pleasant! In a nutshell, it was by far the windiest and wettest of our five treks in the Chilcotin Ranges. The travelogue is as follows:

### Day 1

Departing Tyaughton Lake at noon the 20-25 minute flight to Lorna Lake went smoothly; packs were shouldered by 1300 hours and in surprisingly quick time it was an early afternoon lunch on a very windy Lorna Pass. We left the trail here, hiking obliquely over a barren gravelly ridge to the northeast, descending to the pass between Graveyard Valley and the North Fork of Tyaughton Creek. This pass is also the junction of the Elbow Pass trail and the upper Graveyard trail (a park boundary sign). Leaving a broken ski-hiking pole there, it was a very comfortable descent into the Graveyard, ending the day’s trekking at an indicated campsite on



**Lorna Lake in 2005 (left) and 2013 (right). Photos: D. Hughes.**

the map located opposite the entrance to Tyax Creek basin (ascended by us in 2010). Site selection committee (Dave and Doug) overruled Adrienne’s handy water site in favour of less shade and more wind. Nonetheless, it was not very difficult to find any number of good sites in Graveyard Valley. Distance travelled for the day was 7-8 km, from 1950 metres (lake) to 2350 metres (pass) to 1900 metres (valley).

### Day 2

My intent was to make sure everyone knew the significance of Graveyard Valley, with a stop at the historic site, and its placard describing the many local wars between the Chilcotin and Bridge River native bands and

the resolution of peace now in place. The placard said we were trespassing! Nearby, there is supposed to be a trail junction to the Little Graveyard valley. Several side-hill cow trails did not line up to the intended route. So, the valley was entered at near creek level and a slow ascending traverse through shrub and high grass eventually lead to a very indistinct trail, initially. Cleverly hidden or grown in, it became an obvious feature once entering the forest canopy. Suddenly, it was bear alert! A wide swath of grass along the trail was flattened. Chilko was leashed and bear deterrents were readied for action, which included making lots of noise. For about 1km the freshly bent-over vegetation continued, but upon reaching open subalpine meadows it disappeared. The bear went up the mountain probably in plain view of a Golden eagle skimming the ridge line to the left of us. The grandeur of Little Graveyard opened up before us. The pass at the head of the valley was quite visible about 3km away. The valley floor was wide open, the trail being quite visible except where it passed over moist sedge-covered areas. The forest was on the lower slopes of the valley walls. The only sign of human use this summer was one set of bike tracks. The trail crossed its creek shortly before rising to a decidedly windy Little Graveyard Pass. Certainly no place for a lunch break that day; we retreated to the nearby pond just to the east for our stop. The pond did not have an outlet. There were a few sets of animal tracks on its muddy floor, including those of grizzly and moose. Red Hill (a mountain) rose up from the pass in intimidating steep and mobile scree slopes. Adrienne and Chilko began guard duty while the slog up it began. We aimed for a ramp below the west summit, reached in about an hour. There was a cairn on it and a view in all directions. To the north rolling meadows almost reached the summit – a horseback ascent was possible! However, the goal was the east summit which is a rocky scramble. Cruising over the middle summit without noticeable elevation loss there was no cairn on it; yet it is the indicated 2569m position on the map. From there the east peak appeared to be higher, requiring an easy 50-100 metre descent to the col between the two summits. It was a rough broken rock scramble to its summit; surprise, no cairn on it, and we were now certain it was the highest of the three. First ascent(?). There was no sign of any previous visit – hard to believe, though it was not horseback accessible! The descent was the way we came, except the



**Graveyard valley and camp in the valley. Photos: D. Hughes (top) and K. Ricker (bottom).**



**Karl watches as Adrienne crosses a stream. Photo: D. Lonsborough.**

writer elected to walk the steep meadow on the north side of the western summits while Dave tried to use his aneroid to establish the relative height of each summit. The result was inconclusive. By 1500 hours we were back down to the pond and the gang elected to move onto the next indicated campsite in Little Paradise Valley. The initial steep descent in the trail (heading east) brought us to a very refreshing creek coming out of a rocky subterranean passageway –with an unknown source. The water was cool and sweet. It became a 15 minute stop, drinking water and repeatedly filling our bottles. We should have camped there. About 2km of easy open alpine hiking led to the forest-edge and the junction with the Little Paradise Creek trail – supposedly the main thoroughfare for horse traffic which uses the Relay Creek road as their trail head. The map indicated a campsite nearby. This was obviously for the rare horse party but useless for us – no nearby water! Dave scouted ahead spying a possible tributary valley with a flowing stream despite the lack of visible snow slopes above it. So it was up the horse trail and above treeline for about 1km to suddenly arrive at a deep gulch. Running water in it, yes, but hardly enough room beside the stream to set up tents. Moving downstream about 100 metres from the trail crossing, some space was found, though some rock removal was needed to set up the tents. It turned out to be a long day, 9-10km on the trail, and another 3km up and down Red Hill, and again up hill to the campsite at 2050 metres.

### Day 3

The objective for the day was Deer Pass in order to establish a two-night camp, and provide a day of wandering without heavy packs about the nearby ridges enclosing Lizzard Creek basin. It was a relatively quick ascent to Little Paradise Pass (2250 m) on wide open slopes where the horse trail disappears. Cowpokes



**Descending into Manson Creek basin. Photo: K. Ricker.**

just let their steeds wander anywhere as long as they reach the pass. Descending the southwest side into Manson Creek basin was a different matter. The route entered a gully with the trail clinging to its left side. At treeline the trail dropped down a steep slope away from the gully in what had been a series of switchbacks on a steep grade. The numerous tracks of mountain bikers who had more or less straight-lined their descent, obliterating the original trail, and some horse traffic was using their line as well. We were all in agreement: the bikers had overstepped their privilege on this trail ruining it for everyone. Hopefully crews from WORCA (Whistler Off Road Cycle Association), SORCH (Squamish) and PORCA (Pemberton) will come in, rectify the damage and erect barriers to stymy further tomfoolery; otherwise the pending Parks Management Plan will put a stop to all biking in the park. The lower two thirds of the Manson Creek trail, fortunately, was in good shape, providing a restful hike to Tyaughton Creek valley.

Descent of the main trail in the Tyaughton is in the woods. A mountain biking party of four graciously stopped to let us pass. They were on their way to Elbow Pass for a day trip from their camp set up at the junction to the Deer Pass Trail. The leader looked at his GPS unit, saying the junction was only 1.77 kilometres away, and the Tyaughton crossing was an easy ford. It was to be our lunch stop. The afternoon involved the long ascent of the Deer Pass trail, a rise from 1600 to 2350 metres, roughly 5km in length. Surprisingly little bike damage on this trail was encountered despite its popular use. Those who fly to Warner Lake invariably ascend the pass from the Gun Creek side and then descended to Tyaughton on their way to Big Creek

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Looking north from Deer Pass (top); camp at Deer Pass beneath “Mt. Gomorrah”. Photos: K. Ricker (top); D. Hughes (bottom).

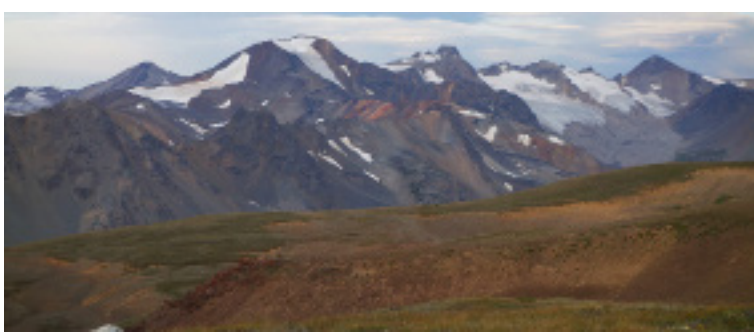


Two views of Mt. Sheba. Photos: D. Hughes (top) and D. Lonsborough (bottom).

or Spruce Lake. A very windy Deer Pass was reached in the late afternoon. Camp set up at a nearby pond, without an outflow creek, was the only option, and so a wind break of large stones was constructed. There were deer tracks everywhere in this alpine setting; the pass had been appropriately named. Over the dinner hour the build-up of lenticular clouds was a forewarning of a pending weather change. It had been a two-pass day, 13–14km on quiet and scenic trails.

#### Day 4

A blazing red sky that morning called for a change of plans. A promised day of lay-about hiking wasn't in the cards. The ridge crest hike to Mt. Sheba had to be done before it socked in. In the deteriorating weather, we moved on, with a short diversion onto the summit of “Mt. Gomorrah”, located southeast of the pass. We continued on a fairly well-defined horse trail that ascended to the ridge crest, then stopped. The rest of the morning involved a side-hill struggle on steep slopes covered in sharp rock debris, very unstable underfoot. The lower outlying west summit of Sheba was approached, knowing from two previous trips it had to be avoided by descending slopes to the right (southwest) of it. Unbelievably, there were intermittent mountain bike tracks to stumble through on the descent below the feature. Voila! The horse trail reappeared out of nowhere to steer us under Sheba and then over a rock glacier, leading into the pond basin below the main peak. This pond, a marked campsite on the map, was also without an outlet. Nonetheless, we stopped there for a well-deserved lunch break, but axed it as a campsite. The team wanted to keep moving under the southeast slopes of Sheba and onto the ridge terminating as “Open Heart Mtn.” (2300 m). Dave and Doug dropped their packs to bag Mt. Sheba (both peaks) while the rest of us counted sheep grazing nervously nearby. The summit of “Open Heart” was bypassed using a twisty trail below it on the north. Descent of a short, but loose, gully off the ridge was needed to reach the trail which crossed a lot of loose talus before emerging onto “Open Heart” horse trail. This was the main route used by guests



**Southern Chilcotin scenery, including the view from Mt. Sheba (top).  
Photos: D. Lonsborough.**

at the outfitters camps below at Spruce Lake. Rain showers were finally catching up to us in the descent to the park campsite at the north end of the lake. Phew, we had just beat the weather moving in, but at the expense of many cuts on the footpads of Chilko's hind feet. He wasn't going to be moving on Day 5. He was on sharp rubble for most of the 14-15km traversed that day through an elevation range of 2350 to 2500m (2665m for Sheba ascenders) and down to camp at 1600 metres. It was a night of lightning but somehow the storms bypassed Spruce Lake.

### **Day 5**

The promised rest day for the trip. A slow hike around Spruce Lake led to a long chat with a cabin owner who had brought his family in by horse. Over an hour and with his beer in our hands, the 80+ year

history of the use and development of the Spruce Lake area was discussed and issues defined. Obviously, he had covered a lot of terrain by horseback in 20 or so years. Mountain bikers were a concern, as was the disappearing wildlife, but he perked to attention when we told him of the band of 16 or 17 sheep seen yesterday between Sheba and "Open Heart Mtn.". "Were there any rams in the herd", he asked, obviously hoping there might be a trophy head to hunt! Fortunately, we didn't know, because the distance without binocs had been too great. It was an entertaining and informative confab, providing us with the horseman's viewpoint on the various issues hanging over this newly-created park land, which is certainly bound for never-ending non-resolution. And to drive the point home, it was summer high season and there was no ranger anywhere near the park! Creating new parks without a funding appropriation to look after them has been a hallmark of establishing political points, and under false pretenses!

During the late afternoon and evening, the campground suddenly swelled in traffic. An outfitter's horse party (Chilcotin Mtn. Holidays) of 10 guests, 2 guides and spare horses moved into their quarters. A party of 6 had followed our route to Deer Pass and across Sheba Ridge in poor weather, citing heavy rain at the pass that morning (phew, vindicated, we moved out in time!), and the Phillips family of five from Victoria trundled in by way of Tyaughton Valley after crossing over Big Creek and thrashing the wet boggy ground to reach Elbow Pass. They had been as far west as the Taseko Valley in their very impressive itinerary of travel. The ten year old son dropped his pack and hit the lake for a swim!

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### Day 6

Departure from Spruce Lake is always highlighted by using the Windy Pass Trail. Chilko, after a full day of sleeping, had recovered, though his hind feet were bandaged to make sure the wounds would not re-open, and we carried his pack. The weather looked questionable, but all of us were ready to go. Up to treeline it was almost pleasant, but beyond it was wet and, of course, windy. The side trip to “Stegosaurus Mtn.” to collect a *Lewisia* was cancelled. The flora about the main trail were already well past their prime and the extra effort to collect a flower in similar condition would have been useless. Our short stop below the pass (2200m) in the lee of shielding krummholz was taken to put on needed raingear. There was no stopping at the pass for a side trip to ‘Spruce Peak’ (2362m), continuing instead down trail into Eldorado Basin to about treeline for lunch, just short of the old mine road that leads into Taylor Basin.

A slow walk up the road, with three going to the old mine, consumed the afternoon. The promised campsite on the Taylor-Eldorado divide (2050m) didn’t pan out – no water. Descending onto the Camel Pass Trail in the Taylor valley, however, did lead to a very pleasant site with all the amenities, including copious firewood used until we hit the sack at 10pm in increasing rainfall. Chilko’s feet fared well throughout the day, traversing two more passes in 11-12km of cloud-shrouded hiking.

### Day 7

It was supposed to be a day of ridge traversing from Camel Pass into Cinnabar Basin and then out to Tyaughton if time permitted; otherwise, a final camp would be in the basin. Well, we awoke to a storm blowing, wet and socked in – a solid white-out. Not a ridge could be seen. Obviously, we were “hooped”. We had trouble finding Camel Pass in the intense fog; two false attempts before getting it right, thanks to some compass work by Dave and Doug. The problem: were the local iron-rich rocks playing havoc with the compass? Apparently not. We finally hit the Pearson Creek trail, and then the old mine road. In the thick, gloomy clouds of the day it was actually a pleasant stroll down the road and by 12:30 we were on the Tyaughton Lake Road with 3km of slogging to reach cars, lodge, showers and bar. Adrienne said: “Suck it up boys. Let’s get it over with”. But after 1km, a pickup was flagged down, and with 5 bucks thrust at the driver, we trucked it to the finish line: roughly 10km of hiking from 2150m down to 1050m at road end. In another hour there was a bright, clean and well-dressed (?) crew in the Tyax bar, and at 5pm the gang re-assembled at the Goldbridge Hotel for the farewell dinner. Yes, it was a windy trip with a wet ending after 7 instead of 9 days, but worth every drop of sweat exuded! Peak bagging suffered more than somewhat but Red Hill was climbed (first ascent is dubious, but at least it is now cairned), the only trip objective that was met!!

### Natural History Notes

**Flora** identification suffered; we were too late this year, the second week of August, as many flowers were wilted, or in seed stage, or just gone. About 50 species were identified, but nothing added that had not been recorded on previous trips. *Lewisia* sp. will have to await another trip in late July, and I do hope it is a *Lewisia pygmaea* as suspected and not some gross misidentification of another family of flowers! The only feature of note was the proliferation of asters, as opposed to fleabanes which are close relatives that are abundant in early summer but wilted out by mid-August.

**Wildlife** on the mammalian front was a mixed matter. A lone snowshoe hare at Spruce Lake created some night fright at one tent! We did not see any bears though certainly had a grizzly ahead of us in Little Graveyard Valley and possibly on the Pearson Creek mine road (very fresh scat). Deer tracks were everywhere, very numerous and large mule deer were seen on Days 1 and 2. There were also a few moose tracks and one was seen from the airplane while flying into Lorna Lake. A fresh short-tailed weasel carcass was on





Volcanic plug in Eldorado Basin (above with arrow); rock glacier on Mt. Sheba (right). Photos: D. Hughes (above) and K. Ricker (right).



Hiking in flower-free meadows. Photo: D. Lonsborough.

the trail in Little Paradise Basin and there were many whistling marmot sightings on Days 1 to 3, but rarely thereafter. Wolf tracks were also seen. The highlight of the mammal sightings was the band of 16 or 17 California Bighorn sheep on the stony barrens of Open Heart Ridge. This was the first trip where a large herd has been seen. Conversely, there were no goat sightings.

For **birds**, this was the first trip for Golden eagle and Northern goshawk sightings, on Days 2 and 3. Each day we were greeted at breakfast hour by calls from Clark's nutcrackers, who were with us most of each day. Their relatives, gray jays and ravens, were seen only at Spruce Lake. Spotted sandpipers and common loons were also seen at Spruce Lake. Spruce grouse (some were Franklin form) were intersected on the trail near treeline on Days 2 and 3. Again, there were many barn swallows at Tyax Lodge, and a few juncos were the only "dickey birds" seen on the trail.

**Geologically**, there were no new revelations. The most unique features are at Mt. Sheba. On the mountain's north side there was a spectacular debris-covered glacier, that has a gleaming white accumulation zone and an ablation zone with concentric mounds of debris-covered ice. The mountain's south side, however, was festooned with rock debris, obviously moving slowly but not on underlying glacier ice. Instead, the rocks were gliding slowly with a thin veneer of ice on the stones at depth; there were so-called rock glaciers – the sharp steep fronts on their downslope edges being indicative of active movement. I still await the production of a high quality coloured geological map of this area. As a newly-designated park, it is a long-overdue project for the provincial and/or federal geologists!!



The BCMC ran climbing camps to the Waddington Glacier area of the Waddington Range in the central Coast Mountains of BC. The first was from July 28 to August 6, 2012 and the second was from July 27 to August 3, 2013.

The top of the Waddington Glacier is located approximately 5km SE of Mount Waddington. The Glacier itself does not connect with Waddington, but rather connects to the SE side of Mount Munday, which is separated from Mount Waddington along a spectacular ridge that includes Spearman Peak and the Arabesque Peaks. The Waddington Glacier drains to Scar Creek before reaching the Homathko River on its way to Bute Inlet. The Waddington Glacier and its neighbour, the Smoking Canyon Glacier, to its east are bounded on the northeast by a wall of peaks that form the south side of the Tiedemann Glacier. This spectacular “southern flank of the Tiedemann Glacier forms an unbroken mountain wall 20 km long and 1000m to 1400m high.” (D. Serl. The Waddington Guide, p. 195). This wall provides an impressive backdrop from the BCMC’s Plummer Hut on the edge of the Tellot Glacier.

The Waddington Glacier peaks are also referred to as the Munday Group and this area sees some ski touring traffic, but little summer climbing activity. Most climbing parties, including the BCMC parties, have tended to concentrate on Mount Waddington, the Tiedemann, Serras-Stiletto groups and the upper Tellot peaks. The Club has had a number of climbing trips to Tiedemann, Scimitar, Radiant and Tellot Glaciers over the last several decades, but few if any to the south side of the southern flank of the Tiedemann.

The north side of the Waddington Glacier peaks includes spectacular north walls on Mount Marcus and Merlon Mountain and dramatic glacier approaches to Sierra, Grenelle and Mount Munday. Significant reduction in the glacier approaches has made access to Tiedemann’s southern flank much more difficult than it was two or three decades ago. Peak elevations provided are from Don Serl’s Waddington Guide and do vary a little from the Waddington Summit series map.

## 2012 CAMP

Our first trip to the Munday Group had Mount Munday as its primary objective. A second objective was to move along the southern flank wall to Grenelle, Sierra and Fascination mountains. Recent reduction (shrinking in depth) of the Waddington Glacier has resulted in more crevasses and terrain difficulties that kept us from venturing as far down the southern flank of the Tiedemann as we would have liked.

Flying from Bluff Lake with White Saddle Air’s Mike King on Sunday morning, July 29, we set down near Mystery Pass at about 2800m. We set up camp on the relatively flat top of the Waddington Glacier below the south glacier on Mount Munday. This glacier rises up to a cirque between the Central and East peaks of

Mount Munday. After establishing camp, we headed over to Mystery Pass. This pass is an important connector in the Waddington Range and it joins Waddington Glacier to Ice Valley Glacier and to areas southwest and west of Mount Waddington. The route down to Ice Valley appeared straightforward. However, routes up very aesthetic Mount Agur, one of our objectives, were badly broken. Erich had been up Mount Agur and Mount Munday in the 1970’s and he was amazed how much more diffi-



**Bluff Lake with Blackhorn (left) and White Saddle (right) mountains behind. Photo: D. Hughes.**



**En route to The Snowdome. Photo: D. Hughes.**

this year provided several leads on a knife-like snow arête. We returned to camp via a glacier ramp on the west side of Campbell Peak.

Day 4 was a camp day with light snow and visibility reduced to 15m.

Thursday, August 2, was our first day to climb Mount Munday. Leaving camp at 7:30, we headed up the south glacier of Munday and up the headwall cirque between the Central and East peaks. A couple of leads of climbing on the headwall brought us to the summit plateau. From here a relatively steep but straight-forward east slope was used to reach the Central summit (3320m). We then were able to descend the west side to approach the main summit. Some navigating was required to get around the bergschrund to reach the snow summit of the main summit. A short lead across an airy gap led to the true summit of Mount Munday (3367m). After lunch we headed down from the summit and over to the North Peak. Though seldom climbed, the trip to the North Peak (3320m) was well worth it. The North Peak provided the best vantage point to view Arabesque Ridge, Waddington, Combatant, Tiedemann and the Serras. Our retreat back across the plateau and to the cirque separating the Central and East peaks brought us back to camp around 6:30 pm.



**On the plateau looking towards the East Peak of Mt. Munday. Photo: D. Hughes.**

came to a drop that required a rappel in order to continue along the ridge to Ferris. Given the time, we elected to retreat and retraced our steps back to The Snowdome.

Saturday, August 4, brought sunshine and a trip back up to the Munday plateau to climb the East Peak. After a pleasant scramble up the ridge to the East Peak (3341m) we were rewarded with excellent views of all Mount Munday's six peaks and a good vantage point for more of the Tiedemann southern flank to the east. It quickly became clear this area would be our objective for the following year.

After descending the East Peak, we crossed the summit plateau to the Far West Peak (3280m) where we

cult glacier routes now appeared. With the weather now deteriorating, we quickly returned to camp.

Day 2 brought fog and with the limited visibility we were restrained to a short walk to Munday East Peak's southern ridge.

Tuesday brought good weather and we were off exploring. We headed around the East Peak's southern ridge and up to the southern flank of the Tiedemann Glacier. Our first objective, The Snowdome (3040m) was a pleasant climb and it afforded us our first views of the north side of Tiedemann Glacier and across to BCMC's Plummer Hut. We then proceeded along the ridge to climb Lichen Pinnacle and Campbell Peak (3120m) northeast ridge, which

On Day 6 we planned to travel toward Grenelle Mountain. We proceeded to the south ridge running down from The Snowdome before encountering significant crevasse problems and a drop off that is not shown on the current 92N6 map. As a result, we retraced our steps and again ascended The Snowdome. We proceeded to the easterly hump of Snowdome and down a 45-degree slope to continue on the ridge toward Roger and Ferris.

After navigating several bumps along the ridge, we



Mt. Munday - cirque between Central and East peaks (top); Central, Main, West, and Far West peaks (left to right) from the North Peak (middle); on the Main Peak's summit (bottom). Photos: D. Hughes.





More Mt. Munday - the east side (above); Far West Peak from the West Peak, with Mt. Waddington behind (below). Photos: D. Hughes.



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were rewarded with a steep snow climb (50 plus degrees) that allowed us to practice placement of several snow anchors. This peak dominates the Munday skyline from the Corridor and Ice Valley glaciers to the west. After picture taking, we down-climbed and made our way to the West Peak, which is about the same height as the Central and North peaks. This peak is not mentioned in Don Serl's guidebook or shown on 92N/6. A quick return brought us back to camp at 5:15 pm.

Day 8 was departure day with Mike King arriving about 12:40 pm and a great flight to Bluff Lake.

Participants: Bruce Cassels, Larry Kost, Erich Hinze and David Hughes

### 2013 CAMP

We arrived in Bluff Lake on Saturday, July 27, where we were treated to a great dinner at Dave and Lori King's B&B. Sunday, we flew with Chris Randolph of White Saddle Air, arriving at our camp spot at about 2720m below the southwestern end of Grenelle Mountain. After establishing camp, all seven of us trekked over to Irresistible Mountain (2898m). From here we could survey our surroundings on the Waddington Glacier to the west, south and east.

Day 2, July 29, we headed off to Ferris and Roger, both close to 2920m. We split into two groups, climbing each peak separately. Andrei, Ilze, Erich and David went to Ferris first, while Larry, Bruce and Matthew went to Roger. Mount Ferris and Roger are named after the Neave brothers who came close to climbing Mt. Waddington in 1934. Ferris proved to be more difficult with more loose rock, perhaps because of recent glacier shrinking. The top rope lead was class 4 with a class 5 move. The climb was not without incident as rockfall glanced off Erich's shoulder while he was belaying me.



Camp and the southwestern half of Grenelle Mtn. Photo: D. Hughes.

After David, Erich, Ilze and Andrei summited Roger we proceeded down along the ridge to Grenelle. Upon arriving at a subpeak on the west side of Grenelle, Erich decided he wanted to return to camp as he was still recovering from rockfall bruises. I accompanied him while Andrei and Ilze proceeded to climb the Grenelle subpeak – class 5. On reaching the top, they decided they could climb the West ridge to the northwest summit, which at 3048m is recorded as the highest point on the almost 2 km long boomerang shaped summit ridge. Andrei and Ilze arrived back in camp by 7pm via the gully separating the west subpeak and the main Grenelle massif with a detour around the bergschrund.

Tuesday, July 30, brought more good weather. Andrei and Ilze now headed off to Fascination Mountain while the remaining five climbed Grenelle via Andrei's descent route. From the col with the west subpeak, Larry, Bruce and Matthew ascended the class 4 rock to the summit. Erich and I climbed the steep snow and ice to the left. After lunch Bruce and Larry decided to explore the summit ridge, which is a series of rock gendarmes. After traversing about one-quarter of the way, they found a big rappel was necessary to proceed to the central summit block. They decided to retreat. The five of us arrived back at camp about 5:30 pm.

Andrei and Ilze arrived back from Fascination at 10:40 pm. The climb took longer than expected, partially because they needed a second rope and more hardware to move faster up and down the climb. A rest day was now in order for them.



**Heading to Echo Col. Photo: D. Hughes.**



**The shrinking Smoking Canyon Glacier from Echo Col. Photo: D. Hughes.**

because they needed a second rope and more hardware to move faster up and down the climb. A rest day was now in order for them.

Day 4 was an exploration day for five of us. We travelled to Echo Col, which separates Fascination and Sierra. From there we could survey routes up both peaks and view the descent down to the Smoking Canyon Glacier. Merlin Mountain and Mount Marcus would have to be reached from this glacier and access has been made significantly more difficult by glacial recession. Both peaks are almost as formidable in appearance from the south side as their massive north faces.

Interestingly, Sierra Peak appears to be strictly an extension of Grenelle from the Echo col vantage point.

On Thursday, August 1, the weather was a little less clear but seemed to be holding. Six of us left for Echo Col. With the lack of snow, climbing conditions on both Fascination's north ridge and Sierra south gully were completely changed from the descriptions in Don Serl's guide. Sierra gully was very sketchy and Fascination was now a rock climb except for the bottom two pitches and not the snow climb as pictured in Don's guide.

At about 7am, Andrei and Ilze started up the Sierra



Fascination Mtn. from camp (top); northwest end of Grenelle Mtn. (middle left); Fascination Mtn. from Echo Col (middle right); View from Mt. Munday to the southwest side of Grenelle and Fascination Mtns. (bottom). Photos: D. Hughes.







**David on Fascination Mtn. Photo: D. Hughes collection.**

gully, managing with difficulty to get across a weak bridge over the bergschrund. At the same time Larry, Bruce, David and Matthew started up Fascination's north ridge. Route finding on Fascination proved to be the biggest challenge, but all in all it was an enjoyable but lengthy climb. Just as Larry reached the summit crest near 1pm, we heard shouts from Ilze to call her on our small hand radio. With radio contact it was learned that Andrei had taken a bad fall for close to 60 metres in the Sierra gully. Andrei and Ilze had made it up the gully and the connecting rock tower arriving at the top about 11:30am. After lunch they proceeded down and at a point 5 m below the top of the gully, Andrei belayed Ilze down 60m. He then started to down-climb without crampons. He hit a patch of ice that sent him on a tumbling fall past Ilze until her belay and rock obstacles stopped his fall. Ilze then lowered Andrei to the end of their 60m rope, where he was able to make his way over to a small ledge about 15m away. Ilze then down-climbed to him. After assessing his injuries, she called us. They decided to stay put as the balance of the route to the bergschrund, approximately 80m, was difficult and the weather was deteriorating.



**The gully on Sierra Pk. Photo: D. Hughes.**

On receiving her call, we all decided immediately to turn around. After descending and rappelling, we reached the Echo Col about 5pm. We could now see lightning to the east. Upon further discussion, it was decided we might need a helicopter rescue. Bruce and Larry were given the role to see if they could climb up the gully to them in order to provide a second rope for rappelling, while David and Matthew returned to camp to get the satellite phone to call White Saddle. By the time we reached camp after 6pm, it was starting to rain. Bruce and Larry found the bridge across the bergschrund had weakened further with the heat of the

day and snow conditions had become dangerous so they also retreated to camp. We were able to continuously converse with Ilze via our small hand radios.

I started calling White Saddle about 6:15pm. After several calls, Pat King at White Saddle explained that he had made over 20 calls trying to get approval for a rescue from Comox Search and Rescue. By this time, Chris Randolph had arrived back (Mike King was away for the day) and he decided to come in and see if he could rescue Andrei and Ilze. Chris is a former member of the BCMC and he was on our 1998 climb of Mount Tiedemann. Chris arrived with Pat King about 8pm. I then accompanied them up in the helicopter to show

them exactly where Andrei and Ilze were. Chris then returned me to base camp and then made several yeoman attempts to land his helicopter on the ledge where Ilze and Andrei were. The sidewalls of the mountain, however, proved to be too close and he had to back off.

We then tried to drop a duffle bag of supplies – clothing, sleeping bags, tent and food to Andrei and Ilze from the helicopter. The bag landed on the ledge but the wash from the helicopter blades knocked the bag off where it fell to some point down the wall toward the glacier below. Chris and Pat returned to Bluff Lake and further calls to the Search and Rescue got the commitment for a rescue somewhere after 9pm. Comox S&R estimated they would arrive in 40 minutes.

At about 10:40, a big Cormorant helicopter arrived and proceeded to fly around Fascination about five times. On a couple of their passes, Search and Rescue personnel were able to get a spotlight on Andrei and Ilze. We now had a night rather than a daylight rescue. In addition, we also had a Buffalo aircraft flying above in circles. Two flares were launched from the plane but on the wrong (west) side of Grenelle rather than the east side of the boomerang long ridge. Spectacular lighting but not much help. The Cormorant then disappeared down to Scar Creek near sea level to unload weight. It returned and downloaded a paramedic and basket to the ledge using a haul line. After two trips and one more circumnavigation of Fascination Mountain, the Cormorant with Andrei and Ilze left for Bluff Lake accompanied by the Buffalo at about 11:30 pm. Mike King subsequently informed us that this was the first time Comox Search and Rescue had performed a haul line rescue at a high altitude (2900m). Comox Search and Rescue also discovered they could use White Saddle for both helicopter and Buffalo landings and refueling, making central coast mountain rescues much more efficient than refueling at Port Hardy.

By daybreak on day 6, Friday August 2, the heavy rain squalls during the night had stopped. Larry, Bruce, Erich, Matthew and I made plans to try and retrieve the duffle bag. On approaching the side walls of Grenelle a little to the west of the Sierra gully, Larry thought he could see the duffle bag on a ledge about one rope length above the glacier. We then tried to find a route up the wet cliff to the ledge. I was able to find a less steep ramp coming over from Sierra. Bruce decided he would climb up the ramp heading to the ledge. Upon arriving at the top of the first pitch he was now above us, and lo and behold, he could see the duffle bag in the bergschrund very near to where we were. As he retreated, Larry was able to climb down and get the duffle bag. We were able to retrieve about 90% of the contents. The duffle bag had partially exploded on impact and two smaller bags had fallen further into the bergschrund. Fortunately, the valuable items were largely intact.

Given the weather, we had to wait until Saturday to fly out with Mike King to Bluff Lake.

Andrei suffered a badly broken clavicle when he hit the sidewall of the gully. He had an operation a few days later to repair tendons and to have a plate inserted that required five screws. He has recovered and was back ski mountaineering the following winter.

Our thanks to Chris Randolph, Mike and Pat King at White Saddle and Comox Search and Rescue. We would also like to thank Audrey, Dave and Lori King for their help and hospitality and Baully Enterprises for their excellent freeze-dried foods.

Participants: Bruce Cassels, Larry Kost, Erich Hinze, David Hughes, Matthew Murray, Ilze Rupners and Andrei Smertin.

## ROCKY MOUNTAINS

### The Tamarack Trail – extended the Grizzly Group way – July, 2012

Karl Ricker

#### Planning

The daunting late and slow-to-melt snowpack of 2012 presented a conundrum. It was blocking alpine hiking trails throughout much of the province, and put the kibosh on my proposed biennial trek to the Chilcotin Ranges, scheduled for early July. I huddled with the last remaining original member of the legendary Grizzly Group, Mike Simpson, to find an alternative. It was to be the 40th anniversary of the Group, although three of the originals were now retired or gone, replaced by others over the years, but they too were no longer interested in long treks. Scanning the trail guides turned up an interesting ridge top traverse along the west boundary of Waterton National park. It was labeled “The Tamarack Trail” in Patton and Robinson’s hiker’s bible, “The Canadian Rockies Trail Guide”, and their description of the 3-day trek was very appealing. A phone call to the Park Warden’s office at Waterton confirmed that the trails were clear of snow, unlike anywhere else to the north and west. That cinched the decision to get on it. Its length, without any side trips, is 36.4 km with suggested overnight camp stops at Twin Lakes and Lone Lake (booking mandatory). The chief Grizzly said this was too short and, upon further query, added a detour route to Goat Lake, followed by a spectacular traverse of Avion Ridge to regain the Tamarack at the Twin Lake campground. This eliminated 4 km of forest trail walking in the Bauerman Creek Valley. It added an additional campsite at Goat Lake and stretched the hiking to 50 km; still a bit short, but most of it in overwhelmingly alpine scenery.

Mike lined up future grizzlies for the trek: two very active daughters: Bonnie Farris and Jackie Skrypnek and their super-active teenagers, Ben and Jake, and Jane and Peter, respectively. I came along to slow down the pace and record the stunning natural history along the ridge line. It was the second week of July; alpine flora was in prime bloom and the water courses were in bank-full flow. The western boundary of the park abuts the Flathead in southeastern British Columbia, supposedly sacrosanct wilderness, bounding with wildlife on beautiful alpine ridges, etc. – touted as a unique ecosystem, according to the pundits and their voluminous media output. As the trip along the boundary progressed, there was darn little wildlife to be seen, although we passed through a hair-snagging trap at South Kootenay Pass, suggesting it was a recognized corridor

for animal movement between the two parks. Frankly, the scenery is mainly inside Waterton park; the Flathead is a boring series of forested ridges with valleys in second growth forest, having been logged decades ago.



Karl (second from right) with Mike Simpson (far right) and future grizzlies. Photo: K. Ricker collection.

#### The Trek

We did the traverse from north to south, opposite the direction recommended in the guidebook. Arriving at the Red Rock Canyon trail head, after planting vehicles at the opposite end of the trek at Rowe Creek on the Akamina Highway, the packs with four days of food were hoisted under a hot blistering sun. Any worries about

snow impeding progress were dismissed. But the initial 4 km of the Tamarack Route was a pleasant hike on an ancient road bed. The Goat Lake turn-off quickly killed the easy travel. It's a darn steep side trail facing right into the sun with no shade. A formidable cliff was soon met, but a ledge trail was blasted across it, astonishingly constructed by hard hand work decades ago. At this point, Jake and Ben zipped ahead to secure a campsite at Goat Lake. This unique side trail was only 2.5 km in length, but provided a tremendous cardiovascular and esthetic workout. Officially, the trail ended at the lake but a well-beaten path continued into the bluffy alpine, which would make Newman Pk. (2488 m) a very worthy one-day objective.

The following day, July 10th, camp was departed early because a long day on the Avion Ridge was in store. The Newman-Avion col was reached rather quickly, the first arrivees seeing the only goat throughout the traverse. Well, at least the lake name below lived up to its name. Avion Ridge winds and twists along the B.C.-Alberta border for several kilometres and flirts between 2000 and 2450 metres in elevation with several ups and downs. The first "up" was bypassed with a level scree slog on the B.C. side. That was a mistake; thereafter, we stuck to the actual ridge top, rounding the crest of a cirque in the Castle River headwaters. By early afternoon the ridge crest lead down to a col between the west fork of the Castle and a Lost Lake tributary of the Bauerman in Waterton Park. On a sunny day, Avion ridge got full marks for being spectacular! After nearly 3 km of descent from the col and back into the forest the Tamarack Trail was again intersected, where there was a warden cabin and campground. Our camp for the night, however, was a 3+ km hike to Twin Lakes, lying in a neat pair of small cirques under Sage Pass. There was still some snow on the ground in this area, but one or two campsites were bare. Gradually, the tired troops drifted in. Over 30 species of colourful alpine flora decorated the route, the best and most unusual being the tall



**The party on the Avion Ridge, with peaks in the U.S. Glacier National Park on the skyline (top and middle); Lower Twin Lake near the campsite (bottom). Photos: K. Ricker collection.**

stalks of Bear Grass, unique to this corner of the Rockies.

July 11th was scheduled to be a short day. The trail followed the base of the headwall at tree line, descending gradually to a mushy Blue Grouse Basin (didn't see any). We were then in the headwaters of Lone Brook basin, looking only at peaks within Waterton. Soon the trail that crosses over South Kootenay Pass was intersected. Packs were stashed and the side trip to the pass provided the lunch stop. If we had been more ambitious, it would have been only a mere stroll from there to nearby Kishenena Pk (a lowly 2252m) but Mike promised the gang an early arrival at our next campsite at Lone Lake where they could swim, fish or relax. It was 4 km away tucked under a peak by the quirky name of Mt. Festubert! The lake, however, was not inspiring, scenery-wise – a hole surrounded on three sides by tall forest, trampled here and there by Park Warden's horses. There was a cabin and corral and the nearby campsite was disjointed with the tables



and fireplace far removed from the actual tent sites that overlooked the headwall of part of the Lone Creek valley. Big fish were spotted in the lake and the teenagers spent the balance of the afternoon trying to catch them, without luck.

The finally day (July 12th) was a long day climbing steadily on a trail to the crest of Lineham Ridge, the highest point on the Tamarack Traverse at about 2535 metres. From upper Lone Creek basin the trail was carefully etched into a humungous scree slope, rising at a steady 10-15% grade to reach a



spectacular ridge crest (actually a mountain summit on its own). Almost 13 km of trekking, several kilometres of which were well above tree line, was required to reach it. The ridge crest provided great views of the chain of lakes on Lineham Creek basin and to some of the 3000m (plus) peaks in Glacier park across the border. In 2005, Mike and I took part in Alberta's centennial, doing our part in ascending Waterton's highest peak, Mt. Blakiston, which is in the Lineham Creek basin. Easily seen that day, it was on the list of 100 peaks that had to be ascended that year to commemorate the Province's celebrations.

**On Lineham Ridge (top); looking down to Lineham Lakes (bottom).**

**Photos: K. Ricker collection.**

From this phenomenal viewscape, we hiked onward to a set of artificial steps that have been constructed in the rock to assist the trekker on or off the summit. They were on the Rowe Creek basin side of the ridge. Descending into Rowe Creek basin, the trail again sidehill gouged into scree while dropping down to a col, with Mt. Lineham rising from it off to the east. Were it not for a scheduled car park destination that afternoon, the packs should have been dropped, the peak easily bagged, and then one would descend to Rowe



**Rowe Creek valley. Photo: K. Ricker collection.**

Lake and bivouac for the night (tent camping verboten). So, instead, we descended onto a long snow slope, glissading where possible to reach the valley floor. There were one heck of a lot of day trippers in this basin, the lakes being 4-5 km from the car park. The teenagers were promised ice cream at Waterton and wasted no time blitzing out to the car park, well ahead of the writer, but the beer in the cooler was still cold and the adults savoured every drop before continuing onto the “Dzum” multi-functional café at Waterton. The cafe was a trip on its own into another time warp; their prices were those of the 1960s and 70s!

To reflect on the trip that is probably the best of the several long treks in the park, it marked the south end of our journey’s in the Canadian Rockies with what is left of the Grizzly Group. Before Mike tosses in the towel as its sole survivor, we should try another in the northern Rockies (south section) near Tumbler Ridge; so stay-tuned, there may be more to come. And, by the way, not one grizzly bear was seen on the Tamarack traverse!

### **Natural History Notes**

Every day flora and wildlife were recorded, but our flower guide seldom agreed to the species we were looking at. It is well known that this corner of the Rockies has its own set of endemic species not found elsewhere north or west.

Birds (specific notes in brackets):

Swainson thrush, Varied thrush, Hermit thrush, Robin, Olive-sided flycatcher (Goat Lake basin only), Yellow warbler, Gray jay, Clark's nutcracker, Pacific wren, Song sparrow, Chipping sparrow, Golden-crowned sparrow, Fox sparrow, American dipper (one only), Common raven, unidentified finch and hawk. Surprisingly, there were no chickadees.

Mammals:

Rocky Mountain goat (one only), White-tailed deer (Twin lakes), Whistling marmot, Rocky Mountain big-horn sheep (one only), Black bear (one only). Grizzly bears are a hot topic in this area. Wildlife specialists claim that there is one for every 100 square kilometers of terrain, but we saw no sign of their presence.

Flora:

65 genera of flowers were identified but identification of the 100 or more species that were present is "shaky" for most. By far the most impressive flower was *Xerophyllum tenax*, commonly known as bear grass. Among trees and tall shrubs, sub-alpine fir and Engelmann spruce dominated the upper treeline zone. However, there was the odd stand of tall larches (hence the name Tamarack Trail), but there might be two species or hybrids of the two (*L. lyallii* and *L. occidentalis*). I had the same problem with the five needle pines (*P. flexilis* or *P. albicaulis*) and again with the junipers (*J. communis*, *J. scopulorum*, and *J. horizontalis*). Help! Mike Feller and Terry Taylor should have been with us! It was a floral paradise.



View south of the Rowe Creek valley, showing some disappearing glaciers in Glacier National Park. Not visible from the Tamarack Trail. Photo: M. Feller (September, 2013).

**Glacier update: camping crowds want to see our receding glaciers**

Karl Ricker

In the previous (2012) BC Mountaineer, I reported good news and bad news for the Overlord and Wedgemount Glaciers, respectively. Overlord had advanced 1.9m, and Wedgemount had retreated a whopping 28.6m between 2011 and 2012. What would be in store from the effects of the hot summer of 2013?

The Labour Day weekend jaunt to Overlord Glacier gave us two views on the situation. If one can recall, Overlord has a bilobed snout and, historically, we have measured the position of each, and then averaging the result for the two to give us a single numerical answer. This modus operandi didn't work in 2011 because one snout (the farther away of the two) was buried in residual winter snowpack and the distal edge of the ice could not be found. So, measurements for 2011 and 2012 had to be content with the determination on the snout closest to the true left margin of the glacier (i.e. the cabin side). So, based on the single snout determination, 2011 showed no advance or retreat, whereas 2012 posted a (+)1.9m advance, but this snout is protected from solar radiation melt by a blanket of rock debris on the ice surface. Through Brian Wood's probing with an ice axe, the edge of the ice was found to be 5.3 metres in front of exposed ice. Nonetheless, in 2009/10 both snouts on the glacier reverted from big losses to marginal gain/loss, and I am laying the reason for the change to be due to the excessive (and record) snowfall of 1998/99. That is, over the course of 11 to 12 years, this excess worked its way down-glacier to post the change from receding to quasi-stable ice front position.



**The snout of the Overlord Glacier in September, 2013.**

**Photo: K. Ricker.**

So, what happened in 2012/13? The debris-covered snout yielded (-)1.5m recession, although relatively clean ice was 17.4m behind the debris-covered ice front. Furthermore, it appears that clean ice is overriding the debris ice in this area. One has to ask if the protective debris cover is allowing a realistic appraisal of the glacier's "health". Well, the other snout of clean ice, and no debris particles to be found on or bound in it, says the debris is now giving an anomalous picture. The clean or right-hand snout retreated (-)14.3m in this newest time-frame (2012/13). So, the surge is finished for the time being, and averaging the two results leads me to post a (-) 7.9m recession for the glacier.

Some will argue it should be more. The total recession for the glacier, since climax position established during the Little Ice Age (late 1700s) is now about 1352m, or about 1139m from A.D. 1879 (+/- 13 yrs) to the present. Over the course of our investigations beginning in 1986, we have measured 201.9m of recession, the ice front now being well over 100m away from our baseline set upon the rubbly debris forefield in 1995. From it all further measurements have been made with a surveyor's 50-metre tape, accuracy to the nearest tenth of a metre.

For Wedgemount Glacier there are no complications with multiple snouts. On September 6/7 I, with the



help of Dave Lyon, and son, Graham, and a Swiss visitor, and in the overall company of the Geomatics Dept. of B.C.I.T. (leader Mr. Ian Lloyd – a former student while Bill Tupper led the surveys in the 1970s and early 1980s) slugged it up to the BCMC hut overlooking Wedgemount Lake. The campground at the hut was already fully-occupied by a V.O.C. glacier school. The BCIT gang was already on the ice continuing to GPS the glacier surface to measure overall ablation. We dropped the packs and shoved on toward the glacier snout to set up a new baseline to measure the distance to glacier edge. Our old system had to be abandoned because there was no more stable rubble on the glacier's left-hand margin to build year by year cairns to mark the ice edge. In the year marking 2011/12 the ice had receded a whopping (–)28.6m, and judging by the copious stream discharge, we pondered a similar, or yet worse, result for 2012/13. Arriving at the cairns for 2012, it looked grim. Ice was collapsing into a developing pond, but to the northeast and across the outlet creek the ice margin was on “terra firma”. To this side a line was projected based on the 2012 position. The recession from the new baseline was “only” 18.7m – a moral victory of sorts. Of sorts, because the large pond on the glacier's right margin, and back-up ice cave, have grown considerably over the last year (amount pending BCIT survey result this year) and pond growth from both sides of the glacier could lead to an amalgamating lake across the entire ice front, with two outlets yet. So, we may be looking at a future Upper Wedgemount Lake – stay tuned.

As a postscript, Karl, with assistance from Marilyn Cram, Ehleen and Erich Hinze, and others, determined that recession of the Wedgemount Glacier picked up in 2013-2014, with measurements on 6-7 September, 2014, indicating a retreat of 23.6m. Some ice caves have also collapsed since the previous year.

Our Wedgemount Surveys had an aborted start in 1973. Over the following 40 years the total recession has been 427.5m or about 10.7m/year. However, from 1989 onward the recession has usually been greater,

exceeding 20 m/year in 1997/98 (El Niño year), 2008/09, 2011/12 and 2013/14. In 2006/07, however, it was only (–)2.5m, possibly reflecting a surge from the record snowfall of 98/99. A lesser loss is as good as a victory!

Let's move onto another matter. On Labour Day weekend, I have seen 19 and more tent sites spring up around the BCMC cabin at Russet Lake. So far the meadows about the cabin are coping with the stampede but, clearly, the Parks Service is not. There was no toilet paper or any hand cleanser in the out-



**Wedgemount Glacier snout in September, 2013 (left) and August, 1971 (right). Note the recession of the snout from the lake. Photos: K. Ricker (left) and M. Feller (right).**

house, paint is chipping off the exterior wall of the cabin and blow downs across the trail were not sawn away. The Flute Creek bridge sits unfinished and the Harmony Creek crossing is a maze of fallen trees, a slumped-out approach on the east side, etc. For Wedgemount, park rangers closed the outhouse at the lakeside campground on the Friday before we arrived. Upon arrival, all campsites at the cabin were occupied. By the time our Saturday work on the glacier was completed the lakeside campground was filling up and tents were going up elsewhere. Sunday morning I counted 30 tents!, and over a dozen were at the campsite without an outhouse. The conscientious ladies at that site were hiking back to the cabin site for their toiletry.

During Sunday's descent from Wedgemount, there were 51 day trippers on their way up, and upon our arrival at the trailhead parking lot, there were 44 vehicles crammed into it and alongside the road outside it!! Perhaps people want to see the glacier before it disappears. But let's face it, B.C. Parks is not doing its job; the trail is an erosional mess and there is no excuse for shutting down the outhouse at the lakeside campground before the conclusion of early autumn. As for an erosional mess, in 2014 construction began on an IPP with an intake on Wedgemount Creek right at the park boundary. This has necessitated rerouting of the trail.



**Dave and Graham Lyon near the ice cave at the right hand margin of the Wedgemount Glacier, September, 2013. Photo: K. Ricker.**





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