
THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER



1990



THE B.C. MOUNTAINEER
Journal of the B.C. Mountaineering Club

Volume 60, 1990

ISSN 0045-2998

	1988-89	1989-90
Honorary President:	Paul Binkert	Paul Binkert
Executive Committee		
President:	Brian Gavin	Paul Kubik
Vice-President:	Jill Stocks	Dave Robertson
Secretary:	Peter Rogers	Dennis Berryman
Treasurer:	Sev Heiberg	Jos van der Burg
Climbing:	Jacqueline Bradshaw	Darlene Anderson
Membership:	Harold Rydell	Jacqueline Bradshaw
Camp:	Paul Kubik	Mark Haden
Social:	Debbie Caldwell	Karin Rolfes and Sandrine Humbert-Droz
Conservation:	George Hamilton	George Hamilton
Cabin:	Pat Crean	Pat Crean
Past President:	-	Brian Gavin
Editor:	Michael Feller	Michael Feller

Cover Photos:

- Front Cover: Lindisfame Mtn. in winter. Photo - S. Grant.
 Inside Front Cover: Skiing on the Franklin Glacier. Photo - R. Enomoto
 Inside Back Cover: Robert Gordon on the summit of Mt. Munday. Photo - R. Enomoto
 Back Cover: The east face and north ridge of Mt. Queen Bess. Photo - M. Force.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MOUNTAINEERING	PAGE
- RAMBLINGS	
- Address from a Retiring President, by Brian Gavin	2
- The Endangered Epic, by Brian Wood	4
- Dinosaurs are Alive and Well and Roaming Around The Coast Mountains of B.C., by Pat Crean	9
- TRIPS OVERSEAS	
- La Haute Route - Avec Points, by Michael Feller	11
- TRIPS IN AND AROUND B.C.	
- Across Garibaldi Park, by Randy Stoltmann	18
- Aspen Peak Christmas Camp, 1987, by Steve Grant	29
- Franklin Glacier Spring Ski Camp, 1988, by Kathy Wong and Jan Kirkpatrick	34
- Mt. Logan Attempt via the East Ridge, by Brian Gavin	38
- Mt. Queen Bess Summer Camp, 1988, by Brian Gavin and Cheryl Leskiw	46
- Cleaning up the Meadow Dome Area	
1. Meadow Dome Christmas Camp, 1988, by Steve Grant	55
2. Meadow Dome Easter Snows, by Michael Feller	61
3. Priory Peak, by Steve Grant	63
- Mt. Judge Howay, First Winter Ascent, by Reinhard Fabische	67
- Ski Patrol to the Rockies, by Robin Tivy	68
- Mt. Logan Ski via Kings Trench, by Brian Waddington	73
- Highlights from the Rockies Summer Camp, 1989, by Paul Kubik and Michael Feller ...	81
- Petlushkwohap and Skihist Mountains, by Brian Gavin	92
- Tidewater to Treeline: Megin River to Buttle Lake, Strathcona Park, by Randy Stoltmann	95
MOUNTAIN SCIENCE	
- Of Matier Glacier Moraines and Lichens, by Karl Ricker	104
- Overlord Glacier - a 1989 Update, by Karl Ricker	108

MOUNTAINEERING RAMBLINGS

ADDRESS FROM A RETIRING PRESIDENT -

by Brian Gavin

As your retiring President, it is appropriate to reflect on what we have accomplished over the past few years.

We have successfully offered summer camps (usually a choice of two), as well as a Christmas and spring ski camp every year. Excellent progress has been made in addressing club equipment by replacing all tents and pieps while disposing of the old ones, reducing ropes and kitchen gear. The North Creek cabin has been completed and the trail is being worked on; the urgent repairs on the Plummer Hut have been done with some minor ones still outstanding. The club library has been temporarily relocated and its reorganization is in progress. I am optimistic that it will be upgraded and suitably housed in the near future. Our level of participation in the Federation of Mountain Clubs has increased with representation on the Board of Directors and the three standing committees. We have also contributed instructors to the Traditional Mountaineering course. Our club membership has grown by approximately 25% over the past four years largely due to our participation as instructors, the continuous offering of ski and summer camps, and a very active year-round trip schedule.

A considerable effort has also been put into a number of administrative areas. These have seen the formulation of position descriptions for members of the executive committee, a policy manual to provide guidance on issues not covered in our by-laws, the development of liability waivers for membership and trip participants, a complete review of the club by-laws and recommendations on membership requirements. This all strengthens our foundation and provides a framework to grow within.

Having summarized what our immediate accomplishments have been, perhaps my responsibility is to inspire you all on to greater things. In this respect, I would like to review the history of our club over the past 30 years to demonstrate its leadership. Most members are probably aware that it was a direct result of efforts by the BCMC that Garibaldi Park was created - even though it took over 15 years. Beginning with a club resolution in 1915 and then a number of summer camps and representations to government, a Reserve for Park Purposes was achieved in 1920. Further club camps and then joint camps with the Mountaineers of Seattle and the Mazamas of Portland led to the Garibaldi Park Act of 1927 and the later expansion of it in 1928 and '33 to largely what it is today.

Following the crash of the Trans Canada Airlines flight on Mt. Slesse in 1957, the BCMC in conjunction with the Vancouver Section of the ACC rejuvenated the Mountain Rescue Group. This group was incorporated as a society and was very active in search and rescue efforts on the North Shore and in the Chilliwack area. Likely, today's North Shore Rescue and Chilliwack Search and Rescue are descendants of that organization.

In February 1963, two BCMC members - Don MacLaurin and Martin Kafer - attended a Provincial Sports and Fitness Conference. They came away with the recognition of the need for a federation of clubs as a means of realizing financial aid and assistance from the government to assist the improvement of access and trails to mountain areas. In mid-1963, the BCMC assumed the leadership role and invited four other clubs to co-operate in a joint venture - one of which became the Mountain Access Committee. (ACC-Vancouver, VOC, NSH, Youth Hostel)

In late 1965, the club recognized a need to provide skills to would-be mountaineers. This would increase awareness of the sport of mountaineering and raise the profile of the club. Consequently, the club cooperated with the Vancouver Night School Programme to offer a course on Mountain Craft. Preliminary steps were also taken towards working with the Boy Scouts of Canada.

From 1965 to 1970, the club built five mountain shelters, two being constructed with the assistance of the Ministry of Parks on the western side of Garibaldi Park - the Himmelsbach Hut at Russet Lake and the Wedgemont Lake Hut. All of these shelters were built as open cabins and their use by other mountaineers was generally encouraged as a means of improving public awareness of the areas and to raise the profile of the club.

By 1970, the Mountain Access Committee had gone through an evolutionary period and a need for change was recognized. A number of club members (most notably Martin Kafer) figured in the restructuring of that organization into the Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia. The founding members were the B.C. Mountaineering Club, the Alpine Club - Vancouver Section, Varsity Outdoor Club, North Shore Hikers, Simon Fraser Outdoor Club, and Vancouver Natural History Society.

Through the publication of guidebooks, the club has contributed to the community outside the club. The book "103 Hikes in Southwestern B.C." was initially a joint effort of the BCMC and the Mountaineers of Seattle. The BCMC also published the "Climbers Guide to the Squamish Chief" which was compiled by Anders Ourom. More recently we also participated in the funding for Fairley's guide - the Culbert update.

I suppose in a sense, the builders of this club have challenged us all to do more than just mountaineer. Essentially then, it is against this background that I would like to discuss our current leadership role in the mountaineering community and what might be.

Although some may not realize it, we are in the midst of a very significant project: the Smoke Bluffs Park Project. Without the Federation, this opportunity may not have arisen. However, the BCMC is currently the clear leader in the fund raising efforts. Through personal donations, volunteering at casino nights, and our "Climb-On" shirt program, we have generated in excess of \$25,000 towards the Federation's purchase of the land destined to become part of that park. With our continued efforts, this project will become a reality.

In this time of competition for land uses, I believe there is a growing need to take steps toward the protection of recreation access; protection of the kinds of resources pursued by our members year-round. One such step is to pursue the creation of another park - one that is essentially a significant enlargement of Joffre Lakes Recreation Area to include all the alpine areas surrounding the Matier Group, Mt. Rohr, Mt. Marriott (Aspen), Cayoosh Mtn. and the Place Glacier.

We should continue to be involved in the publication of guidebooks and histories.

Within the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C., the club has again become an active participant, although there is still a need for more club members to work on the FMCBC committees - most notably Trails and the Adopt-A-Trail programs - but also the Safety and Education Committee and the Communications Committee.

As stated earlier, I believe that the founders and builders of this club have issued us a challenge to contribute. Our strength and contribution lies in your participation. I say, let's do more than solve problems around the Saturday night campfire - let's meet that challenge!

THE ENDANGERED EPIC

- by Brian Wood

After over 30 years of hiking and mountaineering experiences, I am noticing that a "particular something" is missing from my recent forays into the back country. Its loss was not noticed immediately because it did not disappear overnight. The "particular something" that seems to be gradually disappearing from my recent wilderness experiences was that old-fashioned term "adventure", or to use the more modern term, the "Epic". Not only is adventure being threatened, at least for me, but so is the wilderness where these adventures usually take place. By some strange coincidence, could this declining frequency of Epics be associated with the same factors which also threaten the wilderness?

One evening, as I lay relaxing in a hot bath after a typically pleasant, uneventful, slightly tiring, but not exhausting day in the bush, I realized that it had been a long time since I had arrived home from a trip too late and too exhausted for a bath. What had happened to those stimulating adventures that characterized my weekends when I was younger?

Over the years, at least two important wilderness factors had changed, namely the sophistication of the equipment used on outdoor trips, e.g. "high tech" gear, and of course, one's own experience and knowledge of the wilderness. This same improved technology and experience or wilderness knowledge also contribute to more people penetrating further into the back country than before, and thus these two factors were also perhaps two of the main factors which were endangering the wilderness. While we have no control over advancing technology or the increasing numbers of people penetrating the wilderness, we can make "allowances" for equipment and experience to reverse the current decline of the Epic. Our high-tech gear, and increased experience could be two reasons trips were becoming more

predictable, and therefore, less adventurous. With improved gear and planning, fewer things seem to go wrong, and Epics are threatened, as is our wilderness.

There is an old saying that goes something like this: "There are bold mountaineers, and there are old mountaineers, but there are no bold and old mountaineers."

There must be some truth in this old saying because as one gets older, one probably gets smarter and decides not to be a mountaineer, or at least not to be a bold mountaineer. Perhaps it is only the young and bold mountaineers who still manage to experience old fashioned adventurous Epics.

Another saying that comes to mind can be paraphrased to suit my purpose as follows: "A superior mountaineer uses his/her superior knowledge to avoid situations where his/her superior skills might be needed."

Perhaps this is our paradox. For whatever reason, we try to avoid the situations that might result in adventure, but it is adventure we really need in order to avoid boredom that can result from predictability. Some experienced mountaineers remember only the unpleasant aspects of their early Epics, where lack of experience resulted in hunger, coldness, extreme tiredness, etc., which are all sensations many of us now try to avoid. But, don't you remember the incredible release and joyous satisfaction that came from surviving a "real good Epic"?



Brian Wood looking for an epic - photo by M. Feller

What does "the real good Epic" entail? In my opinion, a real good Epic brings one to the threshold of a disaster without actually being disastrous. A real good Epic would include arriving back at the car considerably later than expected, usually in the pitch dark. If one arrives back to civilization on schedule, the trip would certainly not constitute an Epic. Most of us can look back, albeit through rose (and sweat) tinted spectacles, to trips where we staggered back to the car in the early hours of the morning, with only one light still functioning for a party of at least six exhausted, but still cheerful members. Another requirement for an Epic is that one must be soaked to the skin, cold, aching, hungry and so tired that all except the driver falls asleep within minutes in the car, lulled by the smell of wet wool and chilled sweat. For those with a higher tolerance to discomfort, a minor pain from such things as flat feet, varicose veins, scratches and bruises, enhance the Epic, or at least in the telling of the story.

We should examine what caused these Epics so that we may rescue them from the verge of extinction. In the early days, equipment failure was fairly common and could "trigger" a good Epic. How many times did ice axes or crampons break, or ski or ski bindings break, or kayak skins tear? Equipment failures of this type tend to consume additional trip time so that the enjoyment of improvising repairs can be fully savoured, especially in the pleasure of retelling. As a bonus, the party's pace following the failure and repair was usually much slower, and so a late return to civilization was assured. Nowadays, ice axes, crampons, skis, kayaks, etc. seem almost unbreakable. An unsuitable vehicle could also trigger Epics. For example, our unreliable cars would fail to start, get flat tires, or simply could not get far enough up the logging road. Such equipment failures at the beginning of the trip would usually delay the start of the trip such that there was insufficient time to finish it in the daylight, thus setting the stage for another adventurous Epic.

When we were younger, our optimism had not been tempered by experience, particularly with predicting the weather. We'd set off clad in flimsy T-shirts and shorts because the weatherman promised that the last few days of warm, dry weather would continue for a few more days. As we grew older, we learned that weather in mountains was not included in the weather forecast because mountains have their own weather systems. Old experienced mountaineers can usually be identified on the easier mountain trails on clear, sunny days carrying huge packs of emergency gear, which is never needed anyway, at least not by them because, alas, they are "too experienced" to have an emergency.

Some other Epics in the past were triggered by an over-optimistic appraisal of the terrain and one's capabilities. This also usually becomes tempered with experience. We have now been known to actually abandon trips when the summit was in sight over the final ridge. This strategic withdrawal occurred because our experience taught us that if we'd continued, we'd be late back to camp and probably miss afternoon tea around the camp fire. We rationalize our position by pointing to distant clouds in an otherwise clear blue sky, or point out that we might be late home which would worry spouses, children, etc., or even might initiate a costly rescue attempt. As we become older, our lives become more complicated, and additional considerations means that we cannot afford the inconvenience and disruption to our tight schedule that an Epic would cause. We have become like Tolkien's Hobbit who stated that he

had no time for adventures which he felt were nasty, disturbing things which only make you late for dinner.

Are we subconsciously trading excitement, stimulation and release of our earlier Epics, for well organized, efficient but, in the end, unsatisfying, trips? Such trips can achieve their "apparent" objective without disturbing one's well organized routine but perhaps the "real" objective was to have some excitement in a good Epic. As we get older, we tend to stretch a little less, and set sensible and relatively safe targets so that an Epic will not rock our well-planned boat. As our experience increases, so does our reluctance to frighten ourselves, and to give up creature comforts for a few hours or days, and we have usually acquired skills and equipment to avoid most unpleasant situations.

One solution to these problems would be to deliberately increase the chance of experiencing one or two Epics per season, provided life is not threatened too severely or frequently. We should avoid having too many Epics, otherwise our friends would suspect failing faculties, a mid-life crisis, or merely the inevitable revealing of plain incompetence that we had managed to hide for many years. In fact, to avoid losing friends and credibility, the Epics should appear to be unavoidable but yet reasonably under control.

It should be pointed out that some highly skilled individuals in the higher echelons of outdoor sports, such as rock climbing gymnastics, extreme ski mountaineering, and marathon paddling, give the appearance of deliberately shunning most high tech gear, avoiding taking any safety precautions, and instead relying on their incredible skills and stamina, and a certain amount of luck. While this extreme approach is fine for some individuals, for ordinary mortals who are not in the best of physical condition and do not have lightning reflexes, a more moderate approach is called for. Some appearance of caution is advisable for the sake of your reputation to prevent critics from being able to say "Well, he was asking for it, he took no precautions".

I have a few suggestions to increase the chances of things going wrong so that a reasonable Epic can be triggered. Equipment that is too reliable and too safe is probably one of the easiest things we can avoid and there are the unexpected side benefits of recycling gear and saving money. There are many pieces of reasonably old equipment abandoned by those who insist on being on the "leading edge of technology". We can always go back to wool, leather and wood, and forsake the high tech materials such as synthetic fibre fabrics and reinforced plastics. Steel should not be overlooked as it has the advantage of being heavy, and therefore more tiring than lighter material. With luck, steel might be weakened by rust and fail at some critical moment. Clearly, moderation and good judgment should be used so as not to be considered too reckless or too frugal. It is hoped that younger members of the outdoor clubs would notice our tendency to use older gear. We could look at this as an educational experience to show them that their expensive modern gear is unnecessary for most trips. It should be added that, by buying old, used, low tech gear for members of the family, one would then have time to go on trips, as opposed to spending all one's time working to pay off huge expenses incurred in buying expensive high tech gear for all members of the family.

Another way to increase our exposure to potential Epics is to stop organizing such efficient, well planned trips to known areas, and instead go on trips with less experienced individuals to unknown areas. On these trips, it is essential that the older mountaineer goes along on the trip as an honoured guest, and not as a closet leader whose experience and advice might reduce the chance of having a good Epic.

The typical family outing can become a wonderful opportunity for potential mild Epics if your children are left to organize a trip, select the route and equipment and make most of the major decisions. Again, the more experienced mountaineer could go along as an honoured guest and keep his mouth shut, at least as regards offering advice to selection of the route and other options.

I have tried to show that high tech gear and increased wilderness knowledge are threatening the wilderness, and also threatening Real Good Epics. Apart from supporting conservation groups and harassing politicians, there seems to be little that we can do to reduce threats to the wilderness, but there is something that the older and wiser mountaineer can do to save real Epics from extinction due to the ravages of high tech gear and experience.

STOP PRESS - AN EPIC REVISITED

Barely a week after completing the preceding article, the author staggered out of the bush with two friends and limped (on skis, no less) down a logging road to the car. For the last few hours, our party of three intrepid adventurers had been struggling through the West Coast bush in the dark and wet driving snow with two barely functioning headlights.

Was this the stuff that Epics are made of? Had we, with great effort, narrowly avoided experiencing an Epic? It was such a long time since we had an Epic, we barely recognized the possibility of having one. Perhaps, with our party at least, Epics were momentarily removed from the "endangered" list to be placed on the "threatened" list. Like all chance encounters or rare events, we should examine what accidentally went right, as opposed to what went wrong.

As this was the first trip of the season, it was meant to be an easy warm-up, but it didn't turn out that way. Preferring comfort to discomfort, we are more used to the longer days of spring trips than the short days of January trips, and we had not allowed for such short days. Perhaps this poor judgement can be blamed on our failing memories (old age?), or we were merely moving slower. Whatever the reason, we left camp just as dusk was falling. Because the way up was so desperately bushy and steep, we tried a different way down, which seemed just as steep and wasted additional time with route finding and many discussions. The going was also slower than expected due to poor snow cover in the valley bottom which had not covered the standing willows, alders, dead falls, boulders and other miscellaneous miseries that got in our way.

So much for environmental considerations - what about equipment? Did equipment problems contribute to our chance encounter with an Epic? One member of the party insisted on

bringing his old style badly worn ski bindings which kept on prematurely releasing. Because the batteries of his flashlight had been flattened by his children, he could not fix his bindings in the dark. Also, his worn out and dirty stick-on skins would not stick on the skis and these required taping on.

As we were floundering around in the soft snow and boulders, growing colder and more tired by the minute, I realized that we had on hand some of the important ingredients of a good Epic, and all that had to be done was to combine them into an inseparable mess and presto, an Epic would be born. But something went wrong and the Epic slipped from our grasp - I accidentally blundered across our ski tracks from the day before: The tracks were almost covered by fresh snow, but even in my puny headlight, they were clearly ski tracks. Nobody with any sense would be in this valley and so they had to be our tracks leading back to the road. What should I do? I was well ahead of the other two to escape from their heavy cursing and swearing as they floundered blindly about in the snow. Should I lead them away from the tracks, to provide a greater opportunity for the Epic to develop more fully? It might be a long time before these particular ingredients would come together again in such miserable surroundings. What a dilemma! The question was: Did I really want an Epic?

I was surprised (and disappointed) about how quickly I came to a decision. In about 1.35 seconds, I called to the other two who stopped cursing and almost hurried forward to check out the tracks and to make sure that I was not hallucinating. And that was that - our elusive Epic was lost almost before it was born. Accidentally finding our old tracks dashed my aspirations of experiencing an Epic. It still took us over an hour to follow the tracks back to the logging road, but we knew by then that we would not be spending a second night out in the bush, this time soaked to the skin and cold.

Looking back, we did the only sensible thing, which was to try hard to avoid the Epic. Perhaps that is why Epics are such a rarity because we are usually successful in avoiding them.

DINOSAURS ARE ALIVE AND WELL AND ROAMING AROUND THE COAST MOUNTAINS OF B.C.

by Pat Crean

Who said that these noble creature are extinct? Propaganda promulgated by telemarkers, no doubt. No doubt also that the fastest growing trend in skiing over the past few years has been the re-discovery of the telemark turn. What many don't realize was that at one time the telemark was the downhill turn and that like button shoes and bobbed hair, it has merely undergone a resurrection of sorts. This in turn has led to the erroneous belief that the dinosaurs had died out. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Many years ago in the local mountains, when anyone who skied at all well invariably sported an olde worlde accent, it was quite common to see some grizzled veteran of Austrian or Swiss army training elegantly telemarking his way down the death-defying slopes of Mount Sey-

mour, whilst we neophytes were grimly snow-plowing down the bunny runs. So a whole new trend blossomed and, as with all trendy fashions, one just had to have the appropriate trappings. Long, old style parkas and anoraks were in, the drabber and the baggier, the better. Toques were out, and only Peruvian 'chollas' were acceptable as head-gear, preferably with earflaps waving loosely in the breeze. Skis and boots had to be quickly adapted from the inadequate Nordic gear to the more stringent demands of the marketplace. Manufacturers responded magnificently to the call at the cash register. Steel edges? Stiffer boots? Double boots? wider skis? Skinny skins? No problem, we can supply them all. Shades of bygone days. Laminated wooden skis, double-lace boots, cable bindings, baggy pants - exactly what I remember so well when I first ventured out on the slopes, both for downhill and for touring.

An interesting genetic question now arises regarding telemarkers. Are we seeing the re-emergence of what was thought to be an extinct species or is it a branch of the pre-existing species that never did die out?

Nonetheless, throughout all the fooforaw about the springing up of a new form of back-country life, the dinosaurs were quietly and systematically evolving. Space-age, high-tech, super light weight metals and plastics were streamlining their traditional Mesozoic equipment. Comfortable, warm, dry footwear, super all-terrain skis, ultra safe bindings, together with the latest fabrics for clothing made the most outrageous ski runs more enjoyable than ever. The uphill climb was also not noticeably more strenuous for these staunch Sauropods. More recently, small groups of Tyrannosaurii rex have been seen gathered at the bottom of double-black diamond gullies, amusing themselves by watching the antics of sundry Telemarkus vulgaris, the self-styled new elite of the Pleistocene ice-cap, as they re-live the terrors of learning to ski.

However, in the benevolent way that Nature has of co-mingling its species, herds of Telemarkii are now often seen together with herds of mature Tyrannosaurs. Although snide comments and snorts are frequently exchanged, it would appear that multi-culturalism will prevail eventually. Anthropologists have yet to agree on whether Tyrannosaurs should inter-breed with Telemarkus vulgaris. Only the passage of a few million years will tell whether this is feasible.

So where does the process of evolution stand at this time? It would appear from the facts available that Telemarkus was a sub-species whose advancement was arrested for some as yet unknown reason. Many theories have been discussed, including that which says that their brain may have been too near to their toes, which were invariably cold; an inability to cope with evolutionary demands (i.e. fibre-glass, carbon fibre, kevlar, plastic boots), resulting in a mental block and a subsequent reversion to a pre-existing level. Some theorists believe that it may have been too strict an indoctrination of 'bend ze knee' from early downhill ski instruction, which manifested itself later and became a compulsion.

There certainly seems to be little argument against the conclusion of arrested advancement, since all the equipment in vogue for adult telemarking is what space-age Tyrannosaurus was using over 20 years ago. One can conclude, therefore, that Telemarkus for some reason

underwent a regression of one generation. It remains to be seen if they can ever catch up.

To all of you Tele-Vulgs out there, keep on trying and don't take offence. Some of my best friends are Teleplunkers, but I don't know if I'd want my daughter to marry one.

(After a stormy day in the tent with Belinda Grogworthy)

These opinions do not necessarily reflect those of any ski-tourers alive or pretending to be, or of the executive past present or future of the B.C.M.C., or of any other self-respecting or right-minded individual, couple, junior, senior, honorary or subscribing member.

TRIPS OVERSEAS

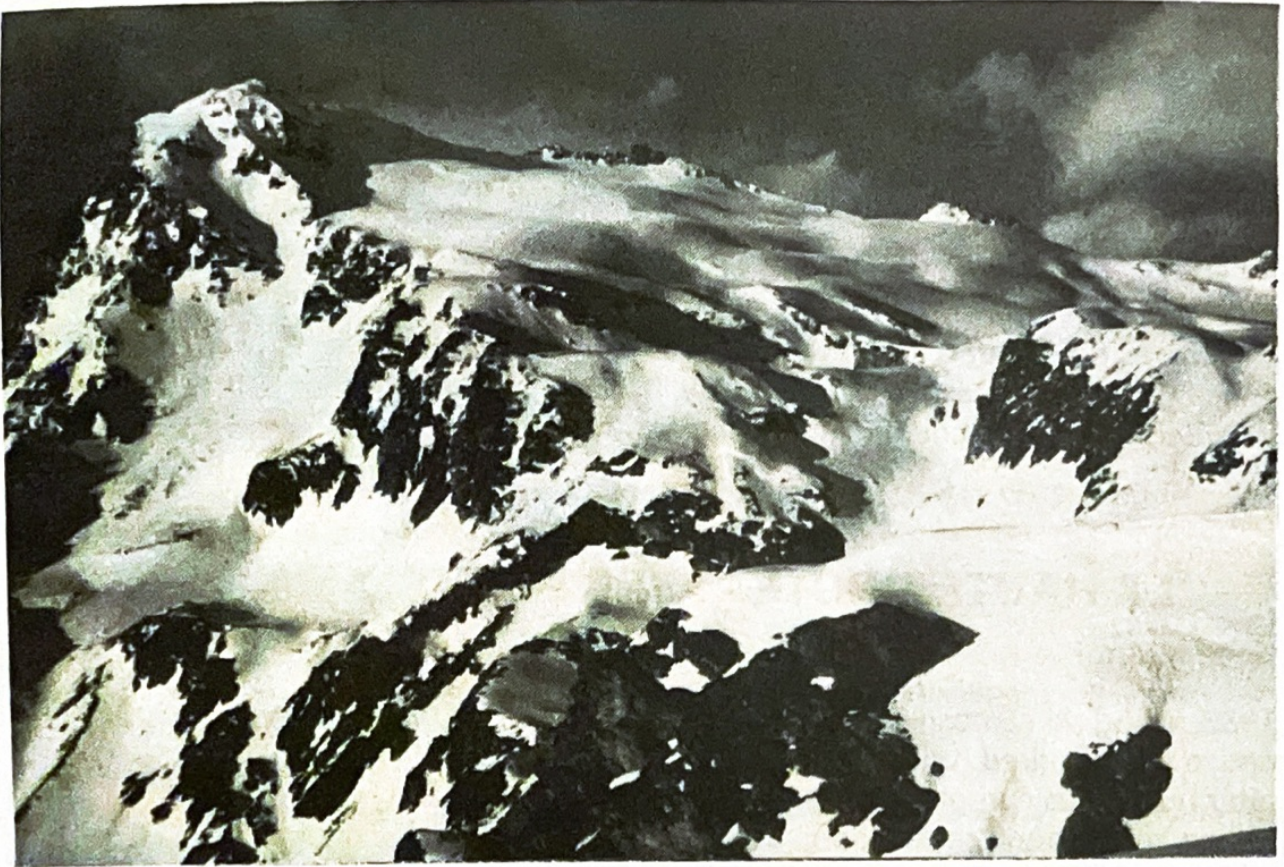
LA HAUTE ROUTE - AVEC POINTS, April 1988 -

by Michael Feller

The 1988 spring ski camps were again scheduled when I had work commitments so an alternative was required. With encouragement from our Bavarian correspondent in Geneve and after numerous computer messages flashing backwards and forwards between Geneve and Vancouver, I found myself donning skis near the small village of Bourg - St. Pierre, near the St. Bernard pass in Switzerland. Peter had plotted out a route which would avoid the crowds and get us a respectable number of peaks and points over a few days in the Valais area of southern Switzerland.

At 1600m, the snow was disappearing fast, so we alternately walked or skied until, around 1800m, we entered the realm of continuous snow. A few hours later, under overcast skies and light snow, we reached the Cabane du Velan, our destination for the night. Present were a party of American toothpickers, an Austrian trio, a very unfriendly and surly hut warden, and ourselves. Both the Americans and Austrians had got lost in the clouds while on the famous haute route and had ended up at the hut by mistake. We alone appeared to be where we planned. After paying the equivalent of \$50 CDN for dinner (lousy), accommodation, breakfast (little food), and hot water, we settled in for the night. One might not have to carry tent, sleeping bag, or much food in the Swiss Alps, but one certainly pays for it out of one's pocket. Thereafter, we made our own breakfasts and were also not charged for water by other hut wardens, so our costs declined to \$35 per night, except for all the beer and wine which Peter and friends enjoyed consuming.

Next day, the warden got us up at 6:30 a.m. and, by 8 a.m., we were en route up a glacier towards our first peak - Mont Velan. At the head of this glacier, we had to carry skis and climb up to a rocky col. By this time, we were with the Austrians, whose language was music to our Bavarian's ears, after a year or so of French. On the other side of the col, we put in a fixed line, tying ourselves on with prusiks, and descended steeply to another glacier. This was typical of subsequent skiing - generally technically more demanding, climbing-wise, than skiing in coastal B.C. Ice axes, crampons, harscheisen, ropes, etc. were all frequently used on what was ostensibly a ski trip.



The Regondi hut beneath Mt. Gelé - photo by M. Feller.



Peter on the slopes of Mt. Gelé

On the glacier, skis were put on again and we weaved our way upwards between ice falls to a relatively straightforward summit of 3730m. In the Austrian party was 64 years old Hans who, regrettably, beat your reporter to the summit. The only consolation was that this meant hope for the future. The Austrians were exuberant, bergheiling everyone and taking numerous photos, particularly of Mont Blanc, which dominated the views to the west.

The ski down was in slightly crusty snow until around 3200m when the Austrians headed back to the fixed rope in order to return to the hut and get back onto the haute route. Peter and I stopped for lunch then headed up to the ridge on the other side of the glacier. There skis went onto our packs and, using ice axes, we cautiously descended 100m over slippery snow-covered rocks to the Col de Valsorey, along the Swiss-Italian border. From there a steep ski down the soggy southern slopes took us into a beautiful Italian valley. This ski was not without its moments as we set off several huge wet snow avalanches.

Larches, grassy meadows and rustic summer farm cottages dotted the landscape, along with the occasional marmot. Apart from the marmots, the only other animals we saw for the entire trip were two chamois (probably) the next day. Wildlife was scarce - even few tracks were seen. Leaving the green and brown delights, we headed back up into the world of black and white to reach, just before the sun went down, a tiny hut perched at the top of a 200m cliff - the Bivouac Regondi - which we had to ourselves, although several ski tracks indicated it had been used recently.

Next morning, it was well and truly harscheisen time as we skied up the frozen slopes to a long glacier which had us up to our second summit - Mont Gele, at 3520m. From this vantage point, Mont Blanc had begun to recede and the Matterhorn appeared near the horizon. We had several alternative routes, but decided to head for the Cabane de Chanrion in Switzerland to the north.

A joyful ski over firm snow had us at a col contemplating the steep northeastern slopes of the peak. With much enthusiasm, Peter launched himself on a series of rapid parallels while I cautiously did some long traverses until the flatter glacier below was reached. Many exquisite turns later, we reached a valley beneath the hut. This was to be our last skiing in almost untracked snow as we were now on the haute route, as the 30 people in the hut and the numerous tracks in the snow indicated.

Late that evening, the 3 Austrians arrived and, after much wine and discussion, Peter was convinced we should continue along the haute route with them. As most people travel the haute route at a similar pace, one's skiing companions remain the same for several days. Thus, for the next few days, we would see the same faces, except for the weekend crowd the following (Saturday) night.

The barbaric hole-in-the-floor-and-toilet-paper-in-the-plastic-bag toilet, and the relatively late (6:30 a.m.) awakening indicated that we were still in the French part of Switzerland. It was harscheisen time again as we set off up glaciers, winding through icefalls, climbing up an ice

cliff, up and up to the 3800m Pigne d'Arolla. This was our first peak on the haute route. Not only was it crawling with people, but it also had moguls. In fact, all the downhill sections of the haute route had moguls after the preceding week or two of generally sunny weather. Can you imagine moguls on Garibaldi? Such are the numbers of people ski mountaineering in Switzerland. The Matterhorn to the east loomed closer.

From the peak, a steep descent took us rapidly to the Cabane des Vignettes, the most spectacular of the huts we were to stay in, and also the highest at 3160m. This was a large stone hut constructed on the side of a small rocky ridge and perched 150m vertically above a steeply dropping glacier. At the hut, the afternoon's entertainment was provided by someone dropping one of his skis down this glacier and one of our Austrian trio skiing down to retrieve it. That evening, Saturday, the hut filled up with 50+ weekend trippers. Ski mountaineering appears to be relatively popular in Switzerland, almost a yuppie activity, if such things exist there, judging by the number, and type of people involved. Virtually everyone wore waist harnesses all the time except our Austrian - Bavarian - Canadian - Australian party, and everyone had all the necessary ski mountaineering gear, except for five scruffy toothpickers, all English speaking.

The Germanic influence began to be felt at this hut as we were wakened earlier, at 6 a.m., and the mountain names a couple of ridges to the east changed from French to German. From the hut, a few km saw us at the col and the head of a glacier. From here we had a short 400m ski down another glacier, before climbing back up to another col - the Col du Mont Brule. The last 50m of this was steep and done on foot with ice axes. Another short (100m) ski descent had us on a glacier in Italy with the intriguing name - Haute Glacier de Tsa de Tsa. After lunch, we climbed up to its very head then up a peak to its south - the Tete de Valpelline - at 3800m.

This peak is on a ridge which, heading 2 km east, rises up to the Dent d'Herens and, a further 4 km east, to the Matterhorn. These two peaks, particularly the spectacular icy northern slopes of the Dent d'Herens, totally dominated the views from the Tete de Valpelline. For the first time on the trip, clouds had covered some of the peaks, obscuring the summit of the Matterhorn, but the clouds could not take away from the subsequent ski run which must rate as close to the ultimate run for a mountain climber. From the summit, we skied north down the heavily crevassed Stockjigletscher until, around 3100m, we swung south down to the Tiefmattengletscher, skiing right beneath the spectacular north face of the Dent D'Herens.

The snow was firm and the skiing almost effortless. The route then turned east and headed for the west face of the Matterhorn. We were then beneath the most sacred of all the world's mountains. The climbers shrine, her summit veiled in cloud, sent out a spell, demanding awe. This was a place for worship. The spell continued as we skied around the west face and beneath the north face. A line of ice cliffs above and ice rubble on the slopes beneath our skis indicated that she could, if she wanted, hurl ice at us, but I believed she would not do this to a worshipper. In fact, she waited until we were well away from the face before unleashing a huge chunk of ice which crashed towards a guided party heading up the valley.



Peter on the Gornergletscher, with the Liskamm above - photo by M. Feller



The Matterhorn, with the N face on the right - photo by M. Feller.

A km beyond the face we came to our first trees for several days. Firstly larches, then pines, then bottomless sugar snow for a while until we got onto a ski trail heading down to the bar/restaurant at Furi, a small place above Zermatt. Here skis came off, Peter and the Austrians began some serious drinking as I had an ice cream. Several drinks later, we were in the gondola headed down to Zermatt and its famous (to mountaineers) Hotel Bahnhof, with its upper dormitory costing mountaineers no more than an alpine club hut in the mountains - cheap accommodation in an expensive, but charming, tourist trap.

A wash, sleep, restocking with provisions, then we were off by cog railway to Rotenboden, part of the downhill ski complex above Zermatt. Under brilliant skies, the view of the Matterhorn was simply stunning. It was in picture postcard condition but because of our distance from it (8 km), it did not cast its spell of the previous day. From Rotenboden (2800m), we descended 300m to the Gornergletscher. This descent was down steep icy slopes, and those of us walking with ice axes actually travelled faster than the skiers. The glacier was crossed to another, the Grenzletscher, which descended to meet it. Two km up this glacier, at an elevation of 2800m on a rocky ridge, was our destination for the night - the Monte Rosahutte.

At the hut were about 30-40 people sitting around outdoor tables eating and drinking their lunches ordered from the hut warden and staff. These people were heliskiers who had been taken to the upper slopes of Switzerland's highest peak - Monte Rosa - by two helicopters



Skiing down from Monte Rosa - photo by M. Feller.

operating non stop all morning. For the entire morning, there had been only one 5 minute period when a helicopter could not be heard. The Swiss certainly know how to pack the maximum number of people into their mountains. Heliskiing is a blight not only in B.C.

After a modest lunch, we left the hut at 1 p.m., with instructions to be back by 8 p.m. if we wanted dinner. Our destination was the Signalkuppe, one of the several peaks of Monte Rosa. We all went at our own pace with old Hans finally dropping behind me. The route weaved through the crevasses of the Grenzletscher beneath the extremely impressive ice cliffs on the northeast face of the Liskamm, reminiscent of the Mt. Cook area of New Zealand. The heat affected me as I slowly dropped behind Peter and the two younger Austrians. I reached the summit half an hour after them, the last 20 m being over hard green ice and requiring an ice axe, but no crampons due to the steps left by numerous others. A large locked black hut occupied the entire summit, the highest point being on its verandah or roof, depending on one's preference. This area was one of the most spectacular on the haute route but by far the most desecrated. We left the 4550m summit at 7 p.m. and headed rapidly down into some storm clouds that were producing spectacular lighting effects. Through snow and dense cloud, we returned to the hut at 5 minutes to 8, for a superb meal of bangers, smoked pork, and sauerkraut. An exhausting but rewarding day.

Now under strong Germanic influences, our hut warden wakened his charges at 4:30 a.m., but our group stubbornly slept on. Finally, at 6, we greeted yet another sunny dawn, had our standard spartan European breakfast, then harscheisened up the Monte Rosagletscher heading east. After crossing this glacier, we had to ascend a 30m rock ridge. When the rock got to class 4, metal hand holds and foot holds appeared, bolted to the rock. This was definitely not B.C.!

Above the ridge, we got to the upper basin of the Gornergletscher, up which we skied to its head, beneath the northern and northeastern faces of Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn receding all the time. Heading now in a northeasterly direction, we skied up and down 5 or 6 glaciers for 8 hours or more (I lost track of time), past many beautiful ski peaks. The whole trip had been in heavily glaciated areas, but unlike coastal B.C., there were no flat ice caps. Here the glaciers either went up or down.

Peter was anxious to get some points, but ominous clouds caused us to push steadily on, ignoring the peaks. Finally on the Allalingsletscher, some 14 km from the Monte Rosahutte, the clouds caught up to us. It began to snow and visibility dropped to 50m. After another 4 km, the snow was getting heavy and we continued past the Britannia Hutte, which had been our planned destination. A kilometre from this hut, we came to the top of the lifts above the Saas Fee downhill ski area. Another 6 km and 1300m lower, we found ourselves below the snow and in the rain of Saas Fee - the official end of the haute route and of our trip - although it required a bus, train, and car ride to get us back to Geneve.

TRIPS IN AND AROUND B.C. ACROSS GARIBALDI PARK, 1-9 August, 1987 -

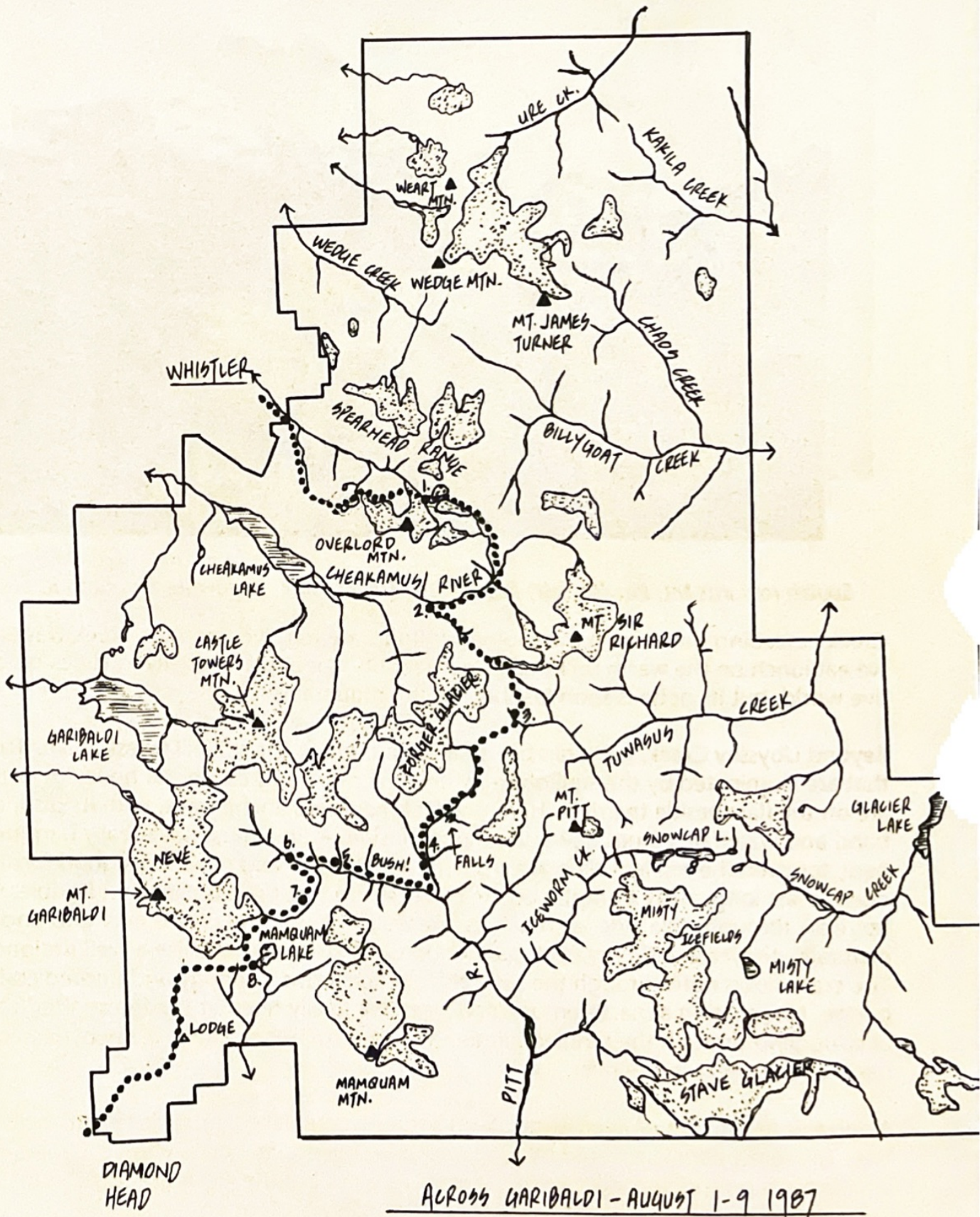
by Randy Stoltmann

There is little give in the hard snow beneath my boots, as yet unsoftened by the morning sun. Traversing carefully, I aim for the line of sunlight creeping steadily across the surface of Macbeth Glacier. Once in the sun, the snow is already soft enough to kick steps in, and the ascent to the divide goes quickly. Greg and I gaze eastward from the crest into the untrodden wilderness beyond the Spearhead Range. There are absolutely no signs of human presence; no logging cuts or roads, no huts, no trails, no aircraft. In the next week, this is the world in which we will live - the land as it has been for hundreds of generations. Not always easy or entirely pleasant, but always rewarding. We lift our packs and start off down Iago Glacier.

Our trek had begun the previous day, as we hiked to Singing Pass with two friends, then traversed below Overlord Glacier and across the boulder strewn Fitzsimmons Glacier. Beside Overlord Glacier, we watched eleven mountain goats, some of them kids, scale the north face of Fissile Peak with astounding ease while we stumbled down the loose moraine. That night, the four of us camped by a small pool on the rim of the steep moraine separating Macbeth and Fitzsimmons glaciers. The evening was calm; rosy light descended on the peaks and the valley below lost its colours to even shades of blue. Rolls of cloud, painted by the declining sun, hung above Decker and Trorey. When our friends returned to Singing Pass the following morning, the two of us turned east into the wilderness.

The descent of Iago Glacier is a quick glissade down the soft snow at the edge, and we are soon hiking along the shore of the milky green lake recently uncovered by the retreating ice. A creek flows from the lake down rocky moraine slopes to join Diavolo Creek on a willow covered flat. Here, Indian paintbrush shows red throughout the valley, and I crouch low to photograph it framing the tortured ice of Diavolo Glacier. The creek makes a sweeping bend to the south and enters a small canyon. Studying the airphotos, I decide to climb a small treed ridge and pick up a series of meadows on the other side, thus avoiding the canyon. Scattered clumps of mountain hemlock and subalpine fir soon open up to a small willow-lined creek and a beautiful meadow basin. The photo shows a string of these little meadows leading towards the Cheakamus River, so we follow our 'heather highway' from opening to opening. Deer tracks form distinct trails in the wet ground, but the animals remain elusive. Then the forest begins to thicken, and the roar of the Cheakamus River becomes more pronounced. Descending through steep but fairly open forest, we quickly lose elevation and are soon on the forested flats bordering the river. Downstream on the boulders, a thin log spans the water, here really only a creek. The quick crossing puts us right into the slide alder and devil's club on the opposite bank. I can already hear Greg cursing. The heavy trees beyond shade out the brush and save us for now, and for an hour, we traverse steep sidehill forests while the river below descends into a canyon. Diavolo Creek becomes visible, also lined by rock walls. Near a patch of pleasant open forest, I can hear the rushing of Ubysey

figure 1





South towards Mt. Pitt (to left) from North Tuwasus Ck. headwaters - photo R. Stoltmann.

Creek cascading down from the southeast. Boots are removed and the creek waded. Then we eat lunch on the warm rocks while our feet dry. An airplane briefly intrudes on our primitive world, but its noise is soon lost behind the mountains.

Beyond Ubysey Creek, we scramble up a steep bank to the sidehill forest again. The insects that are illuminated by the sunlight now become more aggressive. An hour downstream, we are on the flats beside the river. Here, the first major avalanche track, with its distinctive cliff band and waterfall, comes down the mountainside. A slide must have really hammered down here, for even the resilient slide alder is flattened, broken and dead. This good fortune doesn't last long; away from the centre of the swath, the bush is alive and flexible. One does not walk through slide alder as much as one walks, climbs and crawls over and under it. Naturally, the ice axe on my pack catches on every stem and acts like a well designed anchor. The creek flows right through the slide alder which forms a springy and unpredictable bridge. Negotiating a marsh on downed trees, we finally re-enter the forest after a half hour of struggling through the tangled jungle. A second smaller swath is neatly bypassed by a band of trees next to the river.

Along this flat stretch of river, Engelmann spruce has replaced amabilis fir as the dominant tree. The forest floor is covered by sand and gravel deposits; possibly the ice buildup causes flooding during spring runoff. With the trees rising out of the clean gravel, it is the perfect campsite, but it is still too early to stop. The flat valley bottom now ends and the river enters another canyon. Though the sidehills above are sometimes steep, the forest is for the most



View west across upper Pitt River towards Mamquam Mtn. - photo by R. Stoltmann.



*200 m high falls, Pitt river tributary -
photo by R. Stoltmann.*

part very open. Animal trails are distinct, but not usually continuous enough to be followed for long. As is typical, animals tend to go over and under rather than around obstacles and bush belts. Once around a prominent ridge, we cross another large slide path thick with devil's club and slide alder. Again we are lucky to find a strip of coniferous forest along the edge of the deep canyon. The river boils far below, and its heavy booming echoes up off the rock walls. From here to the flats at the mouth of 'Forger Creek', the forest is beautiful, large old hemlocks rising out of thick moss. After an hour, we break through the bush belt at the forest edge onto the open gravel bars along the Cheakamus, bathed in low-angle afternoon sunlight. The river sparkles, the air is warm, and the craggy Douglas-firs on the opposite bank are for me classic signatures of the wilderness. Greg pitches the tent among bear tracks in the sand while I rig a food cache on an old leaning snag. We cook dinner over the stove, then build a small fire in a deep pit in the sand to prolong the evening, given the luxury of plentiful firewood. The muffled roar of the river and the wide, clear sky above is soothing. And there is the feeling of intense satisfaction that comes with the anticipation of many wilderness days and nights ahead.

In the morning, we pack up and eliminate the fire pit and all signs of our camp. Sometimes, more as a joke than anything else, I make imitation deer tracks in the sand with two forefingers. It seems only natural to leave a special place just as you found it; passing gently over the land and leaving behind only footprints - just another animal track.

We now leave the Cheakamus and start up 'Forger Creek', soon encountering thick belts of young trees in an old avalanche or moraine area. The airphoto shows possible weaknesses in the barrier, but we are eventually forced up the mountainside to avoid the bush. Traversing slide alder thickets and fir groves, we work our way up to the crest of an old moraine. The entire slope of the moraine down to the creek is covered in dense slide alder, so we make our way up through the open forest behind until cliffs block the way. Then it is straight down the moraine through the alder, half bum-sliding, to the open boulders along the creek. The rocky valley is easy walking. Now we start climbing up a high moraine into the upper valley, then ascend past the small glacier at its head to the divide separating the Cheakamus watershed from that of Tuwasus Creek. From here, near the geographic centre of Garibaldi Park, we look south to the wild country surrounding the upper Pitt River. Remote Mount Pitt stands in the centre of our view, to the left of an unnamed double summit. The forested cleft of Tuwasus Creek, streaked with alder choked avalanche swaths, turns left and is lost from view as it heads east towards the Lillooet River. Dropping to a notch in the divide, we traverse southwest across a snowfield to the meadowed crest of a ridge overlooking a hanging valley. There is the unending roar of water, as seems to characterize this country, from the many streams cascading down from the hanging icefields. Greg finds a meltwater trickle, and we settle down and eat while taking in the panorama of mountains and valleys that few people have seen. It is strange that such a rarely visited area lies so close to Vancouver. But in this unknown aspect lies the real beauty of this region; even the easy access of trails would diminish the sense of remoteness which exists here. And humans have never been very successful at reversing the effects of their developments, given instead to expanding and improving until the original quality is sharply diminished. I hope that this land will always

remain totally wild for the inspiration of those who take the time and effort to know it personally.

Only a few wispy clouds are scudding over Mount Pitt. Below is a cliff band covered with a dense mat of stunted subalpine fir and yellow cedar, and there is no apparent route through it. Kicking my boots into marmot and pika burrows for footholds, I work my way across the slope above the cliffs until I find a gully leading down to the meadow below. I grab a handful of yellow cedar branches and lower myself down the gully. Greg appears above and follows my route down. We quickly walk down to a meadowed bench still some distance above the valley floor. Below is another steep pitch, so we push through a hemlock thicket out to the highly tilted meadow. My cautious walking becomes looser and more rapid as I get lower. At the bottom, the cold creek offers a welcome drink. Our intended lake campsite still seems some distance away, so we start off down the creek bank, soon entering dense tangles of yellow cedar and hemlock. The creek plunges noisily over huge rocks, then suddenly leaps over a cliff, twisting some fifty metres into an alder-choked gully. I can see no way down on this side, so we cross. We then crash through the bush to the edge of the cliff. Below is a sea of slide alder, and beyond in a little heather meadow, our lake. I slither down under some roots and alder trees and make my way to the right where the cliff is lower. Here it would be easier to climb down to the alder belt, but my legs are becoming so scratched from the abrasive bush, and it's nearly eight o'clock. When I find Greg again, we readily agree to hike back up to the meadow and set up camp. Careful study of the airphotos should get us through this mess tomorrow when the light is better. Eating in the darkness, defeated by the bush and cliffs, my impression is of a dismal little valley. The creek roars on into the night as I lie in my bag and think about our progress.

This morning, August 4, it is partly cloudy, but the sun pokes through down Tuwasus Creek, then creeps up to our camp. Breaking camp quickly, we start up a rock slide to where a series of talus fingers begins. I noticed them on the airphotos this morning. We start down the boulders, tracing the route on the photo, and emerge just below the gap that is our route west towards the Pitt River. We scramble up the talus to the gap which Greg has named 'Valley of the Lost'. There is something fitting about this, for the bleak pass evokes a powerful feeling of remoteness. Tuwasus Creek Valley to the east is now hidden. To the north and south are high walls of greyish rock, and fog shrouded peaks above. To the west, the valley curves below hanging glaciers and disappears into an unnamed canyon. In all directions, it is several days travel through difficult mountain country to the nearest road or convenience. I have often looked into wilderness from the fringes, but here, I am in the middle of it and it feels different. This is something precious, but very fragile, easily broken by human technology such as aircraft.

A snowfield fills the pass, on the edge of which lies a deep green pool bordered by the steep rock walls. We walk across the snow towards the meadows beyond, rounding a damp sedge flat and climbing around a heather ridge. A pretty little stream courses through the meadows and is joined by another stream from the north branch of the valley. Together they flow off towards the Pitt River to the southwest. A half hour through rolling meadow country brings us to a willow thicket and a series of talus slopes. We keep to the talus away from the bush,

following the farthest corner of the last exposed slide to within a few metres of the creek. The creek is quite large here, but it flows over a broad slab of granite and looks easy to ford. We crash down to the water's edge and replace boots with running shoes. The water is cold and knee deep, but with the axe for balance, the crossing isn't difficult.

The sun is out as we enter the bush again, heading as straight as possible towards a strip of heavy forest. Climbing through head high salmonberry, we scramble up to the trees. This little stretch of easy walking doesn't last long; a huge slide alder swath is just ahead. I duck low and begin to negotiate the maze of flattened trunks. Over, under, over. More cursing and crazed enthusiasm. A major creek storms down a rocky gully, so I head up to find a good crossing. Off with the boots again, and into the water with axe in hand. The slick boulders are invisible under the milky glacial water, and I'm thinking about the waterfall below. The steep, hard pack rubble on the bank is not much better, and our return to the slide alder is no reward except that whatever we walk through ends up behind us. Some distance down the opposite valley side, I can see a high waterfall foaming white down the cliffs. Another steep thicket which leads to a huge rock slide. It appears as though the entire mountainside just peeled away in one great slab and crumbled onto the flats below. Some of the boulders are the size of small houses. This is easy walking, though, and we are soon in the heavy forest beyond. Finally a decent stretch after all the thrashing. The forest is mostly hemlock and amabilis fir, but there is the occasional bigger yellow cedar. Across the valley, the white plume sprays down a two hundred metre high slab of silver granite. I stop briefly to photograph it from an opening in the forest, then continue. We want to reach the Pitt by tonight.

Although the map names the smaller northern tributary as the Pitt River, I consider the main stem of the river to be the one which flows from the Garibaldi Neve to the west. The northern tributary is what I call the North Fork. The creek we are following joins the North Fork a few kilometres downstream, and we will have to cross one of the two to continue. I'm starting to wonder whether that is possible. The going is better now, and we are moving quickly through the open forest with its big yellow cedars. One is at least two metres thick.

What looked like more slide alder on the photos turns out to be man-high bracken which parts easily. The creek has flattened out, and we stop for a drink opposite an island. It still looks fordable. Another canyon begins here, so we climb up through the forest towards the ridge crest. Bluffy terrain slows our progress, but we soon begin to descend a series of gullies to a bench above the confluence of the two creeks.

The North Fork is a big, booming stream. Flowing deep and rapidly among large rocks, it looks like trouble. I ponder the creek from within the forest while Greg searches for a sturdy pole. For the first time, I seal my camera gear inside zip lock bags. There is an island here, so this is probably the best crossing. The first channel is thigh deep but not very fast, so the island is reached easily. At the top end of the island, the main channel flows through narrow gaps between rocks, but it is very deep. Too deep to wade. We wander down the island looking for a better spot, but there is none. So I pick up a log and drag it up to the gap. Greg brings another one and we throw them across to form an unstable bridge. With the long pole upstream, I inch my way across, then step into the metre deep water and struggle to

the sand bar on the other side. Greg is more tentative and slips, straddling the logs. I jump out to grab his arm and we are both soon safely on the west bank. Picking up the packs, we walk up the bank in our runners and sit down in a dense grove of trees for a rest and some food. It is getting dim and we may not be able to make the Pitt tonight.

With food in hand, I watch the lumbering cinnamon coloured bear casually saunter down a tree that leans out over the water. He turns his big rounded head and casts a glance towards us, then ambles off the other way. I did not get a good enough look to be sure, but the colour and form suggests possibly a small grizzly. I wonder if that bear has ever seen a human before, or what he thought of our river crossing spectacle. The light is already starting to fade, so we set off into the bush behind the little grove, shouting and whistling to warn our friend. The alder gives way to an open talus of huge rocks. The river runs white and fast below, filling the narrow valley with its thunder. There is a single rock here that is clearly visible on the aerial photos, perhaps forty metres long and a third as wide and high. The lower end rests on another house sized rock which overhangs the forest edge. Now the bush closes in on the talus, and we are thrashing again. With this slow travel, it is obvious that we cannot make the Pitt tonight, so we drop into the riverside forest and set up camp on a mossy flat, just at the start of the next canyon.

Morning brings us a challenge; how to bypass the canyon ahead. Near the water, vertical rock walls quickly close in, and above are five hundred metres of steep bluffs. I backtrack a short distance and push up a small clearing filled with devil's club to where I can see the soil has been disturbed. Deep rounded tracks of long established use mark an animal trail which leads up a ledge in the bluffs. We follow it up around the ridge to where it fades out among the rocks. The animals have shown us the way out of the canyon, and apparently someone else as well. A red survey tape hangs from a branch. I pull it off and stuff it into the pocket of my wool pants; it is an unnecessary sign of human presence in this totally primitive country. It is also the first sign of humans we have seen since some discarded tampons near Diavolo Creek. As we walk out onto the open bluffs, there is a view of the Pitt River valley - all wilderness, unmarred by the roads and clearcuts that spoil virtually all the low elevation Coast Range valleys. The comforting thought that this valley has been spared for its natural values relaxes me.

We are making fast progress down the huge staircase of bluffs that leads to the flats bordering the Pitt. The big cedars appear again, then hemlock, fir, and cottonwood beside the river. We push through the damp, fragrant bush past a slough to the river's edge. The cold silt laden water flows fast and deep among rocks and gravel bars. Even if the first channel was fordable, I am certain the main one will be too deep and powerful to cross. Nor could we cross the North Fork where it joins downstream. We had considered following the Pitt downstream to the park boundary, then traversing around the south side of Mamquam Mountain to Mamquam Lake. I can see now that even if we could cross the river, we would be hard pressed to make it through in our five remaining days, especially with all the uncertainties. There is always the pressure to keep moving when unknown country lies ahead. A whole day could easily be squandered in the face of an unfordable river. I say we follow the Pitt upstream to the Bishop Glacier tributary. Greg agrees, for there is really no alternative. I have

dreaded this possibility, for the airphotos show heavy forest for only about two kilometres, then mostly avalanche swaths and narrow forest strips all the way to the headwaters. This will be fun!

We start up the sand and gravel bars, passing through a pleasant stand of young trees. Now we penetrate the big cedar forest again, hiking slowly over the uneven ground hampered by low hanging vine maples. The incredible crop of huge blueberries is fair compensation.

Several hours have passed when we reach a narrow but very bushy slide path. Beyond, we pick up an animal trail and follow it down a steep bank to a pair of creeks. Here on the banks of the Pitt, we sit on the warm rocks and eat, pondering the continuous slide alder hell on the opposite bank. Reasonably easy forest continues on our side for another hour, then we start uphill to avoid a slide alder patch. The steep sidehill and thick undergrowth make walking miserable, but it is still better than going through the alder. We cross the next narrow swath, complete with creek gully, then a second a few minutes later. Here we find a remarkably open patch of forest bordering 'the big swath' - the largest avalanche chute which we must cross. We decide to stick close to the river, in case the bank is walkable. It isn't, so we get a quick introduction to man-high salmonberry and bracken ferns with hidden boulders underneath - and holes between them. The open creek at the midway point gives us a break, and the bush is now less bad. We hit the bank again, then climb up a steep eroding escarpment into the forest. It is open, easy walking on a faint animal trail through aesthetic forest. The good going soon ends, though, and again we drop down the escarpment into the bush thickets. This one is a real pack snagger, all slide alder and devil's club, but we are able to bypass most of it by walking on the riverbank. Clouds have been building again, and to the west, upstream, they are dark and forbidding. A few heavy drops begin to fall sparsely as we enter the next forest patch. There doesn't appear to be any decent campsite here near water; the river is down a steep bank. Plodding on through the gloomy forest, the light of the next swath begins to show through, but now the rain increases. We drop down the slope to a little fir grove next to the river flats. In this secluded nook between the trees and a large rock, we set up a cozy camp and cook dinner by the tent door. What a place for a rainstorm, right in the middle of the worst bushwhacking of the trip! It is raining hard now; the big drops are driven through the heavy forest canopy, drumming hard on the tent tarp, merging with the river noise. The knowledge that ten hours of the most severe bushwhacking is behind us does little to raise my spirits, for many hours of the same still lie ahead.

The roar is still here early in the morning, but I cannot distinguish rain from river in my semi-awake state. It seems dark above. Greg and I lie in our bags debating the sound in muffled grunts. I finally manage to poke my head out the tent door, and looking up can see the blue dome of the sky above. The sun on the upper slopes will not reach us for some time as the valley walls are steep. I am not so energetic this morning; the constant drinking of silty glacial water over the last two days has upset my stomach. Perhaps a sand bar has developed there! Starting out again, we are immediately in wet bush down by the river, plodding slowly across the swath and into a messy forest with much bush and windfall. The forest seems to go on for too long. Even now, close to the Bishop Glacier tributary there is little hope for fording



Slide alder hell, upper Pitt river valley. photo by R. Stoltmann

the river. Climbing up again, we hack through the scrappy trees to the edge of a rocky gully containing a turbulent glacial tributary stream. Picking carefully down the gully wall using roots and branches for handholds, I note the potential for a slip to send me over a substantial drop into the Pitt River. Across the creek, we push through bad alder thickets and marshy ground for half an hour, coming out on the banks of the Pitt opposite the Bishop Glacier tributary. I study the water, trying to gauge the depth. Several times, I try wading out, but find the current too strong and the water well over a metre deep. We look for logs without much luck, then decide to try further upstream. But the salmonberry covered rock slides are intolerable, progress being very slow and annoyingly clumsy. The river doesn't change much, and the bush...I'm going to cross here, where the river divides into three channels, no matter how deep or fast it is! This bush must end now, and the only way to end it is to ford the river. We find sturdy alder poles and change into running shoes. The first channel is easy and shallow. Now the second channel requires some study to find a good crossing. The water is thigh deep and strong, forcing me to lean heavily on the pole. Nearly knocked off balance by the current, I thrust forward to rocks. This appears to have been the worst, so I start across the equally deep final channel. But my last step drops me into unexpectedly deep water. All my weight and strength goes into holding my position against the current, my hands grasping the pole well under water. Even under the weight of my pack, my feet begin to float. At my limit, my foot slips and I lunge for the overhanging alders and yank myself out of the water. Having seen my difficulties, Greg starts across warily, but even the second channel is too much for his shorter build. We shout ideas over the roar, then hike downstream on opposite banks to the gravel bar near the Bishop tributary. A half hour of chopping with my

ice axe gets me through a downed tree which I haul to the waters edge. I tie it to the bear rope, and Greg pulls it across the main channel from the opposite bank in an attempt to make a footlog. It is no good, though, and he decides to hike upstream in the morning. I rig a shelter with my rain cape and some downed branches, and we spend the night on opposite sides of the river.

Greg started upstream early this morning; I am in no hurry to get up. I decide to carry my pack up the mountain to where the talus is more easily accessible and leave it there while I hike upstream to meet Greg. Somehow we miss each other, and when I return to my campsite, I find Greg already there. He had bushwacked some two hours upstream to where the river forks and avalanche snow bridges one channel. We eat a little and then start the long, slow climb out of the Pitt River valley. I detour to get my pack, then we continue slowly up through forest, meadows and bluffy country to a high bench overlooking the Bishop Glacier moraine with its creek. Here, among sedge meadows and tiny streams, we find relative silence after long days near the river. We pitch the tent by a clear pool, and cook a large pot of pasta. Tomorrow we will reach the trails again.

The beautiful morning is marred only by the aggressive mosquitoes, but the breeze sweeping down the valley blows them away once we start walking. We drop through little meadow gullies to the long boulder slopes leading down to the creek. Now it is just a straightforward walk up the moraine to the snout of Bishop Glacier. Rounding the corner, the ice-draped bulk of Mount Garibaldi becomes visible at the head of the glacier, a familiar landmark that tells me our trek is nearly over. We begin the final grind up the steep valley side to the bluffs overlooking the meadows west of Mamquam Lake. Drinking the clear water of a meltwater pool, I gaze out at the face of Mount Garibaldi across the clean white neve. After a lengthy rest in the long shadows of afternoon, we wander down through the flowering meadows to Mamquam Lake and set up camp.

There are other hikers here; columns of campfire smoke rise from the meadow patches near the shore. The people we pass say nothing, eyeing our swarthy faces, perhaps wondering where we have been. It is quiet, with the gentle music of tumbling water sounding from across the lake. We set up camp and cook a large supper. I sort through my remaining food, burning the empty packages in a nearby firepit. The lowering sun now paints the ramparts of Pyramid and Mamquam mountains deepening shades of gold. The ripples fade from the lake, and its surface mirrors the glowing rock.

In the cool of morning, I climb steadily up the trail towards the sunlight creeping down the meadows. From the ridge crest, the narrow thread of civilization stretches westwards across the barren moraines. Across flats where fifty years ago was ice. Across the flower-filled slopes of Opal Cone, and into the rocky valley where Ring Creek flows. Here we meet a young park ranger, perhaps a university student on a summer job. Seeing that we have been out a while, he asks where we have been. I tell him we have come from Whistler, by way of the upper Cheakamus and Pitt rivers, and he seems surprised. But I cannot tell him much more, for the places we went; the creeks we forded, the meadows and valleys we walked, the waterfalls and glaciers we saw; they were mostly nameless corners of the wilderness. They were also

parts of my wilderness. If he would ever see them, they would appear different through his eyes, and symbolize different experiences. Two peoples' wilderness may be physically the same tract of country, but the experience that ties people to the land can only be had by seeing, feeling and living in the wilderness oneself. I wished him a good hike, then turned towards Diamond Head and the long walk out.

Party: Greg and Randy Stoltmann

ASPEN PEAK CHRISTMAS CAMP, 1987

by Steve Grant

Over the past decade the number of people wishing to spend Christmas and New Years at mountain cabins has increased far beyond the capacity of available cabins. Alternatives have developed: build your own cabin, helicopter wall tents to remote sites, and person-haul wall tents into the mountains. Building cabins has obvious disadvantages, and helicoptering has many undesirable side effects. Helicopter trips on the coast at Christmas have proven to be vulnerable to weather problems.

The club purchase of two new wall tents in 1987 encouraged a core group of members, led by Harold, to put together a genuine Christmas sledding trip. There were three main challenges - putting together a crack team, organizing the hardware and choosing the site. In retrospect, the ingredient that made this trip so much fun was that since we hadn't done a trip quite like this before, the people who signed up were those who both endorsed the concept and were willing to face unforeseeable difficulties as part of the adventure. We really had little idea what would transpire.

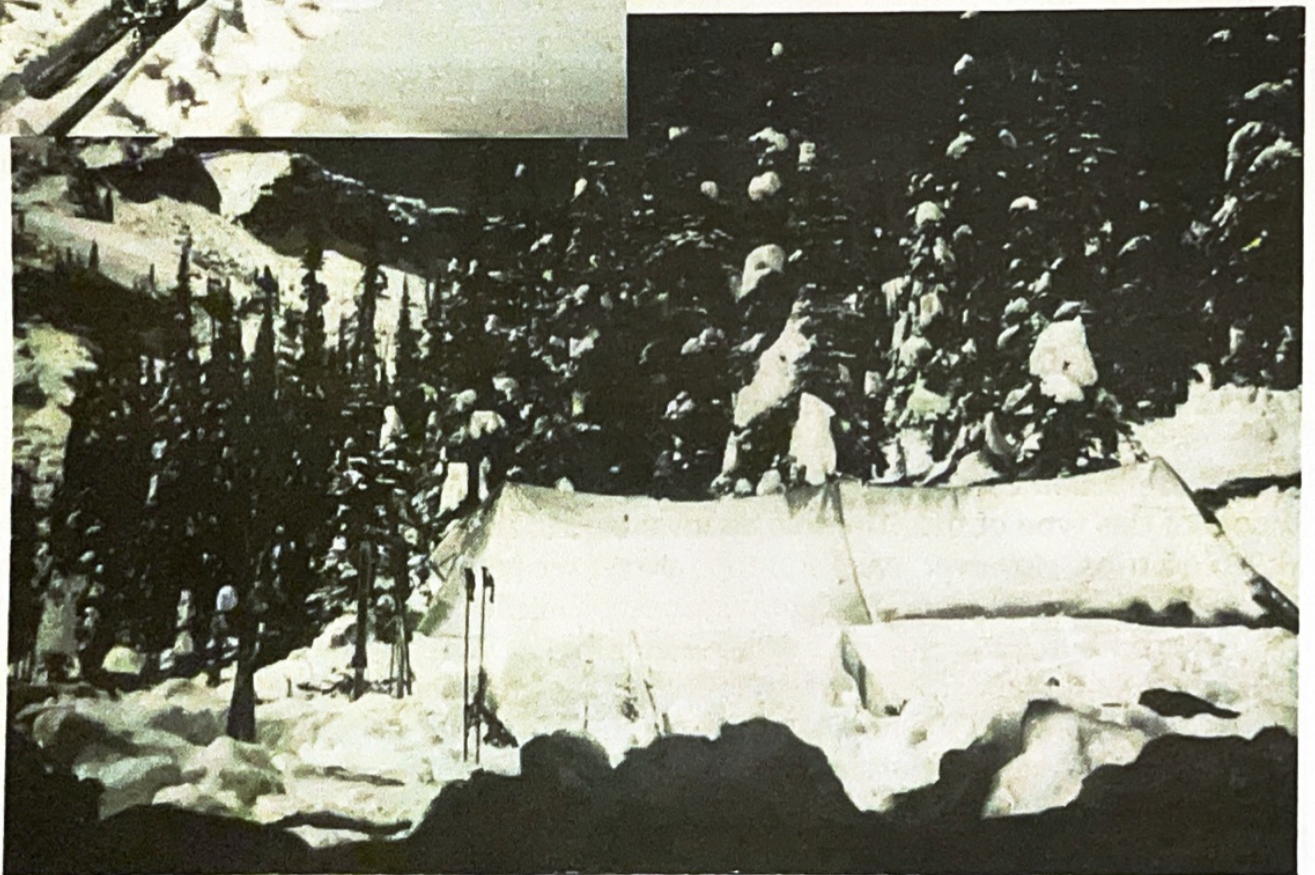
Harold logged long hours on the phone, doggedly ensuring that the tents, tarps, wood stove, lanterns, pots, fuel, saw, axe, etc. would arrive complete and useable. Unknown to us he also was creating a radical new sled. The rest of us grudgingly accepted responsibility for various pieces of camp gear, and concocted a variety of more pedestrian sleds.

The site selection committee searched for a location that would best suit the unique requirements of this type of trip. The sole disadvantage of the Aspen site was that it was used for weekend trips. However, weekend trips always seemed too short to really enjoy and explore the area, and it rated high in all other aspects. One benefit of the location was that participants had the freedom to arrive or leave early or late. The highways department ploughed a special parking place for us - which we didn't use since we thought it was where they turned their vehicles around. Fortunately there was no major snowfall during the trip so our vehicles were alright parked on the shoulder of the Duffey Lake Road.

On Dec. 24 an advance party of John Knight and two friends began breaking trail into the area. The combination of a small party and deep fresh snow forced them to camp short of



*Anita and the purple bag en route to camp -
photo by S. Grant.*



Camp by moonlight - photo by S. Grant

the selected site, which they reached on Christmas Day. They weren't at precisely the right site, but were close enough. They dug a snow cave and built an igloo which they decorated with battery powered Christmas lights. Bonus points for aesthetics!

The rest of us drove up on the 26th, and spent precious time struggling to load awkward things onto sleds in the cold dawn. Harold finally unveiled his coup — a sled that consisted of a hip belt, a pole to a single plastic toy ski, and a plastic bucket strapped to the frame. There was a nervous tittering as we balanced our pack-conformist urge to ridicule anything new against the possibility that it was a serious idea. The rest of the sleds included real pro fiber-glass jobs with poles and everything, plastic sleds, a "Crazy Carpet", and even a rugged purple stuff sack. The loads were simply enormous.

The first stretch along the gentle logging road was a cinch, but then we headed into the woods. Here the sleds displayed their various tendencies to seek the fall line, dig into uphill, get caught on things and roll over and dump their loads. Rather than cross the main stream, the broken trail stayed on the summer route, which involves a major sidehill ascending traverse in fairly dense woods. The fun really started.

The sleds were just too heavy for one person to tow up the grade while also carrying an overloaded pack. The heavier sleds had two grinders, and were able to progress if one person pulled and the other pushed. The rest of us towed to our limits then abandoned the sleds for a second carry. A great team effort took place, and all the loads arrived at the intended site (at the far end of the large lake in the upper Cayoosh Creek drainage) up to 6 hours after leaving the road. We began assembling a full scale camp that, up to that point, had only been theory to us.

Somehow the private tents and the shells of the big tents were put up before we surrendered to darkness, hunger and fatigue. After brainstorming how to best arrange the comfort support systems, we turned in. There were three of us sleeping in the big tents and just after getting into our bags, a sudden gust of wind blew aside the walls and swept snow through our shelter. This necessitated further work before we finally could call it a day.

Most of the following day was required to finish setting things up, It was stormy anyway. Matthew abandoned the big tent for a snow cave. The canvas tents developed into a very substantial comfortable structure. Placed end to end, they were surrounded to the eaves with snow walls, and covered with the huge blue tarps. The floor was on two levels, with the stove rigged at the far end of the lower floor, the door at the midpoint on one side, and steps to the higher level floor, Robin led Tony and I on a snag logging operation that utilized perhaps the most dangerous practices ever seen in B.C., miraculously without injury. There was still time for some ski runs on the steep slopes nearby, but not enough time for reaching summits.

The next day saw us finally heading for the peaks. Most were drawn to a perfect slope nearby to pass the day making turns. They also followed the ridge to "Rabbit Ear" peak which overlooked the camp. Randy and I continued toward Aspen, heading along its S. ridge. We

soon had to leave our skis and postholed up to a high point on the ridge near Aspen. Shrouded by snow cloud, Aspen looked very high, difficult, and distant from this vantage. Randy picked out a route to it along the western side of the ridge and along Aspen's SW slopes. Conversation that night centered on the major expedition to be mounted on Aspen the next morning.

In the morning, there was excitement in the air as the troops departed on the chosen path to Aspen. During the traverse of the west side of the ridge leading to Aspen, Bill and I ended up ahead of the others, and started up the peak. Soon the mountainside became steep and rocky, so we left the skis and laboriously punched steps upward through the inclined boulder field. It seemed impossible, but we anticipated that others would catch up to help break trail. The endless slope above was hidden in cloud, and dry snow was whipping around us. It was damn cold. I was freezing and ground to a halt. Bill went on ahead, and after resting and having a bit to eat, I felt I could at least follow his tracks. By the time I caught up to him, he was flagging a little and commented that this was like a real peak. I was feeling much better and went ahead again.

As we reached the top, the clouds dissipated into clear weather, leaving us in (setting) sunlight looking at the special effects of pink light on ice crystals in the air. Far below us we spotted our friends, one by one, turning back to camp. We felt elated and isolated, but confident in our ability to return safely. We made it down off the peak as it turned deep red in the alpenglow. All nervousness vanished when we put our skis on, and began carefully working our way back to camp in the dark. But the thrill of it all got to us, and we had a pretty irresponsible dash through, into, and over, invisible obstacles.

The next day Anita, Robin, Dave and Gavin made it up Aspen, and found our steps to be a handy staircase. Bill, Harold and I followed the flat portion of the access trail down the valley, then broke a trail over to the meadow where Mt. Rohr weekend trips usually camped. From there we broke more trail along the normal route to the summit of Rohr. There was lots of time to enjoy the fine sunny day on top with so many peaks around us, and it was pleasing to see Aspen a distant 9 km away with the camp in between. We had an excellent ski run back down the slopes and valleys to the camp.

That was New Year's Eve, and the spirits flowed. Harold added popcorn, and as we became more pissed, the discussion centered on determining who among us was a nut case. Harold produced an alcoholic beverage so repulsive that there was lots left to be refused at the trip reunion slide show. We call it "Huh huh huh". It's interesting how simple things can be beautiful, moving experiences on these trips. Dave and Anita went for a night ski, and were struck by rabbit tracks on the lake in the moonlight.

With apologies to "Flint Steel", here's a verbal; snapshot from an evening at the camp:

"You push past the crackling plastic sheet into the sharp frosted night air. Shadows from the moonlit firs lie across the clearing. The sky is a brittle canopy of stars. As you walk down the path to the waterhole the snow squeaks under your booties, and the voices from the tent

recede. You step down into the waterhole and hear the gurgle of the little stream. Lit by flashlight you dip your bottle through a hole chipped in the ice and drink the impossibly cold pure water. You pause to absorb the overwhelming beauty of the moment. Absolute stillness. Heading back, the big tents glow blue through the massive snow walls and plastic tarps. Clean smoke rises from the flue and is carried down in cold outflow night air. The voices get louder as you push back the curtain, the warm moist air instantly fogs your glasses and you are enveloped by warmth and chatter.

With the promise of another perfect day to follow, we decide to add a day to the trip. Those who had run out of food were able to bid on the huge excess that I had brought, with prices reflecting freight charges and a monopoly situation. John's group packed and headed out. Jacqueline and Sev toured off to Rabbit Peak, while everyone else swooshed off towards Rohr.

As we neared the head of the valley W of Rohr, Gavin, Dave and I split off to climb the peak NW of Rohr. Engrossed on conversation about computers, Robin and Bill missed our departure, gave up looking for us and meandered up the peak W of Rohr. We looked all over for them, and finally spotted the fugitives across the valley on the other peak. We decided that we must teach them a lesson by also going up the one they were on. But Gavin went down from there, and Dave aimed for Rohr. I met Robin and Bill as they left the top of their peak, whereupon they decided they had to go up our peak. But from the top of their peak, Rohr was a fairly level trip away and I could see Dave on it, so I went over and met him just below the top. He agreed to wait for me, so I went to the top, then rejoined him for the best ski run of the trip, gliding down to the lower valley; pausing for many backward looks before the final traverse back to camp.

The next day was another perfect day. But it was time to go home. Everyone set about packing - no simple undertaking. A work group delicately began dismantling the stove, still hot and smoking from burning trash. Robin decried their efforts, declared: "It's not a nuclear reactor.", and hauled it outside with a stick. Then he dumped it too near some equipment, where it melted one of my pole baskets.

After many group sledding photos and lingering glances around the wonderful valley, we followed the new trail John's group had broken down the stream. There were some complaints about the sleds slipping into the open water holes, but the air time with sleds made up for that. Then it was back into the woods. The sleds were unmanageable. They rolled over and stayed upside down. They slid down the fall line and passed their owners. The big downhill traverse got littered with temporarily lost and abandoned equipment. Harold did not let us ignore the perfect manners of his incredible monopod, although it appeared that there wasn't a lot of baggage hiding on its sparse frame.

At one point I was traversing at significant speed when the Crazy Carpet decided to go below a tree that I had passed above. I got yanked off my skis, and when I got to the sled found that the rigging had torn off. The only sign of it was a smooth groove down the fall line. After I found it I gave it a good beating with a ski pole and dragged it back up the trail. Harold snatched disgrace from the jaws of glory when a buried alder snapped the ski off his smart sled. That was a real drag.

Due to these technical difficulties, the group got quite spread out, and some of us went back up the traverse to help bring down a second load. Unfortunately Robin was even further behind, and we were readying a rescue mission from the frozen cars when his headlight appeared out of the dark.

The trip was a total success, and proved that this type of camp is a feasible alternative to the other Christmas trips. By the end of it, the topic was not whether to do the same next year, but where to do it. We visited the site the following summer and cleaned up. There wasn't much stuff, and things can be expected to get lost in the snow. Aspen was climbed directly from the camp, and this would have been a more efficient winter route.

Party: Harold Rydell, Matthew Sessions, Tony Ross, Dave Ross, Anita Miettunen, Sev Heiberg, Gavin Thurston, Bill Maurer, Randy Enomoto, Robin Tivy, Victor Borchers, John Knight and two friends, Steve Grant.

FRANKLIN GLACIER SPRING SKI CAMP, May 1988

- by Kathy Wong and Jan Kirkpatrick

Cast of Skiers (in order of waking appearance in the early am)

Steppenwolf - Robert Gordon. Faster than Fletcher Challenge chainsaw, this Ironman was able to climb 1,500 m, ski 30 km, and read science fiction novels until 2 am all in 1 leap.

Trailbreaker Emeritus - Brian Vezina. Owner of robotic trailbreaking quadriceps. The "B" team had to weigh his skis with glacial moraine to slow him down.

Earl Grey - Pat Crean (Organizer). A major shareholder of Murchies - he always had a cup of tea for those skiers who had difficulty lighting their stoves.

Dr. Scholl - Gerard Clement. Connoisseur of European chocolate, smoked salmon, and ultra-thick moleskin begged from the therapist on this trip.

The "B" Team - Jan Kirkpatrick, Kathy Wong, Bill Anslow and Dave Wong. The deadly combination of a travelling Aussie and 3 ex-VOCers produced a "crash and burn" team whose members slept in and skied Hawaiian style.

The Galloping Tua Gourmet - Randy Enomoto. Protege of Julia Child and Magic Pantry. The only member to bring 2 stoves, Canada's dietary food guide and a lawn chair. Reservations were a must to eat at his tent.

Fair Dinkum - Gordon Bedford. Another travelling Aussie whose snow wall around his tent rivalled the Great Wall of China.



Camp on the Franklin glacier - photo by R. Enomoto.



Cooking in the snowcave - photo by R. Enomoto.

Sir Waddington - Martin Kafer. Esteemed mountaineer and winner of the Arthur Erickson award for the most symmetrical snowcave.

Week One - After an overnight stay at Graham's (home of humungous omelettes and strawberry shortcakes) at Tatla Lake, our group met at the King's helicopter hangar waiting for the skies to lighten and the snow to stop. It was interesting to examine each others methods of packaging gear and food. Some travelled ultralite with 1 pack and 1 box while others had enough boxes to make a group of Sherpas shudder.

Also in line for the helicopter was a group from Canmore who were part of an organized paid trip with Al Schaeffer, a backcountry ski and kayak guide. We promised not to muck up each other's powder and to stay on opposite sides of the glacier.

In the afternoon the helicopter arrived and we quickly loaded our gear and selves. After a fantastic ascent past forested mountains, alpine meadows, and jagged peaks, we flew through a tiny gap and came upon this wondrous snowy expanse with the glaciers brilliantly lit by the sun. We were able to see Jester, Cavalier, and tents set up by some of the members of the other group.

Already Brian was building the Waddington throne complete with low walls for privacy. Randy had his lemon yellow lawn chair in the front of his matching tent (where was the picket fence?). Robert was unloading his box of science fiction books while the senior members were building their kitchens and sitting area.

After an alpine start at 8 am, we set off as a group to Jester (2721 m), a peak surrounded by the Franklin, Corridor and Dais glaciers. Incredibly warm sun poured over our tracks as we headed up the ridge. At the base of Jester's summit several members ice-axed it to the top with the exception of Pat who insisted on dragging his mountaineering skis in anticipation of an exciting ski descent. He left a beautiful track resembling half of a DNA helix.

The next day, Randy, Gordon, Robert and Brian headed off to the well known Mt. Munday (3341 m) while the rest of us headed to "Regal Dome". With harscheisen under mountaineering skis, Gerard, Martin and Pat confidently led the way. It was somewhat hairy for those with skinny skis who had to heavily dig in their edges for the first several 100 meters on the steep icy incline with yawning crevasses on the bottom. As the incline increased, Gerard dramatically announced that there was no way he could ski up this dangerous side with only toothpick skis as there were so many open crevasses waiting to devour unwary skiers. With that boosting our confidence, the rest of us nervously hastened forward until we reached softer, gentler, kinder snow.

At the top there were magnificent views of Mt. Waddington's rugged South face while we ate the first of our 20 bagels allotted for the trip. The descent down was less perilous than expected, as by now the sun had softened the snow considerably. We made it to camp in time to prepare the welcome wagon for the Munday group which managed to make it to the peak after some exciting technical ice moves. After downing several mugs of Tetley's, they crashed until the evening.



The group resting at camp - photo by R. Enomoto.



Skiing above the Franklin glacier - photo by R. Enomoto.

MOUNT LOGAN ATTEMPT VIA THE EAST RIDGE, May - June, 1988

by Brian Gavin

The Klane or St. Elias Mountains are a remarkable part of this planet's geography. The words "huge, vast, immense" have new meaning as both the horizontal and vertical scales take on proportions so different from our rather comfortable Coast Range. The area is the third most heavily glaciated in the world - after the Antarctic and Greenland. Mt. Logan itself gives rise to two of the most interesting glacial features in the world: the Seward Glacier on its south side flows through a relatively narrow 5 km gap lying between Mt. Augusta and Mt. Cook to form the Malaspina Glacier - the largest piedmont glacier in the world; the Hubbard Glacier on its east side flows south east past Mt. Vancouver toward Mt. Hubbard before turning south and then south west to become the galloping glacier as it plunges to the 3 km wide gap to the sea at Yakutat Bay.

Not to be outdone by the glaciers, the peaks are of enormous proportions. Using the main glaciers as basecamps, one will find that the ascents of the major peaks involve vertical distances every bit as significant as the great peaks of the Himalaya. Mt. St. Elias, Mt. Augusta, Mt. Vancouver, Mt. Hubbard, Mt. Alverstone and Mt. Kennedy all involve ascents in excess of 3000 metres. Mt. Logan is rather well known as the greatest mountain massif in the world. Even at the 5000 m elevation, its circumference measures more than 150 km! Ascending this peak involves an ascent of over 4000 m - more than an ascent of Mt. Everest from its basecamp. Furthermore, studies have indicated that the actual pressure at the summit of Mt. Everest is quite comparable to the actual pressure at the summit of Mt. McKinley or at Mt. Logan.

Mt. Logan was named - perhaps appropriately - after Sir William E. Logan, the founder of the Geological Survey of Canada. The peak was first climbed by a party of Americans led by Albert McCarthy. This first ascent required two years. In 1924, a reconnaissance of the approach to the Kings Trench was made from the small Alaskan town of McCarthy. Over 33 days, this reconnaissance used horses to travel 140 km up the Chitina River to the toe of the glacier, and then travelled a further 84 km on foot to the Cascades of the Ogilvie Glacier. In preparation for the expedition itself, an advance party used the same route with horses and dogsleds to place 2600 kg of supplies at the point 15 km up the Ogilvie Glacier. The climbing expedition left McCarthy on May 12, 1925, reached the cache after 13 days, and moved to the foot of the Cascades 6 days later. On June 23rd the summit team climbed a double peak but discovered that the summit was actually another double peak 3 km further away. They stood on its crest at 8 pm that day. The return to camp was an ordeal as they were beset by a storm and forced to bivouac. Leaving the bivouac in poor visibility, they discovered their wands but followed them in the wrong direction and fell in crevasses while whited out. They finally found their high camp 42 hours after leaving it. They finally returned to McCarthy on July 15 after an epic raft trip but McCarthy got sick and never fully recovered. (This experience was virtually repeated by a BCMC party attempting the first winter ascent of Mt. Logan - see BC Mountaineer - 1986 article by Bill Maurer.)

The first ascent of the East Ridge was only the second route on the mountain and was also done by a team of Americans in 1958. Their climb required over 20 days and nine camps after flying to its foot. The second ascent of this route was in June 1959 by a party of seven including Hans Gmoser, Willie Pfisterer and Karl Ricker. They left Kluane Lake on May 27 walking up Slims River and then skiing up the Kashkawalsh and Hubbard Glaciers. Their first view of Mt. Logan came on June 1 and the base of the east ridge was reached on June 6 - 11 days later. They climbed the ridge in 5 days with the high camp at 5075 m. The summit of the East Peak was reached on June 12 with all members experiencing severe headaches! (little wonder). The descent required two days and the objective was to exit north via the Donjek Glacier and River. The epic truly began on the descent of the river. The intention was to raft down but one of the three rafts had 96 holes in it! Crowding aboard the remaining two they set off down the Donjek which was flowing at 25 km/hr. One of the rafts blew a hole and its crew needed rescue. In the end two men with the balance of the equipment set off while the others prepared to walk the remaining 40 km to the Alaska highway. The third raft had the same fate as the other two and all the remaining equipment was lost in a snarl of logs - including all their photographs and cameras.

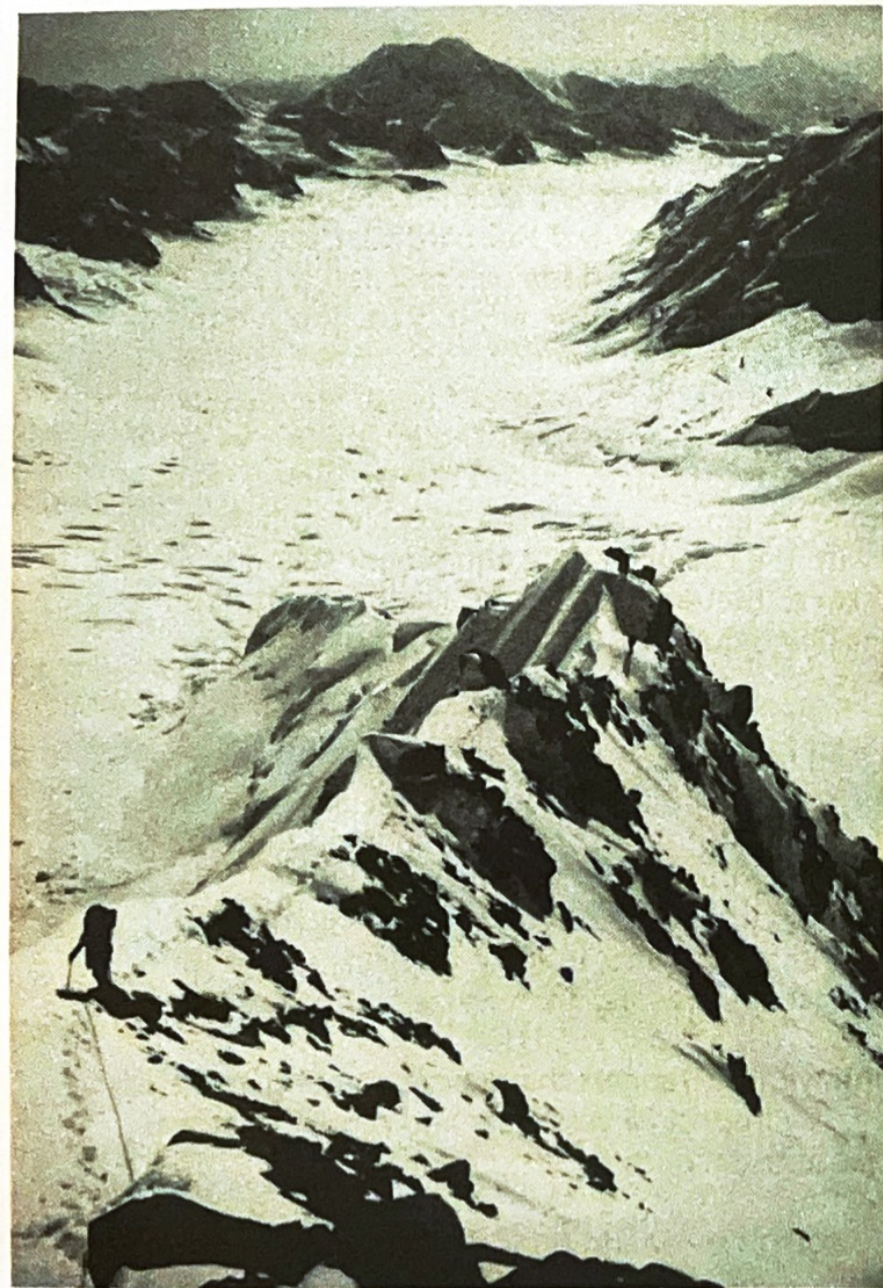
Prior to our setting a timetable, we attempted to research other attempts through past issues of the Canadian Alpine Journal. This proved not very fruitful. Overall, the perspective seemed to be that earlier in May was cooler with more snow. Late May or early June parties reported problems with the bergshroud guarding access to the ridge. The unknown was how long we might sit at Kluane Lake waiting to fly in - the record being 21 days! A few preliminary planning meetings produced a nucleus of six climbers, who, in the end, became the entire climbing party - Grant McCormack, Rob Brusse, Juri Peepre, Erich Hinze and myself.

Grant had done such a thorough job liaising with the rangers that a brief meeting and a sign in was all that was required. Normally they may inspect all your gear and require that you demonstrate proficiency in a number of rescue techniques.

Spring was slowly arriving with the ground bare of snow and buds appearing on the bushes, but snowy hillsides and the solidly frozen lake were proof of winter's firm grip on the land. Well, the weather looked less than perfect and Andy Williams wasn't flying. In his dry witty manner he suggested we not be in a hurry tomorrow.

Monday, May 9 - Remarkably, the day dawned as clear as could be. We were slowly getting up and thinking of breakfast when Andy drove up in his pickup and asked what we thought of going flying. The flight in was "a mind-blowing experience". The round trip took about one and one half hours and had us all assembled on the Hubbard Glacier some 10 km from the objective. With such good weather and the long days provided by 60 degrees latitude we decided to shuttle loads right away. With Doug, Juri and I pulling sleds we managed to move everything about 7 km on the relatively flat glacier. Erich and I triangulated the landing strip and stored the survival stuff - just in case. It was hot and sunny - just like Vancouver.

Tuesday, May 10 - We rose this morning as the sun cleared Mt. King George. There was some thin cloud down valley but otherwise a clear day. With crevasses to negotiate ahead we



Between camps 1 and 2 with King George Pk. in the distance - photo by B. Gavin.



Between camps 1 and 2 with Hubsew ridge to right - photo by B. Gavin.

elected to ski roped up. Rob, Grant, and Erich travelled on one rope packing a trail for the sleds which Doug, Juri and I pulled. We probably overloaded and were still acclimatizing as four hours were required to gain 350 m over 3 km to advance base camp at 2400 m. We dug the cache in and enjoyed a 40 minute spring ski back to camp.

Wednesday, May 11 - Up a little earlier today and successfully moved everything to our advanced basecamp in one and one half hours. A lenticular on Logan developed fairly fast, forecasting a change. Doug and Juri went off to fix a line onto the ridge which required four hours in fairly tough snow. Erich and I did a major resort of the food with snow falling as we finished up. By supper time the coastal cement was pouring out of the sky - and we all went into hibernation for the next two days.

Saturday, May 14 - With the wind and blowing snow, no one was keen early, but things improved so we left camp at 10:30 with Doug and Juri breaking trail with light hardware while the rest of us moved supplies. Struggling up the fixed line involved some serious wallowing but the loads were dropped at 2900 m at 5:00 pm.

Sunday, May 15 - We were up with the sun this morning and although the visibility was variable we decided to push. We took a total of 16 days of supplies onto the ridge with each person carrying about 7 kilos of communal gear plus camp. Travelling on two ropes of three we moved up to the previous cache. Dropping our gear I led Juri and Rob along the ridge nearly reaching a prominent snow dome. We returned to just below the cache where the others had tent platforms all established and dinner happening. There was not a breath of wind with the view just getting better and better!

Monday, May 16 - We rose at 7:30 as the sun streamed over the east ridge of Mt. MacArthur. We packed up and two hours later arrived at the snow dome we saw the previous day, and established Camp II at 3150 m. We spent the day moving everything to this camp and establishing a walled city. After dinner a number of radiophone calls were placed. There were reportedly 2 parties of 4 behind us.

Tuesday, May 17 - Visibility was limited with weather deteriorating. Doug and Erich were keen on this technical part of the ridge so were off breaking trail. Juri and Grant followed fixing some line. I spent time improving snow walls before Rob and I left ferrying loads which were cached at the highest point. On the descent we were impressed with this perspective of camp on the ridge above the Hubbard - "looks incredible!" my log says. Snowing steadily and -11 C at sack time.

Friday, May 19 - After two days of snow and avalanches this day dawned perfect. We packed up everything possible except camp and left at 9 with Doug and Erich travelling light to break trail. At one point with Grant and Juri on a fixed line just below them, they unleashed an avalanche that had Juri airborne, upside down and looking like a body surfer. With this scare behind us, we continued on to establish Camp III at 3600 m tucked in beside a cornice. After a poor start, the day turned out spectacularly fine. On descent to Camp II we were surprised to have company in the form of 4 Germans: 2 from Smithers, 2 from Bavaria. After



Just below camp 2 - photo by B. Gavin.

dinner we watched lenticulars form around Mt. MacArthur as the temperature dropped. Doug surprised us all with the news he was headed down and home tomorrow! This had a pretty unsettling effect on us all but he was final.

Saturday, May 21 - We were up at 7 to a gorgeous, cool day. Packing up camp we said farewell to Doug who was descending with the Germans who were ferrying loads. We were all saddened to see him leave but he cheerfully took down what we considered surplus. Erich and Grant reestablished trail while Rob led Juri and I behind. Up at camp III we got the Sentinels set up side by side, while Erich and Grant fixed a short line above camp - setting off another avalanche in the process. Later, after dinner, Erich called home to Vancouver to be informed he had a daughter added to his family. Very unimpressed as it seems the doctor decided to hurry things up so he could leave on holidays!

Tuesday, May 24 - After 2 days of snow and high winds, the weather finally looked good. Juri called out at 8 am and discovered his wife is in Ottawa. He called Ottawa to discover his sister had died. This was difficult for Juri and us all. His family insisted he stay. His motivation understandably evaporated.

Later in the afternoon, Grant and I went out trail breaking. Nothing slid off at the first line. Above that as I climbed a ridge I managed to set off a slab avalanche of 45-60 cm that went down both sides of the ridge. We continued. Rob and Erich ferried loads up behind us and dropped them at the highest point. We returned to camp to find the German and a Vancouver UIC team had joined us.

Wednesday, May 25 - We were up at 8 am and packed up slowly, leaving camp at 10:30 behind the other teams. We felt it was about time we rode their trails, having done all the work to date. Erich and I got to the top of the fixed line and after two leads of running relays stopped for lunch while the others caught up. From here we negotiated a huge cornice (very icy) and then the plodding began. Eventually, Erich and I selected a site for Camp IV at 4300 m, halfway between the German snow cave 50 m above and the other camp 50 m below in a wind cirque amongst huge seracs. By 9 pm the mercury was down to -22 C.



Above camp 2, on flat area on ridge - photo by B. Gavin.

Thursday, May 26 - In near white-out conditions we climbed slowly up to camp V at 4800m, cached our loads then retreated, following our wands, down to camp IV. At sack out time the mercury stood at -17 C.

Friday, May 27 - The winds picked up in the night, with quite a bit of blowing snow. The early morning weather was grim but improved enough by 11 to allow us to move. We left camp at 2:30 with lots of cloud around us but otherwise fair. Beyond the halfway point though, the weather became increasingly poorer and colder until we reached camp V three hours later in a virtual white-out and 40 km/hr winds. Another hour had a platform with walls established and we crawled in. Some clearing occurred, casting the shadow of Logan into a cool -26 C sunset with a half moon. By then we had established a method of

pitching the two Sentinels end to end about 60 cm apart with vestibules on outside ends. This allowed us to pass things between tents and cook in vestibules. The wind really picked

up and I installed the wind guys. This was our expected ripper!

Saturday, May 28 - The winds continued strong and we slept in. The effects of altitude began to manifest themselves as motivation was low in spite of calmer weather later in the day. Juri was keen to ferry loads but couldn't move any of us. The German and Vancouver teams came up and dug snowcaves. Juri fortified the snow walls which proved a good decision.



Between camps 3 and 4 - photo by B. Gavin.

Sunday, May 29 - Oddly, we slept late. Breakfast was losing its appeal. It was calmer but we were between 2 cloud layers. We finally left camp at 3:30 carrying everything. About 2 leads of steep climbing brought us onto the plateau and we pushed well out to seek some minor shelter on a bench below a rocky ridge. Camp VI was established at 5100 m. Juri and I had fierce headaches - Grant wasn't so bad.

Monday, May 30 - The temperature was off the scale below -30 C. The Germans arrived as we were ready to leave so we hoped to share trail breaking. Erich's water bottle leaked into his boots and overbag - not good. We continued west to the col at 5240m and saw a storm coming at us off the Pacific. It was very cold. I wore pile pants over middle and expedition weight underwear with Goretex pants. Same on top. Three pairs of mittens and three hats. Still cold going uphill. I felt awful with headache, nausea, dehydrated, short of breath. As we reached 5500m on our way to the east peak we were hit by a squall with snow, wind and no visibility. We sought some shelter and tried to sit it out a bit but we were too cold. Sadly,

we turned back to camp, struggling to see the wands.

Tuesday, May 31 - It was relatively calm but there was much cloud around. Juri was up early as usual and suggested a retreat. We had only 2 days of food left and had heard stories of groups being caught out on the plateau for seven days. Retreat seemed wise so we descended to Camp III.

Wednesday, June 1 - Juri was up even before the sun to rouse the slugs to action. There had been even more snow down here making the descent of the knife-edged section even easier. Checking out the fixed line leading off the ridge, we reset the pickets and pulled the deadmen. After one and a half leads the snow became very soft but we carried on. I fell in waist deep a couple of times approaching the pin at the rock, but was alright. Beyond this, the route had been avalanched. I kept going - wading mostly in dangerous wet mush, eventually reaching the advanced base cache. Rob and Juri demonstrated better judgement and waited until the sun went off the slope

Thursday, June 2 - We were up to talk to Andy at 8am requesting a pickup in mid afternoon. We packed everything up on the three sleds and with absolutely perfect snow conditions (fresh snow on a frozen crust) we slid all the way to the airstrip by 1:00am. While Grant fiddled with the radio, the rest of us dug out the survival rations of moosehead, cheese, black forest ham, salmon and gourmet bread. What a treat in the blazing sun. We watched clouds come and go over Logan and eventually Andy arrived. We squeezed hard and managed to get out in two flights leaving some supplies for the UIC team. The weather just barely let us out. Kluane Lake was now completely thawed. And this was the sad end of an adventure.

Thoughts on the East Ridge as a Route

The route is relatively short and quite direct but leads to the East Peak with the Main Peak some 3-5 km beyond.

The route is pleasantly alpine and relatively safe by comparison with some others.

The route is somewhat protected from weather in the sense of strong winds, being at the head of the valley formed by the Hubsew ridge to the south (left) and the Catenary ridge/ MacArthur Peak to the northwest (right).

This also has the effect of limiting views to King George and parts of Mt. Vancouver and Hubbard Group until above 4000 - 4500 m.

Special Equipment Notes

Tents - 2 Eureka Sentinels with vestibule
 1 Quasar from MEC retired with Doug from Camp II

- Stoves - 1 MSR X-GK extremely efficient and reliable
 1 MSR X-GK spare burner
 1 MSR Whisperlite for lower elevations
 1 Coleman Peak I used to Camp III but flames everywhere except where they belonged above this. Abandoned at Camp IV
- Fuel - White gas - Carried 1/3 L per person per day, used 1/5 - 1/4 L per person per day
- Feet - Erich Used very heavy single leather boots
 Brian used Koflach Ultra Extreme with standard inner
 Others used Kastinger plastic doubles
 Brian used 6 mm Neoprene "40 below" overboots; Others used homemade insulated or Berhaus supergaiters
 Brian and Juri used VBL socks and pile socks
 Only Brian and Erich survived with no tingling feet (trenchfoot syndrome). No one contracted frost bite.
- Ropes - 3 x 9 mm to top of knife edge section, then 2 only
 3 x 100 m 9.5mm poly
- Hardware 2 snowstakes (excellent) and 1 ice screw per person
 1 deadman per person (useless)
 2 hammers to top of knife edge
 6 Karabiners and slings per person
 1 ascender per person
- Other - 3 shovels
 2 snow saws
 50 wands
 SBX-11 Spilsbury radio

MOUNT QUEEN BESS SUMMER CAMP, 6-21 August 1988

by Brian Gavin and Cheryl Leskiw

Looking forward to another camp in the heart of the British Columbia coast range, six of us left town on Friday evening to stay at Spence's Bridge, while the other half left the following morning. The rendez-vous was at Graham's at Tatla Lake at 5 pm Saturday. This accomplished, final plans were made over dinner before the advance party of three continued on to the Kings at Bluff Lake with the others driving to the Bracewell's Lodge at Wilderness Lake in Stikelen Pass at the south end of Tatlayoko Lake.

Saturday, August 7 found Erich, Dave and Brian airborne out of Bluff Lake at 6 am to a site at



Looking toward Whitemantle Range from near camp - photo by M. Force.



Mt. Waddington from base camp - photo by E. Hinze.

1900 m on a series of benches with lakes up Doran Creek. The others were all in by 9:30 and an hour and a half later, camp was well established with a useful snowbank as the "fridge".

After lunch a variety of groups formed to climb Armada by a variety of routes but all to have a look at the area. Erich and Dave left for the east ridge, Brian and Cheryl for the south ridge, and then Phillip, Blair and Mark for the west ridge. This latter group was eventually pursued by Peter and David and later by Paul and Maureen. Well, the first two groups succeeded in completing their routes. Erich and Dave had summited and were just beginning down as Brian and Cheryl's route joined with the west ridge and turned to the summit. The east ridge was class 3; the south was stiff 4 in places. As Brian and Cheryl neared the summit they wondered where the crack west ridge team was. Then the helicopter returned! The east ridge was descended very quickly, but the chopper left camp before they could get there.

The west ridge had been ascended in a very straightforward manner until more difficult ground was reached. Phil and Mark had gone left looking for an easier route. Blair stayed right somehow and directly tackled the slab. In the meantime Peter and David had caught up. Feeling rather uncomfortable, Blair attempted to reverse a last move but as it was just out of reach, he slid off and fell about 5 m, striking young David. Although David only suffered a badly bruised right thigh, Blair sustained a badly fractured right ankle. As Paul and Maureen neared the scene, Maureen was dispatched back to camp to summon help. The others at the scene used everything they had to splint Blair's leg and lower him as comfortably as possible to the base of the ridge. Meanwhile, Maureen reached camp just as Erich and David arrived. They were able to use the club radio to reach Williams Lake and the King's who arranged to fly in with the nurse from Tatla Lake. Blair's angel from heaven had him flying in no time and 24 hours later he was in Lion's Gate being readied for surgery.

Such things dampen spirits somewhat and the weather assisted. Showers moved in and continued all the next day with light winds. People festered about visiting, making tea or playing with gear. Later on reading and power snoozing took over. The rain became steadier.

The next day, during some tempting sunny breaks some of us went up to the col west of Armada, got rained on then returned to camp.

The next day Dave, Erich and Phil left for an attempt on Queen Bess. The weather didn't look wonderful. Mark and Brian left later followed by Cheryl and Debbie heading somewhat south east along benches to the snout of a small glacier. From here, the right moraine (glacier true left) was followed until the southwest ridge of Peak 2622 at grid reference 877806 was gained. This provided a pleasant Class 3 climb to the summit. While lounging about on the summit we cast about for a name. In consideration of the next peak being dubbed Prince of Wales, we opted for Duchess of York. She's more fun anyway! The north west ridge was easily descended and then Prince of Wales traversed as we made our way back to camp. Some steep snow provided an exhilarating glissade for some.

The next day, dawned flawless, and for those of us there for a week, this was the Queen Bess motivator. Dave, Erich and Phil left camp at 6 with Brian and Mark somewhat behind at 7.



Paying homage to Sussex (left) and Queen Bess (right) from the Mantle glacier - photo by M. Force.

After a pause at the last water in the col, they roped and crossed the glacier heading due east. Travel was quick on the frozen surface and crampons were used to ascend the steeper arm up to the col with Mt. Sussex. Team one had veered right to gain the rock at its steepest point while Mark and Brian allowed themselves the privilege of ethics and started from the lowest point of the col. Lunch allowed others to gain the top of the steep bit before Mark and Brian followed. Just as well since there was considerable loose rock and Mark did his usual gardening.

From the top of the steep part, the ridge became very narrow and the exposure on the east side was really impressive - rather similar to the west ridge of Forbidden Peak. Brian discovered that his camera wasn't working and shortly after Mark found his camera missing. They were at a potential bivy site so while Brian prepared a ledge in the snow, Mark went back in search of his camera, to return 45 minutes later, all smiles. Meanwhile, Team One rappelled off into the gathering gloom getting to camp at midnight.

After a comfortable night, Brian and Mark shared an orange and bagel for breakfast with some Toblerone before continuing on. Beyond a couple of minor towers, Brian led the 18th pitch past a wet slabby step onto the snow and the final ridge to the summit. The summit canister contained the original register from the Mundays in 1942. This was the 18th ascent of the peak. Although occasional clouds blew over, they had excellent views from the Lillooet Icecap to Raleigh and Gilbert to Washington. After an hour, they descended back down the

ridge to the anchor. Three rappels on double ropes had them down and in camp by dusk.

After the two parties headed off for Queen Bess, some of the remainder decided to sleep late, using the excuse that they had been star-gazing the night before. The sky had been clear and this was the time of year to view the perseids meteor showers. Mark guided them on a tour of the stars and constellations, which were brilliant.

After a late breakfast, Debbie, Paul, Maureen and Cheryl set off towards Silver Swan. When they got to the Armada-Lynn col, they sighted Silver Swan and the south ridge, which they had intended climbing. This looked more challenging than the "afternoon wander" they had intended. So they roped up and set off across the S.E. end of the Mantle glacier, to ascend Lynn peak (2774m). They ascended an obvious snow slope on the southwest, which went to within 30m of the summit. This final bit was a mix of snow patches and a "boulder side-walk." At the top they added their names to the film canister summit register, had a snack and tried to spot the parties over on Queen Bess, with no success! After a glissade back down camp was reached - a 7 hour return trip. This was a great confidence builder for snow experience.

The following day, suggestions from Cheryl to climb Chisel Peak, south of Mt. Queen Bess elicited no interest. The day was spent in relative relaxation by most of them, with Maureen heading off to the east to do some meadow-walking, and Cheryl challenging all to go swimming for longer than the 30 seconds she had done. Despite the sunny weather, the pond next to camp was still close to freezing temperatures. Some opted for Paul's solar shower and generally spent the day being "lollers and lounge lizards."

Phil, Paul, Maureen, Debbie and Cheryl headed off to attempt Chisel Peak shortly after 7am. They travelled for several hours across alpine meadows and scree, crossing a very cold creek below the south end of the Mantle glacier. Shortly after crossing the creek, they began climbing up easy snow slopes on the west ridge, where they began scrambling up mixed snow and rock, to the bottom of the final rock section below the summit. The first third of this was easily scrambled up, followed by two roped pitches of 4th to low 5th class climbing on great rock! Phil supervised while the less experienced enjoyed a few fun and comfortable leads. From there it was another 100m of easy walking on rock to the summit, where they had a quick afternoon brunch before beginning the descent at 4 p.m. On the descent they had a long glissade, accompanied by hoots and hollers of laughter as they tried to follow Phil's attempt to turn himself into a human catapult. They arrived back in camp in time to dress for a fine dinner prepared by Brian and Mark. Erich, Dave, Brian, Peter and David were leaving the next morning, while the rest were staying until the end of the week, so they had a farewell party (it's amazing how many people a 4 person tent will hold!) complete with Oreo cookies and Jello.

On Sunday morning they were flown out, while Mark and Phil disappeared into the fog heading off towards Corgi Peak (approx. 2620m), which they ascended via the south ridge. They found the climbing pleasant, going up about 350m of second and third class rock with a couple of pitches of fourth and one pitch of low fifth class. They descended via the glacier



Mt. Essex (left) and Queen Bess from the NE - photo by Phil Kubik.



Mt. Queen Bess with the north ridge on the right - photo by C. Leskiw.



Mt. Queen Bess - west side - photo by M. Force.



Brian on the N ridge of Queen Bess - photo by M. Force.



Near the top of the N ridge of Queen Bess - photo by M. Force.



Phil and Dave on the summit of Queen Bess - photo by E. Hinze.



The western side of Chisel Pk - photo by M. Force.

on the west face and the disgusting southwest gully, returning to camp 9 hours after departing.

The next 2 days, Monday and Tuesday, were days of rain, eating, and reading. As the camp then consisted of 2 four-person tents, each with three happy campers, and a gear tent, the whole group could comfortably munch away in one tent. Breakfast was followed by the daily reading from freedom of the hills.

By Wednesday morning all members of the party were feeling sufficiently tent-bound to head off into the fog. Heading up to the Armada-Lynn col, they found the rock wet and slippery, so opted for snow, roping up then heading off over the west Mantle glacier to climb Silver Swan via the glacier and snow slopes on the east. These took them close to the summit rock pile, up which they scrambled. The fog had cleared enough to view the precipitous drop-off to the north, and to glimpse Reliance and Determination to the west. After the glissade down. Mark, Paul and Maureen headed off towards Mantle, while Phil, Cheryl and Debbie headed back towards the Armada- Lynn Col. Debbie had had enough of the snow so was dropped off at the edge of the glacier. Phil and Cheryl then headed off after the other party, up Mantle Peak. Contouring around Armada's north east face, both parties eventually gained the north ridge, then marched up through mushy snow and fog to the summit - a small pile of rock. A compass course was then followed to the low point on the ridge south east of Armada and then back down to camp, which was reached as the invisible sun was setting.

During dinner that night they decided that, if the weather had not improved in the morning, they would radio out for an early departure. The dismal weather the next day resulted in the party being at Bracewell's lodge that evening. The Bracewell's generously offered coffee, showers and a very reasonably priced lakeside cabin for the night, an offer which was taken up by Paul, Maureen, Phil and Mark.

Party: Erich Hinze, Dave Hughes, Brian Gavin (organizer), Phil Kubik, Blair Mitten, Mark Force, Peter and David Stange, Paul Hunter, Maureen Hill, Debbie Caldwell, Cheryl Leskiw.

CLEANING UP THE MEADOW DOME AREA

1. Meadow Dome Christmas Camp, 1988

- by Steve Grant.

Following the success of the previous year's Christmas "Big Tent" trip to Aspen Peak, it was a foregone conclusion that we would do the same thing in a different area this year. As it turns out, there are few places suitable for such a camp,. We had never been to the place we decided to go to, but it looked good on the map. The chosen spot was the Meadow Dome area, between Lizzie cabin and Lillooet Lake. The only people we could determine who had been into the area were out of the country.

An advance group tried to reach Battleship Lakes by the north main fork of Lizzie Ck. logging road on December 24th. They encountered various difficulties and retreated. They reported to us from Pemberton that evening, Christmas Eve, that the north main had car-stopping ditches across it but too little snow for skiing, the headwall to the lakes looked impossible and snowless, and there was very little snow above treeline.

The advance group headed off on another set of adventures elsewhere, while in Vancouver we struggled with the devastation created by this news. Thank God for the phone system. Within hours a solid contingency plan was in place. We realized that given the snow shortage, the road towards Lizzie Lake would be drivable, thereby opening up the southern approach as a shorter access. The only person we were able to find who had actually been to the range, Chris McNeill, finally returned to Canada, was reached in Nanoose, and confirmed that the alternate route was sensible if not desirable. So the advance group had provided a valuable public service after all.

Despite the lessons of previous years, the troops could not be mustered out of bed in time to take advantage of precious hours of daylight. Paul H., the sole survivor of the advance group, awaited our arrival at Nairn Falls Park. He added a mountain of group gear to the mountain we already had in the car. Then the group had to be coaxed away from the Pemberton Hotel where they were threatening to eat. So it was mid-morning before we even began driving up the Lizzie Creek road. The south main had only a few centimeters of snow on it, and we were able to drive 7 km. to the bottom of a steep section before deeper snow and a fallen tree blocked us. After unloading, the drivers took the cars most of the way out to the lake road. Steve L. made his own guess about how much snow to expect and left

his van farther up. We walked back to the drop off point, and didn't start skiing until almost noon.

The trail breaking was about as easy as could be asked for, and the merits and loads of the various sleds were vigorously debated. Harold's unique monopod had sprouted a second ski since last winter. After three or four hours of travelling we reached the point 2km due north of Anemone Peak where we would leave the road and climb north into the target range.

At this time, an amazing social event took place. Some rebels looked at the slope, which obviously was sled - unfriendly, and decided that perhaps they'd cast their lot with a bunch of con artists. They wanted a democratic decision made as to whether to continue with the plan or to shift the destination to Cherry Pip Pass, visible and easily reached from the road. The democratic process required that we await the arrival of the rearguard. By that time, further progress would be halted by dark, and establishing camp would take a second day. Steve L. said: "Parliament is not in session". A few of us thought that what was happening was so unlikely that the others must be kidding, so we added the sled loads to our packs and began skiing to the top of a short clear cut.

A few minutes later, I was glad to be out of sight of the people on the road because I had to take off my skis and kick steps in icy snow up through steep, dense woods. Eventually this eased off, skiing resumed, and I continued breaking trail following the stream, looking for the flat area marked on the map around 1700m. At 4:15, gravity temporarily won its fight for my pack, so I hurried on without it, rationalizing that the perfect campsite had not been reached, and someone had to find it quickly before it got dark. Too bad for me, the woods closed in again, and the climb steepened as darkness fell. But at the last minute, I popped out onto a flat, open bench, with good views, forest, and water nearby. I rushed back down to tell the others and retrieve my pack. Steve L., Helen, Jorn, Jacqueline, Robin also made it to the site at 5 that night, after 5 hours of travelling. Stan was overtaken by darkness, and set up his tent in the boulder-filled stream bed, where he spent the evening being swallowed by deep holes hidden between the boulders.

At daylight, we confirmed that no better site was available, so it was safe to lay out the street grid in anticipation of the arrival of immigrants, level a site for City Hall (canvas tents), and dig a water hole. While the others started setting up one of the canvas tents, I skied down to the road to see who else might be coming. Everyone was heading up the broken trail.

Upon returning to camp, I discovered that Robin, Steve L., Helen and Stan had sneaked off to bag "Mt. Rugged". Since you can't have people getting extra summits on a trip, I charged off after them, and managed to reach the top in time to get back before dark. That evening, we set up the second big tent, and Jorn, Robin, and Jacqueline established their "outdoor cafe" - a snow pit dining room that later sported a fire.

The next day various groups headed out in poor weather. Robin engineered the construction of a trunk railroad over the pass to the Fried Egg Lake area, from where we veered off towards Meadow Dome. Or, at least, we meant to. The weather was lousy enough that Steve

L., Helen, Robin, Stan, Jorn, Jacqueline and I were near the top of Priory Peak before we realized that it couldn't possibly be Meadow Dome. At the top, it became evident through the stormy weather that it was a double summit, the other summit to the north was a few metres higher, and between us and it was a gap that we couldn't cross! On the return to camp, we met people all over the place, most of whom had been up Bellavista Ridge and visited Battleship Lakes. We also discovered that this area has wonderful potential for skiing off boulders and small cliffs.

December 29 again dawned stormy. The whole group, except Jay who had come down with the flu, pushed up to Bellavista Ridge, where the views were sufficiently "un-bella" to complicate finding the real summit. From there, we planned to find a way down around the west ridge to the Bellavista - Priory Pass, and complete a loop back to camp. Fierce independence resulted in the group splitting into units invisible from each other in the whiteout, independently verifying that traversing around the pass would be suicidal, and taking steep powder runs down the west slope of the peak towards Lizzie Creek. Loud nattering in the clouds ("Where are we? Where are you going? Is that a cornice? Is that safe? Where are you going?", etc. etc. ... ad nauseam.) allowed the larger group to reassemble, and we worked our way through the storm back along the ridge to camp.

The rate of snowfall kept increasing into the evening, and to our surprise people began arriving out of the night - Randy, Russ, Graham, and Bev. Graham was ferrying two packs up the headwall. He would go for a short stretch and then go down to pick up the second pack.

During that night, one would awake to find the tent dark and silent. A poke at the rather closer than normal wall sent the snow load swooshing down the side of the tent, and the dark silence was replaced with dim light and the sifting patter of falling snow. At 3, I decided that despite personal inconvenience, the big tents had to be checked for snow loading. It would be less work to clear them off before they collapsed than to fix them afterwards. I tunnelled out of my buried tent, and waded over to find the big tents starting the buckle. The snow I knocked off them pushed the side walls in, so I spent an hour shovelling it away from the sides. This was complicated by the hundreds of white guy lines hiding in the snow and darkness, and I finished by fixing an end pole that had telescoped. Then it was my tent's turn to get some breathing space, and back to bed. The complacent townspeople dreamed on.

In the morning, I awoke to the sounds of the residents of our stricken city pawing through the rubble searching for loved ones and salvaging the meagre possessions they had left lying around the night before. They marvelled at our flimsy City Hall, standing tall and intact. Soon things were in order again, and Paul K. led hip deep trail breaking up through the woods above camp. What had been intended as a ski day changed drastically when Paul announced that he would climb the west ridge of Mt. Lindisfarne, hidden in the fast moving grey clouds of the storm above us. I declared in my best authoritative voice that this was a Stupid Idea, and I would not be going. However, after a significant number of certified sensible and intelligent friends filed past me after Paul, I decided that someone had to make sure they didn't get into trouble. Besides, what if they made the top and I didn't?



Endless snow at camp - photo by S. Grant.



Mt. "Rugged" from Lindisfarne - photo by S. Grant

I was unable to catch up to the formidable Kubik until I found him standing in a jumble of snow blocks and mumbling about the damn snow moving. Yes, it certainly had. And then he continued up! Eventually, it got too deep for us to ski, so we kept going on foot, soon leaving the others behind. Views below had long since disappeared and conditions deteriorated as we climbed higher into the storm. Near the top, Paul stopped to put on more clothing, and I wandered around trying to find the true summit.



Below Mt. Lindisfarne - photo by S. Grant.

Once at the summit, Paul paused only long enough to gulp down a sandwich before charging off down the peak. I followed, and was getting warm again as I met Jorn, Jacqueline and Robin coming up. Since I was now comfortable, I headed back up with them to get "people on a stormy peak" pictures that usually are impossible in those situations. Descending again with them, we met Steve and Helen coming up. Amazingly, Steve skied all the way to the top. Significantly lower down, we ran into Stan determinedly climbing. Lower on the mountain, we rejoined Paul where he had stationed himself and was preventing anyone from taking photos of his avalanche. Then a very steep and deep ski run dropped us back into camp.

As darkness fell, Helen, Stan and Steve L. were still not back. We discovered that no one had taken a flashlight because we planned only to do ski runs. Discussions about those absent

didn't progress even to the point of deciding whether to go look for them before or after supper when we heard them on the slope above. It turned out that Stan had reached the summit alone and after everyone else. On the way back, along the summit ridge, his glasses had frosted with rime, and he had missed the snowed-in footprints that led down off the peak. He followed the tracks I had made looking for the summit and got disoriented. It had become pretty wild up there, got dark, of course, and he began preparing to bivvy. Luckily, Helen went back up and found him.

December 31 - Half the party packed up and left, taking with them a lot of the group gear and one of the big tents. Fortunately for those remaining, the day dawned bright and clear. The goal was to climb Meditation Peak, at 2600m the highest in the area, and higher than Cloudraker. This was accomplished without difficulty from the col joining it to Rugged. A snow wall at the top was provided for the comfort of the sightseers. Then we skied into a golden sunset on the powder slopes bounded by Meditation, Lindisfarne and Rugged.

Unknown to us, the people going home were having some fun of their own. Substantial trail breaking was required to get down the road. Randy and Russ had left their four wheel drive cars at the end of the drivable portion of the road. Needless to say, it no longer was drivable after the heavy snowfall. Russ was still up with us. Randy continued out with the others. Steve L., by driving downhill with chains on and his foot to the floor, was able to pretend that the Astro Van was a snowplow, and got down past the other cars. Then the van sputtered to a stop with the engine compartment jammed full of snow. They sorted that out and dropped Randy off at Twin Creeks Resort.

Up at the camp, the remaining wall tent vied for attendance with the hobo campfire under the stars. New Years was duly observed. The abandoned homesites gave mute testimony that our community had failed to provide jobs, and the residents had been forced to pack up and move back to the city slums. A community is not viable without proper access and citizens who do nothing but ski.

In the morning, it was overcast, so we gave up the idea of staying an extra day. The descent to the logging road was made hazardous by incredibly heavy packs. A tree conspired with my pack to give my face a lesson about immovable objects and inertia. It was a relief to heap the stuff on the sleds. and travelling was fast and easy on the broken trail down the logging road.

Soon we reached Russ' and Randy's cars, and kept on going since there was nothing much we could do for the poor things. Just down the road, we met Randy, accompanied by a formidable tow truck growling ever so slowly up the road. Randy remarked that they were "2 hours into the burn". While we were loading the remaining cars, the tow truck came out, ignominiously dragging the expensive new 4wd Camry out to the main road. Russ was then able to escape for free. Given where we'd parked and the amount of recent traffic we got out without any drama, but the drive along the unplowed and slippery Lillooet Lake Road was memorable.

The award for worst equipment went to Jacqueline. Both of her Merrell boots cracked across the soles, and her "Way Honed" skins turned out to be an incorrectly assembled version of a bad idea designed by poorly wired robots. Steve Ludwig earned the entertainment and resourcefulness awards, as he performed hilarious imitations of Sigge while converting Jacqueline's three-pins into cable bindings.

One result of the rout of the advance party and my own stupidity was that we ended up without one of the blue tarps. As it turns out, the tarps were essential. The heat from the stoves melted falling snow, and the resulting water dripped into the tarpless tent. When the stoves were out, the wet tent froze solid. The first group to leave took the wood stove. We found that the kerosene heater put out insufficient heat for the remaining tent, but an attempt to burn up the surplus fuel at least dried it. The new small lantern purchased by the club was perfectly adequate, and much easier to pack than the old lanterns.

Harold's plan to have late joiners bring desserts for everyone worked quite well. It was enjoyable to have treats that we wouldn't ordinarily bring. Harold's inspired and copious popcorn production was a highlight of the evenings. And just to make organizing these trips less of a thankless task - thanks, Harold.

Party: Paul Hannig, Erna Burda, Wayne Saunders, Jacqueline Bradshaw, Randy Enomoto, Russ Fretenburg, Steve Grant, Rosanne Konrad, Paul Kubik, Bev and Graham Rowbotham, Karin Rolfes, Harold Rydell, Robin Tivy, Jay MacArthur, Dave Hill, Jorn Jensen, Helen Sovdat, Stan Sovdat, Steve Ludwig.

2. Meadow Dome Easter Snows, 24-26 March 1989

- by Michael Feller

North Creek was not to be this year as the Lillooet River logging road was not plowed beyond the Railroad Pass turnoff. The usual uncertain road conditions dilemma was relatively easily resolved in favour of a trip to Meadow Dome to "clean up" some of the peaks the Christmas ski camp people had missed.

In rather uncertain overcast conditions, our convoy of three cars headed up the first turnoff on the Lizzie Creek logging road. It soon became apparent that this road was freshly plowed but several scrapes and the loss, yet again, of a licence plate meant that Steve's car was not to experience all of it. A combination of walking and ferrying gear and people in the remaining 4 wheel drive Tercels had the whole party a very respectable distance and elevation (1000m) up the valley, north of Meadow Dome.

After 2 km of logging road, a route was selected up through the forest and into the Battleship Lakes Valley. This proved steep, but relatively short (only 400m vertical) through heavily snowed-up forest. The climb was followed by a kilometre of beautiful, but cloudy, valley flats across some lakes and on, and on, to a pleasant campsite, once considered but rejected for a possible Christmas ski campsite. It was probably wisely rejected as the sleds would have

presented problems climbing up the steep slope to the Battleship Lakes valley.

Tents were then pitched, kitchens constructed beneath the trees (by the sensible people), or in the open (by those not fearing blizzards), and a fire was lit to warm our bodies and hearts. A vigorous search for firewood left the surrounding forests as denuded of dead wood as they would have been after several "Ross" camps. The comforts of the camp were such as to keep 67% of our female contingent there the following day while the rest of the party assaulted Meadow Dome. It must be admitted, however, that the flu and inclement weather (cloud and snow) also contributed to the lethargy of our female contingent.

The assault took Meadow Dome by surprise, so much so that she gave up without a struggle. Her summit, however, was littered with the refuse of a helicopter party, but the view through the clouds was one of beauty - the nearby precipitous north face of Priory Peaks looked particularly impressive as it occasionally pierced through the clouds. On the ski down, the assault party split up into several small parties paralleling and telepopping their way down exhilarating fresh powder. The afternoon saw these small parties exploring the gloom in all directions. With some views and sunshine, it would have been an idyllic place.

This was not to be, however, as the weather gods sought revenge for the sneak assault on Meadow Dome. The blizzard, accurately predicted yet again by the trip organizer, finally arrived. The light snow got heavier, cutting short the evening's festivities by the fire.

The next day appeared whiter, snowier, and windier than the previous one, so only a small group set off for the head of the valley. Steve and Paul K. were first off the starting blocks, heading for the peak immediately west of Meditation Mountain. This peak had been named "Mt. Rugged". Poor visibility, wind, snow, and steep rock foiled this attempt. The following party of Brian, Harold, and Michael, observing the masochistic attempt on Mt. Rugged, bypassed it to climb a peak to its north. Meanwhile, Jacques, always eager for gold, had realized back at camp that other people had left and might actually reach a summit before him. With poles flailing, skis whirring, and clouds of snow, he had set off in hot pursuit and was seen, during a lifting of the clouds, frantically trying to catch the others, which he eventually did, but I cannot remember who "got the gold". All 6 people managed to reach what appeared to be the summit (and on a later trip to the area - see the next report on Priory Peak - was indeed confirmed as being the summit). The remainder of the party, except for the ailing Jacqueline, skied more sheltered slopes lower down.

The blizzard caused an early return to camp where, during lunch, a consensus - somewhat mushy - was reached that a retreat to Vancouver was in order. The weather gods had won. The retreat was actually a rout for most of the party, who cunningly chose a route down the steep slope somewhat to the east of the ascent route. All those who chose this route ended up walking through dense young trees interspersed with huge logs and small cliffs, all covered only partially with deep soggy snow containing numerous holes and other discontinuities - a skier's nightmare. Eventually, however, the cars were reached and later, Vancouver.

Party: Harold Rydell, Steve Grant (Co-organizer), Paul Kubik, Rosanne Konrad, Paul Phillips, Sev Heiberg, Brian Vezina, Jacques Bilinski, Jacqueline Bradshaw, Evelyn Feller and Michael Feller (Co-organizer).

3. Priory Peak, 5-7 August 1989 -

by Steve Grant

This trip was scheduled to visit the same area as the Christmas ski trip, to see the area in summer plumage, to clean up the site of the ski camp, and to finish climbing the nearby mountains.

With the infamous tree finally cleared from the road to Lizzie Lake, we were able to drive to the east fork of the south main branch of the Lizzie road system. Some of the most entertaining car thrashing in years enabled us to drive to 1450m, just 1 km NW of Cherry Pip Pass, and the point where the bushwacking starts. As each car made its way through another obstacle, Robin would toss a bouquet of fireweed on the hood and proclaim: "TOYOTA - FROM JAPAN", etc. Get up there soon; this road won't last long!

Three parties formed. Anders was fed the coordinates of the lake where we planned to camp, and sped into the forest. A fast group was soon out of contact with the rest of us. At 1720m, I left my pack and went to the Christmas campsite, arriving just as the fast group popped out of the woods into the bright little meadows. The minor mess, mostly unburned firewood and aluminum foil, was soon cleaned up, and I set the fast group on course for the lake before retrieving my pack and rejoining the slow group.

The lake, at 1940m just east of Bellavista Ridge, had a flat grassy campsite and the shallow, tepid water was soon polluted by swimmers who enjoyed having a sandy bottom. At this point, Anders threw the trip itinerary into disarray by proposing a pre-supper climb of Priory. That this was a race to the summit was immediately evident as people sprinted out of camp, still cramming things into their packs. Less than two hours later, we were on top. In order to discourage future episodes of such silliness, I won't name who we were. The time consuming return traverse along the north slopes of Bellavista Ridge proved that it is faster to reach Priory by going over the top of Bellavista. While we were on Priory, Barb, Kumiko, Harold, Mike, and Sev had a leisurely climb of "Mt. Rugged".

The next morning there was a lot of milling about in camp since the destination peak had been climbed. Anders headed off by himself to climb Lindisfarne by its west ridge. Robin, Kumiko, Evelyn, and Sev traversed high from the camp towards the south slopes of Meditation. Jacques, Barb, Mike, Harold, Karin, Irene, Darlene and I went up to the col between Lindisfarne and Meditation. Now follow this closely. Harold and Karin turned off onto Anders' route. Jacques got far ahead and started up Lindisfarne's north ridge from the Lindisfarne-Meditation col. When this became too difficult, he bypassed the summit on the glacier to the north, and reached the top via the SE ridge. I went farther up Lindisfarne's north ridge, but ran out of nerve in class 5 stuff, and had been joined by the others by the time I had given up. Robin had approached from Meditation, and we bypassed the ridge problem on the glacier, then followed goat tracks up steep snow and then loose rock back onto the north ridge.



Robin lecturing the troops on the summit of Aurora Pk., prior to evacuation - photo by M. Feller.



Meditation Mtn. from the summit of Aurora Pk. - photo by M. Feller.

Upon reaching the top, we found that Harold and Karin were there, but Jacques and Anders had already left for the L-M col. There were so many tents at the Stein festival at Mt. Currie that we could see them from here. After a very leisurely bask in the sun, we departed for the SE ridge access to the glacier, and with some trepidation and step-cutting crossed it to reach Aurora Peak. Along the way, we met Sev, who had been up Meditation and was continuing on his way to Lindisfarne. Anders and Jacques were soon spotted on Meditation. Our mob gingerly crossed the glacier again to reach the L-M col. Then Mike, Evelyn, Robin, Darlene and I went up the south ridge of Meditation while the balance of the group descended to return to camp. Robin was starting to mention some physical discomfort. During this whole time, Kumiko had gone up Meditation, lost sight of everyone else, went part way up the south ridge of Lindisfarne, and then returned to camp.

Anders and Jacques continued up "Mt. Rugged" before going to the campsite, and eventually everyone made it back. By this time, Robin looked very ill, and was unable to eat or lecture. After a starry cold night, we were greeted by another perfect day. Sev stole out of camp early to climb Priory, and was followed after sunrise by Harold and Mike. As the rest of us got up, it was apparent that Robin's condition was serious. After all, he hadn't left his tent or said much of anything for 12 hours. The party was well supplied with the medical expertise of Irene, Kumiko and Barb, and the diagnosis was either appendicitis or food poisoning. As Robin was in too much pain to even attempt to stand up, a helicopter evacuation was indicated. We also were confident that he must have been in pretty bad shape to let this go on his record. Jacques and Barb left for the nearest phone. On the drive down, they missed a hidden corner and briefly got stuck. A radio phone call from Twin Creek Resort did the rest.

Darlene and I headed to the last peak I thought I had not been up, while the others assisted Robin or prepared for the chopper's arrival. When we reached the more eastern of the twin summits NW of "Rugged", we discovered two important things. The other summit was higher, and there was a class 5 gap separating the two. But this did mean that when Paul, Mike, Brian, Harold, Jacques and I skied up the other one at Easter, we actually were up the peak (at the time, near our exposure limits in a snowstorm, we had a glimpse of the eastern summit and though it was higher), and there had been no cairn. Over on Priory, Mike and Harold never saw Sev as he climbed the peak, and Harold decided that his dental training was too valuable a resource to our society to risk in the gap separating Priory's lower south summit from the north summit, so Sev and Mike both soloed it.

Darlene and I got back to the lake just before the chopper arrived. When it did, Robin scooted towards it at high speed, fortunately accompanied by Anders in case he stood up into the rotor. The paramedics thought the two of them were just helicopter groupies or something, and walked around them to where we were holding Robin's tent to enquire of us where the patient was.

Soon after, Sev, Mike and Harold returned, and an hour later, we were at the cars. The next obstacle was the press of heat, dust, people and cars at the Stein festival. Robin had gone by ambulance to Lions Gate Hospital (demanding that they not drive so fast), which we visited on our way home. Tests yielded inconclusive results, the pain diminished, and he went home



Traversing beneath Lindisfarne looking back to Aurora - photo by M. Feller.



Priory Pk. from Bellavista ridge.-photo by M. Feller.

the next day.

This oddly neglected area is very worthy of visiting, winter or summer and we got a good dose of adventure on a excellent long weekend (ignoring the excessive heat and bugs).

Party: Sev Heiberg, Harold Rydell, Darlene Anderson, Evelyn Feller, Barb Bradbury, Michael Feller, Robin Tivy, Karin Rolfes, Kumiko, Jacques Bilinski, Irene Goldstone, Anders Ourom, Steve Grant (Catalyst).

MT. JUDGE HOWAY - FIRST WINTER ASCENT

10-12 February, 1989

- by Reinhard Fabische

After waiting patiently for two days, we finally received word - we had a plane. A boat trip was out of question as there was just too much ice on the lake. We arrived late Friday evening at the air strip at the north end of Stave Lake. Luckily, the air strip had hard frozen snow and we were able to land without difficulty. We made camp and went up at first light Saturday morning. Our plans were to ascend Judge Howay from the east. The Stave River crossing was much easier than anticipated as the river was low due to the cold weather. We crossed the river in our small rubber dingy without even getting wet. Bushwhacking was very minimal - about 1/2 hour and then we were at the bottom of the waterfall. After a few minutes we were ready to start climbing with nicely sharpened ice axes. The waterfall was frozen solid, which allowed us to avoid having to scramble up the bluffs and trees on either side.

Later we had a few difficulties using the gully as it splits up into branches. The branch we chose ended up with a very steep waterfall which was only partially frozen. So instead we chose a bluff covered in ice which turned out to be more difficult than we realized. At the head of the bluff it got narrower and steeper with vertical icicles hanging down. These compounded the problem by dripping water. Also, by now the sun was gone - it was almost dusk. The way out of this situation was a tree. This I grabbed hold of then cramponed up one of its roots. One rope length later we were in a clearing and able to get back to the main gully. Now finding snow we were able to make camp. We stopped at the hanging valley at about 1050m.

Sunday we rose early and started the route recommended by Culbert. This took us to the North Ridge. By midday, as we reached the ridge, we could see Judge Howay and our hopes rose. By now we were climbing some steep slopes. We got to the top of the snow slopes and realized we were on a separate mountain - one north of Judge Howay and of course the wrong one. We couldn't continue the route because of a steep cliff down and the same across. The guidebook-recommended access just didn't exist. We had to descend back to base camp, but not willing to give up.

Monday morning we took a route which we had done previously in the summer. Heading more to the southwest initially, then turning west, the going was fairly easy. We were then at

approx. 1750m and the work began. A long, steep couloir, which we enjoyed climbing, brought us close to the summit peak. A knife edge snow ridge lead us to the foot of this peak. The snow ridge was very exposed, as was the face of the summit peak. It was steep and short - about 2 rope lengths. But we made it to the top at approx. 3 p.m. After a brief breathtaking visit, we descended back to base camp.

Tuesday morning we broke camp and arrived back at the landing strip to await our plane out.

Party: Skip King and Reinhard Fabische

SKI PATROL TO THE ROCKIES, 24 March - 31 April, 1989

- by Robin Tivy

To Bob Saunders
Mountaineer in Chief, Rockies Division
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Bob:

On the dates of March 24 to April 31, a patrol from the Coastal division ventured deep into territory under your jurisdiction, without following the normal protocol of advance notice. We hereby submit a full written report of our activities to you.

Location: Canadian Rockies, Banff National Park

As our defense at not following normal protocol, I can only say that the trip was not premeditated: The team did not know they were definitely going out on assignment until 11:00 p.m. March 23, the day before we left. The main uncertainty was Mr. Jorn Jensen, who was in Mexico for the preceding three weeks, and slipped back into the country only a day before the assignment. He tried to hide out, but Klaus and I were waiting, and eventually he was picked up returning to the Center at 10:30 p.m. Exhausted though he was, he realized that tradition dictated he had no choice but to go. Thus we proceeded to the new Safeway store with the computerized food list, setting the Days variable to a value of 8 and picked up the necessary provisions. We returned at midnight March 23, and were underway by 8:00 am the next morning.

Here are the daily reports:

Day 1: 1989 March 25, 10:00 am. Klaus Haring, Jorn Jensen and I started at the Fish Creek parking lot, and proceeded up the Lake Louise skiout, heading toward the Skoki valley, via Deception pass. The day was overcast and the pass whited out. That night we made camp in the upper Skoki valley, toward Ptarmigan peak. Equipment selected was a rope, ice axe, and 8 days food. Objectives were to climb some of the peaks around the Drummond glacier,

than proceed to do a loop up Douglas lake, over Bonnet glacier, down into Johnson creek, over Pulsatilla pass, down Wildflower creek, up Baker Creek and out.

Day 2: Went down past Skoki lodge to investigate. The guide told us that people used to go up to the Drummond glacier in the old days, but no one had been up there lately. So we went back up and around Skoki mountain to Red Deer lakes and onward to the creek draining the Drummond glacier. Went right to the end of valley to establish camp, but could not find any water, so we retreated half-way down the valley and made camp by first open water.

Day 3: Overcast, therefore we could not go up onto Drummond glacier, so we went for a day trip up to "Natural Bridge", on the opposite side of Red Deer river. There was a broken trail twisting all over the place, but finally going part way up the creek. At Natural Bridge, we briefly amused ourselves by climbing across it, and risking our lives, then had lunch at a large boulder just above the bridge. After lunch, we went further up to investigate the approach to a "haute route" to the Bonnet glacier: going to the west of Mount Douglas, Mt. St. Bride and to the east of Lychnis mountain, and from there onto the Bonnet glacier. I must report that the approach was perfect, and this route should be considered in your inventory. We kept to the left of the valley, going up a perfect ramp which led to a small dip at about 2400m. Here we turned around, because of time and bad visibility. However, it was obvious that the route continued without trouble to the high pass beside an obvious "horn" at 2900m.

Day 4: Somewhat overcast, similar to the summit day several years ago on the Mt. Chown expedition. However, in spite of the weather, we decided to try to climb one of the Drummond peaks anyway. The steepest part of the route is a wall at the end of the valley. By using a great diagonal ramp running from left to right we got up to the glacier with minimal exposure to avalanches. We stayed to the left of the tongue of the lower glacier not going on the glacier until about 2600m. The weather deteriorated steadily, and finally we had a lunch stop, built a deep snow fort, and discussed turning back. However, after about an hour it cleared enough to see the center peak (3080m), so we proceeded to climb it. The wind howled, and the view was minimal at the summit.

Day 5: Broke camp amid perfectly clear skies and proceeded down the Red Deer river. We cut through the trees over the shoulder to the Douglas lake valley. This was our first sugar snow experience off the broken trails. Had lunch in the brilliant sun at outlet of lake although a cold wind was present. After lunch we began laboriously churning across the lake. Even on the lake the snow was completely sugared out and only rarely could you stay on top. It was not as bad as our last year's White Rabbit expedition, since at least you could lift your foot without the ski being held down by a crust, but it was bad enough.

Klaus started off strongly, resuming his role as a great locomotive pulling a train across the lake. However he soon developed trouble with the toe piece on his mountaineering bindings. It seems that when he gets snow under his boot, it pries off the binding. Although on some previous trips, he also had this trouble, this time he pulled the screw right out, and it was lost, making the event more serious. Fortunately Jorn had extra screws and I had a good

screwdriver. However, he needed a piece of wood to wedge in the screw hole, so the screw would hold. Since we were in the middle of the lake, no wood was available. The solution was for Klaus to clamp down his heels to prevent the toe from flexing. Thus the great "locomotive" dropped to the rear, and shuffled along until we reached some small wooden shrubs beyond the lake.

While on the subject of binding trouble, I should also mention that Jorn had plenty of trouble with his old Grasshoppa type cable bindings. The adjustable wing was always slipping several notches outward and also bending downward. We later discovered that the reason the wing could move freely, even with the screws tight was because the hole in the "wing" was elongated by the stress of doing turns on the previous days. At this point I must report to you that we in the coastal division have concluded that these bindings are no longer suitable for regular service in the back country. Today's heavy boots and rugged situations put too much demand on this equipment, which was engineered for much lighter Nordic boots, rather than today's Vibram soled boots. As you remember, I had previously had plenty of problems with the same system on the Mt. Chown assignment. In the year subsequent to that, I subsequently broke 6 separate wings and a plate, before finally scrapping the entire system. It seems after about 5-8 years of service that the accumulated metal fatigue makes them unreliable. In the coastal division, we are now converting exclusively to the Chouinard one piece aluminum bindings which are half the weight and have performed perfectly for the past two years. However, as they get to be old, it will probably be wise to monitor metal fatigue and carry spares on longer assignments.

Eventually, Klaus patched his skis, and resumed trail breaking. I must report another observation: in spite of the overall superiority of narrower skis for service in the Rockies, it seems that the wider skis are slightly more capable of staying on top of sugar crust. As second man, I was regularly breaking through places where Klaus had stayed above the crust.

The trail breaking was tough, and somewhat discouraging. Where are the broken trails of yesterday? In the mid 70's there might be some hope that we would meet another party coming the other way, and thus have a broken trail, but not today. Nowadays, everybody is flying in to a hut on some glacier or lying on a beach in Hawaii instead of going out on patrol.

In the perfectly clear weather, St. Bride to the west dominated our view for much of the day. It looks like it would be difficult to climb, either summer or winter. Eventually at the head of the valley, I briefly resumed the lead to put a daring stretch of "railway" through a series of large boulders to the east of the creek canyon. This put us in the high meadow and onward to the end of the valley. By the time we reached the end of the valley it was getting late and we could not find water. We skied up the creek bed leading to the east and had almost given up when Klaus shouted he had discovered open water, just before the creek narrowed into a deep canyon. So we made camp amid the large spruce trees on the bank of the creek. The night grew cold, particularly so after the hot sun all day. Here I made the only fire of our trip and we warmed our boots and looked at the stars and northern lights before proceeding to bed.

Day 6: Broke camp and almost immediately climbed out of the creek bed and climbed up the open sparsely treed slopes to tree line. Our route to the top went almost straight up. The slope was bombproof, so there was no concern for avalanches. We did not go to Gwendolyn Lake, which was somewhere to the east. Got onto the smooth glacier at about 2750m and roped up. In hindsight, it was probably not necessary to rope up, and certainly we could have done the whole trip with only a single ice axe in the party. However, we had both rope, and three ice axes.

We had lunch at about 2800m on the Bonnet glacier, just before the top of the rise. Here we could clearly see that the "haute route" previously described would have been quite feasible, and avoided Douglas lake. We bypassed the approach to Bonnet peak, and an hour later reached the pass at 2850m. Since we still had plenty of time, Klaus proposed we stroll up the south peak of Bonnett which was 3220m. The wind was howling across the bare slopes, and was quite cold. At about 3000m, a large bird with a wingspan of almost a metre hovered over Klaus' head in the strong winds, then turned and flew downwind right to the summit of Bonnet peak.

Although a ski pole would have been more practical, we took our ice axes to the summit to maintain a professional image for official pictures. We reached the summit cairn which was in excess of 3 metres in height at about 3:00 p.m. As the sky was still mostly clear, we were able to see peaks in every direction. Mt. Hector was clear to the top, but Assiniboine and some others had their tops in the clouds. The main peak of Bonnet was slightly higher than our peak: 3250m. Perhaps another day...

Back at the pass, it was time for the big descent into Badger pass. There had already been 2 cornice triggered avalanches off the slopes to the west, with the top layer having slid off to a depth of about 60cm. The debris lay across our path below. We went down a little east of the lowest point in the pass, which was not quite as steep and concave. Although no-one was really worried, we went down the slope one at a time.

Badger pass had a cornice right across it, but we climbed up, punched through the cornice and then proceeded down into Johnson creek where we made camp. Here we cursed the snow, snarled at each other, fell into the creek, and finally crawled into the sack. It had been a big day.

Day 7: It snowed all night and the morning was quite mild. After a brief route discussion, it was decided to stick to our original plan of going up over Pulsatilla, down Wildflower, up Baker Creek, and out. Hopefully we would be able to make camp high in Baker Creek, and pop out at the car fairly early the next day for the drive home.

I started off in the falling snow, breaking a trail. For once, my pack felt light, and so I was able to concentrate on engineering an interesting but efficient route to the pass. The route kept to the left passing through an enchanted forest of larch trees on the western side of the valley, made beautiful by the freshly falling snow on their bare branches. Jorn described the whole scene as being from a Chinese painting. Higher up, the conditions deteriorated, and

by the time I got close to the pass, I couldn't tell what the slopes above looked like amid the driving snow. However, my skis were performing well and I avoided using my skins all the way over the pass. Jorn was somewhat behind, and then Klaus, both using skins.

Down into the trees of Wildflower creek, we were at first able to follow a trail in the valley bottom. However, it seemed a lot less distinct than when I was there 12 years earlier, and we soon lost it and stayed close to the bottom of the creek, rather than on the right bank as I thought I remembered. However, it didn't seem to be any great disadvantage, and eventually we reached the junction with Baker creek, deep in the canyon. The time was about 4:00 p.m.

Here we all put on skins, and proceeded to climb, with Klaus once again in the lead. There was no sign of the trail shown on the map. At about 6:00 we emerged into the clearing and lake shown at 1900m, where we made camp and proceeded to cook dinner. The temperature dropped again that night, and Klaus retired to the tent, while Jorn cooked and I laid out a fairly extensive model railroad around the camp, complete with two reversing loops, a turntable down by the water, and numerous spur tracks.

Day 8: The next morning, I got out of the tent by 6:40, and was away before 8:00 to break a trail up to Baker lake, while the others finished breakfast and packed up the tent. The sugar snow had enough of a consolidated layer on top and I rarely punched through. Going up Baker creek, I stayed to the left slopes, but eventually was forced down onto the creek itself, rather than cross an avalanche slope. On my way down I set off a small slide which poured down onto the creek bed, leaving bare rock on the bank. When I emerged into the open meadows at 2100m, I was still well ahead of my pursuers. So I set out along the left edge of the meadow, about 50 metres above the bottom. Gradually I climbed into the trees, with the idea of cutting off the corner and going across Tilted lake. However, I wasn't sufficiently sure of this idea, so I eventually found myself at the normal outlet of Baker Lake, after a little bit of zigzagging up and down. Still no sign of my pursuers. So I began to imagine I was the RCMP's most wanted man, leading a crazy trail through the mountains, escaping to freedom across the frozen north. I marked the time in the snow: "10:30", and set out across the lake. At the far end of the lake, I climbed the pass, and looking back over my shoulder, I saw a figure emerging at the outlet, in hot pursuit. Soon he was joined by a second constable. I hooted at them, marked 11:00 in the snow, and disappeared over the pass.

At Ptarmigan lake, I met the first outsiders, who had skied up from Skoki. They asked where I had been, and I gave them a matter of fact route description: down around Skoki, up to Natural Bridge, up the center peak on the Drummond, up Douglas lake through the valley of hidden lakes, over Bonnet glacier, up the unnamed peak on the left, down into Johnson creek... When I said Johnson canyon, there was some recognition, and their eyes grew wider. I was speaking in a slow drawl, like a trapper who had been out too long, as my face was cold. If they could only have known I was the mad trapper, the RCMP's most wanted man, and leading a twisted trail though the frozen north. I would have talked longer to them, since they were so impressed, but if I talked too long, I might have been caught, and spent the next 20 years behind bars. So I told them to give the message to the other two that I

would wait (to turn myself in) at Boulder pass, which I reached at 11:56 am. Here I waited for an hour with no sign of the law, so I amused myself by granting numerous interviews to the day trippers from Skoki.

Unknown to me, as soon as I disappeared over the ridge above Baker creek, the chief of the pursuit force (an Austrian called K. Haring) had yet another equipment failure with his aging, decrepit equipment, and had immediately ordered back the eager young Danish constable who was hot on my tail. It seems the heel cable for his binding had completely self destructed. After some study, they substituted a piece of prussik rope, and continued the chase to Boulder pass. When they arrived, they were both in high spirits, exclaiming about multiple equipment failure. It seems that in addition to Klaus breaking his bindings, Jorn had also split the tail of his ski by throwing them down the rock bank in Baker creek, at the place where I had cut loose the slide.

Now we get to the end. With both the constable and the chief in front of me, there was only one possible way to escape life behind bars: My chief pursuer had been on limited rations for days, which gave me the opening I needed. I reached into my pocket and my hand closed around a small smooth object, which I thrust at the chief. He took one look at the Purdy's chocolate Easter rabbit, and knew he had no choice but accept a large piece as a bribe. I thus bought my freedom, and the chase was over.

We skied down the ski-out, and returned to the coastal division, ending our patrol in your region.

Yours respectfully,

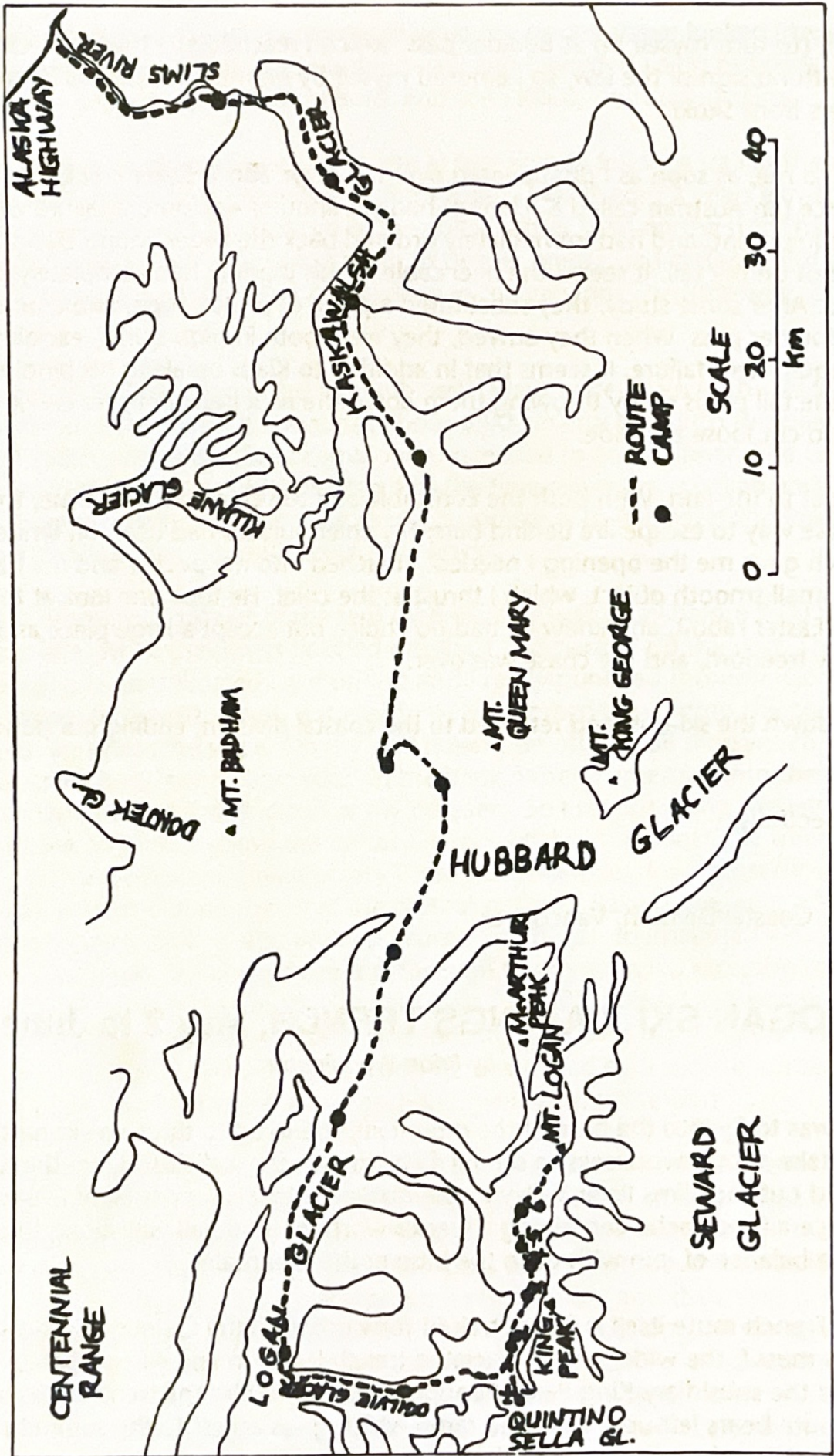
Robin Tivy,
Organizer, Coastal Division, Vancouver

MT. LOGAN SKI VIA KINGS TRENCH, May 2 to June 6, 1989

- by Brian Waddington

The plan was to fly into the base of the mountain, spend up to three weeks on the mountain and then take about two weeks to ski out 170 km over the icefields, down the Kaskawalsh Glacier and out the Slims River Valley to the Alaska Highway, for a total of five weeks. We would place a food cache containing a week's worth of food half way along the ski out route and fly the balance of it in with us to the base of the mountain.

The King Trench route itself is quite straight forward; from the Quintino Sella Glacier west of the Logan massif, the wide, gentle glaciated trench leads up and eastward between the main massif and the subsidiary King Peak. At approximately 4000m the trench ends at a saddle and the route bears left up a glaciated ramp which gives access to the summit plateau. There is a small icefall to be negotiated at the bottom of the ramp.



At the top of the ramp, the route crosses a 5400m col and descends slightly before traversing the broad summit plateau, bypassing some minor summits and reaching the peak, located at the eastern end of the massif. The size of the summit plateau makes it necessary to camp there, as it would be next to impossible to make the summit from a camp at the top of the ramp (a distance of about 10km; all of it above 5300m).

Because it would be difficult to retreat if someone became ill, it is extremely important to be well acclimatized before venturing out to the plateau. That, and the fear of bad weather, rather than technical difficulty, were the main reasons we allowed so long to climb the mountain.

On May 2nd we flew in to our first camp at the 2600m level on the Quintino Sella Glacier. I must admit the flight really blew me away. The scale of the glaciation was far greater than anything I had seen before, even in the Himalayas. Not long after takeoff, I got my first look at Mt. Logan, dominating the western horizon though it was still 80 km away. For a moment I was overawed; I really wondered what the hell we were doing up here.

The next day we began our ascent. Basically, we yo-yoed our way up the mountain, spending one or more days ferrying loads of food up to the site of the next camp before finally moving up to inhabit it. We planned to make our camps about 600 m vertical apart, and spend two or three nights at each camp to allow time for acclimatization. In fact, we wound up moving somewhat more slowly than this due to the slower acclimatization of some of the party and to stormy weather.

When we moved up to camp 2 everything seemed to be going well. But after dinner Tim felt ill and Darlene's headache became worse. As a result they decided to return to camp 1 as they weren't sufficiently acclimatized to sleep at camp 2. Descending solved the immediate problem, but we were a bit disturbed to see altitude problems so early. Eventually, Tim and Darlene did acclimatize, but they had to sleep at a lower elevation for a few nights before catching up to Greg, Dave and myself at camp 3. In fact, Tim proved to be one of the strongest in the party at higher altitudes, in spite of feeling the worst at first.

Dave, Greg and I made a carry most of the way to camp 3. We ran into our first Logan storm, and had to leave our loads a few hundred metres short. The weather cleared the next day, so we carried another load all the way to camp 3. And on May 7th, the three of us moved up to camp 3. We were careful to locate camps 2 and 3 well away from King Peak. The north face of King Peak is over 1200m high and a face that big just had to avalanche now and again. And it did - several times a day. It was awesome to watch a great chunk of ice fall from one of the hanging glaciers, shatter into countless pieces and gather snow with it until it formed an avalanche a couple of hundred metres wide which travelled most of the way across the bottom of the trench before finally dissipating.

The next few days were spent carrying loads up through the icefall onto the ramp and the site of camp 4 at 4500 m. This involved a little bit of roped-up walking and the crossing of



Camp 1 in King's Trench - photo by B. Waddington.



Between camps 1 and 2 - photo by B. Waddington.

several snowbridges, one of which we belayed across. We thought it was pretty simple, but a rather lavishly equipped American party on the route at the same time as us fixed a rope across it.

During this period Tim and Darlene rejoined us, feeling better acclimatized. However, Greg began to suffer a recurrence of asthma which hadn't bothered him for years. This slowed him down somewhat for the rest of the time on the mountain, but didn't stop him.

On May 11th we all moved up to camp 4, and on the 12th, made a carry to camp 5 at 5200 m. Now we were looking across at King Peak, not up at it. The change of scene was welcome as the Trench started feeling a bit claustrophobic after a while.

Unfortunately the weather then changed, and we were tent-bound for four days. The storm was saving the best for last. On the night of May 16th it snowed heavily and the wind was so strong that the tents flapped hard all night, even inside the 1 1/2 metre snow wall, making sleep impossible. An unprotected tent would have been shredded.

At approximately 4:00 am, I heard calls for help from Dave and Darlene in the other tent. They said they were buried and couldn't get out. Snow had drifted around the tent, completely burying its entrance. I cleared the snow enough to liberate my trapped companions and soon all three of us were busy shovelling. We were almost finished when Dave had a BRI (Bootie Related Incident) and fell on his tent, breaking a pole. Fortunately, the pole later proved to be repairable. However, for the remainder of that night, all five of us had to cram



Camp 4 with King Pk. behind - photo by B. Waddington

into Tim's three-man dome tent.

When we finally emerged from the tent the next morning, we were surprised to see that the storm had passed. It was still windy and in our stunned condition we thought the storm must be continuing. Once we gathered our wits, we were soon on our way to camp 5 where we spent just one night before pushing on over the col onto the summit plateau on May 18th to make camp 6 at 5300 m. The weather worsened again and the next day was a write-off.

May 20th started off no better, but by mid-morning improvement was evident. Dave, Greg,

Darlene and I climbed a nearby bump, which we turned back from because we didn't like a steep bit just below the top. Meanwhile, Tim, seeing what might be the only chance at the peak, went for it solo. He was successful, returning tired but happy after a long day.



The next day, fortunately, the weather held so the rest of us went for the peak. We started out on skis, but soon left them in favor of ice axe and crampons. The snow was so wind-packed that crampons were needed to get any grip at all. We traversed north of the false summit and crossed the final flat bit before the summit pyramid. We only roped up after Dave fell up to his armpits in a slot. I remember thinking that we really should be roped up, but I felt strangely detached and couldn't bring myself to care much.

Ascending the summit pyramid, a matter of perhaps 200 m, seemed to take forever. We all felt the slowing effect of the altitude. Eventually, we reached the top. The peak

Greg on the summit ridge of Logan - photo by B. Waddington.



Skiing beside the Ogilvie icefall on the way out - photo by B. Waddington.



Food cache camp on the ski out - photo by B. Waddington.

itself rather reminded me of Eldorado Peak in the North Cascades, but the surroundings were of course totally different. The view was amazing. None of the photos I took convey anything like the sense of wide open space that I got standing there. The enormous 30km wide Seward Glacier was stretched out a distant 4000m below us, and Mount St. Elias dominated the western skyline. Even Mount Fairweather was visible away to the south. We stayed there quite a while soaking it all up. But time was passing, we could see the next storm coming, and it really was time to go. It was a long trudge back to the plateau camp.

Now, having reached the peak, we just wanted to get down off the mountain as soon as possible. Life at 5300 m just wasn't that comfortable. It was quite cold (perhaps -20 degrees C during the day and well below -30 degrees C at night). Cooking took forever, and we all felt the altitude a bit.

As luck would have it, the next day was stormy and we had to stay put. The next day was only slightly better, but we were so anxious to get down that we went anyway. It was tough crossing the col to get off the plateau, with high winds and blowing snow. Once we descended a bit we got out of the killer wind and soon warmed up. A lot of unstylish skiing followed as we made our way back down to the Trench, where we camped about halfway between the old camp 1 and camp 2. The snow was for the most part windblown, and we were winded! In fact, there was very little good skiing the whole trip.

The next day was a rest day, and we celebrated with wine (partly frozen) and all sorts of food. It was great to eat all those foods that we couldn't eat up high because they were frozen. And we could sit around outside - quite a novelty after the higher camps.

On May 25th Tim flew out with Andy Williams to catch his plane back to England. The rest of us began the skiout. The skiout was much like a ski traverse on a big coast range icecap, except that everything was bigger. Many of the glaciers we travelled were 5 or 10 kilometres wide. First we descended beside the Ogilvie icefall, then we traversed 150km of glacier with only 1200m elevation gain and 1800m elevation loss. This is where the Krazy Carpets really paid off. With some difficulty, we located our food cache several km from the location we had on the map.

By the time we reached the Kaskawalsh Glacier it was June and the snow was going fast. After surviving the snow swamps, we walked the last 25km of the glacier, most of it on an enormous medial moraine. A soggy, but immensely enjoyable walk down the Slims River Valley to the Alaska Highway on June 6th finished off the trip.

Party: Darlene Anderson, Tim Booth, Greg Statter, Dave Williams and Brian Waddington



Snow swamps on the glacier after 10 days of skiing out - photo by B. Waddington.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE B.C.M.C. ROCKIES SUMMER CAMP - July 1989

- by Paul Kubik and Michael Feller

1 Mount Athabasca - 15 July, 1989 (by Paul Kubik)

Mount Athabasca straddles the Banff-Jasper National Park's boundary. West lies the immense Columbia icefield and south, the long ribbon of the Saskatchewan Glacier. After climbing every day for the preceding week, we all felt pretty fit. So it was a hopeful group that began the 90 minute drive up the Icefields Parkway. It was a fair morning in the Bow Valley, so with considerable surprise we beheld a wedge-shaped thunderhead roaring down Arctomys Creek about 40 minutes later. The bottom of the cloudhead appeared of the order one kilometer high by two kilometers long and resembled a farmers ploughshare. We stopped on the highway to try to photograph it but as quickly as it came, it was gone.

We regrouped on the approach road to the Athabasca Glacier where giant rubber-tired vans the size of open-pit mining dumpsters roam the glacier. Keeping well out of sight of the behemoths, we slunk up the moraine on Mt. Athabasca's north side. Our intention was to gain the long west ridge connecting Mounts Athabasca and Andromeda. A well-worn approach track testifies to the popularity of this route.

Several options for gaining the ridge exist. The most serious, a ten-pitch ice route didn't have much activity. Given the sort of day (laidback at the moment) and that we were a mellow lot, we opted for one of the other two possibilities. Given that another group of two was apparently stalled due to some momentary difficulty on our first choice of route, we opted for the longer and possibly less rewarding second choice. This involved ascending the lower glacier along a beaten path and then traversing up and right towards Mount Andromeda. About half way along a long crevasse separating us from the much higher upper glacier could be breached.

This was done in due course but not until the group with crampons on had demonstrated to the group without crampons on that it really was a good idea after all. And after all this, the group of two over on our first choice decided to back off and were now apparently coming our way.



Ascending Mt. Athabasca - photo by H. Kemp.

We eventually got off the upper glacier and onto the west ridge proper. Gaining the crest we ascertained with a considerable degree of certainty that we were in for a bit of convective activity courtesy of a rogue frontal system. It was at this point twelve kilometers southwest of us and rapidly approaching. That is to say that there was an entire front of individualized thunderstorms extending in a line north-south as far as the eye could see. It just happened to be that the meanest, darkest and ugliest of them was coming our way.

We kept on going as we figured we had a half-hour window in which we could bag the summit and still get off the ridge and back down to the glacier before the storm hit. Which in a way was probably quite fortuitous for us because, as it turned out later, a glacier is not a very good place to be in a thunderstorm.

The storm came faster than expected though we should have realized that it would be as fast as the one witnessed in Arctomys Creek. Within fifteen minutes the first dark clouds were streaming up from the Saskatchewan Glacier below. Hart unroped and made a mad dash for the summit. The rest of us milled around in confusion for several minutes debating whether to descend the west ridge.

Finally it was decided for us. Hart returned as the storm gathered intensity. A panicky group began stripping off all metal objects - ice axes, crampons, ice screws, snow flukes and cameras. We dropped the rope and harnesses where we stood and ran down a steep and rubbly rib on the south side of Mount Athabasca. The south rib would be directly in the face of the storm but in terms of safety from lightning, it would be as good as we could get. It was neither too high nor too low in profile which would minimize its potential as either a lightning rod or a spark gap.

In about three minutes we were really in it. There was no time to put warm clothes on. A wall of wind hit the exposed rib like a shock wave. It was all you could do to get your jacket on. And then came hail in big balls that hurt as it pummeled your head and bare flesh. I huddled on top of my pack and tried to protect my bare legs from the hail. The others did the same in



After the storm, from the summit of Mt. Athabasca - photo by R. Konrad.

preparation for any ground currents. One crack among the many rent the atmosphere slightly above and to the west. It was impossible to raise your head and look around and better not too. And then like the morning storm in Arctomys Creek it was over and blue holes were popping out all over the place.

We went back up the rib to the ridge, collected our gear and headed for the summit congratulating ourselves on our luck. The storm had passed directly over us and was now well to the east as evidenced by the track of hail left behind on the ground. The track was about three km wide and white with hail against the brown of the country rock. Nothing sinister appeared to be coming our way so we dawdled on the summit and took photographs. Further north you could make out Mount Robson and away to the west stretched the massive Columbia Icefield. Mount Columbia, as always, was shrouded in cloud.



*Sky Ladder on Mt. Andromeda as seen from Athabasca -
photo by Paul Kubik*

On the way down there was no sign of the other group of two until we were practically off the lower glacier. One of them had been struck, apparently by a ground current on the glacier. Evidently a bolt had arced from an ice axe two meters away to the victim. Fortunately for her the direct hit was some distance off.

The victim's partner hadn't noticed anything wrong until he turned around to see his girlfriend writhing in agony in the snow. When we met them they were travelling roped up although she seemed quite dazed and only expressed a desire to get down as quickly as possible. They didn't want any help and so we went on our way thankful that we had been spared any of those kinds of experiences.

Party: Hart Kemp, Simon Coates, Michael and Evelyn Feller, Uli Hausman, Rosanne Konrad, Paul Kubik.

2. Mt. Chephren - 18 July, 1989 *(by Paul Kubik)*

Mount Chephren is a striking summit. When approached from the south along the Icefields Parkway you can easily miss it amid the backdrop of imposing peaks lining this great north-south glacier-carved valley. It is only when you pull virtually abreast of its imposing east face that you comprehend the tremendous mass of rock that the peak embraces. The east and north faces rise above you over 1 1/2 km in vertical extent from the Mistaya River.

The mountain seems rather close from the near point along the highway. The hikers route though is rather circuitous. Beginning further back at the Waterfowl Lakes campground, a footbridge crosses the deep, fast-flowing Mistaya River. The trail ascends briefly towards the southwest before turning northwest along the margin of a swamp. Most of the 100 meter elevation gain to Chephren Lake is in the first kilometer before the swamp. The trail itself is quite swampy along much of the remaining section.

At Chephren Lake a rough route follows the south bank of the lake and another route, described in the Rocky Mountains - South guide book follows the north bank. A marmot crossing from north to south along the log jam at the lake end slipped into the water several times as we watched. This more or less settled any indecision we may have had as to choice of route. We followed the south bank and at times we went out onto the shallow lake edge where numerous small rocks made travel over the water faster than in the brushy forest fringing the lake. About two-thirds of the four km lake edge was travelled this way.



Mt. Chephren (left) and Whit Pyramid Mtn. (right) taken from the side opposite to that of the ascent route - photo by R. Konrad

After this, the lake edge became deep for a short section below a loose debris embankment that rose over 30 meters. The soil was too loose for large trees, but the alder vines provided good hand holds for swinging monkey-like along the lake. This brief bit of unpleasantness over with, there was a final kilometer of boulder hopping to reach the southwest end of Chephren Lake and camp.

The campsite lay directly beneath Mount Howse's east face. An improbable climbing route ascends the north-east rib which splits the face in two. Pocket glaciers lie at the base of the face on either side of the rib. Our camp was basically between any potential avalanches arising from these glaciers.

We had been warned by the Parks Service that the meadows at the end of the lake were quite fragile but all we could find was moraine. A brief shower put an end to the discussion over the optimal camp location within the general area, so we scraped out a few hollows and settled in.

A not so brief shower next morning shelved our ambitions when we awoke at five o'clock. But, after another hour and a half of sleep the weather had turned distinctly usable. Breaking away from camp in what seemed good time, we were shortly crossing Steve's makeshift footbridge over the nearby creek and heading up the moraine below Mount Howse.

Mount Chephren is ordinarily climbed from the alp slopes on the south side according to our "local" sources. A point of note here - "local" sources of information are almost always more complete and reliable than the "Climber's Guide to the Rocky Mountains of Canada - South". Our local source in this case was the Warden Service of Banff National Park. The climber's guide descriptions are brief and often inaccurate. Conditions have changed in the 76 years since the standard route was put up on Mount Chephren. So if you were to follow the description as stated in the guide book today, you should expect to climb vertical, featureless, waterfall-strewn black cliffs to gain the col between the White Pyramid and Mount Chephren. We chose a different route.

Between the southern alp slopes (the new standard route) on our right and the black cliffs (the old standard route) on our left lay a great red gut. The red gut ascends from a pocket glacier towards the black cliffs and then veers up and right from their base. After re-grouping momentarily for the first time since leaving camp we again split up. Steve ascended the red gut on steep snow and the rest of us on Class 4 rock with one aid move. We didn't see Steve again until the summit. His route in terms of speed turned out to be the best. Above the red gut, he cut back onto the west arete above the col and then over easy ground to the top.

Our Class 4 led back onto more snow and loose scree as it curved around towards the east. A second, narrower back cliff band rose above us. This black band, unlike the one below the col, was pierced in several places by gullies, one of which I was confident that we could get through. Off to the right, we were now well above the southern alp slopes and looked directly down upon camp. The new standard route must intersect our route somewhere nearby.

The first gully we tried was a spectacular black throat. It was the second gully to the left of the right hand wall which dropped precipitously down toward the lake. The black throat was somewhat loose but nevertheless offered good holds as we made our way through one or two at a time. After half a pitch of low class 5, it was over with too soon.

Above the throat a little more Class 4 climbing led to easy ground above the east face. We strolled up to join Steve on the summit. A look at the summit register showed only one name that we recognized and about four ascents per year.

Steve's route up was the obvious choice for the descent. The west arete was not all that steep so it was rather more effort than it was worth to do "jump turns" in the scree. We were soon at the point where one turned off the arete to avoid the col and the lower black cliff band. We were descending rather fast. Perhaps as a result of this, Glynnis had an unfortunate accident. Slipping on the scree, she dislocated her shoulder as she put her arm out for support.

Shoulder dislocations are excruciatingly painful as a rule, and this one was no exception. Glynnis would cry out in pain with only a slight shift in her body position. To minimize the pain, clothing was rolled up in a stuff sack and this was then stuffed under Glynn's injured shoulder. Her arm was then supported with triangle bandages from our first aid kits. It was rather lucky that in the group we had a considerable number of people with first aid experience. Rosanne, Theo and Glynnis all had taken wilderness first aid courses. Glynnis was able to provide self-diagnosis and directions in between her gasps of pain as she had the most first aid training among the group.

The shoulder couldn't be relocated as it was a first time dislocation and there was the possibility of pinching a nerve or artery. To move her was obviously out of the question, especially considering the terrain that we were in. Glynnis had to remain sitting the whole time as the pain when lying down was much worse. A level spot was scraped out of the scree and lined with a rope and spare clothing.

It would shortly be a bivouac situation with an injured climber at almost 3000 meters unless we could get a rescue operation underway. Steve was recalled from below where he had been preparing to descend the red gut. Speed was of the utmost urgency as it was now almost 3:00 and the rescue must be mounted before dark or before the next storm hit and flying became impossible. As there was considerable cloud cover, the latter was a distinct possibility. After assuring ourselves that there was nothing further we could do, Steve and I took off for Waterfowl Lakes Campground to notify rescue personnel in Lake Louise.

As a result of our haste, I was extremely uncomfortable descending the red gut. Carrying only an ice axe and no crampons everything depended on making no mistakes. Belaying being out of the question, I was conscious that I could be another accident in the making. The snow was steep and hard. A slip would without doubt mean a bad plunge over one or more small cliff bands that cut the snow slope through the gut. Runnels in the snow testified to the everpresent danger of a fall. At one point my boots slipped out of the steps I had

kicked and I dropped two meters. Fortunately, my full shank boots and ice axe were able to stop me before I gathered too much momentum. Half an hour later, and none too soon for me, I was out of the gut and safe but soaked in sweat from the tension and exertion. Steve was barely a minute behind.

Steve and I alternately passed one another depending upon our aptitude for certain kinds of terrain. Steve faster on snow, I on rock. We got into camp seconds apart, Steve having ultimately taken a final lead when I made a poor decision to descend a steep moraine that I had ascended that morning.

In camp I changed into running shoes and shorts in preparation for the final leg into Waterfowl Lakes. I also tried to find Sylvia who had stayed in camp, to let her know what had happened. She was nowhere to be found. I scrawled a note and left it at her tent and then took off. I eventually did contact her as I saw her on the trail on the way back.

The run out seemed to go quickly. In fact, Steve and I arrived at the campground within seconds of each other again although we did not see each other on the trail. On the way out a tree branch had attempted to rip my ear off and it was now covered in blood and streaming down my neck. I only felt sorry for the family party I encountered on the trail!

I have this image of the mother burned into my memory. She was walking, concentrating intently upon the ground as she picked her way among the tree roots, mudholes and shintangle. In the furthest reaches of her consciousness she heard something panting towards her along the forest track. Looking up abruptly, her hand rising towards her heart as it skipped a beat, she saw me as a crazed backwoods savage bearing down on her. A savage splattered in mud from the trail, sweat streaking down his face in rivulets, shirt ripped in shreds at the shoulder and bleeding profusely from an ear wound. There was no time to stop and explain that I was really a decent, civilized human being who for that one moment in time was trapped in a mind-wrenching ordeal, a race against time if you will, to attempt to get some kind of help to Glynnis before the fall of night.

We did succeed - our run out took all of two hours. The National Parks Service has a well-oiled rescue machine which was brought into play. Claire Israelson, the rescue coordinator, was dispatched to the accident scene in a helicopter adapted for high altitude rescue. (His name often appears in connection with rescues reported in "Accidents in North American Mountaineering".)

The rescue team was ready. After climbing into their own full body harnesses, they clipped themselves and the gear onto the business end of a large eyebolt on a hawser connected to the underbelly of the chopper. Dangling below the chopper some five meters they returned to the mountain and landed some distance below the accident scene.

Luckily the clouds lifted and within about four hours of the accident occurring, Glynnis was lying strapped into a stretcher and moving at over 150 km/hr as she flew a thousand meters above the Mistaya River. On landing, an awaiting Parks Service ambulance whisked a visibly

shaken patient to the hospital emergency room in Banff. Later that evening at 9:00 the doctors in Banff relocated her shoulder. It would be several months before she would regain full use of her arm and for the next six weeks it would remain firmly anchored to her side by a strap.

The rescuers made the decision to evacuate the whole party on the mountain. So, two at a time, Rosanne, Uli, Marilyn and Theo took the 1300 meter plunge to the campground in five minutes. This had taken Steve and I two hours and considerable exertion to accomplish.

Party: Glynnis Hood, Steve Grant, Theo and Sylvia Mosterman, Rosanne Konrad, Paul Kubik, Uli Hausman and Marilyn Cram

3. Mt. Lefroy, 13 July, 1989 *(by Michael Feller)*

We left the Abbot Pass hut in the chilly dawn air, the sky actually devoid of clouds (one of the few such days during the first week of the Rockies camp). The 500m high steep snow slopes of the west face of Mt. Lefroy rose above us into the blueness. A mild overnight frost had hardened the snow surface, creating excellent step kicking and, higher, cramponing conditions.

At the first of the rock buttresses, we roped up, then cramponed steadily and uneventfully upwards, pausing every so often to use rock gear, ice screws or ice axes for belays. A lone figure appeared coming up the glacier below us. Charging upward, he soon passed us - Uli required no rope. The summit ridge and the sun loomed closer until finally we were out of the blue coolness of the face into the sunny warmth of the summit ridge.

The summit was a real one - barely enough room for one person, so we sprawled or reclined on parts of the ridge just below it. It was certainly too small to provide for Steve's summit snow wall - instead he hacked a seat out of some nearby snow.

The views in all directions were impressive. After several days of clouds and rain it was indeed uplifting to see the Rockies in their true splendor. A cool breeze kept parkas on but Kodak made a few dollars out of our party as the views were recorded for posterity.

Lunch and a quick doze were followed by an uneventful descent of the face, now bathed in warm sunlight. Crampons were soon put away as the snow had softened up. Shortly after reaching the bottom of the face, wet snow avalanches began to sweep parts of it. Lounging in the afternoon sun at the hut, thoughts of New Zealand climbing drifted back - the masochistic early morning starts, crisp cramponing snow, the midday slush, the afternoon rests at the hut. This climb had all the ingredients of the New Zealand climbs - even the inconsiderate "other" party in the hut (a group on an instruction course led by "a legendary climber" managed to leave a huge pile of dirty dishes for the hut custodian to wash; their pre-dawn breakfast and departure was also not accomplished very quietly).

The following day four of us descended "the death trap" to Lake Louise, noting how Uli's upward tracks disappeared every so often beneath huge mounds of wet snow avalanche debris, while the rest of the party climbed Mt. Victoria. The culture shock at Lake Louise awoke us from the world of the pure snows above.



This climb, like most of the summer camp climbs, was relatively uneventful, but it did provide much inner contentment and satisfaction. It was memorable not for any dramatic events, but because everything worked - good companions, good weather, and a good trouble-free climb.

Party: Holly Robertson, Dave Percival, Hart Kemp, Simon Coates, Paul Kubik, Uli Hausman, Steve Grant, Evelyn and Michael Feller

*Climbing the last pitch to the summit ridge on Mt. Lefroy
- photo by H. Kemp.*



*On the summit ridge of Mt. Victoria
with the west face of Mt. Lefroy to the
left of the climber - photo by S. Grant.*



*Just below the summit of Mt. Victoria
- photo by P. Kubik.*



The summit of Mt. Lefroy - photo by M. Feller.

PETLUSHKWOHAP MTN AND A NEW ROUTE ON SKIHIST MTN, July 1-3, 1989

- by Brian Gavin

The Kwoiek Creek area was first visited by the club when Roy Mason lead a club camp to the area by flying into Kokwasky Lake in 1958. The BCMC later held a club summer camp in the area by flying to Haynon Lake in 1971. Over the past few years I had heard enthusiastic reports about the area and of Skihist. With all the latest information then, north Kwoiek Creek became a destination for a trip which had been scheduled for the Chilcotin during a period of forecast adverse weather.

We left Vancouver in the rain on a Saturday morning, and drove for hours into drier conditions, to finally park at roads' end at 1500 m elevation. This left just over 2 km travel to the proposed camp site at the lake east of Skihist. Travel was quite easy for the first km and then a couple of bad stretches of slide alder had to be negotiated. The Australian technique used "sandshoes" to walk up the creek. The flies were a bit desperate. The others kept to the north side of the creek and used some rock piles to finish up. The lake was reached after about 2 hours and the tents were pitched just in time to fend off a shower. Prowling around after

supper we discovered an old prospector's camp with an unnecessary amount of debris strewn about. An old gold pan was found on the creek bank at the outlet of the lake.

The next day dawned clear, spurring us into action. The day's objective was Petlushkwohap Mtn. since it was the more distant of the two major peaks in the area. We struck off in an ascending traverse across the moraines left by the glacier draining the east face of Skihist and gained the ridge which leads to peak 2775. This was followed for a while before dropping and contouring into the gully leading to the col west of Winter Peak. All of this was done under a warm sunny sky although a few clouds were beginning to form. Most cols were breezy; this one was no exception. We hastened on, crossing very firm snow on the NW flanks of Winter Peak to gain the ridge connecting to our objective - Petlushkwohap This provided a very pleasant hike up bare rock with a short scramble onto the summit. We enjoyed a leisurely lunch with views of a very unusual valley - no signs of logging! It was part of the Stein.

By now the clouds were very well developed. Although the summit of Skihist was obscured, the views south to the Rutledge and Chochiwa Glaciers were quite good - more objectives. The north side of Skihist looked quite attractive and our memories suggested that this was unclimbed. Well, well. Our thoughts turned to the descent as the wind picked up. Our steps were easily retraced, and once below the col west of Winter Peak, we were much warmer and paused to shed a layer or two. Repeating the previous day's experience, we arrived in camp just in time to seek shelter from a heavy shower. That day was rather more desperate as the Australian stove rebelled against its master. They sputtered and fussed and fumed in unison.

Well, it seemed the weather in this area was well aware of the "same as previous day" theory and subscribed accordingly. We were up early to another brilliant sky though somewhat cooler. Following breakfast, we again struck off to the moraines. Upon reaching the creek, we swang left and headed easily uphill towards the glacier - the moraine was comfortably stable. Coming into a basin, we swang to the right and discovered this area to be glaciated although it is not shown as such on the 1:50,000 map sheet. We eventually reached the col at military grid reference 792610 and found it particularly breezy. We dropped over to the north seeking shelter to have a snack and rope up.

From here we contoured west across the glaciated north slopes of Skihist looking for reasonable lines. Paul led his party rather directly upward to the col while I led mine a few hundred metres further west towards the skyline. Both parties gained the ridge via 40 degree snow-slopes and subsequently followed the rather narrow ridge west and south to the summit. There had been some fresh snow overnight but it was of no real concern. Rather, walking this narrow ridge with wonderful views off both sides was exhilarating - just the way a new ascent route should be. While having lunch near the summit, clouds sprang into being and we rested in the gloom for a while - then peek-a-boo began.

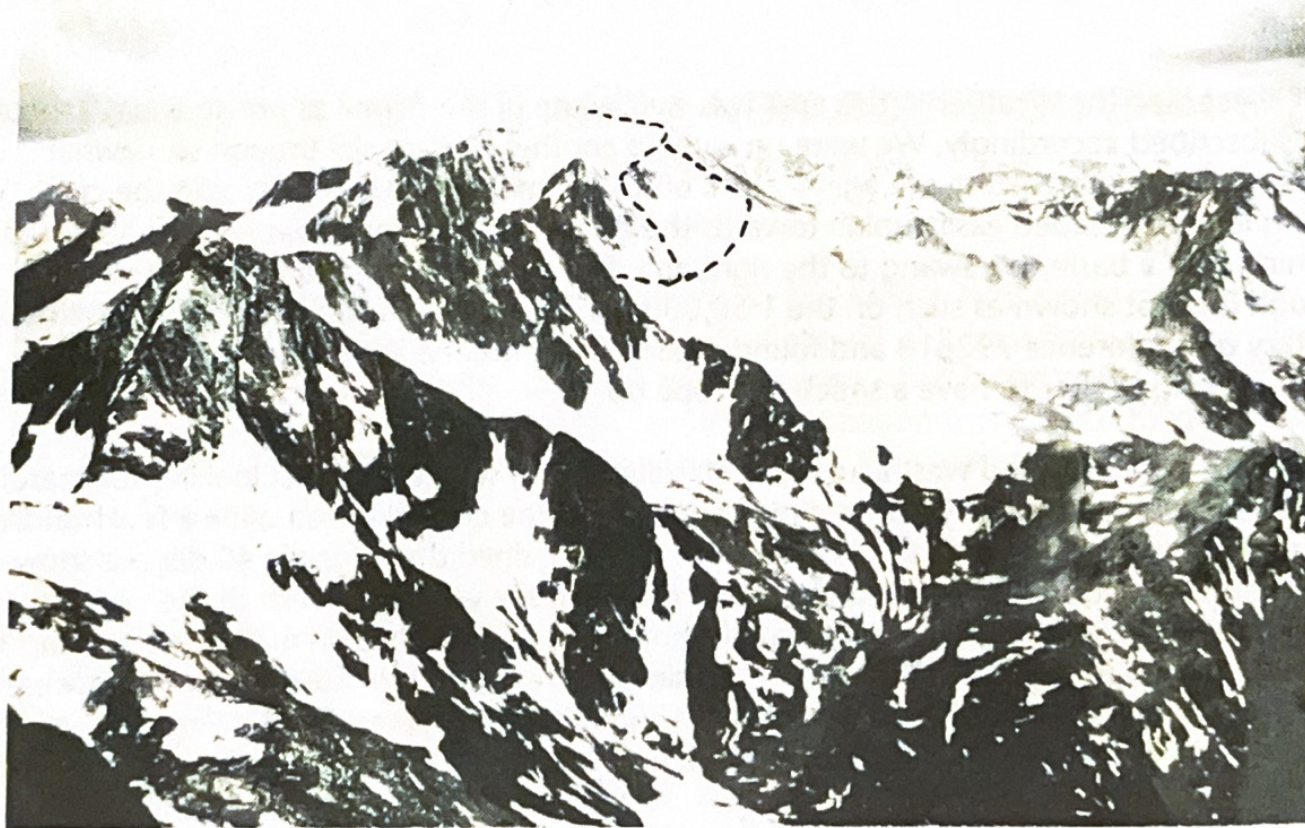
Against the judgement of some but in the spirit of adventure we headed down the southeast

ridge. After some stiff class 4 scrambling, we got to easier ground and soon found the descent route. Plunge stepping down the east glacier was exciting and provided us with a speedy descent. Down at the moraine, we became aware of building clouds and hastened to camp to pack up everything dry before the next shower.

With this done, we headed down the creek trying to be cunning in our upcoming encounter with the slide alder. We crossed to the south side for a bit, and then the group became very fragmented. Erich and I opted to head up the hillside a bit. This worked well for avoiding the alder but landed us in a very swampy section of forest in retaliation. The flies were even more desperate. Finally the slash - then the road and car.

In retrospect, this is a remarkably diverse area. While the logging roads have done a job on the Kwoiek drainages, they provide access to beautiful country. The ascents of Petlushkwohap and Skihist are surprisingly different - the former seems rather like a pleasant hike while the later is very alpine in character. And to imagine that in the face of such poor weather we managed to ascend the two highest peaks in south western B.C. with a new route and traverse besides. None of us had been around this side of Skihist before, but we will return, I'm certain.

Party: Paul Kubik, Darlene Anderson, Denise Hart, Peter Colliers, Erich Hinze, Michael and Evelyn Feller, and Brian Gavin (Organizer).



The N side of Skihist Mtn. from Petlushkwohap Mtn., showing the new routes on the N Face and NE ridge - photo by M. Feller.

TIDEWATER TO TREELINE: MEGIN RIVER TO BUTTLE LAKE, STRATHCONA PARK, 10 - 19 August, 1989

- by Randy Stoltman

Cruising north from Tofino towards the black clouds hanging over Obstruction Island, it seems only fitting that Clinton is diligently waterproofing his boots. For up Millar Channel, the heavy drops begin to splatter across the windshield of the Matlawhaw Pride, and soon the calm water is blurred by the impact of this coastal downpour. Food packages bound for Ahousat and Hot Springs Cove, as well as our two backpacks, are frantically hauled into the cabin as the Pride races through the rock lined reaches of Sulphur Passage.

When we have unloaded our gear, and stand on the rocks at the mouth of the Megin River watching the Matlawhaw Pride churn off down gloomy Shelter Inlet, the reality of our plan sets in. We will walk, without trails, up the Megin and across the mountains of Strathcona Provincial Park to Buttle Lake. It is a sixty kilometre route that to our knowledge has never been walked in its entirety before.

Clinton and I place our packs under a dense spruce tree and examine the vague path leading into the bush. It leads some distance into the thicket, but then seems to end. We return through soaked bush to the rocks. Closer to the river, we pick up a second path which soon becomes more defined. We return for our packs, then strike off up the river, more confident about making some progress on this miserable evening. As soon as the river water is shallow enough, we begin wading. In running shoes we slosh upstream, following the wedge gravel bars and crossing where the river washes from side to side. The water is warm and clear - lowland water borne of rainfall and its slow release from the virgin rainforest. We are two km up from the mouth, and the light is fading, so we pitch the tent under an overhanging big leaf maple. After a simple cold dinner, we rest in our little dry haven while the rain drums on into the night.

By morning the rain has stopped, and Clinton is already setting wet gear out on the rocks to dry. I do the same, then settle down for breakfast. All morning we make good progress up river, generally wading with the occasional romp through devil's club and salmonberry where a deep pool blocks our passage in the river. Bald eagles wheel overhead; deer bounce along sandbars marked by wolf tracks and bear sign. Here we are guests in a wilderness that belongs to these creatures. And yet, I cannot help thinking, that Megin is threatened by logging interests that have blindly taken one valley after another in a one way trip to obliteration of our wilderness rainforests.

Shortly after lunch a squall stops us beneath a convenient overhanging cedar tree. Out on the river, raindrops dimple the sunny water. As the rain dies, we shoulder our packs and pick our way along the water's edge. I ford the river below the next big pool, then toss my stout driftwood pole back across to Clinton. This is one of the few places where the current is sufficient to warrant the use of a pole for balance.

For the first time, we are plagued with mosquitoes and no-see-ums. But the discomfort is forgotten as golden light falls on the forested mountains beyond Megin Lake. The clouds that have wrapped the mountains dissipate and reveal jagged fangs of rock thrusting up beyond the first ridge, above the headwaters of Watta Creek.

It is a pleasant change to be walking in hiking boots after yesterday's long walk up the river in flexible running shoes. We push into the forest on the south shore of Megin Lake. Clinton notes a cedar that has had a test hole cut into its trunk by natives in search of solid canoe logs many years ago. Around us stand a half dozen other big cedars. The sidehill soon steepens, and travel over windfalls and bushy uneven ground is slow. For a while we follow a narrow beach along the lake, but are soon forced to return to the forest. Intermittent animal trails clearly show the lower profile of their makers as they tunnel under salal bushes and logs. An old rock slide, its boulders sheathed in moss, eases the undergrowth for a while. Two thirds down the lake the beach resumes. Here the grasses are studded with wildflowers, and hundreds of sun bleached drift logs have amassed between the forest and the shore. Among this natural debris, I find a few pieces of milled lumber and three old tires; perhaps a float at the cabin was blown apart during a storm, depositing these blatant signs of human presence in this corner of the wilderness. We follow the curving shoreline past the drift logs and along the edge of a marsh to where deposited sand forms a hard beach. Here on the warm gravel of the river mouth, backed by pioneering alder trees, we stop for lunch. Clinton braves the water for a quick swim; I am content to lie on the clean gravel and absorb the sun's warmth.

After eating, we pull on our runners and begin to slosh up the river again. At each crossing the cool water refreshes my feet. Beyond the first bend, we mount a huge spruce log, then find ourselves jumping off the butt end into the river to reach a suitable crossing point. Seeing my performance with a full pack, Clinton passes down his pack before jumping. We scramble among roots along the river bank, then cross to a wide gravel bar. As we walk upstream, the lowering angle of the sun accentuates the beauty of this valley. Smooth gravel is backed by alder and maple trees, then by tall spruce and Douglas-fir which press up against the steep mountainsides. Continuing on up dry channels under the arching deciduous trees, we pass several perfect campsites, but push on to make distance. After a long bouldery stretch, we come to what the photo shows is the last large gravel bar. A small patch of sand awaits our tent. I am setting up a bear wire when I notice, atop a small bluff at the edge of the channel, another split cedar cabin. Nearby, a tiny outhouse is positioned so as to dump directly into the now-dry river channel below. There are no bugs tonight, and our little driftwood fire burns clean and hot into the night. As it begins to die, a few rain-drops fall.

Early in the morning, I can hear the steady patter of rain on the tent fly. I drift off again feeling no urge to force myself out of the bag. An hour or so later, I awake again to the gentle rushing of the Megin. The damp outside is drying under a tentative sun. We pack up and cook breakfast in the shelter of an overhanging yew tree below the cabin. The off and on drizzle passes almost unnoticed. As we begin to walk towards the end of the bar, it brightens again, and we are soon penetrating the rain-drenched bush. Here are thick growth of devil's

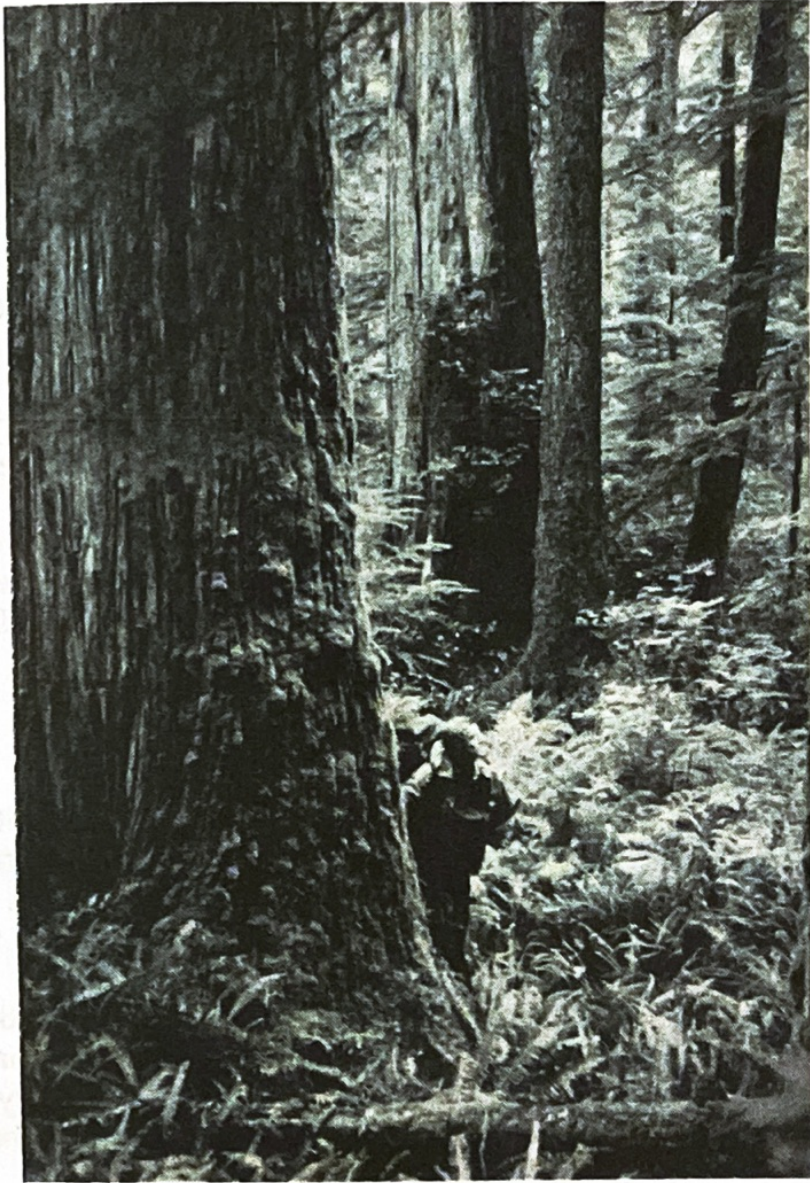


Wading the lower Megin R. - photo by R. Stoltmann.

club and towering huckleberry bushes, under the lofty canopy of moss-padded hemlock-fir forest. Here and there stand large, well shaped cedars. One is three meters thick and rises with gently tapering perfection into the canopy.

For two hours we push through the forest. At times the sun breaks through and Clinton parts bushes seemingly laden with thousands of sparkling diamonds. We emerge from the woods onto slick water-polished granite where the Megin emerges from a canyon. Centuries of slow erosion have worn the hard rock into smooth saucers and ridges. The river itself slows into a pool lined by rock formations. The green water is perhaps ten meters deep, and it eddies slowly among overhanging sculptures of rock.

The forest above the canyon is mostly cedar and hemlock with moderate underbrush. After climbing onto a benchland where large cedars predominate, we traverse through thick bush and much windfall towards Mitla Creek which joins the Megin from the east. The thrash drags on, with the increasing roar of the creek hinting at a canyon we had not anticipated. Indeed, Mitla Creek rushes urgently down a steep gash in the rainforest. We turn upstream, working our way down towards the water wherever possible. When we finally reach the creek, we are overdue for a good drink and lunch. The Mitla is a fast flowing stream which drops rapidly around big rounded boulders. Hemmed in by steep ridges, it is a gloomy place in this unsettled weather. We climb straight up the forty-five degree mountainside, hanging



*Cedar-hemlock forest above Megin canyon near Mitla Ck. -
photo by R. Stoltmann.*

monberry and work our way to the dense forest. But the bush remains thick even under the heavy canopy of coniferous tress. As we meander around looking for openings, I pick up a long series of bush-free patches in ancient hemlock forest. Occasionally giant rotting fir snags loom up through the misty greenery, signposts pointing to a long forgotten history of forest fires. All morning we hike through the wet bush, towards the creek that drains today's destination, a subalpine lake 1000 m atop the ridge north of Mitla Creek. This creek cascades down over slabs of bedrock, in a small canyon bordered by a ridge of open forest. The ridge

on to ferns and shrubs. Then, as in the upper Pitt of Garibaldi two years ago, we pick up an animal trail which guides us through the canyon. As the terrain eases, the trail fades out leaving us in thick devil's club. The valley is now shallow, but the ground is uneven, frequently littered with moss and bush covered boulders, remnants of long ago rock slides. Crossing to the north side of Milta Creek, we forge on for a half hour through very dense huckleberry and old rock slides, then begin to look for a campsite. There are virtually no decent flat spots in the forest, but a small island in the creek offers a dry channel with a sand patch. Here, in bug infested hell, we cook under the extra tarp. Our carefully preserved bug-free environment - the tent - seems so incredibly peaceful as I lie in my bag listening to the creek. After three full days, we are deep in the wilderness, and despite the bugs and bush, I can only hope that it will always remain as I have seen it. Clinton and I have walked for only five minutes up the dry channel when we face this morning's dreaded bushwhack. With a little hesitation we plunge into the drenched sal-

is steep, but the lack of bush makes walking easy. Above is a cliff band which runs the entire length of the valley. Using trees and roots for support, we clamber up a bushy cleft in the bluff, forcing our bloated packs through the tightly spaced trees. The sun now filters through the foliage. Just then, Clinton breaks out onto an open bluff above a waterfall. There is no question about whether we stop here for lunch.

We eat while gazing out over the green cleft of Mitla Creek; shreds of mist still hang in the rainforest, but here we sit up in the warm sun. Clinton figures we have climbed up the wrong creek, and he is right because we have not reached a sharp bend that should now, according to his altimeter, be below us. Nevertheless, it is a good route through the forest. Soon we are on open bluffs, dotted with yellow cedar and lodgepole pine. As the bluffs steepen, I make a reconnaissance without my pack, finding a feasible route to the ridge top.

For much of the climb out of Mitla Creek we have been crisscrossing the western boundary of Strathcona Park. As we begin to traverse towards the lake we leave behind the endangered Megin River wilderness and enter the less threatened parkland. Throughout its history, Strathcona has been abused; dams have flooded its lakes, forests have been traded away to logging interests, and mineral claims allowed to poison the sanctity of this parkland. Here we are in a nature conservancy zone, but our destination - Westmin Resources' mine - reminds us that park protection is only as good as the will of politicians.

August 15 begins clear and cool. Remnant clouds stream from the strikingly jagged peaks to the north. South, across the socked-in headwaters of Mitla Creek, sharp fangs of rock tear through the remains of a heavy winter snowpack. Our unnamed lake shines lead silver in its little basin. Clinton has strung a long clothesline, and our damp gear is hanging or lies spread across the rocks to dry. Shorts and dry packs are luxury after two days in soaked rain gear. Our route takes us up a ridge to the southeast of the lake, past a smaller lake, and around the mountain shoulder to a narrow divide which separates Mitla Creek from a western fork of Kowus Creek, a tributary of the Moyeha River. We descend the large avalanche chute on the Kowus side, cross residual snow near the bottom and climb through slide-battered trees onto a small heather-covered knoll. Clinton heads for the rim of the bluff for a view of the valley, but as he crests a hump, he pivots around and runs back towards me shouting. He must have disturbed a hornets nest, but then I hear the cussing and grunting, and a black bear cub emerges in a tree from behind the hump. Resisting the temptation to move in and photograph the cub, we turn around and contour across the mountainside to a rocky creek gully. Sufficiently distant from bruin, we break out lunch.

We intend to contour around the head of the valley to a narrow bench which merges with a bluff ridge leading all the way down to the main stem of Kowus Creek. Starting out again, we clamber up a steep gravel bank out of the creek gully, then drop right back down into another gully beyond. For half an hour we traverse steep slide gullies, their sides thick with slide alder and Vaccinium. On the treed ridges between gullies are large mountain hemlock and yellow cedar trees, often twisted and battered by winter avalanches. Beyond a tedious moss covered rock slide, we encounter two enormous yellow cedars. The large tree, three metres in diameter, is near record size for the species. But even if it isn't the largest, it surely

is one of the most remote giants left, for here we are in the heart of the greatest tract of wilderness left on Vancouver Island.

For two hours we thrash through dense subalpine forest, up gullies, over bluffs, then back down again with the realization that we have contoured too high into a cliff belt. When we finally pick up the wooded bench and emerge in the ridge top meadows, the light is fading. We reach a tiny lake and set up camp as tentative raindrops begin to fall from the darkening sky.

The rain overnight did not materialize, and I awake to a sun-warmed tent. With the now standard bug protection on, Clinton and I examine the airphotos over our leisurely breakfast and packing routine. The route ahead looks good and we are soon strolling through meadows along bluffs. Descending toward Kowus Creek we are rarely without views of the forested valley curving off towards the distant Moyeha. Our descent is frequently interrupted by stops to feast on heavily laden huckleberry bushes. Off the last open bluffs dotted with lodgepole pine, the ridge descends steeply into lowland forest of large western red cedars. Negotiating one tricky cliff band, we ramble down to open boulders of the creek bed. After lunch beside the clear waters of the Kowus Creek, we cross and contour through damp cedar forest to a shallow ridge between two creeks. Climbing through easy forest, the ridge opens up to heather patches and little rock bluffs. Bypassing the lake at 1000 m, we emerge on a ridge overlooking the Moyeha Valley. We push on only as far as the open bluffs on the rim of the Moyeha. Here we set up camp beside a dark pool. All day the cloud cover has thickened, and now a heavy sheet of overcast blankets the peaks.

On this glorious morning, August 17, we gaze out from our bluff over the Moyeha valley. From the estuary at distant Herbert Inlet to the gleaming glaciers of Mariner Mountain, all is bathed in clear morning sunlight. From this great gulf rises the river's roar, the voice of the wilderness. The Moyeha is special, for it is the only major west coast river drainage entirely within a park south of Alaska. The only one.

We climb for an hour through easy forest and over bluffs to a meadowed gap in the ridge crest. To the north, a pretty hourglass-shaped lake nestles in a narrow valley, its deep blue waters nearly divided by a rock isthmus. Looking at the warm rocks, I promise myself a swim today. Beyond the gap, the bluffs steepen. As I reach the top I hear Clinton's shouts for help from below. He has climbed up a little gully into a awkward position where he can move neither up nor down safely. With the weight of his pack pulling him, his arms are quickly fatiguing, and he is in danger of falling. I drop my pack and quickly clamber down above him to assist him up. This incident reminds us of how wilderness places responsibility on the individual. Such basic actions take on heightened significance when an error may preclude further travel, days from civilization.

Now we are on the high ridges north of the Moyeha valley. In the distance to the north, I can see the highest ramparts of Vancouver Island; the Golden Hinde, Elkhorn and Colonel Foster. Directly to the east is the pyramid of Moyeha Mountain. Scrambling through a series of little valleys between bluffs, we find our swimming hole - a long clear lake tucked against a



Morning above the Moyeha valley - photo by R. Stoltmann.

vertical wall of rock. We do not hesitate, quickly stripping and plunging into the frigid water. Afterwards we eat on the warm rocks with a view of Mariner Mountain. East of the lake, our route takes us through a scenic gap and across a snowfield to the rim of a great cirque below Moyeha Mountain. We intend to drop down across, but it is now evident that the descent would be very steep, and the subsequent elevation gain on the opposite side equally so. After some debate we decide to try the ridge crest above. Rounded rock domes punctuate this ridgeline, a skywalk between the great cirque and the roaring vastness on the Moyeha. In the lowering sun of the afternoon, we ramble along the crest to a gap that leads us down to the north again. For most of this day, we have walked along the northern divide of the only completely protected river system on Vancouver Island. I have felt its presence, wild and mysterious, and taken comfort from the knowledge that this valley, at least, we will leave for the future.

I glissade down a snowfinger, then traverse across a series of wide bushy ledges. Clinton follows and together we emerge on the barren boulder strewn plateau northwest of Moyeha Mountain. We select a campsite near one of dozens of deep pools, then cook dinner as the lowering sun's amber light climbs the peaks and slips off into night.

Another sunny morning sees us contouring around the ridge to the north, gently descending heather slopes into the meadowed valley which leads east towards the head of Thelwood Creek. A short climb among boulders and wildflowers brings us to the Vancouver Island divide. Here we leave the westward flowing drainage of Kowus Creek and begin to descend



Towards Moyeha Mtn. - photo by R. Stoltmann.

into Thelwood valley, which drains east into the Strait of Georgia. Below the pass, a flat gravel wash supports a brilliant display of wildflowers. Patches of lupines, Indian paintbrush, daisies and monkeyflowers splash their brilliance across the valley floor, while the creek flows clear and shallow into a little gorge. After negotiating this gap, we again ramble across gravel washes and heather slopes, following Thelwood Creek to its delta at beautiful Upper Thelwood Lake. Here, for the first time since our last camp along the Megin, five days ago, we can relax without mosquitoes. It is such a luxury to lie in the sun unmolested by the little bloodsuckers!

Along the south shore of Upper Thelwood, I also see the first signs of human presence since Megin Lake; a tiny scrap of red plastic mesh lies beside my boot. Then over a rise, there is a ladder-like series of planks nailed to a yellow cedar, perhaps a survey marker of some kind. Near the east end of the lake, a faint trail appears, and I note the imprint of a vibram sole.

After lunch beside the lake, we climb again into the steep bluffy high country between Thelwood and Myra creeks. Our route takes us over a rocky spur and past the outlet of an unnamed lake. Then we ascend to a gentle ridge overlooking Carwithen Lake, and drop down a snow gully to a second more picturesque unnamed lake. A dead level sedge patch beside the outlet creek makes a perfect campsite. Sitting by the lake outlet, where a fitfull breeze keeps the bugs away, I note the amber reflection across the water. Glancing behind me, I am startled by the burning orange glaciers of Mount Tom Taylor. Here, on our last

night out, this wilderness has given us its finest display of alpenglow. I run down to the tent for my camera, then dash up to a bluff for a better view. But just as my telephoto lens clicks into place the colour fades suddenly as the sun drops behind the mountains. But perhaps it is right for this moment to be etched into my memory by a missed photo. This way I will remember, not merely recall at the sight of a photo, this special night in Strathcona Park.

August 19 will be our final day in the wilderness that has become our short term home. But more than images of beauty it is punctuated with sadness. From the high plateau we can see the distant dam and road at Jim Mitchell Lake, and the scar of Westmin Resources' mine at Myra Creek. We wander through a maze of little bluffs and meadows, past a string of tiny lakes. Then we crest the final divide, round meadow-ringed tarn, and drop through forest along a stream towards Tennent Lake. Breaking out of the trees, it is clear that Tennent is not really a lake as mountain lakes should be. A dam blocks the outlet, and fluctuating water levels have stained the shore line with toilet bowl-like rings. The level is down, exposing silty gray stumps and debris. We walk quietly past the dam and down the rocky pipeline track. On and on, down the steep mountainside, following the green painted pipe, the drone of the mine steadily becoming louder, we descend. Near the bottom, majestic Douglas-firs line the track, but they are not the same with the constant whine of generators replacing the gentle music of wind in the treetops.

Despite all these intrusions, much of Strathcona is still the wild and beautiful heartland of Vancouver Island. For eight out of nine days, Clinton and I hiked through country virtually unchanged by modern civilization. With adjacent areas such as the Megin protected, there would still be hope that what we experienced could be enjoyed by generations yet unborn, so that they may know the Island as it was, from tidewater to treeline.

Party: Randy Stoltmann and Clinton Webb.

MOUNTAIN SCIENCE OF MATIER GLACIER MORAINES AND LICHENS

- by Karl Ricker

Joffre Lakes provides a very illuminating natural history lesson. The three lake basins, however, have differing origins. The uppermost is the most interesting in this regard. Several thousand years ago it did not exist, and the middle basin extended farther up-valley. However, a landslide with a 60-70 metre thick debris zone from adjacent valley walls created a dam which backed up the upper lake, isolating it from the second lake basin. Soon after, Matier Glacier repeatedly invaded the lake as shown by the spectacular sharp-crested moraines which disappear into its depths. In 1987, the writer browbeat his family into taking a hike to the upper basin. Two old moraine crests on the west shore of the lake were overtrod before reaching the usual camp area at its SW corner. Between the latter and the lake edge there is another series of moraines under bush cover, while fresh moraines line the adjacent lake shore. All told, there are at least 8 sets of moraines, or more than double the number usually found elsewhere in the alpine areas of the Coast Mountains. Surely this series might provide an interesting chronology of glacial events, and the rest of the day was spent trying

to establish a method to define the age of each moraine.

Trees provide one method to attack the problem, but without a saw on hand, this task could not be undertaken, and the results yield only a minimum age for each crest. Another tack is to measure the diameters of lichens growing on the boulders and a quick look revealed that the moraines of Matier Glacier were displaying much of this kind of cover. The technique is straightforward: The largest lichen of a given species is measured on one boulder, and after looking at another 20 to 50 boulders on the same moraine crest, the volume of data is sufficient to establish an average maximum size of lichen for that particular moraine.

Several species have been used in this so-called "lichenometric" technique, but most investigators prefer Rhizocarpon geographicum because it is a cosmopolitan alpine-subalpine species found in both hemispheres of the earth's surface. It doesn't grow so well on calcium-rich rocks, but otherwise it is usually found on young to old surfaces, being almost an instant pioneering colonizer. This is not the brown or black lichen which slicks up the rock climbing on those damp or misty days, but rather it is the pistachio green one, with yellow haloes around each little cup and a black rim which surrounds the entire thallus. The surface texture of this encrusting species is similar to pebble-grained leather work.

While nice circular specimens are the easiest to measure, this is rarely their mode of occurrence. Ovoid, ellipsoid, and more irregular outlines prevail, and this had lead to confusion on how to measure them for dating purposes. Some record the maximum axis diameters, other average it, but the norm at present is to use the least axis diameter, or the diameter of the largest circle that can be inscribed within the outline of the overall thallus. There are also other problems:

1. adjacent lichen thalli will coalesce to provide a false size;
2. the rate of growth varies not only with the geographic area, but also with aspect, exposure, rock type , length of snow cover, presence or absence of tree cover, or animal scats, etc.
3. the growth rate curve for each species of lichen can only be established where there are other means to date a given surface habituated by a given lichen diameter; and
4. Rhizocarpon geographicum occurs as several races and subspecies, and resembles other closely-related species - all of which can grow intermingled on the same surface at slightly different rates.

To get around the above hang-ups, the field data collector employs a constant methodology, namely: always use minimum axis measurements by measuring the thallus several ways; measure lichens above the base of the boulder, away from the shaded side but yet not the surface exposed to wind blast; confine measurements to lichen growing on one rock type; avoid measurements under tree cover; and make enough measurements to remove the influence of taxonomic variation for the broad spectrum of the species. The establishment of a growth curve is nonetheless a very big problem. The original investigators set up this system in the Alps and in Greenland using gravestones in old alpine or subarctic villages. In one

OVERLORD GLACIER - A 1989 UPDATE

- by Karl Ricker

In the last B.C. Mountaineer, we reported on a recent advance of the Overlord Glacier, and documented its overall retreat since the turn of the century by mapping its various moraines. A series of cairns was left on the left lateral moraine to mark the 1986 position of its snout. In July, 1989 my son and his friend hustled me back to Russet Lake so that they could bag a few peaks. An interesting record in Fissile Mtn's cairn showed that Pip Brock reascended the peak in 1988, at the age of 73, after having climbed it in 1933! We were impressed not only by this but also by the view of the Overlord Glacier below. From this excellent vantage point we could not determine whether it had advanced or retreated since 1986.

The same evening we dropped down to the moraine to resurvey the glacier's terminal position against our cairns of 1986. A few sine law calculations yielded a 4.5 metre retreat for the 3-year period, but the highly crevassed state of the glacier in its lower nerve zone suggested that the entire lower section of the glacier could easily slide that minuscule distance on any given forthcoming late summer day to nullify what was measured. So the glacier has yet to enter into a distinct retreatal phase, and observations over the next few years will be very interesting.

While winding up the surveyor's tape, we stumbled over one spot, marked "oxidized moraine" on the map in the previous Mountaineer, where there are three minor ridges side by side on the main crest of the moraine. A pronounced difference in "freshness" of boulders on each was immediately obvious, as dictated by their colour and lichen cover. Relying on the cosmopolitan lichen species, Rhizocarpon geographicum, we measured the lesser axis thallus diameter of several on each of many boulders exposed on the three crests. As pointed out in the preceding article, the growth rate of the encrusting thallus of this lichen species is a function of time, amongst other environmental variables.

Using the two situations where growth curves have been established (Jasper National Park and Price Lake at Mt. Shuksan), we can provide enveloping age limits on each of the three crests. The outer or oldest which is part of the oxidized soil noted for this part of the moraine, yields an age of 1748 to 1821 A.D. The middle crest, which elsewhere is the dominant part of the main crest of the rest of the entire moraine, was formed between 1875 and 1884 A.D. It is the main 19th century advance that is found everywhere throughout the Coast Mountains. The inner crest, however, yields a date of 1911 to 1923 A.D., although it has to be older than the ca 1920 A.D. moraine found about midway between the glacier and this moraine. Thus, the great recession of the glacier took place during a very short time interval during World War I, then paused, only to resume again in the 1930's before being arrested again in the early 1960's. One has to ask: do world wars cause glacier retreat?!

So, to build on that farfetched idea, it follows that if we can keep the greenhouse effect in check by abolishing "prescribed" slash fires (and napalm bombing), perhaps we will have a healthier glacier to look at and enjoy in the next century.



